The *Cymbalum mundi* of Bonaventure Des Periers and the Concept of Renaissance Unbelief, 1537–1937

followed by a

Critical Edition of the *Cymbalum mundi*

by

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This thesis is submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

This thesis is the result of my own work and includes nothing which is the outcome of work done in collaboration except as declared in the acknowledgements or specified in the text and notes. I further state that no substantial part of my thesis has already been submitted, or, is being concurrently submitted for any such degree, diploma or other qualification at the University of Cambridge or any other University or similar institution. It does not exceed the prescribed word limit for the History Degree Committee.

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The *Cymbalum mundi* of Bonaventure Des Periers and the Concept of Renaissance Unbelief, 1537–1937. Followed by a Critical Edition of the *Cymbalum mundi*.

SUMMARY.

This thesis presents the complete reception-history of the *Cymbalum mundi* of Bonaventure Des Periers, a collection of four dialogues originally published in Paris in 1537, and rumoured for centuries afterward to contain a hidden denial of revealed religion. The thesis divided into six chapters. Chapter I contains an analysis of the book itself, in which it is shown that the *Cymbalum mundi* cannot seriously be interpreted as having any real atheist content. Chapter II describes the very earliest reactions to the book, and the grim ordeal of its first publisher Jehan Morin. Chapter III traces the process by which the *Cymbalum mundi* came to be seen, erroneously, as an archetypal work of atheism over the course of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Chapter IV investigates the book's re-publication in 1711 by the Huguenot bookseller Prosper Marchand, and the subsequent development of its reputation for intriguing scandal in the eighteenth century. Chapter V tells of radical nineteenth-century scholars' characterization of the *Cymbalum mundi* as a forerunner of their anti-clerical cause. Finally, Chapter VI tries to account for the paradox that the twentieth-century French historian Lucien Febvre, otherwise famous for denying the possibility of unbelief in the early sixteenth century, nevertheless held up the *Cymbalum mundi* as a sole exception, and as a precursor to modern atheism. The dissertation closes with reflections on the close relationship between modern and pre-modern descriptions of unbelief in the Renaissance. A critical edition of the *Cymbalum mundi* is attached; likewise a bibliography of all surviving manuscripts and editions of the book.

Foreword

I have reproduced the text of all modern and early-modern quotations as exactly as possible, with the exception of regularizing **U** and **V** according to phonetic value and writing short **s** throughout.

All translations are my own except as otherwise noted. When translating sources into English, I have tried to preserve their peculiarities of spelling, italicization and capitalization, which is what accounts for occasional variant forms like *symbalum mundi* and *Desperiers*.

I have neither modernized, Anglicized, Latinized, nor Gallicized all of the proper names and titles, but adopted a mix of forms according to normal practice in English-speaking scholarship and my own feeling. Still, I have tried not to give more than one form of a name to a given person or book.

Except as otherwise specified, classical quotations are copied from the latest Oxford edition of the cited work, with spelling freely adapted.

I have used the following bibliographical abbreviations:

ACR2000. Giacone, Franco, ed. *Le* Cymbalum Mundi*: Actes du Colloque de Rome (3–6 novembre 2000)*. THR, CCCLXXXIII. Geneva: Librairie Droz, 2003.

BHR. Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance.

THR. Travaux d'Humanisme et Renaissance.

NRB. Rawles, Stephen, and M. A. Screech. *A New Rabelais Bibliography: Editions of Rabelais before 1626*. Études Rabelaisiennes XX (THR, CCXIX). Geneva: Droz, 1987.

The siglum **CM** accompanied by a date refers to an edition of the *Cymbalum mundi*, the full list of which is given in Bibliography I.

The siglum **NRB** accompanied by a number refers to an edition of Rabelais' works as described in NRB.

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My loyal friend Pierre Salvadori helped me with matters big and small during my research, from finding me lodging in Paris to checking references.

In the spring of 2012, when I was an undergraduate at the University of Chicago, my professor Constantin Fasolt introduced me to Lucien Febvre and his *Problème de l'incroyance*. I have been wrestling with it ever since. Furthermore, his character and conscientious scholarship have been a constantly encouraging example to me; and for this reason especially, the present work is the fruit of his influence.

Finally, my supervisor Scott Mandelbrote has been my patient teacher and mentor since I first arrived in Cambridge in 2015. He has given me more help from the beginning than I can adequately thank him for here.

For Ruth Nathan,
on her ninety-fifth birthday.

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Introduction

The *Cymbalum mundi* is a collection of four Evangelical humanist dialogues, written in French and first published by Jehan Morin in 1537. It is the longest surviving work of Bonaventure Des Periers, who also left behind some other prose and poetry from the late 1530s.[1]

The dialogues of the *Cymbalum mundi* are all constructed from classical elements, and their characters are a cast of petty-minded gods and pettier-minded mortals. In the first and third dialogues, which tell a connected story, Mercury is sent down to earth by Jupiter to have the Book of Fate rebound. But on his way to the bindery in Athens he stops in a tavern, where two rogues steal the Book and put a lookalike in its place. Then, while flying over the earth in search of it, he absentmindedly says some magic words that give a horse down below the power to speak. This horse promptly berates his master for abusing him, and the local villagers crowd around to see the spectacle. In the second dialogue, three men search in an arena for shards of the Philosopher's Stone, which Mercury had earlier ground up and scattered in the sand. The god and his mortal companion Trigabus mock their empty claims to have found pieces of it. In the fourth dialogue, two dogs from Actæon's pack reunite some years after devouring their master. (They were the ones who ate his tongue, whence their ability to speak.) They debate the wisdom of letting on to the humans that they can talk.

All four dialogues are influenced in their themes, characters, and dramatic incidents by the dialogues of Lucian of Samosata, a satirist of the second century who was long appreciated by humanists for his Greek style as well as his caustic sarcasm. In his imitation of them, Des Periers was in turn influenced most of all by Erasmus and Thomas More, who had both commented extensively on Lucian and translated his works into Latin. Like these two men, Des Periers wielded Lucian's satirical wit against what he considered to be unserious rivals to Christian piety and humane learning.[2]

If one can be identified, the main theme of Des Periers' Lucianic dialogues is the vanity of rumours and chatter. But many subjects are skewered in the *Cymbalum mundi*,

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[1] Most of this was published in a posthumous volume of 1544 by his friend Antoine Du Moulin. The *Nouvelles recreations et ioyeux devis*, a collection of stories commonly attributed to Des Periers, was proven decisively to be spurious in the early eighteenth century on grounds that I have explained below. Most literary commentators, however, have not admitted the force of these arguments, and have accepted various strained defences of its authenticity.

[2] Paul Oskar Kristeller's description of More's interest in Lucian goes for Des Periers as well: 'The depth of his irony reflects the attitude of a man who ridicules all that is trivial in human experience, in order to reserve his respect and serious thought for higher matters, and who at times is even able to joke and play about matters for which he shows a genuine respect on other occasions. It is for this reason that he liked and translated Lucian.' 'Thomas More as a Renaissance Humanist', *Moreana* XVII, no. 65–66 (June 1980): pp. 5–22 [14–15].

including magic, sectarian squabbling, alchemy, and prognostications. Des Periers saw all of these pursuits as vain distractions from the Gospel, which represented the appropriate object of human knowledge.

Provided one reads it with sensitivity to its classical sources, the *Cymbalum mundi* is both interesting in itself and revealing of the period in which it was written. I have devoted part of chapter I here (as well as the commentary in the attached edition) to elucidating its sources and themes. Nevertheless, on its own it represents only a single example of moderately learned vernacular literature, and not an especially outstanding one at that. The true interest of the *Cymbalum mundi* lies rather in the rumours it has excited in the five hundred years since it was written. Beginning with Henri Estienne in 1566, the book has been represented as a secret attack on all revealed religion, which concealed its subversive doctrine under the veil of innocent fables. The *Cymbalum mundi* (and the works of Rabelais), Estienne wrote,

> are so many nets spread out to trap those who are not fortified with the fear of God: and these nets are the harder to see the better they are covered with pleasant language that tickles the ears.[3]

Though it has been diluted somewhat by recent literary scholarship, this judgement has never been overthrown in the five centuries since it was first formulated. Lucien Febvre, otherwise famous for claiming that atheism was literally unthinkable in the sixteenth century, nevertheless held the *Cymbalum mundi* to be a shocking counterexample; a precursor to all atheism that came later.

This opinion is as ill-founded now as it was in the sixteenth century. There is simply no evidence that Bonaventure Des Periers was an atheist in any possible sense of the term. He was accused of it by Henri Estienne, decades after his death: but he never wrote anything that explicitly called Christianity into question. Meanwhile, he wrote dozens of pious poems, and was the protégé of Queen Marguerite of Navarre, one of the most enthusiastic Evangelical reformers in France. It is always possible that an author had secret thoughts which he did not write, but unless these thoughts can themselves be established from other documents, it is the worst irresponsibility to invent them on his behalf, or on behalf of his gossiping enemies.

[3] 'Les livres de ces deux que nous avons nommez, & de leurs compagnons, sont autant de filets tendus pour prendre ceux qui ne sont bien armez de la crainte de Dieu: & que ces filets sont d'autant plus mal-aisez à voir, qu'ils sont mieux couvers de propos plaisans & chatouillans les oreilles'. | Henri Estienne, *L'introduction au traité de la conformité des merveilles anciennes avec les modernes: ou, Traité preparatif à l'Apologie pour Herodote* ([Geneva]: [Henri Estienne], 1566) [First ed., in 572 pp.], p. 104.

Never mind that it is a fiction: the atheist *Cymbalum mundi* is at the centre of a whole mythology that has been developed about the history of unbelief in Europe. According to this story, atheism originated as a dangerous secret. It was whispered in private, expounded in clandestine manuscripts, and alluded to in public books whose real meaning was only available to enlightened initiates. At a certain point, it emerged into the daylight and overcame its former oppressors, liberating mankind along the way (or ruining it, depending on one's perspective). It was like the nymph Arethusa: arising in the Arcadian era of Lucretius and Xenophanes, she had to run under the salt sea of the Christian Middle Ages, the Alpheus of persecution on her tail, before finally resurfacing in the Sicily of modernity.[4]

Leo Strauss was this theory's most famous modern proponent. Censorship, as he told it, was common in the past, and since true philosophy had always been subjected to it, it followed that there were philosophical texts whose real meaning was intentionally hidden by their authors from the great mass of readers.[5] Among these esoteric philosophers were Socrates, Averroës, Maimonides, Spinoza, Locke, Bayle, Rousseau, and Kant. By reading the works of these men attentively, a 'young man who loved to think' could uncover the secret messages which they had intended to communicate. Very often, the esoteric teaching in question was the falseness of revealed religion.[6]

By his own admission, Strauss proposed nothing that had not already been advanced hundreds of years before him.[7] If his statement of the theory had any original value, it was for

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[4] This analogy was first proposed by Sergio Bertelli: 'Seguire la storia del movimento libertino è seguire lo scorrere di un fiume carsico che, sgorgando in superficie nell'età di Pomponio Leto, di Pomponazzi, di Machiavelli, si inabissa nelle profondità della terra al tempo della Riforma, del Concilio di Trento, delle guerre di religione, per riemergere alla luce del sole con Spinoza e Bayle, disperdendo poi le sue acque e confluendo nel grande fiume dell'Illuminismo.' 'Presentazione', in *Il libertinismo in Europa*, ed. Sergio Bertelli (Milan and Naples: Riccardo Ricciardi Editore, 1980), p. 3. Bertelli's conceit of a 'karstic river' of unbelief was adopted (rather awkwardly) by Max Gauna in his book about the *Cymbalum mundi* and other clandestine atheist literature: *Upwellings: First Expressions of Unbelief in the Printed Literature of the French Renaissance* (London and Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1992).

[5] The locus classicus on allegorical and secretly traded books is a passage in the second letter of Plato: '*φῂς γὰρ δὴ κατὰ τὸν ἐκείνου λόγον οὐχ ἱκανῶς ἀποδεδεῖχθαί σοι περὶ τῆς τοῦ πρώτου φύσεως. φραστέον δή σοι δι' αἰνιγμῶν, ἵν' ἄν τι ἡ δέλτος ἡ πόντου ἢ γῆς ἐν πτυχαῖς πάθῃ, ὁ ἀναγνοὺς μὴ γνῷ. ὧδε γὰρ ἔχει.*' (312D–E) … '*Εὐλαβοῦ μέντοι μή ποτε ἐκπέσῃ ταῦτα εἰς ἀνθρώπους ἀπαιδεύτους· σχεδὸν γάρ, ὡς ἐμοὶ δοκεῖ, ὃ κ ἔστι τούτων πρὸς τοὺς πολλοὺς καταγελαστότερα ἀκούσματα, ὀδ' αὖ πρὸς τοὺς εὐφυεῖς θαυμαστότερά τε καὶ ἐνθουσιαστικώτερα. πολλάκις δὲ λεγόμενα καὶ ἀεὶ ἀκούομενα καὶ πολλὰ ἔτη μόγις, ὥσπερ χρυσός, ἐκκαθαίρεται μετὰ πολλῆς πραγματείας. ὃ δὲ θαυμαστὸν αὐτοῦ γέγονεν, ἄκουσον. εἰσὶ γὰρ ἄνθρωποι ταῦτα ἀκηκοότες καὶ πλείους, δυνατοὶ μὲν μαθεῖν, δυνατοὶ δὲ μνημονεῦσαι καὶ βασανίσαντες πάντη πάντως κρῖναι, γέροντες ἤδη καὶ ὀκ ἐλάττω τριάκοντα ἐτῶν ἀκηκοότες, οἳ νῦν ἄρτι σφίσι φασὶ τὰ μὲν τότε ἀπιστότατα δόξαντα εἶναι νῦν πιστότατα καὶ ἐναργέστατα φαίνεσθαι, ἃ δὲ τότε πιστότατα, νῦν τοὐναντίον. πρὸς ταῦτ' ὦν σκοπῶν εὐλαβοῦ μή ποτέ σοι μεταμελήσῃ τῶν νῦν ἀναξίως ἐκπεσόντων. μεγίστη δὲ φυλακὴ τὸ μὴ γράφειν ἀλλ' ἐκμανθάνειν*' (314A–C).

[6] Leo Strauss, 'Persecution and the Art of Writing', *Social Research* VII, no. 4 (1941): pp. 488–504.

[7] Cf. the anonymous manuscript *Theophrastus redivivus* of 1659. In his introduction, its apparently atheist author explained that all historical atheists were part of a continuous but hidden tradition. Theophrastus of Eresus and

his honest confrontation of an obvious difficulty in it; namely, the assumption that a secret code can only be understood by the righteous and wise, and never by the persecuting authorities themselves. As Strauss put it, 'how can a man perform the miracle of speaking in a publication to a minority, while being silent to the majority of his readers?' As an answer, he appealed to the 'Socratic dictum that virtue is knowledge, and therefore […] thoughtful men as such are trustworthy and not cruel.'

None of this is real. No undercurrent of persecuted unbelief in the Renaissance has ever been shown by any direct evidence to have existed.[8] This was observed by Paul Oskar Kristeller in the course of demonstrating that the supposed atheism of Pietro Pomponazzi and the school of Padua was a speculative invention of the seventeenth century 'libertines', and not actually to be found in Pomponazzi's works.[9] He made a very sane insistence on one of the unprovable but indispensable axioms of historical method: what is not suggested by the evidence cannot legitimately be supplied by the imagination. Nor can we admit special pleading on behalf of atheist readings of books, on the spurious grounds that forbidden teachings were necessarily hidden in esoteric nods, and otherwise undetectable except by modifying our standards of proof. If indeed esoteric atheism was buried so deep as to evade discovery by ordinary historical methods, then we must let it lie in the ground.

Winfried Schröder was right to recognize the direct opposition between Kristeller and Strauss, and also to present these men as the principal modern exponents of their respective methods.[10] Only it must be insisted: we cannot avoid taking sides. If we want to analyse the beginnings of atheism, either we apply the craft of documentary scholarship as it has been handed down since the fourteenth century; or we join Strauss's gang of 'young men who love to think'. There can be no compromise between methods that are based on contradictory principles; between one which treats the plain meaning of primary sources as the only legitimate evidence on historical questions, and another which treats that same plain meaning as a piece of tinsel which must be torn away if the truth is to be discovered. Besides, Kristeller's method already contains all of the sensitivity which one might hope to have achieved by giving inclusive credence to Strauss. Kristeller granted freely that a proper

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all subsequent unbelievers had existed in intellectual communion with each other, forming a chain that led through Plato, Lucretius, and Machiavelli down to the reborn Theophrastus, the author of the treatise.

[8] On this point see Dorothea Weltecke, *»Der Narr spricht: Es ist kein Gott«. Atheismus, Unglauben und Glaubenszweifel vom 12. Jahrhundert bis zur Neuzeit*, Campus Historische Studien 50 (Frankfurt: Campus, 2010).

[9] Paul Oskar Kristeller, 'The Myth of Renaissance Atheism and the French Tradition of Free Thought', *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 6, no. 3 (July 1968): pp. 233–243.

[10] See Winfried Schröder, 'Introduction', in *Reading between the Lines: Leo Strauss and the History of Early Modern Philosophy*, ed. id., New Studies in the History and Historiography of Philosophy 3 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2015), pp. 1–8.

reliance on the documents does not consist in treating them always at face value, or in refusing to draw inferences from them. All the same, he insisted, the ambiguity, duplicity, or incompleteness of certain texts must itself be treated as an object of critical study, not as licence to inject any fantasies we please into our picture of the past. He wrote:

> The secret thoughts of a person that are not expressed in his words are beyond the grasp of the historian as well as of the judge. We must admit, of course, on the basis of plain everyday experience, that the written record always represents only a partial and sometimes a misleading or false picture of a person's life and thought. We should always keep this in mind, and hence appreciate a sceptical attitude such as Bayle's that is at the same time sound, modest, and noble. But we cannot accept the cabalistic history of the fanatical free thinker who wants to find his predecessors everywhere and ventures to attribute his own ideas to past thinkers against the testimony of their own works, taking recourse to their supposed secret and unexpressed thoughts.[11]

Against this sane explanation of the limits of historical knowledge, we have Strauss's claim to cultic communion with the wise man of past.

Still less can we take it for granted that any given belief, however titillated we be by its 'radicalism', would actually have merited persecution in a given period. That an belief was scandalous or radical is not an abstract assertion, but an historical one that can only be tested by examining the belief's actual treatment in the relevant place and time. And indeed, atheism as such was very rarely persecuted in pre-modern Europe. Inasmuch as it was, it was typically an accusation that was superadded to primary accusations of heresy, witchcraft, crypto-Judaism, and so on.[12] Well-attested and widespread dangers like these, not simple denials of God's existence, were what worried pre-modern authorities as they tried to maintain spiritual control over their domains. Hence we may go so far as to say that if Bonaventure Des Periers really *had* been a secret atheist, his book would still have seemed less of a threat to the Parlement of Paris than Lutheran or Sacramentarian propaganda.

Only when we put it aside as a tool of historical analysis can we understand the clandestine theory of atheism as an historical object in its own right. It is, after all, an interesting question why so many scholars have been tempted in the first place to see the history of unbelief as a chain of esoteric communications. Until very recently there was a major obstacle to answering this question: namely, there was no acceptable explanation for how atheism actually *did* come into being. It was therefore tempting to take authors of the

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[11] Ibid., p. 243.

[12] See Dorothea Weltecke, 'Verfolgte und geächtete Atheisten. Konzeptionen von Nichtglauben im Mittelalter und die Moderne Verfolgungsthese', in *Verfolgter Unglaube: Atheismus und gesellschaftliche Exclusion in historischer Perspektive*, ed. Susan Richter (Frankfurt: Campus, 2018), pp. 45–61.

sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries at their word that there really was a subversive underground that dealt in atheist secrets.

The life's work of Alan Kors has improved our position. Over three decades, he has shown in detail how the disputes between Cartesians and Aristotelians in France created perfect conditions for hypothetical atheist arguments to be manufactured, each time in an attempt to prove that without one's preferred method of demonstrating the existence of God and Providence, atheism would be the inescapable logical consequence.[13] (The raw material for these arguments was a massive corpus of ancient sources.)[14] It was only a matter of time before these hypothetical arguments were taken seriously as reliable alternatives to Christian accounts of the world.

Kors's argument, whether or not it is right in this or that point, must be accepted in at least this respect: atheism, when it did come, was not hinted and signed at. It was stated explicitly, first as a hypothetical opinion to be avoided, and then, at the turn of the eighteenth century, in earnest. Meanwhile, the anti-Christian opinions of ancient authors were freely available in printed books that enjoyed official approbation. Even the works of modern atheists were extensively excerpted in books that attempted to refute them. Hence no clandestine manuscript or communication by secret code was ever necessary to atheism's birth and growth. The true purpose of supposedly clandestine atheism was never to convey real secrets, but rather to supply an object for the fears of pious zealots; and later to offer a feeling of brotherhood to men who had declared themselves its initiates. Exactly these were the successive historical roles played by the *Cymbalum mundi*.

THE PROBLEM OF UNBELIEF

More generally, we must also ask what it would have meant in the first place for Des Periers to have been a lone unbeliever in sixteenth-century France. To some extent, we should take seriously the sociological arguments laid out by Lucien Febvre in the second half of his book *Le problème de l'incroyance au XVIe siècle*.[15] The intellectual dominance of late-

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[13] *Atheism in France, 1650–1729: Volume I: The Orthodox Sources of Disbelief* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1990); *Epicureans and Atheists in France, 1650–1729* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016); *Naturalism and Unbelief in France, 1650–1729* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016).

[14] Winfried Schröder has explored these sources in detail, and beyond the French context that Kors concentrated on. He has shown us how an infusion of materialist and sceptical material from ancient atheists and pagans was crucial to the establishment of cogent unbelief at the turn of the eighteenth century. See his *Ursprünge des Atheismus: Untersuchungen zur Metaphysik- und Religionskritik des 17. und 18. Jahrhunderts*, Quaestiones 11 (Stuttgart: Frommann-Holzboog, 1998).

[15] Lucien Febvre, *Le problème de l'incroyance au XVIe siècle. La religion de Rabelais*, L'Évolution de l'Humanité, LIII (Paris: Albin Michel, 1942), pp. 361–501.

medieval Christianity, Febvre wrote, was so great that anyone born under its sway would have faced extreme difficulty in escaping from it. As Marcel Mauss and Lucien Lévy-Bruhl had taught him, an individual's personality—abstract thoughts and all—was constituted in the first place by his social context. Thus without compelling evidence to the contrary, the strong presumption must be that a sixteenth-century Christian was immersed in his faith, intellectually as well as emotionally.

What about the exception, however? A person might well have worked out lines of thought that stood in contradiction to the teachings of Christianity, whether explicitly or by implication. Febvre argued that such a person's discovery would not have represented a serious event in history. Intellectually controlled by the thought-world around him, he would have lacked the necessary mental apparatus to develop a serious objection to Christianity; therefore, if he existed, his ruminations would have been no more intellectually coherent than the ramblings of a drunkard in a tavern.[16]

True: and yet it might be objected that men of the sixteenth century were not the pre-agrarian primitives whom Febvre's borrowed concept of *mentalités* had originally been developed to describe. Some of them could read.[17] It was possible in principle for a Christian of any century to read an atheist statement in an ancient book, and even to believe it. This possibility was broached by Febvre himself when he claimed that Des Periers had become an atheist by reading Origen's *Contra Celsum*. If it could be proven from unambiguous documents that this had actually happened, Febvre's whole teaching about the mentality of sixteenth-century France would have had no relevance whatsoever to Des Periers, or to any other literate atheist. Such a person would have been no speculating buffoon, but a well-informed initiate to ancient unbelief.

Even positing, however, that some sixteenth-century Christian discovered unbelief by collating certain ancient writings; nor in the tavern but in his study, I think it is still not to be taken for granted that this event would have been of any historical moment. Our own age is the heir to a scientific outlook which as a precondition to its investigation of natural and human history set value judgements and religious teachings aside. And there is no denying that this outlook had its roots in certain intellectual techniques that had been developed in the

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[16] *Le problème de l'incroyance*, pp. 380–383.

[17] See Lucien Lévy-Bruhl, *La mentalité primitive*, Travaux de l'Année Sociologique (Paris: Librairie Félix Alcan, 1922). Lévy-Bruhl put special emphasis (pp. 424–433) on the total illiteracy—or anti-literacy—of primitive peoples, who in his telling wondered at Europeans' books, which they took for magical instruments for divination. The learned clerks of pre-modern France were obviously in a totally different position, with opportunities to learn from intellectual systems that had been developed in remote countries and thousands of years into the past.

Renaissance, especially in the domain of classical philology. But no one in the early sixteenth century could have foreseen, let alone hoped, that sacred lore would eventually be converted from the basis and criterion of human knowledge into an object to be studied by empirical investigation alongside all the others. Only in connection with *that* process, which began in earnest around the beginning of the eighteenth century, can a denial of revealed religion be said to have had real historical importance.[18]

Furthermore, it is only modern prejudice that assumes that atheism would have been an especially noble, interesting, or cogent position for a pre-modern scholar to adopt. There were, after all, all kinds of beliefs into which an apostate could have crashed after falling off from Christianity. The most plausible of these was perhaps Islam, which actually did attract some uncoerced intellectual converts in the sixteenth century.[19] Why should we consider conversion to Islam a less impressive feat of the intellect than conversion to atheism? From a certain point of view, Sunni Islam is 'purer' than Christianity: it is not burdened by any embarrassment of saints and miracles, or any oversubtle speculation on the persons of God.[20] It also gives answers to many of the problems which pre-industrial atheism could never have

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[18] I do not intend to suggest that the history of scripture and religion was not studied before modernity (quite the contrary: it excited intense interest and debate from the beginnings of the Renaissance), only that its study was marked by an increasingly self-conscious value-neutrality from around the end of the seventeenth century. Long before the emergence of nineteenth-century *Orientalwissenschaft*, Richard Simon caused a scandal by denying the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, and did so according to historicizing and non-confessional criteria that were at once descended from earlier scholarship and fundamentally different to anything that had appeared before. The vehemence of his disagreement with Spinoza's rival attempt at Old-Testament criticism may disguise the fact that both men were applying arguments that could not have been put with the same clarity even a few decades before (notwithstanding various medieval and post-medieval antecedents). See Richard Simon, *Histoire critique du Vieux Testament* (Paris: Billaine, 1678); Guy Stroumsa, 'Jewish Myth and Ritual and the Beginnings of Comparative Religion: The Case of Richard Simon', *The Journal of Jewish Thought and Philosophy* 6, no. 1 (1997): pp. 19–35; id., *A New Science: The Discovery of Religion in the Age of Reason* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2010); Anthony Grafton, 'Baruch Spinoza Reads the Bible', in *Inky Fingers: The Making of Books in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press, 2020), pp. 232–253.

[19] See e.g. Martin Mulsow, 'Fluchträume und Konversionsräume zwischen Heidelberg und Istanbul. Der Fall Adam Neuser', in *Kriminelle - Freidenker - Alchemisten: Räume des Untergrunds in der Frühen Neuzeit*, ed. Martin Mulsow and Michael Multhammer (Tagung. Forschungszentrum Gotha, Köln: Böhlau, 2014), pp. 33–59. For the Ottoman renegades (though, for various reasons explored in the secondary literature, they were far from ideal types of the intellectual convert), see Bartolomé and Lucile Bennassar, *Les chrétiens d'Allah : l'histoire extraordinaire des renégats, XVIe et XVIIe siècles* (Paris: Perrin, 1989); Eric Dursteler, *Venetians in Constantinople: Nation, Identity, and Coexistence in the Early Modern Mediterranean* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006), pp. 112–129; id., *Renegade Women: Gender, Identity, and Boundaries in the Early Modern Mediterranean* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011); Tobias P. Graf, *The Sultan's Renegades: Christian-European Converts to Islam and the Making of the Ottoman Elite, 1575–1610* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).

[20] This fact was not lost on those sixteenth-century authors who tried to show that Calvinist theology, if taken to its logical conclusion, was so aseptic and inane in its teachings as to be indistinguishable from Islam. See Guillaume Postel, *Alcorani, seu Legis Mahometi et evangelistarum concordiæ liber, in quo de calamitatibus orbi Christiano imminentibus tractatur* (Paris: Petrus Gromorsus, 1543); Philippus Nicolaus, *Fundamentorum Calvinianæ sectæ cum veteribus Arianis & Nestorianis communium detectio […] Ad hæc, quemadmodum ab Arianis & Nestorianis, procreatus est Mahumetismus: ita eundem à Sacramentariis hodie, oculta hæresewn cognatione foveri, & sensim in montes Israëlitarum attrahi* (Tübingen: Georg Gruppenbach, 1586), sig. A_2v.–A_3r., pp. 31–46.

addressed satisfactorily: the authority of the Bible, for instance, or the origin of species. Moreover, there was a powerful Muslim empire on the doorstep of Europe, and no shortage of editions of the Qur'an in Latin and eventually vernacular translation. Yet no one has ever written a book called *The Problem of Islam in the Sixteenth Century*. It is not seen as problematic or scandalous that there were not more people within the boundaries of Christendom who were impressed by the intellectual superiority of Islam. Rather it is taken for granted—and that rightfully!—that a sixteenth-century Christian who converted to Islam would have been rather a curiosity than a giant of intellectual history. Now I submit that a Christian or Jew who lapsed into atheism, however learned his reasons for doing so, would have been even less remarkable than a convert to Islam. Any cosmological system which he could have devised would necessarily have been very eccentric, not to mention useless to his fellow men. Yet since the nineteenth century, many scholars have hoped very badly for such a person to have existed, and posthumously congratulated anyone they could identify as an early unbeliever on his brilliance and heroism. This is only partisanship on behalf of our own industrial civilization's egalitarianism and anti-clericalism.

Add to this that the *Cymbalum mundi* was never a productive source of atheist ideas in any century. However many times it was described as a denial of Christianity, it was never cited by any actually atheist author before the nineteenth century, and then only by men who had acquired their convictions elsewhere before discovering them in Des Periers' dialogues. This consideration alone should be enough to deprive an atheist *Cymbalum mundi* of intrinsic historical interest. Even if it really were what it was claimed to be, it would have been only a passive index of contemporary intellectual trends, or at most a harbinger of things to come. This was so of the *Theophrastus redivivus* of 1659, which really did present atheist arguments, but was never mentioned, except as a curiosity, in a single sympathetic source before the twentieth century.[21] Just like the *Theophrastus*, an atheist *Cymbalum mundi* would only deserve a

[21] In fact, it was barely mentioned at all. Wounded by Alan Kors's judgement that the *Theophrastus redivivus* had a vanishingly small readership,[*] Gianni Paganini has recently protested that it was indeed noticed by one Nicholas Ferrand in a book called *De la connoissance de Dieu*, published in 1706.[**] But he did not observe that Ferrand himself had made no mention at all of the *Theophrastus*, and that only the anonymous and posthumous editor of his book had referred to the manuscript.[†]

[*] Alan Charles Kors, *Atheism in France, 1650–1729: Volume I: The Orthodox Sources of Disbelief* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1990), pp. 222–224.

[**] Gianni Paganini, 'The First Philosophical Atheistic Treatise: *Theophrastus Redivivus* (1659)', in *Clandestine Philosophy: New Studies on Subversive Manuscripts in Early Modern Europe, 1620–1823*, ed. Gianni Paganini, Margaret C. Jacob, and John Christian Laursen, The UCLA Clark Memorial Library Series 27 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2020), pp. 37–83 [54].

[†] It is a double shame that Paganini did not read the book carefully, because it in fact contains intriguing clues to the authorship of the *Theophrastus redivivus*. The anonymous editor, referred to in an approbation as 'M. F. T. E. P.', claimed in his preface to know who had written the book; a man who had apparently died only recently. 'Il y en a [des Athées]', he wrote, 'qui foüillent dans l'antiquité; qui recueillent les vielles objections; qui prétendent appuïr leurs difficultez sur l'autorité des plus celebres Philosophes…Tel étoit l'Auteur du *Theophrastus Redivivus*, livre écrit à la main, duquel j'ai déjà fait mention, & dont la grosseur & la méchanceté nous découvrent que celui qui l'a composé, & qui est

footnote in a history of Western unbelief, as a document that never changed anybody's mind or influenced anybody's behaviour.

For these reasons, I am only indirectly concerned with the question of whether Bonaventure Des Periers was an atheist. Whether he was or he wasn't, the publication of the *Cymbalum mundi* would not have been an epoch-marking event. Much more significant is the very fact that it was called atheist in the first place. Subjected to continual accusations of secret unbelief, the *Cymbalum mundi*'s whole reception history is revealing of a certain fascination with clandestinity that has characterized the study of atheism for the last five hundred years.[22]

In fact, the *Cymbalum mundi* presents a unique opportunity to understand the development of the myth of clandestine atheism. This is so in the first place because it is unambiguously *not* atheist itself. And unlike other non-atheist-but-dubious books, such as the *Colloquium heptaplomeres* of Jean Bodin or the novels of Rabelais, it does not even touch on religious themes at all, except in an indirect and unremarkably pious way. Just as importantly, no one has ever been able to show that a single person was inspired by the *Cymbalum mundi* to become an atheist. Thus it played no active role in the historical challenge to Christian belief. By studying its reception, we can observe the myth of early atheism without being distracted by early atheism itself.

Furthermore, historical commentary on the *Cymbalum mundi* has been almost exclusively devoted to its supposed atheism. Even scholars who believed that Bodin and Rabelais were secret unbelievers nevertheless found plenty of unrelated things to say about their works. But inasmuch as it was held to be an allegory, the *Cymbalum mundi* was rarely treated as a source of anything but atheist secrets. If there were non-atheist elements in it, they were only there to distract the reader from its true message. The *Cymbalum mundi* was the secret atheist allegory *par excellence*: no book has ever attracted such concentrated suspicion of atheism, or for so many centuries, as this one. There are no other major issues to confound our observations.

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mort depuis peu d'années, étoit du moins aussi laborieux qu'il étoit impie. *De la Connoissance de Dieu. Par feu Monsieur Ferrand. Avec des Remarques de M **** (Paris: Christophe David, 1706).

[22] Here I have been influenced by a methodological comment made by an author writing on a different (but not altogether unrelated) subject: 'For the most part […] the books written about secret societies have been unscientific, sensational, frivolous, infatuated publications. The professional historian has been unperturbed and since he has been so little interested in the positive history of secret societies, it is hardly surprising that their mythical dimension, which is of importance, has been completely ignored. Yet it may be that it was just here, in the illusions and fears they created, and in the dreams cherished about them, that the secret societies exercised their greatest power. The widespread belief in the rubbish talked about them is their most important as well as most interesting feature and it is this belief, and not the societies themselves, which is the subject of this essay.' John M. Roberts, *The Mythology of the Secret Societies* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1972), p. 9.

Our story goes like this. In early 1538, a short time after the *Cymbalum mundi* was first published, its publisher Jehan Morin was arrested by agents of the Parlement of Paris, who were conducting a raid against booksellers to combat an infestation of Lutheran writings in the city. A copy of the *Cymbalum mundi* was sent to the Faculty of Theology for review, who deemed it scurrilous, but not heretical. (Morin's ultimate fate is unknown, but two other booksellers swept up in the raid were strangled and then burnt for fomenting the Lutheran heresy.) I have described these events in chapter II.

Then, over the next two centuries, the rumour spread that the *Cymbalum mundi* had been written by an atheist. This accusation was repeated dozens of times, mostly by men who had never seen the book, and who relied on the testimony of other denunciations which they had seen. The growth of this rumour is the subject of chapter III.

In 1711, the *Cymbalum mundi* was printed for the first time since 1538. Prosper Marchand published an edition of it, together with a long investigation of the rumours about it. In his opinion, these rumours were completely baseless, because anybody who had read the book could see that it did not contain anything that could fairly be construed as harmful to religion. Within months of its publication, however, Marchand's edition was the occasion for a considerably less careful man, Jean Fréderic Bernard, to publish a commentary that explained the *Cymbalum mundi*'s anti-Christian allegory. This was the first attempt to show that the book was atheist with close reference to its actual text. Twenty years later, this commentary—which I have called the 'paragraph-series' after the marks used for its lemmas—was reprinted, together with a revised text of the *Cymbalum mundi*. From then on, the *Cymbalum mundi* was available to the whole learned world, and presented in its most popular edition as a book which had denied all revealed religion. Chapter IV explains these bibliographical events, and also includes a general discussion of what secret atheism meant to collectors and scholars in the early eighteenth century.

Though some readers and scholars had been pruriently excited by its apparent subversion, so far no one had explicitly endorsed the atheist message of the *Cymbalum mundi*. This changed in the nineteenth century. Éloi Johanneau, an eccentric antiquarian, set things off by writing an elaborate exposé of the *Cymbalum mundi*'s blasphemous messages. He was followed by several literary historians who each pronounced Des Periers to have been an heroic forerunner of modern freedom from religion, and his four dialogues to have been as many new Gospels of free-thought. Chapter V tells how the *Cymbalum mundi* was thus turned into a Scripture of modern unbelief.

Finally, the myth of the atheist *Cymbalum mundi* was insisted on with unremitting vigour in the early twentieth century, by French as well as German, Spanish, Russian, and English scholars. In 1937, Lucien Febvre declared it to be the single earliest example of Western atheism. Chapter VI discusses the paradoxical nature of this pronouncement, which stood in direct contradiction as well to the *Cymbalum mundi*'s real contents as to the sound scholarly convictions of Lucien Febvre himself. Though he would probably have denied it, only the cumulative interpretations of earlier centuries can account for Febvre's judgement on the book.

In summary, the legend of the *Cymbalum mundi* took shape in three phases. First there was a rumour, spread among pious men, that the book was a nefarious atheist tract. Then in the early Enlightenment, this same rumour was taken up by impious or at least very daring men, who were excited rather than horrified at the possibility of secret atheism. Finally, there was a generation of radicals who were devoted to the destruction of Christianity. These men elaborated on the rumours of previous centuries, this time stating their approval of Des Periers' anti-religious ideals in the clearest terms. Modern scholarship, despite all its claims to originality, is the direct heir to their enthusiasm.

Of course, interest in the *Cymbalum mundi* did not remain frozen in one form across the centuries: there is little in common among the denunciations of Henri Estienne, the giddy elucidations of Éloi Johanneau, and the revelations of Abel Lefranc and Lucien Febvre. Still, these men's interpretations of the book form a connected story, no part of which can be understood apart from the whole. Lucien Febvre in the twentieth century fell victim to an optical illusion that had its origins in the sixteenth. Just as with clandestine atheism in general, the myth of the atheist *Cymbalum mundi* was the result of a process that began in the Renaissance.

LITERATURE

The structure of this thesis has not allowed for a clean division between primary and secondary sources. I have examined the reception of the *Cymbalum mundi* as an historical phenomenon in itself, and therefore dealt with most of the important literature on it in the course of my story. Nevertheless, there remains something to say about scholarship on the book after 1937, when the tradition of the atheist *Cymbalum mundi* reached its culmination in Lucien Febvre's lectures at the Collège de France.[23]

[23] For the best existing review of the important literature, see Dorothea Neidhart, *Das 'Cymbalum Mundi' des Bonaventure Des Périers: Forschungslage und Deutung* (Geneva / Paris: Droz / Minard, 1959), pp. 53–165. More up-to-

After Febvre gave his interpretation of the dialogues, he attracted several imitators of his cryptographic methods. They did not necessarily agree with his specific conclusions, but were each inspired to find their own allegories in the text.

The first of these imitations was the most outlandish by far: an essay published in Casablanca by one Henri Just, entitled 'The Secret Thought of Bonaventure des Périers and the Meaning of *the Cymbalum mundi*'.[24] Just believed that Des Periers (*alias* פרץ) was descended from Jews, and that he had encoded all kinds of secrets in the *Cymbalum mundi*, which was a defence of Jewish mysticism against Christianity and Platonism. Just's reasoning is extremely difficult to follow, and his conclusions so bizarre that it is hard to imagine that he actually believed them.[25] For example, he proposed that the *Cymbalum mundi* was built on the motif of the *twin*. The book was apparently filled with twins: the frame-character Thomas (*Δίδυμος*), Byrphanes and Curtalius (whose names each had nine letters), Hylactor and Pamphagus (each eight letters), and Statius (whose name was related to *Eustachius*, who had two names in the Golden Legend, and thus represented twins).[26] The motif of the twin was the universal sign of secret societies and secret doctrines, in ancient Israel as well as medieval Europe.

This was only one of Just's bizarre reflections.[27] His book was a crazed fantasy, but strangely this fact has not impressed itself on most of its readers. Even when it has been criticized, it has been treated all the same as a reasonable attempt to describe the meaning of the *Cymbalum mundi*, and not as something more akin to Socrates' derivation of the nuptial

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date is Richard Cooper, '*Cymbalum Mundi*: état de la question', in Franco Giacone, ed., *Le* Cymbalum Mundi*: Actes du Colloque de Rome (3–6 novembre 2000)*, THR, CCCLXXXIII (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 2003) [henceforth *ACR2000*], pp. 3–22 [17–21]. It is, however, too filled with imprecisions in spelling and dates to be counted on.

[24] Henri Just, *La pensée secrète de Bonaventure des Périers et le sens du* Cymbalum mundi*: essai* (Casablanca: Imprimerie Fontana, 1948).

[25] This is also so of the other work of Just's which I have seen (and which I know to have survived): an eight-page pamphlet called *Arles et Rabelais* (Arles: La Liberté, 1954).

[26] *La pensée secrète*, p. 20.

[27] Here is another:

> As for the meaning of Mercury's theft of the virgin [B_{iii} r., 12–15], it becomes clear if one remembers that silver is the colour of the moon of Isis, of Diana. Thus it is indeed Virgo which Mercury gives to his cousin Ganymede, the Aquarius, who gives him the wine left over from Jupiter's feasts. For the sun is ready to leave the sign of Pisces to enter the sign of Aquarius. The Christians (fish) will pass away, for Christianity is a religion of passage (פסח). This is the meaning of the secret thought of Bonaventure. Isis is changed for the Virgin, and the Bible for a mythology!

| 'Quant au sense du vol de la vierge par Mercure, il est clair si l'on se souvient que l'argent est la couleur de la lune d'Isis, de Diane. C'est donc bien la vierge que Mercure va donner à son cousin Ganymède, le Verseau, qui lui donne le vin qui reste des banquets de Jupiter. Car le soleil va quitter le signe des poissons pour entrer dans celui du verseau. Les chrétiens (poissons) passeront, car le christianisme est une religion de passage (pâques). Tel est le sens de la pensée secrète de Bonaventure. Enchange d'Isis contre la vierge et de la bible contre une mythologie!' Ibid., p. 21.

number.[28] That this book was not only written in the first place, but even received tolerantly, shows us the degree to which modern students of the *Cymbalum mundi* have been guided by documents and logical consistency.

One year after Just's book, Léon Wencelius agreed with Febvre that the *Cymbalum mundi* had a mysterious philosophical message, with the reservation that Des Periers was a Pyrrhonian sceptic and a libertine, not a convinced atheist.[29]

Something similar was advanced by Verdun-Louis Saulnier, who had summarized and endorsed Febvre's theory as early as October 1942, but soon after developed an interpretation of his own.[30] He explained this new interpretation in an article of 1951,[31] expanding on it in several other publications over a period of a few decades.[32] According to Saulnier, the *Cymbalum mundi* was indeed to be read allegorically, and Des Periers had undoubtably expounded a coherent philosophical message through the mouths of his characters. Only the message was not atheism, but a kind of silence concerning the religious truths: *hésuchisme*, to use the term Saulnier invented.[33] His investigation of the dialogues was

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[28] Take, for instance, V.-L. Saulnier's summary of Just's article ('Le sens du *Cymbalum Mundi* de Bonaventure Des Périers', infra cit., pp. 63–65). Saulnier neglected to tell his readers that Just was a madman, and in fact praised him for raising several important historical points. He was apparently in correspondence with Just himself, and reported receiving a manuscript from him called *Bonaventure des Périers ou l'humanisme démoniaque*, which apparently dealt with the *Nouvelles recreations*. *La pensée secrète* was also treated sympathetically or at least tolerantly by Hans Sckommodau, 'Vortridentinisches Klima in der französischen Renaissance-Literatur', *Romanische Forschungen* LXV, no. 1/2 (1953): pp. 69–93 [87–88]; Wolfgang Boerner, *Das "Cymbalum mundi" des Bonaventure Des Périers: Eine Satire auf die Redepraxis im Zeitalter der Glaubensspaltung*, Humanistische Bibliothek, Reihe I: Abhandlungen, Band 32 (Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1980), pp. 104–105; and François Berriot, 'Athéismes et athéistes au XVIe siècle en France' (Cerf, Atelier national de reproduction des thèses, Doctoral dissertation, Lille III, 1984), pp. 648ff. All three of these authors criticized Just for inexactness, but believed that he had opened up provocative new lines of research. Richard Cooper is the only scholar who laughed at him: 'État de la question', p. 17.

[29] Léon Wencelius, 'Bonaventure Des Perriers, Moraliste ou Libertin ? (Une nouvelle interprétation du *Cymbalum Mundi*)', *Bulletin de l'Association Guillaume Budé* Nouvelle Série, Numéro 8 (December 1949): pp. 41–53.

[30] See Verdun-Louis Saulnier, *La littérature française de la Renaissance (1500–1610)*, Que sais-je ? 85 (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1942), pp. 65–69; id., *Théâtre profane de Marguerite de Navarre*, Textes littéraires français (Paris: Droz, 1946), pp. 127–149. For the development of Saulnier's views on the *Cymbalum mundi*, see Alain Mothu, '"*Que sais-je ?*" du *Cymbalum mundi*. V.-L. Saulnier et sa *Littérature française de la Renaissance* (1942–1973)' (2020), preprint: hal-02483048.

[31] Verdun-Louis Saulnier, 'Le sens du *Cymbalum Mundi* de Bonaventure Des Périers', *BHR* XIII (1951): pp. 43–69, 137–171.

[32] See 'Rabelais et le Populaire. Essai d'une présentation synthétique de *Pantagruel*', *Lettes d'Humanité* VIII (1949): pp. 149–179 [158–159]; 'Saint Paul et Bonaventure des Périers', *BHR* XV, no. 2 (1953): pp. 209–212; and the puzzling article 'Le motif évangélique *tanquam fur* et le *Cymbalum mundi*', in *Hommages à Marie Delcourt*, ed. Roland Crahy, Marcelle Derwa, and Robert Joly, Collection Latomus 114 (Brussels: Latomus, 1970), pp. 368–373.

[33] Here is the basic statement of his thesis (p. 143): 'A ce peuple en délire, aux oreilles du moins qui sauront l'entendre, Des Périers donne une leçon. La thèse générale nous paraît la suivante. Qui recherche la vérité trouve le monde partagé entre deux partis: celui de la vérité traditionnelle, qui n'est fait que de conservateurs égoïstes, et celui des novateurs, qui ne sont que des agitateurs dangereux ou inutiles. Dans ces conditions, le seul dessein raisonnable et loyal consiste à ne pas intervenir. Se mêler au débat, se mêler des affaires de conscience des autres, se prononcer publiquement, c'est déranger l'opinion, et sans le moindre bon résultat. Contre tous les apostolats, toutes les formes de la propagande, la cause que défend le *Cymbalum* est, comme on dirait de nos jours, le non-interventionnisme. Ce livre est, pour nous, une véritable apologie du silence.'

dependent in many details on the interpretations of his predecessors: for instance, he adopted (uncited) Johanneau's identification of the groom Statius with the *status quo*,[34] and Jean-Bernard Michault's identification of *Girard* as Erasmus.[35] But Saulnier owed even more than this to earlier scholars; most essentially, he followed their general method of seeing the characters and events of the dialogues as ciphers for abstract philosophical teachings. In the first dialogue, he wrote, Mercury represents God's attempt to bring Christian Truth (the Book of Fate) down to earth. In stealing the hostess's statue, he destroys the false idols of mortal men. But these men deride him and refuse to believe in his Truth.[36] The second dialogue represents God's second attempt to bring the Truth to men, who prefer to occupy themselves with theological squabbles.[37] And in the third dialogue, God (again in the person of Mercury) works amazing miracles on earth, but men are too occupied with the novelty of these wonders to recognize them as divine.[38] In these first three dialogues, Saulnier concluded, Des Periers meant to convey that it is useless to announce the Truth—that is, the Gospel—in the open. The attempts of God himself to do this were met with ridicule; so how could it be expected that Christians could receive a sympathetic audience? Therefore the best policy was silence on all sacred matters. In the climactic fourth dialogue, Des Periers gave a full exposition of this 'apology of silence' at which he had only hinted darkly in the first three. Pamphagus represented Des Periers himself, who had been convinced of the importance of silence; and Hylactor was Estienne Dolet, who still insisted on proclaiming the Gospel in the open.[39]

Whereas Saulnier was right to dismiss the atheist interpretations of the *Cymbalum mundi*, his own interpretation was just as mystical and unsupported as the ones that had preceded him. Nor could he have ever devised his complicated reading of the dialogues if it had not already been suggested to him in advance that they should be treated as a philosophical allegory. The same goes for the interpretation of Vittorio De Caprariis, who held that Des Periers had not expressed his views in the mouth of any one character, but rather let his profound religious and philosophical doubts be played out in the polyphonic drama of the dialogues.[40] Even more dependent on her predecessors was Heather Ingman,

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[34] CM 1841, p. 117; 'Le sens du *Cymbalum Mundi*', p. 154.
[35] Jean-Bernard Michault, 'Notes critiques sur le Livre intitulé: *Cymbalum mundi*', in *Mêlanges historiques et philologiques*, N. Tilliard, vol. I (Paris, 1754), pp. 145–149; 'Le sens du *Cymbalum Mundi*', p. 148.
[36] 'Le sens du *Cymbalum Mundi*', pp. 145–148.
[37] Ibid., pp. 148–152.
[38] Ibid., pp. 152–154.
[39] Ibid., pp. 155–162. Saulnier presented a similar psychological-literary theory about Rabelais in 'Le festin devant Chaneph, ou la confiance dernière de Rabelais', *Mercure de France* CCCXX, no. 1087 (1 April 1954): pp. 649–666.
[40] 'Sul "Cymbalum Mundi" di Bonaventura des Périers', *Il Mulino* III, no. 11/12 (December 1953): pp. 663–680. There is an interesting discussion of De Caprariis' attitude to Febvre's works in Sylvio De Franceschi, 'La reception de l'École des Annales en Italie entre marxisme et historicisme. Les historiens italiens et l'œuvre de

who gave essentially the same interpretation as Saulnier. (Bizarrely she did not cite him, even though her views of the dialogue were clearly parasitic on his.) She found all kinds of references to *silentium* in the dialogues which she put together for her article on them.[41]

The most insightful modern investigators of the *Cymbalum mundi* have concentrated on its Lucianic aspects. The first of these was C. A. Mayer, who first proposed a few points of comparison between the *Cymbalum mundi* and the dialogues of Lucian.[42] The same topic was explored by Christopher Robinson, who nevertheless succumbed to the pressure of consensus and stated that the first three dialogues constituted 'attacks on revealed religion'.[43] Few subsequent scholars have explored the dialogues' Lucianic sources in fine detail, which is unfortunate, because their investigation is a productive and promising line of inquiry.[44]

Meanwhile, the traditional atheist reading has also been carried on. David Wootton, Malcolm Smith, and Max Gauna have continued to insist that the *Cymbalum mundi* was an atheist book, or at least that some of the characters defended subversive anti-Christian views.[45] Alain Mothu has published over a dozen articles in the last decade on the book, each of which has attempted to reveal some aspect of the anti-Christian allegory in the dialogues.[46]

Lucien Febvre du second après-guerre à la fin des années 1960', in *Lucien Febvre face à l'Histoire*, ed. Marie Barral-Baron and Philippe Joutard (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2019), 171–204 [178–187].

[41] Silence, Harpocrates, and the «Cymbalum Mundi»', *BHR* LI, no. 3 (1989): pp. 569–577.

[42] Claude Albert Mayer, 'The Lucianism of Des Périers', *BHR* XII (1950): pp. 190–207.

[43] Christopher Robinson, *Lucian and His Influence in Europe*, Classical Life and Letters (London: Duckworth, 1979), pp. 116–120 [119].

[44] See for instance the rather diffuse treatments of Christiane Lauvergnat-Gagnière, *Lucien de Samosate et le lucianisme en France au XVIe siècle: athéisme et polémique*, THR, CCXXVII (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1988), pp. 262–274; Carleen Ann LePage, 'Le "Lucianisme" et le *Cymbalum Mundi*: une nouvelle interprétation', Doctoral dissertation (University of Michigan, 1989); Nicol C. W. Spence, 'Sidelights on the *Cymbalum Mundi*', *Romantisches Jahrbuch* XII (1961): pp. 94–104; and Olivier Millet, 'Le *Cymbalum mundi* et la tradition lucianique', in *ACR2000*, pp. 317–332. The doctoral dissertation of Mike Ellis Monsour, 'An Interpretation of the *Cymbalum Mundi*: Four Lucianic Dialogues' (University of Georgia, 1976) is an uncritical restatement of previous speculations. Its investigation of Lucianic sources (pp. 109–130) is superficial.

[45] David Wootton, 'Unbelief in Early Modern Europe', *History Workshop: A Journal of Socialist and Feminist Historians* 20 (Autumn 1985): pp. 82–100; id., 'Febvre and the Problem of Unbelief in the Early Modern Period', *The Journal of Modern History* LX, no. 4 (December 1988): pp. 695–730 [702–703]; Malcolm Smith, 'A Sixteenth-Century Anti-Theist (on the *Cymbalum Mundi*)', *BHR* LIII (1991): pp. 593–618; Max Gauna, *Upwellings: First Expressions of Unbelief in the Printed Literature of the French Renaissance* (London and Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1992); id., 'Pour une nouvelle interprétation du *Cymbalum mundi*', *La Lettre clandestine* 6 (1997): pp. 157–172.

[46] Mothu himself has kindly helped me ensure that the following list is exhaustive: 'Les fables canines du *Cymbalum mundi*', *BHR* LXXIV, no. 2 (2012): pp. 297–310; 'Les visages du Christ dans le *Cymbalum mundi*', *BHR* LXXV, no. 3 (2013): pp. 429–462; 'Les antipodes du *Cymbalum Mundi*', *BHR* LXXVI, no. 3 (2014): pp. 543–570; 'L'attribution du *Cymbalum Mundi* et le « mystère » Des Periers', *La Lettre clandestine* 23: La littérature philosophique clandestine dans les correspondances (2015): pp. 227–247; 'Sur le chemin de Dabas: trois notes sur le *Cymbalum mundi*', *BHR* LXXVII, no. 2 (2015): pp. 399–409; id. and Max Engammare, 'Une prophétie de Des Périers touchant le calvinisme', *BHR* LXXVII, no. 3 (2015): pp. 605–618; 'Le *Cymbalum Mundi* et les Trois imposteurs', *La Lettre clandestine* 24: Le *Traité des trois imposteurs* (2016): pp. 79–102; 'Le livre de Jupiter: L'athéologie du *Cymbalum mundi*', *BHR* LXXVIII, no. 2 (2016): pp. 333–361; 'La satire de la Révélation dans le *Cymbalum mundi*', *Revue de l'histoire des religions* 234, no. 3 (2017): pp. 457–483; 'Mercure magicien: une formule pour faire parler les bêtes', *Réforme, Humanisme, Renaissane* 85, no. 2 (2017): pp. 137–154; 'Mercure, son père et ses dames (deux notes sur le *Cymbalum mundi*)', *BHR* LXXIX, no. 1 (2017): pp. 123–131; 'L'érotique épicurienne du *Cymbalum mundi*', *BHR*

Alongside these interpretations, there has also been a much larger body of scholarship that has concerned itself not with the *Cymbalum mundi*'s historical nature, but rather with its literary qualities. The first to do so was Wolfgang Spitzer, who in 1951 asserted that the *Cymbalum mundi* was not necessarily a polemic for or against silence, but an extended conceptual meditation on *words* as such. Bonaventure Des Periers had apparently been obsessed with nothing so ardently as with the supposed concept of '*parole*', and any given motif in the *Cymbalum mundi* was only present in the text because of its contribution to the elaboration of that concept.[47] Indeed, the literary theme of *parole* had been developed so masterfully by Des Periers that even the slightest change to the dialogues would have spoilt the artistic effect. The episode of Celia in the third dialogue was the only one that was not about *parole*—but it was thus all the more crucial as a counterbalancing motif, and thus responsible for the *Cymbalum mundi*'s status as a masterpiece.

Beginning in the 1970s, Spitzer's theoretical overture was answered by a flood of books and articles about the literary themes in the *Cymbalum mundi*. Many of these had Mad-Libs titles built on the familiar template '<ABSTRACT CONCEPT> in the <LITERARY WORK> of <AUTHOR>'.[48] Unlike historical speculations, which could at least in principle be refuted,

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LXXIX, no. 3 (2017): pp. 529–549; 'La farce divine. Lucien, Des Périers et les dieux d'Épicure', in *Liberté de conscience et arts de penser (XVIe–XVIIIe siècle). Mélanges en l'honneur d'Antony McKenna*, ed. Christelle Bahier-Porte, Pierre-François Moreau, and Delphine Reugig, Les dix-huitièmes siècles 197 (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2017), pp. 124–144; 'L'athéisme masqué : Bonaventure Des Périers, *Cymbalum mundi*', *Le Point* Hors-série: *Vivre sans Dieu* (December 2017): pp. 38–39; 'Jésus et le bon vin et autres notes sur le *Cymbalum Mundi*', *La Lettre clandestine* 26: Spinoza et la littérature philosophique clandestine (2018): pp. 157–183; 'Athéisme et politique à la Renaissance : le cas du *Cymbalum mundi* (1537)', *Etica & Politica* XX, no. 3 (2018): pp. 95–119; 'Traduction et *alter sensus* dans le *Cymbalum mundi*', *La Lettre clandestine* 27: La littérature philosophique clandestine et la traduction (2019): pp. 41–60; 'Délices de l'équivoque. Le titre du *Cymbalum mundi*', *BHR* LXXXII, no. 1 (2020): pp. 65–81; 'Le vol de l'image d'argent. Enquête sur un délit commis dans le *Cymbalum mundi*', *BHR* LXXXII, no. 3 (2020): pp. 535–540; 'Lucien ou Jésus ? L'Actéon du *Cymbalum Mundi*', *La Lettre clandestine* 28: Pensées secrètes des académiciens. Fontenelle et ses confrères (2020): pp. 371–382.

[47] Wolfgang Spitzer, 'The Meaning of Bonaventure Des Périers' *Cymbalum Mundi*', *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America* LXVI, no. 5 (September 1951): pp. 795–819.

[48] For example: Paula Sommers, 'Metamorphosis in Des Périers' *Cymbalum Mundi*', *University of South Florida Language Quarterly* XIX, no. 1–2 (Fall-Winter 1980): pp. 25–27, 30; id., 'Pamphagus Revisited: Wisdom in the *Cymbalum Mundi*', *Romance Notes* XX, no. 3 (1982): pp. 318–323; Eva Kushner, 'Structure et dialogue dans le *Cymbalum Mundi* de Bonaventure Des Periers', in *Crossroads and Perspectives: French Literature of the Renaissance. Studies in honour of Victor E. Graham*, ed. Catherine Margaret Grisé, THR (Geneva: Droz, 1986), pp. 181–189; María Pilar Suárez Pascual, 'La degradación del objeto maravilloso en el *Cymbalum mundi* de Bonaventure des Périers', in *Semiótica(s). Homenaje a Greimas: actas del III Seminario Internacional del Instituto de Semiótica Literaria y Teatral, UNED, 26–28 de abril, 1993* (Madrid: Visor Libros, 1994), pp. 305–310; Rogelio Claudio Paredes, 'Mitología e impiedad: Dioses, hombres y bestias en el *Cymbalum Mundi* de Bonaventure Des Périers', in *Corderos y elefantes. La sacralidad y la risa en la modernidad clásica, siglos XV a XVII*, ed. José Emilio Burucúa (Buenos Aires: Miño y Dávila, 2001), pp. 581–621; Rosanna Gorris Camos, '*Le bain de Diane*: mythe et transmutation dans le *Cymbalum Mundi*:', in *ACR2000*, pp. 163–186; Christiane Lauvergnat-Gagnière, 'Le déguisement dans le *Cymbalum mundi*', in *ACR2000*, pp. 333–338; Bruno Petey-Girard, 'De l'usage du dialogue dans le *Cymbalum Mundi*: théâtralité, enseignement, réflexion', in *ACR2000*, pp. 339–351; Daniel Ménager, 'L'ironie et l'humour [*sic*] dans le dialogue des chiens (*Cymbalum mundi*, IV)', in *ACR2000*, pp. 353–362; Véronique Zaercher, 'Voix et énonciation dans le *Cymbalum Mundi*', in *ACR2000*, pp. 385–396; Trevor Peach, 'Curiosité et conquête du vide dans le *Cymbalum mundi*', in *ACR2000*, pp.

there was never anything to check the proliferation of these literary-theoretical musings, which rarely contradicted their supposed rivals, but only contributed more colour to the kaleidoscope of opinion on the *Cymbalum mundi*. Des Periers was made to have explored the 'self-destructive logic of expression',[49] the 'problems involved in expressing truth through language'[50], the 'dialogocentric conception of Man as *vinculum mundi*',[51] and the 'obscurity of [his] chosen signifieds which served as a protective model in the face of an absolute linguistic clarity'.[52] We are told that 'the thematic volume of *Cymbalum* [*sic*] expands, multiplying layers of reference (allegorical, mythological, hermetic), extending planes and surfaces, and gradually breaking out of enclosed spaces'.[53]

The last critical editor but one of the *Cymbalum mundi*, Yves Delègue, wrote his introduction in the same mandarin-tongue. In a moment of lucidity, however, he explained the political importance of '*parole*' in the dialogues. By satirizing speech-as-such, Bonaventure Des Periers had apparently satirized all those abused it as a tool of oppression against the powerless.[54]

In November 2000, over three dozen scholars gathered in Rome to present their research on the *Cymbalum mundi* at a four-day conference.[55] In his concluding remarks, Richard Cooper praised the diversity of approaches to the 'rich and enigmatic dialogues' which he had just heard.[56] I confess that my own attitude is different. Looking at this six-hundred page conference volume, and at the whole bibliography of post-war writing on the *Cymbalum mundi*, I am only bewildered at the huge variety of interpretations. So many people have written about this book, so garrulously, and to so many different purposes, that it is easy to despair of scientific progress on it, or on any other book that like Phlegon the horse has

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421–433; Pierre Tordjman, 'Pour qui sonne la Cymbale ? Quelques problèmes concernant le thème de l'efficacité symbolique dans le *Cymbalum mundi* attribué à Bonaventure Des Périers', in *ACR2000*, pp. 435–447; Olivier Pot, 'Le livre et la parole dans le *Cymbalum Mundi*: entre hommes et bêtes', in *ACR2000*, pp. 449–471; Madeleine Jeay, 'Les feintes du narrateur dans les *Nouvelles récréations et joyeux devis* et le *Cymbalum mundi*', *Méthode!* 14 (2009): pp. 81–93; Krystyna Antkowiak, *L'aventure de la parole dans* Le Cymbalum Mundi *de Bonaventure Des Périers* (Łódź: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego, 2014).

[49] Mustapha K. Bénouis, 'L'envers et l'endroit du *Cymbalum mundi*', *Romance Notes* XIX, no. 3 (Spring 1979): pp. 366–370 [370].

[50] Florence M. Weinberg, '"La Parolle faict le jeu": Mercury in the *Cymbalum mundi*', *L'Esprit Créateur* XVI, no. 4 (Winter 1976): pp. 48–62 [62].

[51] Jean-François Vallée, 'Les voix imprimées de l'humanisme: Un dialogue entre l'*Utopie* et le *Cymbalum Mundi*' (Doctoral dissertation, Université de Montréal, 2001), p. 588.

[52] Corrado Bologna, 'Lo «spirito» del *Cymbalum mundi*', in *ACR2000*, pp. 201–235.

[53] John O'Brien, 'Heart and Hearth: Some Versions of Secrecy', *The Modern Language Review* 108, no. 4 (October 2013): pp. 1103–1120 [1109].

[54] CM 1995, p. 11.

[55] They were later printed in *ACR2000*. Some of these contributions were detailed and thoughtful, and I have cited many of them here. The majority, however, were literary speculations with little or no archival basis.

[56] Richard Cooper, 'Conclusions', in *ACR2000*, pp. 525–529.

attracted the whole world's curious attention. Those rare scholars who have tried to explain its real historical nature have been drowned out by a chorus of literary critics who scorn to be detained by documentary method. More seriously, responsible historians and trifling litterators have alike neglected the role of the *Cymbalum mundi* in the history of rumoured atheism: and *that*, not the book's 'enigmatic' content or literary qualities, constitutes its real importance. As for us, if we want to see the book for what it is, and also for what it has traditionally been taken to be, we will need to stop our ears against half a century's theoretical chatter.

Chapter I. What the *Cymbalum mundi* Was

The necessary prologue to our history is an examination of the *Cymbalum mundi*'s intrinsic nature and earliest history. In the pages to follow, I will therefore begin with describing the life and works of Bonaventure Des Periers, who was almost certainly the book's author. Then I will interpret the content of the dialogues themselves, which are best understood as a piece of humanist and Evangelical satire. Finally, I will describe the technical circumstances of the *Cymbalum mundi*'s first two publications in order to give a sense of why and for whom its publishers printed it.

THE LIFE OF THE POET

Bonaventure Des Periers was a French humanist author of the early sixteenth century. In the late 1530s, he served in the court of Queen Marguerite of Navarre, and like many other men under her protection, he was an Evangelical whose religious sentiments were strongly coloured by his learning in Latin and Greek. He travelled in France throughout the short span of his historical attestation, and undertook literary tasks for various humanist collaborators. He died around 1544. Apart from these outlines, we know very little for certain about the circumstances of his life. His birthplace, his dates of birth and death, and the members of his family are all either uncertain or completely unknown.

The first biography of Des Periers was written by François de La Croix-du-Maine as an entry in his *Bibliotheque française* of 1584. It read in full as follows:

> Bonnadventure des Periers, born in Bar-sur-Aulbe in the Duchy of Bourgogne, valet de chambre of the Queen of Navarre, sister of King Francis I.
>
> He translated the *Andria* of Terence into French verses, printed in Lyon.[1]
>
> He wrote a fine book of French poetry, printed in Lyon.
>
> He was the author of some tales and witticisms, printed under his name with the title Nouvelles recreations de Bonadventure des Periers, etc. But the first two authors of this work were Jacques Pelletier of Le Mans, a doctor and a philosopher; and Nicolas Denisot, Count of Alsinois, of whom we shall speak in their turn.
>
> This book has been printed many times, as well in Paris as in Lyon.
>
> He was the author of a detestable and impious book called Cymbalum mundi, or 'the little bell of the world', written first in Latin by him (Des Periers), and later translated by himself under the name of Thomas du Clevier. It was printed in Paris in 1537.
>
> He killed himself in the end with a sword that he stuck in his belly, having become mad and senseless.

[1] In 1555, Des Periers' translation of *De quattuor virtutibus* (vide infra, p. 4) was published in Lyon together with a translation of the *Andria*. Presumably La Croix du Maine relied on this edition for his attribution of the *Andria*, but there is no further evidence to suggest that Des Periers was its author.

He was living in the year 1537.[2]

There have since been three substantial biographies of Des Periers. The first was an entry by the seventeenth-century poet Guillaume Colletet in his *Vies des poètes François*.[3] To build his narrative, Colletet supplemented the outline supplied by La Croix-du-Maine with information he had found in some poems in the *Recueil des œuvres de feu Bonaventure Des Periers*. (This book had been published by Antoine Du Moulin had published in 1544, shortly after Des Periers' death.) Colletet agreed with La Croix du Maine that Des Periers had been born in Bar sur Aube, that he had killed himself with a sword, and that he had been a valet to Queen Marguerite of Navarre.[4]

The next two biographies were Louis Lacour's in 1856,[5] and Adolphe Chenevière's three decades later.[6] The account presented by these men has since been apotheosized into that most trustworthy authority, the consensus of experts. (With the exception of Philipp August Becker's imaginative and unreliable study,[7] no major biography of Bonaventure Des Periers has appeared the 135 years since Chenevière's thesis.) The picturesque details and basic outline which these men furnished were later incorporated into most standard accounts of Des Periers' life, like the one to be read in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*. In 1971, the enterprising screenwriter Claude Relinger submitted a script based on Chenevière's biography to the French public-television broadcaster. Unfortunately the world was denied its dramatic biopic of Des Periers, as the appointed reader dismissed the story as confusing and uninteresting.[8]

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[2] François Grudé [sieur de La Croix du Maine], *Premier volume de la bibliotheque du sieur de La Croix-Du-Maine. Qui est un catalogue general de toutes sortes d'Autheurs, qui ont escrit en François depuis cinq cents ans & plus, iusques à ce jourd'hui: avec un Discours des vies des plus illustres & renommez entre les trois mille qui sont compris en œuvre, ensemble un recit de leurs compositions tant imprimees qu'autrement* (Paris: Abel l'Angelier, 1584), pp. 36–37.

[3] This book filled four quartoes in the Bibliothèque du Louvre under the shelfmark F 2398. The entry on Bonaventure Des Periers was in volume II at p. 271. The original manuscript was lost with the rest of the Bibliothèque du Louvre to a fire set on 23 May 1871 as the Paris Commune collapsed. See Léopold Panier, *Le manuscrit des* Vies des poètes françois *de Guillaume Colletet, brûlé dans l'incendie de la Bibliothèque du Louvre. Essai de restitution* (Paris: Librairie A. Franck, 1872).

[4] To my knowledge, the entry has been printed twice. First, a fragment was printed from the lost original manuscript in CM 1858a, pp. xviii–xix; then from a manuscript copy of the original [MS BnF NAF 3073, foll. 150ff.] in the 'annexe' to Jean-Claude Arnould and Bénédicte Boudou, 'Bibliographie d'Agrégation 2008–2009: Bonaventure des Périers, *Nouvelles récréations et joyeux devis*', *Seizième Siècle* V (2009): pp. 319–341 [337–41].

[5] Louis Lacour, 'La vie et les œuvres de Bonaventure Des Periers', which constitutes the introduction to CM 1856 vol. 1, pp. vii–xcvii.

[6] Adolphe Chenevière, *Bonaventure des Periers: Sa vie, ses poésies. Thèse présentée en Sorbonne pour le doctorat és lettres* (Paris: E. Plon, 1885

[7] Philipp August Becker, *Bonaventure des Periers als Dichter und Erzähler. Vorgelegt in der Sitzung am 10. Oktober 1923*, Akademie der Wissenschaften in Wien. Philosophisch-historische Klasse, Sitzungsberichte, vol. 200, Abhandlung 3 (Vienna and Leipzig: Hölder-Pichler-Tempsky A.-G., 1924).

[8] See BnF, Département des Arts du spectacle, 4-COL-58(1350).

The judgments of Chenevière and Lacour often differed from each other's and from Colletet's, but they agreed in using evidence from Du Moulin's *Recueil* as a standard by which to judge the statements made by La Croix-du-Maine. Furthermore, on the basis of the poems in the *Recueil* they claimed to reconstruct several events of Des Periers' life, such as his public disownment by Marguerite after the scandal he caused her with the *Cymbalum mundi*. The biographies of Lacour and Chenevière are wonders of historical architecture. One speculation after another, often based on a single verse in an undated poem, is offered—usually tentatively enough—and soon after hardened into a fact that can bear the weight of further speculations.

Consider briefly the welter of conjecture that this method produced on a single question. One poem in the *Recueil*, addressed to the Queen of Navarre, reads as follows:

> Tu as trouvé un Enquesteur de mesmes
> Pour t'enquerir de moy, ton Malfaicteur,
> Qui me cognoist mieulx que ne fais moy mesmes,
> Qui ha esté, & est mon precepteur,
> Qui m'a monstré quel est mon Redempteur,
> Qui m'a monstré Rithmes, Grec, & Latin,
> Auquel i'allois le soir, & le matin,
> M'en retournois faire aux enfants lecture:
> C'est mon seigneur, Monsieur de sainct Martin,
> Qui me pourchasse encor Bonne adventure.[9]

Who was Monsieur de sainct Martin?[10] According to Colletet, *un Enquesteur de mesmes* was a proper name, referring perhaps to a certain Jean-Jacques de Mesmes, who was Des Periers' tutor at an unspecified point in his life. Louis Lacour, aware of Colletet's identification, disagreed. He put his finger on Jean de Guise, the cardinal of Lorraine, who was the abbot of Notre-Dame-de-l'Isle-Barbe, a church up the Saône from Lyon that was dedicated to Saint Martin.[11] Adolphe Chenevière decried both opinions and pointed to Robert Hurault, abbot of St Martin in Autun. According to Chenevière, the beardless Des Periers had studied under his tutelage, probably in the years 1530–4.[12] These three opinions by no means exhaust the

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[9] Besides, you have found an Informant to inform yourself about me, your Sinner, who knows me better than I do myself; who has been and is my preceptor; who has shown me who my Redeemer is; who has shown me poetry in Greek and Latin; whom I visited in the evenings and the mornings, to read lessons to the children. He is my Lord, Monsieur de St Martin, who still hunts down good fortune for me. | *Recueil des œuvres de feu Bonaventure Des Periers, Vallet de Chambre de Treschrestienne Princesse Marguerite de France, Royne de Navarre* (Lyon: Jean de Tournes, 1544), p. 173.

[10] He comes up one other letter to Marguerite: 'Des celle heure on s'est pourveu d'un lequel y demeure: & ie me tiens illec soir, & matin, chez mon Seigneur Monsieur de sainct Martin, en attendant que tu me faces signes d'aller chez toy.' *Recueil*, p. 163.

[11] CM 1856, vol. I, p. 150n.

[12] See Bernard Leblanc, *Bonaventure des Périers: Poète et conteur bourguignon* (Viévy: Editions des Bruyères, 1986), pp. 21–22.

possible identifications. Can we know of a surety, for example, that Monsieur de Sainct Martin was not Estienne Gentil, the prior of St Martin-des-Champs outside Paris? He was a friend of Queen Marguerite and a renowned reformer, and though Marguerite later denounced him in the *Heptameron* for forcing himself on a nun, she wrote at the beginning of the tale that she had previously taken him for 'the father of true religion', and that she still felt friendship for him.[13] All of these identifications can be used to support one version or another of Des Periers' biography. Yet in fact there is no knowing whether Des Periers was referring to a sojourn in Lyon (if M. de Sainct Martin was Jean de Guise), or Autun (if he was Robert Hurault), or Paris (if he was Estienne Gentil). There is also no knowing what period of his life Des Periers was referring to.

Consider also the epistolary dialogue that Des Periers presents between himself and the lady Claude de Bectone, which begins *Si Amour n'estoit tant volage*.[14] In a rhyming poem, Periers complains of the hardships of carnal love, only to be rebuked by Claude, who reminds him of the blessings of divine love. (The thought is similar to the one developed in the final section of Petrarch's *Secretum*.) Though there was nothing to suggest that either of these poems was a real letter, Adolphe Chenevière took it as good evidence of a forbidden flirtation between Des Periers and the abbess Claude de Bectoz [*sic*], a romance which must have taken place between 1536 and 1539.[15] On equally thin evidence, he also added to the dossier of love-letters some anonymous poems that were inserted alongside a 1547 reprint of *Si Amour n'estoit tant volage*.[16] After Chenevière had invented this romance, a later scholar discovered a hidden allusion to it in the third dialogue of the *Cymbalum mundi*.[17] This conjecture was in turn endorsed as 'ingenious' by Louis Delaruelle,[18] though later treated sceptically by Lionello Sozzi.[19]

These attempts at biography were more or less ingenious, but their results were all equally underdetermined by the single source on which they all relied heavily. The *Recueil*

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[13] See the opening passage of *Nouvelle* XX.
[14] *Recueil*, pp. 185–187.
[15] *Bonaventure des Periers*, pp. 73–90.
[16] Mellin de Saint-Gelais, *Saingelais. Ouvres de luy tant en composition, que translation, ou allusion aux Auteurs Grecs, & Latins* (Lyon: Pierre de Tours, 1547), pp. 65–67. There is only one surviving copy of this book: BnF Rothschild 629.
[17] René Harmand, 'Note sur un passage du 3e dialogue du «Cymbalum Mundi»', *Revue d'Histoire littéraire de la France* IX, no. 1 (1902): pp. 100–101.
[18] Louis Delaruelle, 'Étude sur le problème du « Cymbalum mundi »', *Revue d'Histoire littéraire de la France* XXXII, no. 1 (1925): pp. 1–23 [13n].
[19] Lionello Sozzi, *Les contes de Bonaventure Des Périers: contribution à l'étude de la nouvelle française de la Renaissance*, Università di Torino: Pubblicazioni della Facoltà di Lettere e Filosofia, Volume XVI, Fascicolo 2 (Turin: G. Giappichelli, 1965), pp. 38–41.

offers fodder for unlimited guesses, but no criteria for judging between the truth of these guesses. When it comes to Des Periers' life, the historian who makes too much use of it (not to speak of the spurious *Nouvelles recreations*) is fishing in the air. Furthermore, most of the biographical information in the *Recueil,* like the fact of Des Periers' service under Marguerite, can be independently reconstructed from sources external to it.

More seriously, neither La Croix du Maine nor any of his successors recorded any information about what motivated Des Periers to write his works. Aside from their descriptions of the *Cymbalum mundi*, they were silent on the intellectual commitments of its author. In fact, there is much to know on this head. If we cease to take the *Recueil* as our sole source, and instead look at it as a piece of evidence among many, we can uncover much of Des Periers' theological and literary character, even though the exact timeline of his life remains obscure.

Our potential sources can be sorted into three categories, whose authenticities must be independently evaluated. First, there is a volume called the *Nouvelles recreations et ioyeux devis*, a Boccaccian collection of tales that Robert Granjon published in 1558 and attributed to Bonaventure Des Periers. In my opinion it is not to be reckoned among his genuine works, for reasons that I will explain below.

The second category comprises the poems and translations in the *Recueil*, which Du Moulin claimed to have assembled from the late Des Periers' papers.[20] The volume contains a large number of vernacular poems and prose. Most of the poetry is occasional, and consists of generic praise for various people, including Queen Marguerite, Clement Marot, and Antoine Du Moulin himself. There are some translations of classical works in it: a prose versions of Plato's *Lysis*,[21] a blank dactylic-hexameter rendering of Horace's *Qui fit Mæcenas* (*Sat.* I.i),[22] a verse translation of [Pseudo]-Seneca's *De quattuor virtutibus*,[23] and a mystical *Blason du nombril* that recalls both the creation of Adam and Aristophanes' speech in Plato's *Symposium*.[24] There

[20] For a recent study of this book, see Élise Rajchenbach, 'L'influence de Marguerite de Navarre (et de ses réseaux?) sur l'élaboration du *Recueil des œuvres de feu Bonaventure Des Periers* (1544)', in *Le réseau de Marguerite de Navarre*, ed. Anne Boutet et al., Cahiers d'Humanisme et Renaissance 182 (Geneva: Droz, 2022), pp. 317–339.
[21] *Recueil*, pp. 1–41.
[22] *Recueil*, pp. 104–110. It is printed with no line divisions, and barely distinguishable at first glance from prose. This is apparently the translation that Estienne Tabourot criticized for being insipid unrhymed verse, which Prosper Marchand believed Tabourot to have found in an unidentified independent manuscript. See Estienne Tabourot, *Les bigarrures du Seigneur Des Accordz* (Paris: Jehan Richer, 1583), fol. 154r.; Prosper Marchand, 'Mousset (.....)', in *Dictionaire historique, ou, Mémoires critiques et littéraires, concernant la vie et les ouvrages de divers personnages distingués, particuliérement dans la république des lettres* (The Hague: Pierre de Hondt, 1754), vol. II, p. 79, n. (B).
[23] *Recueil*, pp. 121–147.
[24] *Recueil*, pp. 79–83.

are also verse renderings of Biblical passages: the canticles *Magnificat* and *Nunc dimittis* (Luc 1.46–55 and 2.29–32),[25] and the hymn *Mulierem fortem* (Prov 32.1–43).[26]

It is evident that most of the materials in this collection are authentic. This is especially clear from the appearance in the collection of a poem called the *Prognostication des prognostications*. Before Du Moulin published it, it had already been printed by in Paris (likely by Jehan Morin), under circumstances that associated it closely with Des Periers. Du Moulin, however, seems to have been unaware of the poem's previous publication, and printed it from a separate manuscript. This is apparent from two telling textual variants. In the 1537 edition, there is a line

ou beurre frais sur croustes de pains blancz[27]

which Du Moulin rendered

ou ventre fraiz sur croustes de pains blancz.[28]

'Ventre' is an obviously erroneous reading (unless one puts fresh belly on bread), and it cannot be explained as a misreading of the printed word 'beurre'. It would, however, have been an easy mistake to make while reading a *manuscript*, as the words *beurre* and *ventre* were palaeographical lookalikes in nonhumanistic hands of the early sixteenth century. Initial **v** and **b** could be indistinguishable from each other, each being composed of a left- or right-curling downstroke and then a leftward loop that approached or re-joined the first stroke. Since medial **u** and **n** were lookalikes too, the sequences *eurre* and *entre* were also barely differentiable. [29] The mistake of *ventre* for *beurre* was thus completely natural for a reader of handwriting—though not of print.

It therefore seems that Du Moulin relied on a manuscript of the *Prognostication* for copy, and did not have the 1537 pamphlet to hand. Moreover, the independent witness of the Paris copy to Des Periers' authorship is good evidence that Du Moulin was telling the truth in his preface. He seems to have been working from authentic documents that he had retrieved from the deceased Des Periers' papers.

Although the *Recueil* cannot give us a precise idea of Des Periers' life, it can reveal his literary interests to us. He was a man who translated both the *Lysis* and the *Magnificat*; who

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[25] *Recueil*, pp. 90–92.
[26] *Recueil*, pp. 112–117.
[27] *Prognostication des Prognostications*, fol. [$A_{iii}r$.].
[28] *Recueil*, p. 152.
[29] This is verifiable from attested occurrences of similar words: see for instance Nicolas Buat and Evelyne Van den Neste, *Dictionnaire de paléographie française*, Nouvelle édition revue et augmentée (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2016), pp. 96, 772.

saw in Queen Marguerite both Minerva and a woman confessor;[30] who looked at his navel and thought first of his Creator, and then of the *Symposium*. Never mind who Monsieur de Sainct Martin was: far more revealing of Des Periers is that he praised him as the man *Who showed me who my Redeemer is, / Who showed me Measures in Greek & Latin*. Erudition and poetry made up the tissue of Des Periers' religion.

There was also a strong current of Stoicism in his thought, though it was likewise linked closely to his Evangelism. In his translation of [Pseudo]-Seneca's *De quatuor virtutibus*, for instance, he joined a fifth cardinal virtue to Prudence, Magnanimity, Temperance and Justice. Like Herodotus refusing piously to write *Osiris*, he omitted its name '*à cause de l'envie du Temps Present*'.[31] But it was holier than all the others, and divine, and incarnated visibly in the Queen of Navarre:

> Would you really see such Virtue without vice? Then bring into a female body Reason, Wisdom, and the whole kindly, kingly, holy flock of virtues that we revere—and you'll have the one that I name not.[32]

We do not need to be as coy as Des Periers: the fifth virtue was apparently Charity. The teachings of Stoic philosophy were a fine guide to earthly life, and nothing repugnant to the Gospel; but still not quite sufficient for salvation.[33]

In sum, everything in the *Recueil* suggests that its author was a humanist Evangelical; alive to the beauty and wisdom of ancient learning, but interested ultimately in the supernatural grace that no human arts could bestow.

'Evangelism' requires brief definition. We cannot call it a renewed influence of the Gospel on Christianity, as that would be to take the statements of the Evangelicals themselves at face value. We can say, however, that Evangelism redefined the methods by which the Gospel should properly be understood. The Evangelicals believed that an alliance of faith and philological method, not universitarian theology or law, were the key to understanding

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[30] *Recueil*, p. 183–4: Me faict souvenance / de Athena, qui par bonne ordonnance / vault essayer un chascun professeur: / mais quelcun dict que (veu le contenance) / elle ressemble un bien bon Confesseur.

[31] *Recueil*, p. 122.

[32] Veulx tu bien veoir telle Vertu sans vice?
Assemble moy en en corps femenin
Raison, Sçavoir, & le troupeau bening,
Royal, & sainct des Vertus qu'on renomme,
Et telle tiens celle que ie ne nomme.
Recueil, p. 147.

[33] The seminal work on the topic of Stoicism and Renaissance Christianity—though by no means up to date or reliable in all of its characterizations—is Léontine Zanta, *La Renaissance du Stoïcisme au XVIe siècle* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1914). See also M. A. Screech, 'Some Stoic Elements in Rabelais's Religious Thought', *Études rabelaisiennes* I, THR XXIII (1956): pp. 73–97; id., *The Rabelaisian Marriage. Aspects of Rabelais's Religion, Ethics & Comic Philosophy* (London: Edward Arnold, 1958), pp. 104–125.

Scripture. Men so different as Lefèvre, Erasmus, and Luther all agreed that the visible Church could be wholesomely reformed by overcoming the received canons of scholastic interpretation. In their own eyes, they were rescuing the Gospel from centuries of unthinking neglect. In the eyes of their enemies, they were abandoning the true Gospel that the Church had handed down.

The Evangelicals are not to be identified with the Protestants: there were non-schismatic Evangelicals, like Erasmus and Gerard Roussel. Nor are they to be identified with the Reformers: there were non-Evangelical monastery-reformers, like Pierre Lizet and Noël Beda; and also many appeals to the purity of the primitive church that were not directly related to the text of the Scriptures.[34] But the Evangelicals *are* to be understood as a subset of the humanists, as a matter of prosopography as well as principle. The humanists strove for an unmediated experience of ancient literature, and the Evangelicals among them for the ancient Gospel. Just like the works of Livy or Virgil, it needed to be cleaned of the intellectual lampblack that had encrusted it over the centuries.[35]

Back to Bonaventure Des Periers. Aside from the *Recueil des œuvres*, we are left with the works of his that were published during his lifetime. Alongside contemporary testimonia, these must be our basic materials for reconstructing his life and character. There are six works of importance:

1. The Neufchâtel Bible: two poems and editorial work, 1534.
2. Editorial work for Dolet's *Commentarii*, 1536.
3. Poems in support of Clement Marot, 1536–7.
4. The *Cantique de Moyse, s.d.*
5. *La prognostication des prognostications*, 1537.
6. *Cymbalum mundi*, 1537.

1. The Neufchâtel Bible.

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[34] For an exposition of the latter statement, see Eugene F. Rice Jr., 'The Meanings of "Evangelical"', in *The Pursuit of Holiness in Late Medieval and Renaissance Religion: Papers from the University of Michigan Conference*, ed. Charles Trinkaus and Heiko Augustinus Oberman, Studies in Medieval and Reformation Thought, X (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1974), pp. 472–475.

[35] This use of 'Evangelism' was defined for modern scholarship by Pierre Imbart de La Tour. His motives, I think, were confessional; he sought to drive a conceptual wedge between Evangelism and Protestantism in order to vindicate the title to Gospel Christianity for the humanists who had *not* broken from Rome. The term is unsatisfactory anyway; there was no such thing in the sixteenth century, or in any century, as Christianity that was not professedly 'Evangelical'. Every party to the theological disputes of the sixteenth century, the anti-humanist *parti conservateur* included, claimed to be true to the Gospel. 'Evangelism' is therefore a term that is implicitly sympathetic to the humanists, just as 'Cœnevangelism' or 'Pseudoevangelism' would be disparaging of them. It would perhaps be better to write 'Evangelizer'. But we can check our urge for innovation in this instance, and stick to 'Evangelical' —under the strict condition that we not take it at face value. The Evangelicals sought to revive the Gospel by abstracting it from the traditions of the corrupted visible church. Whether or not they succeeded in doing so is a theologian's question. See *Les origines de la Réforme*, vol. III: *L'Évangélisme (1521–1538)*, IV vols (Paris: Librairie Hachette et Cie, 1914).

In 1535, Pierre Robert Olivetan made a new French translation of the Bible. The first French Bible to be founded directly on Greek and Hebrew sources, it was at the very centre of the Evangelicals' efforts to bring their church back into contact with the original words of Scripture. John Calvin, a cousin of Olivetan, expressed his vehement assent to the project, and wrote a dedicatory epistle for inclusion in its front-matter. He denounced the demonic stubbornnes with which the rotten Roman Church had kept the Bible from the common people.[36]

Olivetan's Bible was prepared with the help of a clerk named as 'Eutychus Deperius'. In addition to composing running summaries of the Biblical text for the margins, he prepared a gloss of all the Hebrew and Greek names, which occupied a few dozen folio pages at the back of the finished book. 'For most of the time', wrote Olivetan in the preface,

> Eutychus Deperius, our loyal brother and good friend, worked on the summaries. To him I have also totally entrusted the table of translations of proper names, which you desired for the public benefit, so that everything might be made plain. Without such a table, the proper names would have remained unknown, and our countrymen would needs have applied to the Hebrews, Greeks or Latins concerning the meaning of the names. Thus the work of translating would have remained partly undone, whereas by these means there is not much now wanting from it, thanks be to God.[37]

It might be natural to assume Eutychus Deperius knew enough Greek and Hebrew to compose this table, which included of hundreds of names and the places where they appeared in the Bible. But it seems that he merely carried over the table of an earlier Bible, making only those modifications to it that were required by Olivetan's novel system of transliteration.[38]

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[36] For scholarship on Calvin's letter, see Dominique Barthélémy, 'Celui qui fit passer la Bible d'Hébreu en français: Olivétan', in *Olivétan: Celui qui fit passer la Bible d'hébreu en français* (Bienne, 1986), pp. 18–29; and Jean-François Gilmont, 'En guise de conclusion: Le livre évangélique de langue française avant Calvin', in *Le livre évangélique de langue française avant Calvin: Études originales, publications d'inédits, catalogues d'éditions anciennes*, ed. Jean-François Gilmont and William Kemp, Nugæ humanisticæ sub signo Erasmi IV (Turnhout: Brepols, 2004), pp. 301–329 [322–324].

[37] Quant est des manieres de parler / declarations des passages difficiles / & interpretations des propres noms pour subvenir au simple populaire que toy Chlorotes conseillois de faire / ie my suis employe: non point certes tant que la chose le requeroit / mais ainsi que loportunite sest offerte a cause du temps qui mestoit brief: pour lequel espargner & recouvrer mapplicquoye plus tost a la translation. Dont pour la plus part du temps nostre loyal frere & bon amy Eutychus Deperius a adresse les sommaires / auquel aussi ay totallement remis la Table de linterpretation des propres noms que pareillement tu desirois / pour lutilite publicque: affin que tout fust explicque. Car sans telle Table les noms propres fussent demourez incongneuz / & eut faillu que nostre peuple eust interrogue les Ebrieux / Grecz / ou Latins / touchant la signification des noms. Ainsi fust laffaire dinterpreter en partie imparfaict / ou par ce moyen lon ny a guaires que desirer / la Dieu grace. | Unpaginated frontmatter (sig. *$_{v}$v).

[38] See Eduard Reuss, 'La Bible d'Olivetan, ou de Serrières', *Revue de théologie* III, no. 3 (1865): pp. 217–52.

Deperius, however, was more than a sub-sub-librarian. He also wrote a theological poem that was printed immediately before *In principio creavit*. In the same fulminating strains as Calvin, he excoriated Frenchmen for having heretofore neglected sacred literature. He hailed the new translation of the Bible as a rebirth of religion.[39]

'Deperius', whoever he was, was both a humanist and an Evangelical. Humanist, because of his wide knowledge of classical philology; Evangelical, because of his conviction

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Io. Eutychi Deperii Amanuensis Interpretis
de Gallica hac Bibliorum versione Carmen.

Plus nimio quondam rerum studiosa novarum,
Eloquii dives Gallica lingua, fuit.
Tot sibi librorum cum scripserit agmina, (mirum est)
Raro, vel nunquam Biblia sacra refert.
Vana refert, Domini spernens oracula vatum,
Seria futilibus posthabet illa iocis.
Ridiculas autem Christo revocante iocandi
Optabit tandem ponere blanditias.
Blanditias sed nacta novas, monimenta salutis
En habet, et fidei pignora certa sue.
Relligionis habet nunc pura fluenta beate,
Trita sub Ausonio que latuere luto.
Viderat ante suas hec Gallica lingua Sorores
Scribere veracis verba retecta Dei.
Ocia dum captat, tandem perfusa recenti
Luce Dei, voluit tam pia facta sequi.
Immo iam sequitur non inferiore loquendi
Utilitate, †eadem quotquot in orbe ferunt.†
En igitur faxis gens Gallica, cordis apertas
Traiiciant aures, que tua lingua canit.
Accipe, volve diu, noctuque volumina sancta,
Non sine sollicito versa labore tibi.
Vana decent vanos / tu non ignota recantes,
St, tua (cum potis es) non aliena colas. |

A poem by Eutychius Deperius, the translator's amanuensis, on this version of the Scriptures:
The French language was once rich in eloquence, and yet too keen for novelties. Though she wrote herself so many multitudes of books, (strange to say!) she rarely or never referred to Holy Scripture, but only to vain things. Spurning the oracles of the Lord's prophets, she preferred empty jokes to serious matters. But Christ calls her back, and at last she shall wish to put aside her silly enticements to sport. Yet has found new enticements, and lo! she has tokens of Salvation, and true pledges of her faith. Now she has pure streams of blessed religion, which were lying spoiled under the mud of Italy. The French tongue had seen her Sisters write the revealed words of the true God. In her sloth she was filled at last by the new light of God, and sought to follow such pious deeds. Indeed she has followed them, with no worse faculty of speech […]. So take care, O French race, that what your tongue sings should speak to the open ears of the heart. Take up these holy scrolls and turn them over night and day, for they were translated for you with no little labour. Vanities befit the vain: do not repeat unknown things, but hush, and tend as you may to your own matters, not another's. |
There is a further couplet, addressed 'Ad Candidum Lectorem':

Quisquis es o Lector, primores carminis huius
Tu ne sperne notas, qui tibi vertit, is est.

Following the hint of this couplet, we discover that the first letters of each line in the poem spell out PETRVS ROBERTVS OLIVETANVS.
At the end of the Bible, there was another epigram attributed to 'Eutychus Deper.': '*Ne mirere novo prodire vocabula cultu / Sed verum in tenebris delituisse diu*. ('Wonder not that these words have appeared in a new guise, but rather that the truth lurked long in the darkness.')

that this humanist learning must be impressed into the service of recovering ancient Scripture. The ultimate value of the revival of letters, in Deperius' mind, was the retrieval of religion from the Ausonian mud which had covered it.

Now, almost everyone mentioned in the Bible's editorial matter had their names done into humanistic forms:

Hilerme Cusemeth. כֻּסֶּמֶת[spelt] > *'far'* [Lat. for spelt] = *Guillaume Farel*
Cephas Chlorotes. כֵּיפָא; *Κηφᾶς* [stone] + *Χλωρότης* [green-ness] = *Pierre Viret*
Antoine Almeutes. *Ἁλμευτής* [vegetable-salter] = *Antoine Saulnier*[40]

Finally, there was Eutychus Deperius. *Εὐτύχος* is Greek for 'well-fated', and therefore a learned equivalent of 'Bonaventure'. In his table, Deperius himself glossed the name of the defenestrated 'Euthyque' of Acts 20.6 as 'heur / ou bien fortuné'; giving both a substantive and an adjective, and bridging the grammatical gap between *Bonaventure* and *Εὐτύχος*. Here, then, is the first appearance of Bonaventure Des Periers in the historical record.

All of these classicized names were used both by Pierre-Robert Olivetan and by John Calvin in their introductory epistles. None of them besides Des Periers' is attested anywhere besides the 1535 Bible, which suggests that their names were rendered like this for the specific occasion. The name-conversion is exactly the kind of activity that Des Periers undertook in his philological index: perhaps it was his own work.

With this earliest trace of Bonaventure Des Periers, we can immediately discern certain basic aspects of his theological profile. First, he was closely associated with a scholarly and Evangelical set of collaborators. Not only did he participate in the most basic activity of the French Evangelicals—the printing of the vernacular Bible—but he also declared his complete support for the project, and his admiration for its leader.

Generations of scholars have combed the *Cymbalum mundi* for coded clues to Des Periers' real theological beliefs. But here is the same man, a short time before writing the *Cymbalum mundi*, stating his mind plainly and confidently, and telling us explicitly what he cared about most in the world. Was his poem in the Bible a piece of *philosophia equina*, designed to cover up a secret radical doctrine? Postulate it, and postulate on equal evidence that Erasmus, who after all wrote some ribald dialogues of his own, was merely dissembling in the *Enchiridion militis christiani*.

[40] 'Salt-merchant'; modern French *saunier*. From Latin *salinarius*.

2. Dolet's *Commentarii*.

One year later, Des Periers earned a mention in Estienne Dolet's *Commentarii linguæ latinæ*, which was a dictionary of Latin terms with notes on their correct usage.[41] (In Dolet's mind, that usually meant their use in Cicero's prose.) At the entry *Superbus*, Dolet indulged in one of his frequent digressions, castigating poets who used the word to fit the meter without paying close attention to its delicate sense. It means *proud*, he insisted—not *great* or *excellent*. In general, Dolet went on, poets were to be condemned who sought after jangling metres without recking the sense. In favourable contrast he praised the poets who first took up a sound matter, and then expressed it with grace and judicious diction. The following poets met this standard:

> In Italy, Girolamo Vida and Jacopo Sannazaro; and in France, Salmon Macrin, Nicolas Bourbon, Jean Visagier, and Jean Eutychus Des Periers, the Heduan: whose faithful and accurate work I relied on in copying out the first volume of my *Commentaries*.

We can learn several things from this brief passage. First, Des Periers' Christian name was *Jehan*.[42] Second, he had written poetry before 1536 that appealed to Dolet's stern judgment. It appears that this poetry was in Latin, both because the theme of Dolet's digression was Latin poetry, and also because the other five men that he mentioned had published copious neo-

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[41] Estienne Dolet, *Commentariorum linguæ latinæ tomus secundus* (Lyon: Sebastianus Gryphius, 1538), p. 535. SVPERBVS appellatur arrogans, insolens, qui fastidio, & contumacia effertur, gravis, difficilis, spiritu, atque animo inflatus. Variis aliis significationibus hoc nomen usurpant poëtæ (ut omnem Latini sermonis proprietatem ad omnia detorquent) ponuntque pro nobili, magnifico, excellenti, alto, elato, ornato, opulento, iniquo: & pro aliis, quæ in poëtarum licentiam cadunt: eorum maximè, qui vel Heroico, vel Elegiaco, vel Hendecasyllabo, vel Phaleucio, & Adonico carmini dediti sunt. Ubi propter certam pedum ratione, quámnam dictionum proprietatem vitiose non traducunt? Quid non asperum, quid non durum, quid non perplexum, quid non vel Græca, vel Latina lingua indigum accersunt? Quid non sine iudicio inferciunt? Quid non sine sensu inculcant, ut numerosum tantùm versum fundant? Túne huius ætatis poëtas multos (qui nominis immortalitatem carmine scribendo ambiunt) mihi non miserandos potius, quàm repræhendendos videri putas? Et miserandi quidem sunt, sine decori, sine vocum proprietatis, sine rerum, argumentique assumpti ratione scribentes, tantúmque ebullientem ingenii fervorem (rem omnium sallacissimam, & ad omnem nominis, existimationisque iacturam lenocinium, & illecebram præsentissimam) inconsultè sequentes: atque ingenii, & eruditionis stulta opinione inflati suas ineptias ante tempus in lucem obtrudentes. Miserandi hi mihi non iure videantur? Miserandi, inquam, & videntur, & planè sunt: qui, cùm in aliquam ingenii, scientiæque opinionem venire concupiscunt, infantium, stultorum, inertiumque famam suorum versuum editione subeunt, ad integumenta vel piperi, vel thuri subministranda nati. Ego verò hanc nostri temporis poëtis sive Gallis, sive externis (doctorum enim omnium nomini æquè faveo: nex mihi plus nostras, quàm externa virtus placet) eam prudentiam, iudiciique aciem inesse vellem, ut, quid in quovis carminis genere scribendum suscipiunt, diligenter perpenderent: tum argumentum susceptum, quanto maximo possent & decoro (decorum enim nisi in re omni observes, quid nisi te ridiculum præbeas?) & vocum proprietate, atque splendore: & gravitate: lenitate etiam, & suavitate, non absurdo sono, aut hiulca textura persequerentur. Ad quam carminis scribendi scientiam insigniæ tibi proposita sunt exempla (nostræ ætatis Poëtas hic solùm recenseo) in Italia Hieronymus Vida, Iacobus Sannazarius: in Gallia, Salmonius Macrinus, Nicolaus Borbonius, Ioannes Vulteius, Ioannes Euthychus Deperius Heduus: cuius opera, fideli ea quidem, & accurata in primo Commentariorum nostrorum Tomo describendo usi sumus. Quos Poëtas inconsultus ardor, ut plerosque, ad carmen scribendum non rapit: sed divina ingenii, & iudicii felicitas ducit. At de his hactenus.

[42] A fact first noted by Prosper Marchand. See UB Leiden, MAR 30, p. 4 (marginal note).

Latin verses. (To my knowledge, only two Latin poems by Des Peries have survived.) Third, Des Periers had helped Dolet in preparing the copy of the first volume of the *Commentarii*. As Dolet wrote in a letter to Guillaume Scève, this job was done during his sojourn in Paris in December 1534, which would seem to prove that Des Periers was in Paris in this period.[43] This fact was overlooked by Adolphe Chenevière, who treated Dolet's commendation as solid evidence that he was in *Lyon*.[44] In fact, there is no positive evidence at all that Des Periers was ever in Lyon before the year 1539.

With the epithet *Heduus*, we also have our only information on Des Periers' origin. It does not inform us of either his birthplace or the people who educated him; it merely means that Dolet associated him with some place in Burgundy.[45] It cannot resolve for us whether he was born in Autun or Arnay-Le-Duc, or in any other place alleged by literary historians.

3. *Pour Marot Absent contre Sagon*.

Des Periers is next attested in 1537, in a book called *Les disciples et amys de Marot contre Sagon*.[46] It contained an assortment of polemical poems by different authors against François de Sagon, who was embroiled in a poetic and theological dispute against the Evangelical Clement Marot and his followers.[47] Two poems in the collection are assigned to a man named 'Bonaventure, valet du chambre de la Royne de Navarre'.[48] They are standard anti-Saguntian invective, exhorting their reader to recognize Marot as one of the great poets of France.

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[43] 'Meis linguæ Latinæ commentariis ex integro describendis horas vespertinas tribuo, quos ad calendas, plurimùm, Ianuarias confecero.' *Dialogus de Imitatione Ciceroneana, adversus Desiderium Erasmum Roterodamum, pro Christophoro Longolio* (Lyon: Sebastianus Gryphius, 1535), pp. 3–8 [4].

[44] Chenevière, *Bonaventure des Periers*, p. 34.

[45] See the entry 'Ædui' in the OLD or Lewis & Short.

[46] Published by Jehan Morin among others.

[47] See Paul Bonnefon, 'Le différend de Marot et de Sagon', *Revue d'Histoire littéraire de la France* I, no. 2–3 (1884): pp. 103–138; 259–285.

[48] One of them is the following set of elegiac couplets:

Forte Saguntinus iuvenis tibi, Phœbe, Pharetram
Abstulerat, citharam subripuisse ratus.
Inque tuum Gallum deprompsit mille Maronem
Spicula, sed nullo saucius ille fuit.
At dum restituit Pharetram, crimenque fatetur,
Ne tibi subripiat plectra sonora, cave.
Nec tu illum pugilis posthac digneris honore,
Qui vatem voluit sic lacerare tuum.

('The boy Sagon once stole your quiver from you, Apollo, thinking it was your lute he'd taken. And he shot a thousand arrows from it at the French Virgil, but he was not wounded by any of them. But until he gives the quiver back and confesses his misdeed, beware lest he take your musical quills too. Nor should you give him any prizefighter's honour, since he tried to injure your own poet.')

That Des Periers took Marot's side so enthusiastically is itself worthy of note, and consistent with what we know about him so far. Marot was a partisan of the Evangelical circle of Marguerite of Navarre, and Sagon one of the conservative Faculty of Theology's defenders. Marot was also friendly with Des Periers' former employer Estienne Dolet, to whom he later entrusted the first printing of his *Œuvres*.[49]

To my knowledge, this also is the first datable piece of evidence that Des Periers had joined the court of Marguerite of Navarre. He remained in her service for at least the next five years. (As late as October 1541, in his very last attestation as a living man in any document, he received back-wages for his services to her as a *varlet*.)[50] Just like Clement Marot, Des Periers had joined himself to the main axis of literate Evangelism in France, and made himself a devoted protégé of the chief patroness of the French Evangelical Humanists.[51]

4. *Le Cantique de Moyse*.

The association with Clement Marot went deeper. In 1545, Jacques Bogard published a volume of Marot's works, which included a large collection of his profane poetry and his metrical translations of the psalms.[52] After the psalms, Bogard printed a new table of contents for some supplementary religious poems, which included *Le Cantique de Moyse traduict par B. de Periers.* The poem itself, which is found on both sides of fol. 82, is an unremarkable versification of Moses' song in Deuteronomy.[53] It is not in fact a translation, but a casting of prose into poetry. The *Cantique de Moyse*, just like the two Biblical translations in the *Recueil*,

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[49] Dolet, however, apparently botched this edition, causing the two men to fall out with each other. See Guillaume Berthon, 'Les débuts de Dolet comme libraire (Marot, 1538): Histoire d'un fiasco', in *Étienne Dolet, 1509–2009*, pp. 325–341.

[50] See Comte Hector de La Ferrière-Percy, *Marguerite d'Angoulême (Sœur de François Ier). Son livre de dépenses (1540–1549). Étude sur ses dernières années* (Paris: Auguste Aubry, 1862), p. 45.

[51] For the significance of Marguerite's network to Evangelism in the period before Calvin's ascendence, see Jonathan A. Reid, *King's Sister — Queen of Dissent: Marguerite of Navarre (1492–1549) and Her Evangelical Network*, II vols (cont. pag.), Studies in Medieval and Reformation Traditions, CXXXIX/1–2 (Leiden: Brill, 2009).

[52] The latter collection is entitled *Cinquante deux pseaumes de David, / traduictz en rithme francoyse selon la verité hebraique, par Clement Marot. / Avec plusieurs autres compositions tant dudict Autheur, que d'autres, non iamais encore imprimées*. There is one attested copy of this portion of the edition, at the Bibliothèque de Genève under the classmark BGE Cth 2261 BGE Bb 2367. It figures as N°. 138 in Claude Albert Mayer, *Bibliographie des éditions de Clément Marot publiées au XVIe siècle* (Paris: A. G. Nizet, 1975), p. 58.

[53] The opening stanza is a representative sample of the whole poem:

> Escoutez Cieulx, & prestez audience
> A tous les mots lesquels ie parleray,
> Et au propos que de bouche diray,
> La terre aussi oye, & face silence.

'Listen, O heavens, and give ear to all the words which I shall speak: and listen, O Earth, to the words of my mouth, and be silent.' Cf. Deut 32:1, which is translated so in the Olivetan Bible: 'O Cieulx escouttez / et ie parleray: & que la terre oye les parolles de ma bouche.'

are taken from Olivetan's 1535 French translation, rather than Lefèvre's or any other source.[54] Given Des Periers' role as Olivetan's clerk, this fact testifies to the authenticity of all three poems, and of the *Recueil* itself. Taken together, Des Periers' biblical poems represent a bridge between his scholarly work for the 1535 Bible and his later literary efforts. He was not a mere philological clerk who also wrote poetry, but a poet who took literary inspiration from his scholarly employments.

Bonaventure Des Periers and Clement Marot may never have met, but they were closely associated with each other in the minds of their contemporaries, Jacques Bogard included. This was with justice: Both men wrote versifications of Biblical passages, both were Evangelical alumni of the court of Navarre, and both found their works condemned by the enemies of Evangelical humanism.

5. *La prognostication des prognostications*, ca. 1537.

There are two extant collections of pamphlets that contain, together with other material from the Marot-Sagon controversy, both a copy of *Les disciples at amys de Marot contre Sagon* and a poem called the *Prognostication des prognostications*. One is in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, and the other in the Bibliothèque Municipale in Versailles.[55] Both volumes contain the same anti-Saguntian pamphlets—all printed by Jehan Morin—in the same order, though in the Paris volume the *Prognostication des prognostications* is interpolated into the middle of them, and in the Versailles volume it appears after all the rest. (The Paris volume also includes two pieces not published by Jehan Morin).

Like *Les Disciples at amys* and all the other items shared between the collections, it was probably published by Jehan Morin, who also published CM 1537. Morin did not put his name on the title page, but the book is printed in the same typeface (de Colines' second English Roman; R [92]) as all of the pamphlets in the collections that Morin *did* sign. His involvement seems likely. I think we are also well-founded in attributing it to Des Periers, especially given the evidence of its inclusion in Du Moulin's *Recueil*.

The *Prognostication* is signed by certain 'Maistre SARCOMOROS, natif de Tartarie.' This name is neither an anagram like *Alcofribas Nasier* (=François Rabelais) nor an etymological

[54] Cf. Lionello Sozzi, 'Remarques sur la poésie religieuse de Des Périers', in *Études seiziémistes offertes à Monsieur le Professeur V.-L. Saulnier par plusieurs de ses anciens doctorants*, THR, CLXXVII (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1980), pp. 205–222 [209].

[55] BnF Rés. Ye. 1585; and B.M. de Versailles Goujet in-8° 58 [item 5]. These pamphlets are described by Trevor Peach, 'Bonaventure des Périers, *La Prognostication des prognostications* (1537), texte et notes', *BHR* LII, no. 1 (1990): pp. 109–121 [109]. Peach's article also contains what was once the most easily accessible text of this edition of the *Prognostication*, though Gallica [ark:/12148/btv1b8618499t] has superseded it.

calque like *Cusemeth* (=Farel).[56] *Sarcomoros* is rather an allusion to the opening chapter of Paul's first letter to the Corinthians:

> *τὸ μωρὸν τοῦ θεοῦ σοφώτερον τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἐστίν, καὶ τὸ ἀσθενὲς τοῦ θεοῦ ἰσχυρότερον τῶν ἀνθρώπων. βλέπετε γὰρ τὴν κλῆσιν ὑμῶν, ἀδελφοί, ὅτι οὐ πολλοὶ σοφοὶ κατὰ σάρκα οὐ πολλοὶ δυνατοί οὐ πολλοὶ εὐγενεῖς· ἀλλὰ τὰ μωρὰ τοῦ κόσμου ἐξελέξατο ὁ θεός ἵνα καταισχύνῃ τοὺς σοφούς.*[57]

The pseudonym *Σαρκομωρός* is merely an inversion of Paul's *σοφὸς κατὰ σάρκα*, and it means 'fool according to the flesh'. This trope—that the only way to be wise in God's eyes is to spurn the world's false wisdom—was beloved by Des Periers' pious contemporaries. Erasmus' *Laus stultitiæ* ended famously in a meditation on this very theme, and it was possibly this book—one of the most widespread works of Renaissance literature—that suggested it to Des Periers. Wherever its provenance, however, the device is revealing of Des Periers' Evangelical motives.

Sure enough, the poem is an enthusiastic religious document. Filled with scriptural references, it makes the following argument: Astrological predictions, of the kind to be found in almanacs and prophecies, are futile exercises of the imagination. What's worse, they are impious. For Christ, says the poet,

> …a dit qu'il n'est licite
> A nous scavoir les temps, & les momentz
> Que Dieu a mis hors noz entendementz,
> Hors de noz sens, & nostre cognoissance,
> Et reservez a sa seule puissance.[58]

Astrology is precisely the kind of worldly wisdom embodied by the *σοφοὶ κατὰ σάρκα*.

The poem opens with a description of news-hunters. The whole world, says the poet, is gripped by an insatiable desire for *nouvelles* from any quarter. Prognostications are damnable in the first place because they are one of the principal sources of these vain *nouvelles*.[59] After a long polemic against the prognosticators is finished, Sarcomoros finally

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[56] From the strange premise that Sarcomoros means 'black skin' in Greek, Henri Just suggested that the book's publisher Morin ['*Maure*-in'] was meant. See *La pensée secrète de Bonaventure des Périers et le sens du Cymbalum mundi, essai* (Casablanca: Imprimerie Fontana, 1948), p. 11.

[57] I Corinthians 1:25–7: The foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men. For consider your calling, brothers: not many of the wise according to the flesh [are called], nor many of the powerful, nor many of the high born. No, God has chosen the foolish things of the world to abash the proud.'

[58] It is not permitted for us to know the times and moments that God has placed beyond our sense and knowledge, and reserved for his own might. | *La Prognostication des prognostications*, sig. B_{iii} r.

[59] 'Chasses tu pas apres abusion, / Cuydant trouver Prognostication, /Ou il y ayt des nouveautez nouvelles?' | Ibid., sig. A_{ii} v.

gives us the 'prognostication of prognostications' itself: for all all years to come, prognosticators can be relied on to be fraudulent liars.

Now the poet invites us on a journey into the sky—*allons toy & moy la hault es cieulx*. From up here, the fighting sectarians of the world are all visible, and all the vain wars over small crusts of earth. Here in the heavens is Jesus Christ, who has given the final word on prognostications. Namely, it is not for men to know the plan of God: so we must cease from offering such empty speculations.

Beholding the earth's puniness from the sky is a stock literary device of ancient literature, most famously employed by Cicero in the *Somnium Scipionis*. Des Periers' immediate sources, however, appear to have been two Lucianic works. First was *De sacrificiis*, in the course of which Lucian remarks:[60]

> But put aside these stories: and let us ascend into the heaven itself, going up as the poets describe: and by that very road that Hesiod and Homer alike describe. Then we may see how everything is ordained among the gods.

Then Lucian proceeds to give a bitterly satirical account of the gods who are to be seen above the firmament. A second journey into heaven, undertaken for similar motives, occurs in Lucian's *Icaromenippus*. Menippus recounts to his friend the circumstances of his recent journey to the sky. Frustrated with the indecisive squabblings of the philosophers on the nature of the moon, he had resolved to settle the matter himself by borrowing birds' wings and visiting it himself. How, his friend asks him, did men appear from so high above?—they were like ants, replies Menippus. Once in heaven, he met a host of heavenly characters, and eventually Zeus, who was preparing to destroy the world out of his frustration at the squabbling philosophers.

Characteristically, this was not an unthinking adaptation from Lucian, but a pious attempt to impress Lucian's satire into the service of the Gospel. Lucian had described the gods in flippant and satirical terms, but Des Periers' description of Christ in heaven was deadly serious.

Now, derision of prognosticators was nothing extraordinary in the 1530s. Parodic almanacs abounded across Europe in this period, which made titillating jokes like *Old age will be incurable in the new year, on account of all the years which have passed*.[61] François Rabelais, who shared Erasmus' view of divination, contributed several pieces to the genre, publishing a

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[60] This dialogue was translated by Erasmus and printed by Froben alongside the other works of Lucian.
[61] See *Pantagrueline prognostication pour l'an 1533*, ed. Michael Andrew Screech, Textes Littéraires Français (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1974), appendix B [pp. 119–136]; and Anthony Grafton, *Cardano's Cosmos: The Worlds and Works of a Renaissance Astrologer* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2001), pp. 127–155.

Pantagrueline prognostication for the first time around 1532.[62] As M. A. Screech has pointed out, Rabelais' parody differed from all the others in its Evangelical tendency.[63] This is most apparent from its first chapter, in which Rabelais denounced astrology as an affront to God:

> Chapter I: On the Governor and Lord of this Year.
>
> Whatever those foolish astrologers from Louvain, Nuremberg, Tübingen and Lyon tell you, don't believe that there will be any other Governor of the whole world this year than God the creator, who rules and moderates everything by his divine word, by which all things are set in their nature, properties, and condition, and without whose maintenance and government all things would be instandly reduced to nothing, just as they were created in their being by him from nothing. For all things, all life, and all movement come from him, exist in him, and are perfected by him. So says the Evangelical trumpet Paul (Romans 11). Therefore the Governor of this year and of all other, according to my true decree, will be Almighty God. And neither Saturn nor Mars nor Jupiter nor any other planet—and certainly not the angels or saints or men or the devils—have any virtue, efficacy, power or influence except as God is pleased to give it to them. As Avicenna says, secondary causes have no influence or action unless the Primary Cause intervenes.[64]

Rabelais' final leap into occasionalism might be shocking to the sensitive reader, but it is completely consistent with his thoroughgoing hatred for soothsaying. Divination was a direct affront to the majesty of God, who alone decided what comes to pass and what does not. After this chapter, Rabelais moved on to the standard jokes about the blind being unlikely to see much, and the poor being likely to starve. In light of this first chapter, though, we must interpret Rabelais' mockery as a fundamentally pious joke.

The same can be said of Des Periers' *Prognostication des prognostications*, which shares so much with the Rabelais' *Prognostication* that it was probably inspired by it. In fact, it is even

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[62] Cf. NRB 14–18. Erasmus never wrote at length like Rabelais did on divination, but his attitude may be gleaned from statements here and there; see his entries in the *Adagia* on *Cribro divinare*, *Curetum os*, *Mortuos videre*, *Si crebro iacies, aliud alias ieceris*, and especially *Qui bene coniiciet, hunc vatem*, in which Erasmus reveals that his disdain for magical divination is derived primarily from the arguments presented in the second book of Cicero's *De divinatione*. For more on the influence of Erasmus on Rabelais, see the article by Louis Delaruelle, 'Ce que Rabelais doit à Érasme et à Budé', *Revue d'Histoire littéraire de la France* XI, no. 2 (1904): pp. 220–262.

[63] Screech, ed., *Pantagrueline prognostication*, Introduction, p. xxiv.

[64] Du gouverneur & seigneur de ceste annee. Chapitre premier.
Quelque chose que vous disent ces folz Astrologues de louvain de Nurnberg / de Tubinge & de Lyon / ne croyez point que ceste annee il y ayt aultre gouverneur de luniversel monde que Dieu / le createur / lequel par sa divine parolle tout regist & modere / par laquelle sont toutes choses en leur nature propriete & condition / et sans la maintenance et gouvernement duquel toutes choses seroient en ung moment reduictes a neant comme de neant elles ont este par luy produictes en leur estre. Car de luy vient / en lui est / & par luy se parfaict tout estre et tout bien toute vie & mouvement comme dit la trompette evangelicque monseigneur sainct Paul. Ro. xi. Doncques le gouverneur de ceste annee & toutes aultres selon nostre veridicque resolution sera dieu tout puissant. Et ne aura Saturne ne Mars ne Jupiter ne aultre planete / certes non pas les anges ni les sainctz ny les hommes ny les diables vertuz / efficace / puissance ne influence aulcune si Dieu de son bon plaisir ne leur donne. Comme dict Avicenne / que les causes secondes ne ont influence ne action aulcune si la cause premiere ny influe.

more zealous than Rabelais' work, and the humorous elements in Des Periers' poem are overwhelmed by a didactic Evangelical message.

Alongside these parodies, invective against vaticinations was a basic trope of late humanism, and of Evangelical theology in particular.[65] John Calvin himself, who eventually denounced both Rabelais and Des Periers as ungodly prattlers, published an *Advertissement contre l'astrologie* in 1549, in which he denounced predictive astrology as a futile distraction from the Gospel.[66] A useful science, he argued, is perfectly godly, even if it is not directly related to the Gospel: God after all has given us liberal and technical arts to our profit. But speculative astrology is such a useless curiosity that it can do nothing but turn a Christian to trivial dissipation. Besides, if we have been born again under the guidance of God, what can our destinies possibly have to do with the stars that presided over our natural births? On the other hand, a book as conservative as the Pauline Index of 1557 contained a warning against judiciary astrology among all forms of divination.[67] No one theological faction had a monopoly on this expression of piety.

BIOGRAPHY IN BRIEF

Let us now state what can be known for certain about Bonaventure Des Periers' life. In the early 1530s, he was in Neufchâtel with Olivetan during the preparation of the 1535 Bible. Then he made at least a brief stay in Paris in late 1534, where he worked under Estienne Dolet during the preparation of the *Commentarii linguæ latinæ*. After that he probably entered the court of Marguerite of Navarre, though it is impossible to tell when, or under what circumstances. Whether or not he ever actually stayed at Marguerite's court, he probably lived in Paris during at least a part of his service, for his several contacts with the publisher Jehan Morin in 1537 imply strongly that he was there. After the completion of the *Cymbalum mundi*, however, he went to Lyon, where he wrote the poem *Le voyage de l'isle* in 1539. In 1541, he was still in Marguerite's service. He died three years later, probably in or near

[65] One can resort to Montaigne's essay I.xi for an ordinary statement of the standard argument against prognostication.

[66] *Advertissement contre l'astrologie, qu'on appelle Iudiciaire: & autres curiositez qui regnent auiourd'huy au monde.* (Geneva, 1549).

[67] It prohibited 'Libri omnes, & scripta […] in quibus Sortilegia, venefica, incantationes, Magicæ Divinationes, vel Astrologica iudicia, circa Geneses, Nativitates, futuros eventus, sive particulares successus, status, vitæ, vel mortis cuiusvis homines describantur.' *Index auctorum, et librorum, qui tanquam hæretici, aut suspecti, aut perniciosi, ab officio S. Ro. Inquisitionis reprobantur, et in universa Christiana republica interdicuntur* (Rome: Antonio Blado, 1557) [British Library, C.53.c.57.], p. 41.

Lyon. There is nothing to support the common assumption that he suffered persecution for writing the *Cymbalum mundi*.[68]

I will now explain my grounds for rejecting the authenticity of the *Nouvelles recreations et joyeux devis*.[69]

In the first place, we can only call the book genuine on the faith of its publisher Granjon's story about a mysterious 'vertueux personnage' who delivered a manuscript by Des Periers into his hands.[70] Meanwhile, the arguments against its authenticity are decisive and numerous. Rumours that the book had been written by someone other than Des Periers were circulated early. In the 1580s, Estienne Tabourot attributed it to Jacques Pelletier (though he was challenged on this assertion by Estienne Pasquier),[71] and François Grudé to both Pelletier and Nicolas Denisot.[72] The first person to give *textual* reasons for the spuriousness of the *Nouvelles recreations* was Pierre Bayle, who pointed out that the apparent reference in the beginning to the French Wars of Religion could not have been written by a man who had died in 1544.[73] He was followed by Bernard de La Monnoye, who noticed five anachronisms in the *Nouvelles recreations* which appeared to prove that the book had been written after Des Periers' death in around 1544.[74]

I. In *nouvelle* XVII:

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[68] Nor is that any wonder. '*Desipuit quisquis scripsit*', wrote Erasmus of another scurrilous dialogue, '*at maiore supplicio dignus quisquis evulgavit*.' To Lorenzo Compegio, 1 May 1519. Percy Stafford Allen, *Opus epistolarum Des. Erasmi Roterodami*, vol. III: 1517–1519 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1913), p. 575 (ep. 961).

[69] If the arguments to follow can be accepted, they have unsettling implications for the many technical treatises that assess the *Nouvelles recreations* and Des Periers' other works as a single linguistic corpus. See for instance Félix Frank and Adolphe Chenevière, *Lexique de la Langue de Bonaventure des Periers* (Paris: Librairie Léopold Cerf, 1888); Rudolph Rübner, *Syntaktische Studien zu Bonaventure des Périers. Ein Beitrag zur historischen Grammatik der französischen Sprache. Inaugural-Dissertation zur Erlangung der Doktorwürde der hohen philosophischen Fakultät der Universität Leipzig* (Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1896).

[70] Wrote Granjon: 'Le Temps glouton devorateur de l'humaine excellence, se rend souventesfois coustumier (tant nous est il ennemy) de suffoquer la gloire naissante de plusieurs gentils esprits, ou ensevelir d'une ingrate oubliance ses oeuvres exquises d'iceux. […] Le semblable fust advenu de ce present Volume, duquel demeurions privez, sans la diligence de quelque vertueux personnage qui n'ha voulu souffrir ce tort nous estre fait.'

[71] Estienne Pasquier, *Les lettres d'Estienne Pasquier, Conseiller et Advovocat [*sic*] general du Roy en la chambre des Comptes de Paris* (Paris: Abel l'Angelier, 1586), fol. 246 r.

[72] Estienne Tabourot, *Les bigarrures du Seigneur Des Accordz* (Paris: Jehan Richer, 1583), fol. 20.r.; François Grudé, *Premier volume de la bibliotheque du sieur de La Croix-Du-Maine*, pp. 36–37.

[73] 'Ce qu'on doit tenir pour certain est que cet Auteur n'a pas composé tous les contes qui se voient dans ses nouvelles recreations. Il ne peut pas avoir fait celui qui est le premier dans l'édition que Mr. Voet a indiquée. C'est celle de Roüen 1606, chez Raphaël du Petit-Val. On assûre dans le premier conte que l'on publie cet ouvrage bien à propos, afin de fournir aux Dames une lecture divertissante pendant les guerres civiles qui causoient tant de maux publics. Des Periers ne pouvoit point parler de la sorte, car il mourut long tems avant les premieres guerres civiles de France.' Pierre Bayle, 'Periers (Bonavanture des)', in *Dictionaire Historique et Critique*, 2nd ed., vol. III, (Amsterdam: Reinier Leers, 1702), 2380–81, n. A.

[74] He wrote these observations into a copy of a 1572 edition of the *Nouvelles recreations.* It is now at the BnF under the shelfmark Res-Y2-1989. They were later published in Bernard de la Monnoye, ed., *Les Contes, ou les Nouvelles récréations et joyeux devis, de Bonaventure Des Periers, Varlet de Chambre de la Royne de Navarre.*, III vols (Paris: [Jacques Clouzier], 1735).

> An advocate in the parlement … pleaded a case before the President Lizet, the recently deceased Abbot of St. Victor *prope muros*.

But Pierre Lizet did not die until 1554.[75]

II. In *nouvelle* XXVII:

> Many have heard the name of René du Bellay, the recently deceased Bishop of Le Mans.

But René Du Bellay did not die until 1546.[76]

III. In *nouvelle* LXVI:

> 'One of them said that there were no mice in Noah's Ark, and that they cause decay: a fact confirmed by Mr. Jehan Buteo of the order of St. Anthoine en Daulphine in his treatise *On Noah's Ark*'.

But Jehan Buteo's *De archa Noe*, which indeed contains the relevant passage, was not published until 1554.[77]

IV. In the same *nouvelle*:

> 'You speak of the Lateran Council: I've seen him a few times. He had a big red hat, and was always well girt, and happily carried a big satchel made of crimson velvet.'

This joke on the Lateran Council is borrowed from chapter 39 of Rabelais' *Tiers livre*. But that book was not published until 1546.[78]

V. In *nouvelle* LXXXVIII:

> 'In those days, apes were coming into fashion in France: and because of that Singerpedie they were afraid of losing their reputation.'

The word *Singerpedie* is an apparent play on *Κυροπαιδεία*. But that word is not attested in French before a translation of Xenophon that was published in 1547.[79]

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[75] Un advocat en parlement qui estoit bien au compte de la douzaine, plaidoit une cause devant monsieur le President Lizet, n'agueres decedé abbé de sainct Victor prope muros' | Ibid., vol. I, p. 207, n. 3.

[76] Plusieurs ont ouy le nom de messire René du Bellay dernierement decedé Evesque du Mans. | Ibid., vol. I. p. 296, n. 1. La Monnoye erroneously wrote '1556'; in any case, both dates are later than the death of Bonaventure Des Periers.

[77] L'un disoit qu'il n'y avoit point de souris, et que elles s'engendrent de pourriture: Ainsi que depuis ha bien confermé maistre Iehan buter [*sic*] de l'ordre S. Anthoine en Daulphine en son traicté, De archa Noé. | Ibid., vol. II, pp. 254–5, n. 4.

[78] Vous parlez du concile de Latran: Ie l'ay assez veu de fois. Il avoit un grand chappeau rouge, et estoit tousiours ceinct, et portoit voulentiers une grand gibeciere de velours cramoisy. | Ibid., vol. II, p. 260, n. 8. The first edition of the *Tiers Livre* was NRB 28.

[79] Car c'estoit du temps qu'ilz commencoyent à avoir vogue en France: et pour ceste Singerpedie ils avoyent peur de perdre leur reputation. | Ibid., vol. III, pp. 101–2, n. 8. La Monnoye erroneously substituted *Singeopedie* for the correct reading *Singerpedie*.

In my opinion, almost every one of these anachronisms is sufficient evidence on its own of the *Nouvelles recreations*'s spuriousness.[80]

The early-nineteenth-century author Charles Nodier made the first attempt to defend the authenticity of the *Nouvelles recreations* against La Monnoye's scepticism. The solution he proposed has been accepted by most of his successors. Publishers in the sixteenth century, Nodier argued, were not restrained by modern editorial scruples. They were always liable to change the text supplied by their authors in order to suit their own whims. Therefore, every anachronism in the *Nouvelles recreations* can be assumed to be a mere interpolation, allowed into the text in order to bring it up-to-date.[81] Lazare Sainéan followed Nodier's interpolation-theory exactly, attributing the anachronisms to 'le sans-gêne avec lequel procédaient les éditeurs à cette époque'.[82] Sainéan even pointed out an anachronism that La Monnoye had not spotted—but he attributed its presence to the same cause.[83] Lionello Sozzi, the most recent serious student of the *Nouvelles recreations*, followed Sainéan almost word-for-word: 'On connoît la désinvoluture des éditeurs de l'époque,' he wrote.[84] Thus Nodier's two-hundred-year-old theory—his afterthought, really—has vindicated the authenticity of *Nouvelles recreations* in the eyes of most of his successors.[85]

Sans-gêne; *désinvoluture*: whether or not these insults against the old publishers are generally justified, they cannot be taken *a priori* as applicable to any one of them. But so long as we are dealing with general presumptions, the *sans-gêne* of the sixteenth century should be taken as a presumption against, not for, Nodier's story. In a world of unscrupulous publishers, any scrupulous publisher had all the more reason to defend the authenticity of his text. This explains the many stories in contemporary editorial prefaces that recount exactly how the publisher got his copy from the author. The *Nouvelles recreations* had just such a preface. A publisher as eager as Granjon to present his text as authentic should not be expected to have allowed obvious marks of its inauthenticity to appear in the text—at least not without

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[80] Only the last seems shaky, as *Κυροπαιδεία* could well have been turned from Greek into French at any moment.
[81] 'Bonaventure Desperiers', *Revue des Deux Mondes*, Quatrième Série, XX (1 October 1839): pp. 329–351 [350].
[82] 'Appendice III: Bonaventure Des Périers.' In *Problèmes littéraires du seizième siècle* (Paris: E. de Boccard, 1927), pp. 275–82 [279].
[83] Namely, in Nouvelle V (cited by Sainéan as 'IX'), the closing moral is introduced by the phrase *Pantagruel le dit bien*, in a reference to an episode in chapter XXVIII of Rabelais' *Tiers livre*, which was published in 1546. Ibid.
[84] Lionello Sozzi, *Les contes de Bonaventure Des Périers: contribution à l'étude de la nouvelle française de la Renaissance*, Università di Torino: Pubblicazioni della Facoltà di Lettere e Filosofia, Volume XVI, Fascicolo 2 (Turin: G. Giappichelli, 1965).
[85] Sozzi admitted in the end that he harboured serious doubts of the attribution to Des Periers. But if they had been constantly before his eyes, his doubts would have seriously disturbed the structure of his five-hundred-page treatise on the *Nouvelles recreations*. So he shunted his misgivings into an appendix and called his work '*Les contes de Bonaventure Des Périers*'.

mentioning and accounting for the anachronisms in the preface. The most likely explanation is that Granjon published his book without realizing that it could be dated by internal evidence to after the death of its supposed author.

More doubts were raised in the 1890s. Gaston Paris noted in the first place that the lexical stock of the *Nouvelles recreations* was substantially different to that of the *Cymbalum mundi*.[86] He also noticed that the numerous tales which are set in Le Mans are far richer than the others in geographical particulars, supporting La Croix-du-Maine's original contention that Jacques Pelletier was the real author of the book.[87]

It is worth noting, finally, that unlike in Des Periers' other attested works, there is no trace whatsoever of an Evangelical spirit in the *Nouvelles recreations*.[88] Our intellectual picture of Des Periers is thus made clearer by striking it from the list of his works. He was not a diffuse jokester, but a learned and merry Evangelical poet.

CLEF DU *CYMBALUM*

Armed with this appreciation of its author, we can take up the *Cymbalum mundi*. We will quickly see the following: the book is a set of jocular variations on the theme set out in the *Prognostication des prognostications*. It is not an enigma; nor a book that its author or anyone else could have explained with a key.

It could well have been so: there were, after all, explicit literary allegories in the early sixteenth century.[89] Usually in such cases, the author stated explicitly that he was writing a

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[86] Gaston Paris, 'La nouvelle française aux XVe et XVIe siècles'. Review of Pietro Toldo, *Contributo allo studio della novella francese del XV e XVI secolo, considerata specialmente nelle sue attinenze con la letteratura italiana* (Rome: Ermanno Loescher, 1895). *Journal des Savants*, May–June 1895, pp. 289–303, 342–361 [356, n. 4].

[87] Ibid., p. 357, n. 1.

[88] The Abbé Clément Jugé rejected Des Periers' authorship of the *Nouvelles recreations* for a precisely opposite reason. According to him, the *Cymbalum mundi* was the work of a sickly, confused agnostic, and could not have been written by the same man as the confident and decent *Nouvelles.* See Clément Jugé, *Jacques Peletier du Mans (1517–1582). Essai sur sa vie, son œuvre, son influence. Thèse présentée à la faculté des lettres de Caen* (Paris: A. Lemerre / Le Mans: A. Bienaimé-Leguicheux, 1907), pp. 288–302.

[89] For example, Hans Sachs told a vision about a garden—

> Ich kam vur einen gartten wol gezirt
> von edlen reben und fruchtbaren bäumen
> von guetten wurtzen blut und kraut…
> zwelff man gunden den edlen gartten pflanzen;
> er wart von in reichlich durchbaut

and then, in the next stanza, explained its meaning and identified the characters in it:

> Der gart bedeut zu Nurnberg die singschul
> die hat gebluet durch zwelff erweltte dichter.

Karl Goedeke, ed., *Dichtungen von Hans Sachs*, vol. I: *Geistliche und weltliche Lieder*, Deutsche Dichter des sechzehnten Jahrhunderts, IV (Leipzig: F. A. Brockhaus, 1870), pp. 12–14. An autograph is also available online: 'Das ander puech mit meyster gesang Hans Sachsen gedicht in zwayen Jaren volent got sey lob meins alters im 34 Jar – MG 2' (Stadtarchiv Zwickau, 1528), https://sachsen.digital/werkansicht/dlf/241126/273/0/#.

riddle, or even gave the *clef* himself. Obviously, it must be demonstrated and not assumed *a priori* that a given work has a hidden meaning.

Closer in spirit to the *Cymbalum mundi* is the facetious allegorism that appeared in *Gargantua*. In the preface, Rabelais exhorted his reader not to take his book literally, but to understand its hidden meaning, which was intended only for initiates.[90] This was a joke: he then confessed immediately that he had done nothing serious in the writing of the book, but only eaten and drunk, and written according to his whim. At the end of the book, a riddle is discovered in the foundation of the Monastery of Theleme, which the giant, sighing deeply, interprets as an allegory for persecuted believers in the Gospel. Yet his companion the monk thinks it refers to the *jeu de paulme*, and gives it an elaborate interpretative key along those lines.[91]

Rabelais was certainly alive to allegorical meaning as a literary device, but all of the allegories in his books were the object of his or his characters' mocking sport. Generally, we must recognize the suggestive riddle as an *internal* literary trope; indulged in by high-minded poets and Rabelaisian pranksters alike, but always set within the structure of a work that was not itself allegorical. Such literary devices were not actual attempts to keep secrets from the uninitiated. To put it another way, a hidden secret like the Riddle of Theleme does not represent an actual possibility for literature, notwithstanding its appearance in a literary work of the period we are concerned with. Rabelais also wrote of two overlearned giants, and we don't believe in *them*.

No, the *Cymbalum mundi* is not a real allegory, though indeed it contains joking references to the possibility of writing in riddles. Granted, there are three historical characters in the second dialogue whose names are given in anagrams. But it is one thing to mention a few contemporary names in bad disguises, and quite another to write a book whose real sense is only meant for the reader who can guess the all-explaining *clef*. And although there are constant allusions and borrowings in the *Cymbalum mundi*, it does not follow by any means that these allusions were intended to hide a complicated intellectual programme. To borrow an illustration from a different historical context, there have been repeated attempts over the centuries to find the allegorical key to the Magic Flute, and to identify each character with a person in Emmanuel Schikaneder's Vienna, as if the libretto's true story was something

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Clement Marot's *Enfer* of 1524 was a similar allegory, comparing his imprisonment in the Châtelet to a descent into Hell.

[90] NRB, sig. A_{iii} r.–v.

[91] Ibid., cap. lvi (sig. N_{ii}v.– N_{iv}v.).

lurking beneath the ostensible plot.[92] But these attempts are obviated when one reads Wieland's *Dschinnistan* and the Abbé de Terasson's *Sethos*, and finds that not only the basic devices of the plot (feuding fairy-princes; initiation into the cult of Isis and Osiris; the Zauberflöte itself), but the moral elements of that plot (cultic brotherhood; self-determined obedience; truth as the precondition of righteousness) were not peculiar innovations, but rather stock elements of a pre-existing cultural magisterium that is just as intelligible to the historian as it was to the men who participated in it. So too did the *Cymbalum mundi* contain allegorizing variations on all kinds of Evangelical and humanist themes; and nevertheless Des Periers did not—as he could not—make any intelligible allusions that were not already given their sense by the learned culture in which he wrote. But supposing he *did* have a private message to convey, and that he furthermore expressed this behind an allegorical screen so thick that his contemporaries had no access to it—then he might to as good purpose have written his book in Scythian and sunk it in the Don. In that case, the *Cymbalum mundi* would carry no historical interest whatsoever, no matter how astonishing its contents.

THE TITLE

I have explained the meaning of '*Cymbalum mundi*' in the attached edition. Here it is enough to say that the title is a reference to Erasmus' entry on that phrase in his *Adagiorum Chiliades*. According to Erasmus (not quite correctly), the Plinian phrase *cymbalum mundi* referred to a pleasant jangle of little bells.[93]

THE EPISTLE DEDICATORY

The *Cymbalum mundi* begins with a letter addressed like this:

> THOMAS DV CLEVIER A
> son amy Pierre Tryocan S[alut].

As Éloi Johanneau first noticed, these names are anagrams.[94] TRYOCAN unscrambles to 'croyant', and DV CLEVIER to IVCREDVLE. *Incrédule*, perhaps? That seems to be what

[92] For a summary of these, see Maurice Kufferath, *La* Flûte enchantée *de Mozart* (Paris: Librairie Fischbacher, 1914–1919), pp. 45–51.
[93] M. A. Screech has argued, persuasively I think, that the association with Paul's *κύμβαλον ἀλαλάζον* is a red herring: 'The Meaning of the Title *Cymbalum Mundi*', *BHR* XXXI, no. 2 (1969): pp. 343–345.
[94] For proof of Trevor Peach's ingenuity, consider his hypothesis that THOMAS DV CLEVIER A SON AMY PIERRE TRYOCAN S. is an anagram for LVCIAN SAMO RHET DE SYMONYA PERIERS AVCTOR. See 'The *Cymbalum Mundi*: An Author in Anagram', *French Studies Bulletin* XXIII, no. 82 (1 March 2002): pp. 2–4.

was meant, and as Yves Girard has pointed out, it would have been easy for the original typesetter to confuse minuscule **u** and **n** in his handwritten copy.[95]

These anagrams have historically been an obtrusive scandal, tripping scholars up ever since Éloi Johanneau discovered them.[96] But there is no reason to treat them as evidence of the *Cymbalum mundi*'s impiety. In the first place, there are no grounds for assuming that Des Periers himself is to be identified with Du Clenier. That would be to naïvely ignore the literary device at work. Du Clenier is not the author or the author's avatar but a *character*; never mind that he is a character in the frame story. Accordingly, his letter to Tryocan cannot be understood as a straightforward expression of Des Periers' views. It is an oblique satire, put into the mouth of an unreliable narrator.[97] Furthermore, to understand '*incredule*' as a doubter of the Christian religion itself was a baseless leap of logic on Johanneau's part. Indeed, the title of Lucian's dialogue *Φιλοψευδὴς ἢ Ἀπιστῶν*, translated by Thomas More as *Philopseudes sive Incredulus*, indicated nothing more a disbeliever in tall tales. (This translation of More's may well have been the very source of Du Clenier's name.)

Du Clenier explains that he has found an ancient Latin manuscript 'in the old library of a monastery hard by the city of Dabas', and translated it for Tryocan's benefit into French. This literary conceit was also employed by Rabelais in *Gargantua*, as when the manuscript of the *Fanfreluches antidotees* is dug up by a certain Jean Audeau, in a meadow by the river Vienne.[98] But Des Periers' Latin manuscript had other possible models in ancient and modern literature, like Garci Rodríguez de Montalvo's preface to his 1508 edition of *Amadís de Gaula*. Montalvo claimed that the fourth book of the romance, now appearing for the first time, had been dug up in a monastery near Constantinople and brought to Europe by an Hungarian merchant.[99] The buried book is a well-worn trope: it has recurred continually in antiquity, the Renaissance, and modernity.[100]

DIALOGUE I.

The first dialogue opens with Mercury alone in the heavens, bewailing all the tasks

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[95] Yves Giraud, 'La lettre et l'esprit: problèmes textuels et éditoriaux autour du Cymbalum Mundi', in *ACR2000*, pp. 23–39.
[96] See the *Clef* in CM 1841, which I will discuss in chapter IV.
[97] François Rabelais' anagrammatic alter-ego 'Alcofrybas Nasier' was a very similar literary creation to 'Thomas Du Clenier'. See Floyd Gray, 'Ambiguity and Point of View in the Prologue to *Gargantua*', *Romanic Review* LVI, no. 1 (February 1965): pp. 12–21 [esp. 17–21]; and Gérard Defaux, 'Rabelais et son masque comique: *Sophista Loquitur*', in *Études rabelaisiennes*, vol. XI, THR, CXXXIX (Geneva: Droz, 1974), pp. 89–135.
[98] NRB 19, sig. [A_v]v.
[99] *Los quatro libros del esforçado y muy virtuoso cavallero Amadis de Gaula* (Saragossa: George Coci, 1508), fol. IIr.
[100] See Livy's *Histories*, 40.29; also Anthony Grafton, *Forgers and Critics: Creativity and Duplicity in Western Scholarship* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), passim.

that the gods have laid on him. (This speech is an imitation of one of Lucian's *Dialogi deorum*, in which Mercury makes a similar complaint to his mother Maja.) On top of everything, he has been entrusted by Jupiter with having the Book of Fate rebound, and decides to go down to Athens to have the job done.

Curtalius and Byrphanes, two rogues, come across the god upon his descent. Almost immediately, the main theme of the *Cymbalum mundi* comes up:[101]

> CURTALIUS. So, sir, what news?
> MERCURY. On my soul I don't know any: I've come here myself to learn some.

This is mockery of novelty-hunters: Mercury himself, the very messenger of the gods, does not know any news. This exchange appears to take its inspiration from Rabelais' *Pantegrueline prognostication*:

> We see this every day throughout France, where the first words that one says to newcomers are: *What news? Do you know anything new? Who says? What rumours in the world*?[102]

Mercury is thirsty, so the three repair to a tavern. The god goes upstairs to steal some silver from the landlady, and while he is gone, the rogues pull a strange book out of his bag:[103]

> CURTALIUS. Here's a book.
> BYRPHANES. What book is it?
> CURTALIUS. [reading]
> Contained in this book:
> *Chronicle of the deeds that Jupiter did before he existed.*
> *Prophecy of the Fates: or, certain tables of what is to be.*
> *Catalogue of the immortal heroes who are to live an eternal life with Jupiter.*
> God almighty, here's a pretty book, good fellow: I don't think the like is sold anywhere in Athens.

The book's title is closely reminiscent of the mock-prognostications that Rabelais, Des Periers, and others had written. The Book of Fate is by no means a stand-in for Scripture: it is an almanac. Later on, in the third dialogue, Cupid makes the connection explicit in his description of the book: 'Many astrologers', he says, 'are clamouring to have it, or to find a copy of it: for they say that it could make their tables, prognostications, and almanacs much more reliable and true.'

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[101] A_{iv} r. 19–22.
[102] …ce que nous voyons encores de iour en iour par France ou le premier propos quon tient a gens fraischement arrivez sont Quelles nouvelles? scavez vous rien de nouveau? Quy dit? qui bruit par le monde? | Cf. Screech, ed., *Pantagrueline prognostication*, pp. 4–5.
[103] B_i r. 1–12.

The rogues steal the book and replace it with a lookalike. Mercury comes back, and there is a quarrel. Mercury claims that the Beaune wine they're drinking is better than Olympian nectar, for which the rogues reprove his impiety.[104] Mercury then asks the hostess to tell him the names of the two rogues, for he suspects that they have caught him in his theft. In return for their names, and for giving him such good wine, he promises to extend her life for fifty years. But she is wise to Mercury's insincerity. She rebukes him for the promise, on the basis that no one can change the term of a mortal's life. Mercury angrily replies that as punishment for her lack of faith, she will miraculously spend the rest of her life as a commoner and bleed every month.

In a closing soliloquy, Mercury plots against the two rogues, though he still does not know that they have taken the Book of Fate:[105]

> If ever they fall into my hands, I'll pass them on to Charon, who'll make them wait a little while on the shore, and won't let them pass for three thousand years. Yes I'll play one more trick on you, Byrphanes and Curtalius: for before I give the Book of Immortality back to my father Jupiter (the one that I'm going to have to have rebound) I'll erase your pretty names from it if I find them written inside, and the name of your hostess too, who is so haughty that she can't bring herself to believe that someone wants to do her a good turn.

The mention of Charon is likely a reference to Lucian's *Cataplus*, which is one of the many Lucianic dialogues that portray the jocular relationship between Mercury and the Ferryman. The joke in the *Cataplus* is the same as Des Periers': Clotho dooms men to pass eventually into the underworld, but Mercury's dallying can nevertheless force the dead to wait uncomfortably on the shore of the Styx. Mercury's second plan for revenge is yet another Lucianic joke: he is exactly as powerless as the mortals to change Fate, but no less willing than them to scribble in an almanac in order to give himself the illusion of control.

After Mercury is gone, the rogues gawk at their stolen treasure:[106]

> CURTALIUS. Let's see in the meantime whether this theft of ours is foretold in it, and whether it says that we'll give it back someday, to make us surer of the fact.
> BYRPHANES. If it does, we'll find it here; for look at this title, *Fata & eventus anni.*

This passage eliminates the last doubt that the Book of Fate is a parody of an almanac. It is a catalogue of the events of the coming year, predicted on the basis of mysterious communion with the heavens, and containing the deeds of men to the tiniest particular. The passage just

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[104] Cf. *Amphitruo* vv. 282–90, which also has Mercury blaspheming more sorely than a mortal.
[105] B_{iii} r. 20 – v. 4.
[106] B_{iii} v. 26 – B_{iv} r. 5.

quoted makes the same point as a section of Des Periers' *Prognostication des Prognostications*; that is, if prognostication really does what it says it does, then it should foretell the fraudulent divinations of the prognosticators themselves.[107] Before they can examine the book more closely, the rogues see their friend Ardelio coming, and they hastily stash the book away.

As we will see in the chapters to follow, this dialogue has been characterized since 1711 as a mocking pastiche of the New Testament. According to this interpretation as it was formulated in the nineteenth century, Mercury (Christ) comes down to earth at the behest of Jupiter (God) to have the Book of Fate (the Law) remade. But Mercury is so powerless that he lets himself be robbed by common thieves. Later, when he makes vain promises of long (eternal) life to the landlady, she sees through him. Like all men and gods, he can do nothing to change the natural course of the universe.

It may be true that Des Periers meant to ridicule men who pretended to know or manipulate fate. But if so, it does not follow that he meant to satirize religion as such: only a certain improper attitude to God. Such an argument was set out in another Lucianic work of the period: Ulrich von Hutten's *Fortuna* of 1520.[108] In that dialogue, Lady Fortune explains that most prayers are useless. Fortune herself has no conscious power over the lives of human beings, and no one can know or hope to change the will of Jupiter (i.e., God). The argument is borrowed directly from Juvenal's tenth satire, which is quoted directly at the end of the dialogue: Hutten, despairing of prayers to Fortune, resigns himself to 'praying to Christ the Saviour to give him a sound mind in a sound body'.[109]

Hutten's direct comparison of Jupiter to God was a bolder religious statement than anything that appears in the *Cymbalum mundi*. Yet to my knowledge, it has never been asserted of the *Fortuna* that Ulrich von Hutten was attempting to make an atheist point in asserting

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[107] Brief, rien n'y a dont ne tiennent propos
Par leur perfaict Astralabe & Compos:
Mais ilz ne font aucunes mentions
De leur Progno)d'abus(stications,
A scavoir mon si telle marchandise
Aura son cours quoy que le marchant dise,
Pourtant fault il, pour ung peu practiquer
En cestuy art, d'elles prognostiquer.
| In short, there's nothing that they don't talk about by the aid of their inerrant astrolabe and compass: but they never make mention of their own deceitful prognostications. To my knowledge, if their wares did what they were supposed to (the merchant's words notwithstanding) then they should have to predict their own prognostications. *Prognostication des prognostications*, 1537, fol. [B_i *r.*]

[108] First printed in *Hulderichi Hutteni Eq. Germ. Dialogi. Fortuna. Febris prima. Febris secunda. Trias Romana. Inspicientes* (Mainz: Johann Schöffer, 1520).

[109] '[HUTTEN:] adeo in proximum hoc sacellum declinans à servatore Christo orabo, ut sit mens sana in corpore sano. [FORTUNA:] Sapis tandem.' Ibid., sig. C_6r.

that prayers to God for specific favours are pointless. The suggestion that superstitious people pray uselessly is not an indictment of God, but of *superstition*.

DIALOGUE II. ΨΑΜΜΟΣΚΟΠΟΥΝΤΕΣ

The second dialogue opens with a conversation between Mercury and a man called Trigabus. His name means 'thrice-mocking'; an apparent play on *Trismegistus*. The occult allusion is apposite, as at the beginning of the dialogue, Trigabus reminds Mercury of three men whom he had once deceived with the promise of the Philosopher's Stone. Mercury had told them that he had ground it up into powder and scattered it in an arena. Since then, the three men have done nothing but comb the sand in search of particles of the Stone. If they found it, Mercury had apparently promised, the reward would be immense:[110]

> If they could find a piece, however small, of the Philosopher's Stone, they would work miracles. They'd transmute metals, break the bars of open doors, heal the hale, and interpret the language of birds. They'd easily get whatever they wanted from the gods, so long as it were a permissible thing that was bound to happen, like good weather after the rain, flowers and drizzles in spring, dust and heat in the summer, fruit in autumn, and cold and mud in winter. In short they'd do all things and many others.

This description is paraphrased, in parts word-for-word, from Rabelais' *Pantagrueline prognostication*. The joke is an old one: prognosticators can foretell anything, provided it was always obviously going to happen; and alchemists can do anything, provided it is part of the ordinary course of nature.

Trigabus goes on:[111]

> One says that red and green clothing must be worn to find pieces of the Stone. Another says that yellow and blue work better. One is of the opinion that one must not eat more than six times in a day, and with a certain diet. Another says that it is not good to sleep with women. One says that one must use a candle, even at high noon. Another says the opposite.

Here we have the beginnings of the anti-sectarian polemic that constitutes the second dialogue. This description of the three searchers, in fact, is paraphrased directly from Erasmus' description of monks and friars in the *Laus stultitiæ*.[112]

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[110] B_{iv} v. 18– C_i r. 13.
[111] C_{ii} r. 2–10.
[112] Quid autem iucundius, quam quod omnia faciunt ex præscripto, quasi Mathematicis utentes rationibus, quas præterire piaculum sit. Quot nodos habeat calceus, quo colore cingula, vestis quot discriminibus varieganda, quâ materiâ, quotque culmis latum cingulum, qua specie, et quot modiorum capax cucullus, quot digitis latum capillitium, quot dormiendum horas. | What could be more amusing than their doing everything by precept, as if they were using mathematical rules, which it would be a sin to ignore: how many knots on their shoes; what shades and colours their clothes must be distinguished by; what material and what breadth their belts must have;

Finally it is agreed to go visit the three men in the arena. In order to avoid recognition, Mercury disguises himself by magic as an old man. Trigabus now begs Mercury to tell him the secret of transformation, and extracts a promise to that effect. This particular exchange comes from the *Gallus* of Lucian, where Micyllus begs his talking cock to give him a magic feather in order to turn invisible.[113]

Mercury and Trigabus enter the arena. They meet the three sand-scryers, whose names, we learn, are Cubercus, Rhetulus, and Drarig. The first two are anagrams for *Buccerus* and *Lutherus*, respectively. Thus these are Luther and Bucer, and the third is possibly Girard Roussel, Bishop of Oloron and Evangelical confessor to Queen Marguerite of Navarre.[114] In light of the passage from the *Laus stultitiæ* cited above, it is no shock that we should find in this dialogue a satire against hypocritical churchmen.

The three men describe their efforts to find the shards of the Philosopher's Stone. Each in turn explains that he has found a piece of it, and that the other two have gathered nothing but sand. Rhetulus (that is, Luther) makes the following speech:[115]

> Not only do I transmute metals, like gold into lead—I mean, lead into gold—but I also work transformations in men, as when I make them harder than any metal, by force of their new opinions, and cause them to take up a new way of living. Those who once never dared look at the Vestal Virgins, I cause to approve of sleeping with them. Those who dressed like Bohemians, I cause to dress like Turks. Those who once went on horseback, I cause to go on foot. Those who were used to give, I force to beg.

This is standard mockery of Luther, including the philo-Turkism and the identification of nuns with vestal virgins. The *Ludus ludentem luderum ludens*, an anti-Lutheran satire of 1531, had put similar words into the mouth of its protagonist.[116] Shall we say that it too was a crypto-

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what kind of hood they have, and how many bushels it must be able to contain; how many fingerlengths of hair they may wear; and how many hours they may sleep? | § 54.

[113] GALLUS. But it's forbidden to do that. After all, Mercury bade me to cry out and denounce the thief if anyone should snatch my feather.
MICYLLUS. That's hardly possible; just imagine that Mercury, a thief himself, should forbid others from doing likewise.

[114] For the last identification see M. A. Screech, 'Préface', in *Cymbalum Mundi*, by Bonaventure Des Périers?, ed. Peter Hampshire Nurse, 3rd ed., Textes Littéraires Français (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1983), pp. 3–17 [11]. A rival theory, making Drarig refer to Erasmus, was first proposed by Jean-Bernard Michault, 'Notes critiques sur le Livre intitulé: *Cymbalum mundi*', in *Mêlanges historiques et philologiques*, N. Tilliard, vol. I (Paris, 1754), 145–149 [147]; and defended in modern times by Lucien Febvre: 'Origène et Des Périers ou l'énigme du *Cymbalum Mundi*', *BHR* II (1942): pp. 7–131 [28–30].

[115] D_i r. 20–v. 6.

[116] 'As far as religion is concerned, I shall speak openly and fearlessly: We must not make war on the Turk. The Ten Commandments are impossible to keep. The Fathers kept the word of God in darkness. All councils went wrong. The Church of God exists only in spirit. There are only two (or three) sacraments, and they do not bestow grace. Ceremonies and masses are not sacrifices. Monks, vestals [!], priests, bishops, cardinals, and popes are but idols, painted masks, Antichrists.' [Quod vero ad religionem spectat palam & intrepide fateor…adversus Thurcam non belligerandum, Decalogi præcepta observatu impossibilia: Patres tenebras verbi dei, esse, Concilia

atheist screed? Surely there were reasons besides proto-Marxist materialism to deride Luther in 1530s Bavaria. And surely Des Periers had his own reasons for including his version of the satire in the *Cymbalum mundi*.

Cubercus and Drarig fiercely contest Rhetulus' claim to have found the Stone, and a scuffle breaks out. But Rhetulus scorns to contend further, and excuses himself from the arena in order to attend dinner with the senator Venulus. Trigabus mocks him for accepting this invitation, where he will tell empty tales amid libertine excess. Mercury replied: 'Now you see what my Art is good for'. Here is the punchline of the whole dialogue: the Philosopher's Stone is indeed very powerful, but only as the source of *nouvelles* to be retold at table.

Now Mercury prepares to go, but Trigabus demands that he fulfil his earlier promise to disclose the secret of transfiguration. Mercury duly whispers it into his ear, but too softly to be heard. Then he disappears. A disappointed Trigabus consoles himself with the following reflection:[117]

> But now I come back to myself, and recognize how foolish it is to count on something that doesn't exist at all: and twice foolish to hope for something impossible.

Trigabus' rumination, which is consonant with the *Prognostication*'s message, ends the second dialogue. There is nothing very mysterious about this text at all. Its subject is alchemy, plain and simple. Not but that there is a religious element in the dialogue: the characters' names, of course, are anagrams for those of reforming clerics. But mocking churchmen as alchemical fraudsters was no literary innovation here. We can say more: for centuries before Bonaventure Des Periers wrote his dialogues, it was a commonplace to skewer posturing churchmen by associating them with the Philosopher's Stone, whether the churchmen in question were cast as victims or as confidence men.[118] Erasmus had mocked alchemists in

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omnia errasse, Ecclesiam Dei solum in spiritu, Sacramenta aut duo aut maximum tria existere, & ea gratiam nullam conferre, Ceremonias liberas & missam sacrificium neutiquam esse, Monachos, Vestales, Sacerdotes: Episcopos: Cardinales, Papas, Idola, Larvas oleatas, & Antichristos esse.] | *Ludus ludentem luderum ludens, quo Ioannes Hasenbergius Bohemis in Bachanalibus Lypsiæ, omnes ludificantem Ludionem, omnibus ludendum exhibuit* (Landshut: Johann Weißenburger, 1531), fol. [E_i v.] – [E_{ii} *r*.].

[117] D_{iv} v. 3–7.

[118] The Canon's Yeoman's Tale is about a cleric who beguiles a hapless priest into buying an alchemical recipe for silver at exorbitant cost. The Yeoman ends his tale by demanding that faithful Christians shun such impious wizardry as the quest for the Stone (Fragment G, ll. 1472–79 [in Skeat's edition, pp. 553–554]):

> … Sith god of hevene
> Ne wol nat that the philosphres nevene
> How that a man shal come un-to this stoon
> I rede, as for the beste, lete it goon.
> For who-so maketh god his adversarie
> As for to werken any thing in contrarie
> Of his wil, certes, never shal he thryve,
> Thogh that he multiplye terme of his lyve.

several texts (including the *Laus stultitiæ* and the *Adagia*)[119], but most sustainedly in his *Alcumista*, a dialogue about a scheming priest who swindles one of his colleagues with promises of life and riches. Alchemy was a very popular object of interest and mockery until the end of the Middle Ages. We fail in our historical imagination if we think that because it is quaint to us, it was also quaint to men of the sixteenth century; and that Des Periers must therefore have used it as a mere allegory for something else.

It has also been asserted since the eighteenth century that by deriding reformers, Bonaventure Des Periers was deriding Reformation as such; perhaps as part of his larger programme of laughing religion to scorn. This opinion is badly supported. It ignores the extent to which anti-sectarianism itself was a perfectly pious theme in the early sixteenth century, even among anti-Papists and even before Luther's schism. In the *Laus stultitiæ*, Erasmus had vituperated sectarian clerics like this:

> They take no care to be similar to Christ, but only to be dissimilar to each other. A large part of their joy is in their appellations: some rejoice in calling themselves Franciscans, and among these there are Colettani, Minores, Minims, and Bullists. Then there are Benedictines, Bernardines, Brigadenes, Augustines, Williamites, and Jacobites—as if it were too little to be called Christians.

This passage was in turn directly inspired from I Corinthians 1:12–13.[120] Erasmus' polemic was obviously directed against religious sects, but the same Pauline trope was eventually directed just as easily against schismatic theologians in the early years of the Reformation. Consider the following lines from a poem of Clement Marot, the 'Epistre à Bouchard':

> Point ne suys Lutheriste,
> Ne Zvinglien, encores moins Papiste:
> Ie ne fuz onq, ne suys, & ne seray,
> Sinon Chrestien, & mes iours passeray
> S'il plaist a Dieu, soubs son filz IESVs Christ.[121]

For Chaucer's own models, see Carolyn P. Collette and Vincent Dimarco, 'The Canon's Yeoman's Tale', in *Sources and Analogues of the Canterbury Tales*, ed. Robert M. Correale and Mary Hamel, vol. II, Chaucer Studies (Boydell & Brewer, 2005), pp. 715–748.

[119] For instance, *Adagium* no. 1957, 'Lavares Peliam': 'Fortassis non intempestiviter dicetur, ubi quis falsa spe ductus inanem sumit operam, veluti si quis arte, quam vocant alcimicam, fretus sibi promittat futurum, ut e stanno fiat argentum, ex ære aurum.'

[120] 'I say this, that each one of you says "I am of Paul", or "I am of Apollos", or "I am of Cephas", or "I am of Christ". Is Christ divided? Was Paul was crucified for you; or were you baptized in the name of Paul?'

[121] I am not a Lutheran or a Zwinglian; still less a Papist. I never was, am not and will never be anything but a Christian, and I will pass my days (godwilling) in the service of his son Jesus Christ. | 'Epistre qu'il envoya a Bouchard, docteur en Theologie'. First printed by Estienne Roffet ca. 1534, in *Le premier livre de la Metamorphose d'Ovide, translaté de latin en françois…Item Certaines œuvres qu'il feit en prison, non encores imprimeez*, pp. 68–9.

This is the same anti-schismatic trope as in the *Laus stultitiæ*. Like Erasmus, Marot seems to have modelled his poem on the verse *Ἐγὼ μέν εἰμι Παύλου, Ἐγὼ δὲ Ἀπολλῶ, Ἐγὼ δὲ Κηφᾶ, Ἐγὼ δὲ Χριστοῦ*. By 1534, conflicts between religious orders had lost their relevance; but sectarianism was still of great theological importance.

One might also cite, as M. A Screech did, the following passage from one of Luther's pamphlets:

> Truly you should not say that you are Lutheran or Papist, for no one died for you, or is your master, besides Christ alone: and you should know yourself to be a Christian. … And if they ask you if you are a Lutheran, you must not answer with hollow words, but openly confess Christ, whether it was Luther, Klaus or Jürgen who preached him. Let the person go: but the *teaching* you must confess.[122]

Screech concluded that Marot had borrowed the device from Luther. I think that he missed the pregnant point of his own example. Luther himself tells us, right here, that Lutheranism and Evangelism are not to be identified with each other!

Jean Crespin wrote a passage to the same effect in his hagiography of Martin Gonin the Waldensian.[123] He and Marot must both be taken seriously on this point. Lutheranism certainly contained within itself an anti-schismatic element—but it by no means follows that

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[122] War ists / das du … nicht sollt sagen / ich byn Lutherisch odder Bepstisch / denn der selb ist keyner fur dich gestorben / noch deyn meyster / sondern alleyn Christus / und sollt dich Christen bekennen…und von der lere wegen tasten sie dich an / und fragen dich ob du Lutherisch seyest. Hie mustu warlich nicht mit rhor worten reden / szondern frey Christum bekennen / es hab yhn Luther / Claus odder Iörge predigt / die person lasz faren / aber die lere mustu bekennen. | *Von beyder gestallt des Sacraments zu nehmen / und ander newrung. Doct. Martin Luthers meynung* (Wittenberg, 1522), fol. [D_{ii} *v*.] – [D_{iii} *r*]. Quoted (from the Weimarer Ausgabe) by Michael Andrew Screech, *Clément Marot: A Renaissance Poet Discovers the Gospel: Lutheranism, Fabrism, and Calvinism in the Royal Courts of France and of Navarre and in the Ducal Court of Ferrara*, vol. LIV, Studies in Medieval and Reformation Thought (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1994), p. 29.

[123] The following exchange, which took place in a prison in Grenoble, must be assumed to be fictitious, but it is nevertheless extremely revealing of the antisectarian consciousness of the Evangelical reformers:

> D'ou es tu? dirent les autres. Tu es quelque Lutherien: car les lettres que tu portes sont Lutheriennes, & monstrent que tu es tel. Ie suis d'Angruene en Piedmont (dit Martin) & à present ie demeure à Geneve, ou i'exerce l'art d'imprimerie: & ne suis nullement Lutherien, ny le voudroye estre, attendu que Luther n'est point mort pour moy, ains Iesus Christ, duquel ie porte le nom, & pour lequel, & avec lequel ie veux vivre & mourir. Interrogué qui preschoit à Geneve, respondit que c'estoit M. Guillaume Farel, & Pierre Viret. Sur quoy le Procureur du Roy luy dit que c'estoyent les plus grans Lutheriens du monde. Mais Martin luy contredit doucement, disant, Ne vous desplaise: ce sont vrais serviteurs de Dieu, qui ne preschent que la pure doctrine, comme ont faict les Apostres, & ceux de l'Eglise primitive.

Jean Crespin, *Recueil de plusieurs personnes, qui ont constamment enduré la mort pour le nom de nostre Seigneur Iesus Christ, depuis Iean Wicleff & Iean Hus iusques à ceste année presente.* ([Geneva]: Jean Crespin, 1555), p. 395.
('Where are you from?' the others said. 'You are some Lutheran: for the letters you are carrying are Lutheran, and show you to be one.' 'I am from Angrogne in Piedmont', said Martin, 'and I am coming now from Geneva. I am no Lutheran; nor should I like to be one, as Luther did not die for me but Jesus Christ, whose name I bear, and for whom, and with whom, I want to live and die.' Asked who preached at Geneva, he responded that it was Guillaume Farel and Pierre Viret. Whereupon the King's prosecutor told him that these were the greatest Lutherans in the world. But Martin contradicted him, saying: 'with all due respect, they are true servants of God, who preach only the pure doctrine, just as did the Apostles and the members of the primitive Church.')

anti-sectarianism was a diacritical mark of Lutheranism. We should refrain, therefore, from falling into the same error as Screech, and calling Des Periers or anybody else a Lutheran for embracing an ordinary Evangelical belief. Anybody who read Paul's words in I Corinthians 1 with a certain attitude was ready to condemn the splitting of the church into personal factions, and to write lists of contemporary sects after the paradigm of 'Paul, Apollo, Cephas'. Here, for instance, is Estienne Dolet, Des Periers' collaborator:

> Let Luther produce his grave commentaries, Erasmus send out his lucid paraphrases, Oecolampadius blast his novelties, Zwingli tell of his miracles, and Lambertus speak of wonders with his cowl cast aside: still Christ is one.[124]

The dialogue of the Stone-hunters is not a Lutheran parody, any more than it is a crypto-atheist allegory. They belong to a well-worn Evangelical trope.[125]

All this should put into perspective the genuine references to the Gospel that occur in the dialogue. At one point, Cubercus (a stand-in for the famously conciliatory Bucer) says:[126]

> Mercury, who gave it to us, did not mean for us to fling these reproaches at each other, but wants us to love one another as brothers. For he has not set us on the search for such a noble and godly thing in dissension, but in love. But we are doing just the opposite.

This speech contains a direct citation of the Letter to the Romans, and is a general pastiche of Pauline rhetoric.[127] Later Rhetulus, justifying the stone-hunt to Mercury, says: 'They do very well to search: for that which is not found, will be found'. This recalls a saying of Jesus which is reported in all of the synoptic gospels: 'there is nothing concealed but it will be discovered, and nothing hidden but it will be known'.[128] It would be wrong to treat these allusions to Scripture as blasphemous parodies. They are rather parodies *of* blasphemy, whose purpose is to send up the impious alchemist-philosopher-theologians who search for power and knowledge from a source other than Christ. Cubercus-Bucer's statement is a grotesque

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[124] Gravissimas commentationes Lutherus proferat, luculentas paraphrases Erasmus emittat, inaudita Œcolampadius crepet, monstra narret Zvinglius, stupenda Lambertus abiecto cucullo loquatur, unus est nihilominus Christus. | Estienne Dolet, *Dialogus de Imitatione Ciceroneana, adversus Desiderium Erasmum Roterodamum, pro Christophoro Longolio* (Sebastianus Gryphius, 1535), pp. 38–9.

[125] As Philipp August Becker pointed out, Des Periers conspicuously avoided criticizing John Calvin: this was perhaps because of his personal or theological loyalties to him. See *Bonaventure des Periers als Dichter und Erzähler. Vorgelegt in der Sitzung am 10. Oktober 1923*, Akademie der Wissenschaften in Wien. Philosophisch-historische Klasse, Sitzungsberichte, vol. 200, Abhandlung 3 (Vienna and Leipzig: Hölder-Pichler-Tempsky A.-G., 1924), p. 51. Louis Delaruelle gave the alternative explanation that Calvin was not yet the head of a defined religious party in 1538: 'Étude sur le problème du « Cymbalum mundi »', *Revue d'Histoire littéraire de la France* XXXII, no. 1 (1925): pp. 1–23 [23 n. 2].

[126] C_{iii} v. 16–23.

[127] Rom 12.10: *τῇ φιλαδελφίᾳ εἰς ἀλλήλους φιλόστοργοι.*

[128] Matt 10.26: *οὐδὲν γάρ ἐστιν κεκαλυμμένον ὃ οὐκ ἀποκαλυφθήσεται, καὶ κρυπτὸν ὃ οὐ γνωσθήσεται.* See also Marc 4.22; Luc 8.17; 12.2.

misapplication of Christian piety to the un-Christian task of alchemy, just as Rhetulus-Luther's sanctimonious epigram is an inappropriate use of Biblical rhetoric. Just like Dolet, More and Erasmus, Des Periers was deriding the men who put their human energies into something alien to the Gospel.

His denunciation of Christian sects had Lucianic as well as Pauline inspiration. In fact, many of Lucian's satires against rival philosophical schools had already been identified as sources for religious polemic two decades before the *Cymbalum mundi* was published. In their joint edition of Latin translations of Lucian, Erasmus and Thomas More had repeatedly stated that Lucian's invective against philosophers should be wielded against vainly striving theologians. Take Erasmus' dedicatory letter to the dialogue *Convivium*:

> Erasmus of Rotterdam to Joannes Eutychius.[129] Most learned Eutychius, though this dialogue of Lucian's contains much that is artful (on account of its elegance preserved so wonderfully across so many and such various characters), still I encountered some who said that it should be suppressed, for that it injures all sects of the philosophers with rather too much licence and raillery. Still it seems more just to me to fume at the ways of our own age, in which we see the schools of the philosophers and theologians squabbling no less childishly; and drawing swords against each other no less cruelly; and battles erupting among teachers of religion no less bloody, than anything which Lucian invented or described in his *Convivium*. Therefore I have dedicated this book, which I found ownerless, yet worthy of a patron, to Eutychius. Farewell, *καὶ ἐυτύχαι*, that you might be what you are named. Antwerp, 1517.[130]

The *Convivium* itself is a dialogue that describes the crazed squabbling of various philosophical sectarians at a banquet. Thus as early as 1517, before the Lutheran schism had emerged, Erasmus had drawn a connection between Lucian's satire and the internecine Christian conflicts of his own day. Thomas More's preface to his translations of Lucian made the same

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[129] Was this Ioannes Eutychius the same man as Iohannes Eutychus Deperius; i.e. Bonaventure Des Periers? It seems unlikely. There is no independent evidence to suggest that Des Periers knew Erasmus personally, and this dedication was written in 1517, nearly twenty years before the first attestation of Des Periers in Olivetan's Bible. On the other hand, P. S. Allen's identification of 'Eutychius' with Johann Huttich of Mainz seems doubtful (though widely repeated in biographical dictionaries). See Percy Stafford Allen, *Opus epistolarum Des. Erasmi Roterodami*, vol. II: 1514–1517 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1910), pp. 502–3 [ep. 550]; Heinrich Grimm, 'Huttichius (Eigtl. *Huttich*), Johannes', in *Neue Deutsche Biographie* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1974).

[130] ERASMVS ROTERODAMVS IOANNI EVTYCHIO SVO S. D.
Quanquam hic Luciani Dialogus Eutychi doctissime, plurimum habeat artis, ob decorum mire servatum in personis tam multis, tamque diversis: tamen aliquot repperi, qui dicerent esse premendum, quod liberius, ac velut *ἐξ ἀμάξης* philosophorum omne genus laceret. At mihi videtur iustius esse stomachandum in huius seculi mores, quo videmus philosophorum ac theologorum scholas multo puerilius etiam inter se dissidere: nec minus atrociter digladiari, tum inter religionis professores nihilominus cruentam esse pugnam, quàm in eo convivio fuisse Lucianus, vel finxit, vel retulit. Hunc igitur libellum, quoniam forte *ἀδέσποτον* repperi, & tamen patrono videbatur egere, Eutychio dicavi. Bene vale, *καὶ ἐυτύχαι*, ut planè sis quod diceris. Antwerpiæ. AN. M. D. XVII

point. On the subject of the *Somnium sive Gallus*, he wrote: 'You will hear a cock talking to a shoemaker, his master, more ridiculously than any clown; and yet more wisely than the crowd of theologians and philosophers who so haughtily quarrel over trifles in the schools'.[131]

Such anti-sectarian interpretations of Lucian were apparently very popular, to judge not only from their frequency but also from the responses they provoked in readers. In one copy of the Erasmus-More translations, in the margin of *Menippus sive Necromantia*, next to Lucian's description of the philosophers in Hell—

> I saw how those who spurned wealth longed to heap up riches, fought over profit, taught for pay, and underwent everything for the sake of money. And those who disdained fame with their words trained their whole plan of life on fame—[132]

a contemporary annotator scrawled: *behold the theologians of our generation*.[133] Now, this very passage, understood in the light of More's and his anonymous reader's commentary, makes up the basic argument of Dialogue II. According to it certain theologians, the spiritual successors to Lucian's philosophers, are prattling pretenders to the truth. Do we think that Des Periers was an atheist on the basis that he satirized what he saw as the blatherings of contemporary theologians, and resorted to Evangelical material to do so? Very well, then Erasmus was an atheist for mocking monks and friars; then Thomas More was an atheist for his hatred of sectarians; then Cléante was an atheist for seeing through Tartuffe.[134] We must not forget that imposture was an accusation that could—indeed, that typically did—come out of the mouths of pious men.

Compare this dialogue to a far more famous one: *Iulius exclusus e cœlis*, rumoured (probably falsely) to have been written by Erasmus.[135] Here the pope himself (Julius II) is

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[131] 'Audies… Gallum cum hero sutore confabulantem, magis ridicule quàm ullus possit γελωτοποιός, sed rursum sapientius quàm theologorum ac philosophorum vulgus nonnunquam in scholis magno supercilio, magnis de nugis disputat.'

[132] 'Eos enim qui spernendam censebant pecuniam, avidissime conspexi colligendis divitiis inhiare, de fœnore litigantes, pro mercede docentes. Omnia denique nummorum gratia tolerantes. Ii vero qui gloriam verbis aspernabantur, omnem vitæ suæ rationem in gloriam referebant…'

[133] 'Vide nostros Theologos huius seculi.' British Library G.2398.(2), p. 563.

[134] Cléante, who says after all: *Gardez-vous, s'il se peut, d'honorer l'imposture: mais au vray zele aussi n'allez pas faire iniure.*

[135] For the text and an introduction, see Wallace K. Ferguson, ed., *Erasmi Opuscula: A Supplement to the* Opera Omnia (The Hague: M. Nijhoff, 1933), pp. 38–124. My confidence in Erasmus' authorship once rested on the arguments laid out by James K. McConica, 'Erasmus and the "Julius": A Humanist Reflects on the Church', in *The Pursuit of Holiness in Late Medieval and Renaissance Religion*, ed. Charles Trinkaus and Heiko Augustinus Oberman (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1974), pp. 444–471; and Silvana Seidel Menchi, ed., 'Iulius exclusus', in *Opera Omnia Desiderii Erasmi Roterodami*, vol. I–8 (Leiden: Brill, 2013), pp. 1–297. I have since been won over, however, to the contrary position of Carl Stange, *Erasmus und Julius II., eine Legende* (Berlin: Alfred Töpelmann, 1937); id., 'Girolamo Rorario und Julius II.', *Zeitschrift für systematische Theologie* 18, no. 4 (1941): pp. 535–588; recently elaborated and defended by Peter Fabisch, *Iulius exclusus e coelis: Motive und Tendenzen gallikanischer und bibelhumanistischer Pabstkritik im Umfeld des Erasmus* (Münster: Aschendorff, 2008). Without getting into the long debates over the dialogue's style and themes, the simple fact is that Erasmus repeatedly disavowed authorship of

represented as a drunken imposter, who tries to gain entrance to heaven after his death despite the objections of St Peter. At first he tries to open the lock of the heavenly gates with his papal key. In vain, because this pope—the head of all Christendom!—is only a pitiful fraud. If we interpreted *Iulius exclusus* with the same hypersensitive suspicions as have traditionally been trained on *Cymbalum mundi*, we would be forced to conclude that it was a blasphemous piece of atheism.[136] There is, however, one important difference, which is that the *Iulius exclusus* states explicitly what is only implicit in the second dialogue. Therefore it has been treated (correctly) as a pious satire of the corruptions of the church; while the second dialogue of the *Cymbalum mundi*, whose polemical point is closely similar, has been made out to be an *impious* satire of the same.

By now we can see in clearer light what Bonaventure Des Periers was getting at with his dialogue. Here in the arena are reforming churchmen, all pretending to a kind of worldly knowledge and power that they do not have. Here is a pagan god, who has maliciously baited them with the promise of those powers. And here is a mortal who derides them all in an attempt to ingratiate himself with the god. But like Count Dracula in the shaving-mirror, the most important figure of all is the one who does *not* appear.[137] Jesus Christ, who is not mentioned in the second or any other dialogue, is not a participant in the worldly scramble

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it (a fact badly misrepresented by McConica). To convict him of lying would require much firmer evidence than has ever been produced. 'Heute ist zu beobachten', wrote Fabisch grimly, 'daß man eher den anerkannten Erasmusforschern glaubt als Erasmus selbst (p. 9).

[136] See the remark on this point by Prosper Marchand, which he wrote on a slip in CM Mar:

> …J'ajouterai neantmoins, que je ne fais aucune difficulté de reconnoitre, que DES PERIERS ait pu désigner par les *Traits Satyriques* qui sont au commencement de son I. *Dialogue*, la *Vie licencieux* & *debordée* des *Ecclesiastiques* de son tems. Mais, je ne crois pas qu'aucune personne raisonnable s'avise de dire, qu'il soit par cela même *Athée*, et *Ennemi déclaré de toutte Religion*. Car, ce seroit faire tomber ce Reproche odieux sur une infinité de personnes, qui de tout tems ont fait la même chose, sans s'exposer à d'autre Blâme, qu'à celui qu'ils pouvoient encourir de la part des *Ecclesiastiques* mêmes. { J'en trouverois mille Exemples, si j'en avois besoin pour prouver une chose si connuë. Mais, je me contenterai de celui que me fournit le célébre Mr. DES PREAUX dans son *Lutrin*. Les Defauts des *Ecclésiastiques* n'ont peut-être jamais esté plus vivement, ni plus ingénieusement attaquez que dans ce petit *Poëme*. Ils y sont depeints avec les Couleurs du monde si peu ces *Messieurs*-là, qu'on ne fait point de difficulté d'y faire dire à l'un d'eux
>
> *Pour soutenir tes Droits, que le Ciel autorise,*
> *Abîme tout plûtôt; c'est l'Esprit de l'Eglise.*
> *C'est par-là, qu'un Prelat signale sa vigeur.*
> *Ne borne pas ta Gloire à prier dans un choeur.*
> *Ces vertus dans Aleth peuvent être en usage;*
> *Mais, dans Paris, plaidons: c'est là notre partage.*
> *(+DES PREAUX, Lutrin. chant. I.)*
>
> Malgré cela, l'on n'a jamais régardé cet illustre *Poëte* comme un *Impie*, ni comme un *Libertin* et je ne pense pas qu'on s'en avise à l'avenir. Bien loin de là, l'on en a toujours fait une estime très singuliere; & personne n'ignore qu'il étoit engagé de fort bonne foi dans un *Parti*, qui s'est toujours picqué non seulement d'une tresgrande Austerité de Moeurs, mais encore d'une Pieté très profonde et tres recommendable.

[137] I heard this line from my teacher Constantin Fasolt.

for knowledge and lucre. The dialogues are pious inasmuch as they portray the miserable and ridiculous state of mortals without him.

DIALOGUE III.

The third dialogue picks up where the first left off. It opens with a soliloquy from Mercury, who is in trouble because Jupiter has threatened to destroy the world if the Book of Fate is not recovered. What's more, Mercury has been saddled with yet another list of tasks. First, Jupiter has instructed him to have it announced that whoever returns the Book will have whatever wine he wants for a reward.[138] Next, there is a commission from Venus to find Cupid and instruct him to corrupt the morals of the vestal virgins. (Des Periers probably intended this as a satire against nuns; see my comment in the attached edition.)

Mercury now happens on Cupid by chance. 'What news?' asks Cupid. Mercury tells him the story of the Book of Fate and hands him the list of Venus' tasks. After some banter, he bids Cupid farewell and resumes complaining, reflecting that he is weary of being asked continually by passers-by for pieces of news. 'Isn't it a pity', he says, 'that, whether I come down to earth or go back up to heaven, the whole world and the gods are always asking me if I have or know anything new! I'd need a sea of news if I were to fish fresh ones out for them every day'.[139] This rumination recalls strongly the complaint of Sarcomoros at the beginning of the *Prognostication des Prognostications*, down to the complaint of the world's constant demand for *nouvelles fresches*, and its weariness with 'worn-out' information.

Mercury reflects that he could lighten his burden by crafting some new curiosities to tell of. He muses that if he ever said the right magic words—*Gargabanado Phorbantas Sarmotoragos*—he would be able to give speech to a horse; and that would be a good piece of news. It chances that there is a horse below, who overhears the magic words and immediately breaks into speech. This startles his master Statius, in a scene closely following the beginning of Lucian's *Somnium sive gallus*. The horse—whose name is given as 'Phlegon'—berates his master for abusing him. Not only does Statius beat him, he says, but he also starves him and refuses him mares even as he beds village-girls in the stable.

Ardelio, the same busybody who approached the thieves at the end of Dialogue I, now arrives and greets his friend Statius. After jestingly taking the horse's side in his complaint, he exhorts Statius to see the advantages of owning a talking horse. It is such a great curiosity,

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[138] E_{ii} v. 5–10.
[139] F_{ii} v., 13–18.

says Ardelio, that Statius could sell it for an enormous price. Or else he could use it as a stud, and make a profit from eager breeders.

In the end Mercury gives a little epilogue. 'The rumour of it', he says, 'will be all over town soon enough; someone will write it down, and perhaps he will add some material of his own to enrich the tale. I'm sure that I'll soon find copies of it on sale in the bookshops.'[140] Here is yet another explanation for the origin of *nouvelles*: a strange thing happens, and the rumour-peddlers exploit its novelty for their own gain. Thus alongside astronomy (represented by the Book of Fate) and theological faction (represented by the three alchemists), the rumour of the talking horse fills out Bonaventure Des Periers' taxonomy of un-Evangelical distractions. Two years before, he had touched on the same theme at the close of his poem for Olivetan's Bible:

Vana decent vanos / tu non ignota recantes,
St, tua (cum potis es) non aliena colas.

DIALOGUE IV. CANINA FACUNDIA

The last dialogue consists of a conversation between two talking dogs, Pamphagus and Hylactor. Both names come from Ovid's catalogue of hounds in Actæon's pack, and seem to have been chosen from it at random.

Hylactor appears on stage first, and complains about how lonely he is, being the only dog in the world who can talk. Soon he discovers Pamphagus, who surprises him by addressing him in speech. The theme of speaking dogs' discovering each other is reminiscent of one of Lucian's *Dialogi mortuorum*, in which Menippus the Cynic talks to Cerberus about the descent of Socrates into the underworld. 'Hail, Cerberus', he says, 'seeing as we are somewhat related (I being a dog myself),[141] tell me, by the Stygian swamp: how fared Socrates when he came here? Probably as a god you can even speak like a man if you like, and not just bark.'

The dogs immediately fall into dispute over the question of whether it would be wise to let on that they can talk. Hylactor is enthusiastic about the prospect, but Pamphagus warns him sternly against it: 'you won't have the freedom that you would like: for often enough you'd have to speak when you'd rather sleep and have your rest. And who knows if in the end they wouldn't get tire of you?' The whole argument is imitated from Lucian's essay *De mercede conductis*, a polemic against serving in the houses of rich men.

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[140] G_i r. 16–20.
[141] '*κύων καὶ αὐτὸς ὤν*'. Menippus is a Cynic, and thus a dog like Cerberus by etymological right.

The dogs now come across a stray letter on the ground, which they discover has been sent from the Antipodes. Pamphagus reads it aloud to Hylactor: it contains a request for safe passage through the earth that is reminiscent of an episode in Numbers and Deuteronomy.[142]

Now the hunter Gargilius has called his pack home, and the dogs must part. After Hylactor runs off, Pamphagus closes the *Cymbalum mundi* with the following rumination:[143]

> That foolish Hylactor won't be able to keep himself from speaking to make the world speak of him in turn. He wouldn't be able to say even a few words but he'd immediately attract a crowd of people, and the rumour of it would run through the whole city; for so curious are men, and so ready to talk of new and strange bits of news.

This is partly paraphrased after the preface to Rabelais' *Pantegrueline prognostication*:

> David says to God: *thou wilt destroy them who tell lies*. And it is no trivial sin to lie so deliberately, and to deceive the poor world that is so curious to know novelties.[144]

Thus the *Cymbalum mundi* ends as it began: denouncing the false prognosticators and hunters after news.

Now we can weigh up the view of Jean Fréderic Bernard, Éloi Johanneau, Abel Lefranc, and Lucien Febvre that the *Cymbalum mundi* was the work of an atheist. We have seen that the *Cymbalum mundi*, like the *Prognostication*, was an invective against news-hunting, alchemy, judicial astrology, and other earthly distractions. Are we to think that beneath the dense tissue of references to Lucian and other works, meant partly to serve Erasmian points of anti-schismatism; there is a second, hidden system of references that imply the falseness of Christianity? that Mercury, in addition to being a classical god with a particular role in the anti-astrological and -alchemical satire, is an avatar of Christ? that the talking dogs, besides their role in the satire against *nouvelles*, were (as Saulnier argued) stand-ins for Estienne Dolet and Bonaventure Des Periers? It is hard to accept such proposals unless we are prepared to accept the axiom that a text can admit unlimited allegorical meanings.

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[142] H_{iii} r. 23– v. 14; see my comment in the edition. Translated: 'Dear Antipodes, moved by our wish to speak humanely with you; and in order to learn your good ways of life, and to make ours known to you, we have followed the counsel of the stars and caused some of our people to pass through the Centre of the earth in your direction. But you, on noticing this, have stopped up their tunnel from your side, with the result that they are trapped in the bowels of the earth. Now we beg that it be your pleasure to grant them passage: otherwise, we will make them emerge thence from so many different sides, and in such great number, that you will not know where to run. Then you will be forced to suffer by violence what we now beg you to do out of grace and love, to your great shame and confusion. Farewell from your friends the Lower Antipodes.'

[143] H_{iv} r. 12–19.

[144] Sans doubte veu que dit le prophete Royal [psalmo. v.] a Dieu. *Tu destruiras tous ceulx qui disent mensonges* / ce n'est par legier peche de mentir ainsi a son escient / et ensemble abuser le povre monde qui est curieulx de scavoir choses nouvelles.

For all that, there is still much more to learn about the *Cymbalum mundi*. Historical questions suggest themselves readily: which editions of Lucian, Rabelais, and Erasmus did Bonaventure Des Periers consult?[145] where can we find the same Lucianic borrowings in the writings of his contemporaries? what hermetic books, or parodies thereof, are likely to have informed the satire on alchemy? In order to understand a text even so slight as this one, we need a library's worth of sixteenth-century references, and the task of hunting the right ones down is far from done. It does not do to mock this activity as narrow-minded or dry (or to make droll puns about *sourciers* like Lucien Febvre did).[146] At any rate, so long as we hunt for secrets, allegories, and other jack-o'-lanterns, we will never find anything real.

PUBLICATION

So much for the text itself; now let us turn to the circumstances of the *Cymbalum mundi*'s publication, which are in their own way revealing of the book's intellectual context.

Cymbalum mundi is attested in exactly three surviving copies, from two different editions: one printed in Paris in 1537; and the other in Lyon in 1538.[147]

i. The Paris edition (CM 1537)

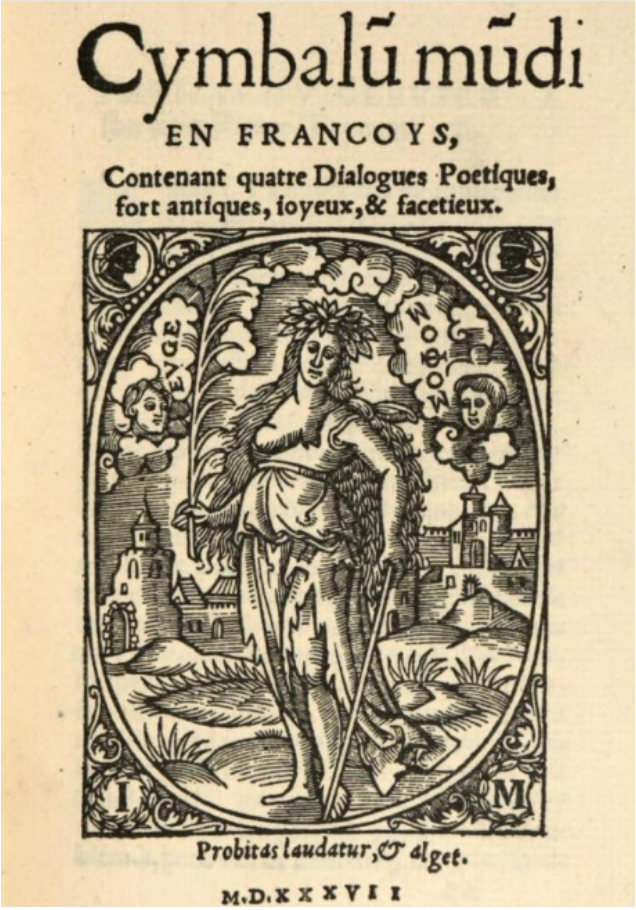
Here are the title page and colophon of CM 1537:[148]

[145] The question of Lucian in particular seems both important and solvable. No single edition published in Latin translation by 1537 contained all of the Lucianic passages cited by Des Periers, but it should be possible to identify a small set of editions which he is likely to have consulted. The essential starting point for this task is Christiane Lauvergnat-Gagnière, 'Bibliographie des œuvres de Lucien de Samosate imprimées au XVe et XVIe siècles', in *Lucien de Samosate et le lucianisme en France au XVIe siècle: athéisme et polémique*, THR, CCXXVII (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1988), pp. 342–411.

[146] 'En bref ce travail sert l'histoire, telle que nous l'entendons ici — dans toute la mesure où elle néglige un historisme vain et sans vertu : celui des sourciers, chers aux bons maîtres de notre jeunesse. Et que perpétuent tant de maîtres moins bons.' Lucien Febvre, 'Maurice Scève éclairé', *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales* IX, no. 1 (1954): pp. 114–115. Cited by Hans-Dieter Mann, *Lucien Febvre. La pensée vivante d'un historien*, Cahiers des Annales 31 (Paris: Armand Colin, 1971), p. 10.

[147] See the bibliography for their present shelfmarks and their provenance.

[148] As represented in the facsimile CM 1914 (accessed on Gallica).



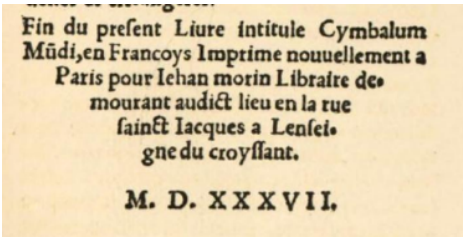
Cymbalũ mũdi

EN FRANCOYS,

Contenant quatre Dialogues Poetiques, fort antiques, ioyeux, & facetieux.

Probitas laudatur, & alget.

M.D.XXXVII



Fin du present Liure intitule Cymbalum Mũdi, en Francoys Imprime nouuellement a Paris pour Iehan morin Libraire demourant audict lieu en la rue sainct Iacques a Lenseigne du croyssant.

M. D. XXXVII.

Note the phrase '*pour Iehan morin*': Morin himself was not strictly speaking the printer of this edition, but only its publisher and vendor. The real printer was Louis Cyaneus (*vulgo* Blaubloom). The evidence for this identification, which is not original to me, is that CM 1537 is set in Simon de Colines' first Small Pica Roman [R75]. This face was never used by anyone besides Colines, who cut the type, and Cyaneus, with whom Colines was closely associated. It is attested in four books: once in Colines' 1522 edition of Lefèvre's commentary on Boethius, once in Cyaneus' 1537 edition of Guillaume Parvy's *Hortus fidei*, once in Jehan Morin's 1538 edition of the *Valet de Marot contre Sagon*, and once in CM 1537. Colines had probably given or sold the type to Cyaneus in the long interval between 1522 and 1537.[149]

Morin, for his part, is a sparsely attested publisher. Though he probably also published some books anonymously (like the *Prognostication*, perhaps), only five books survive with his name and address on them.[150] It does not seem that Morin printed anything with his

[149] Hendrik D. L. Vervliet, *The Palaeotypography of the French Renaissance: Selected Papers on Sixteenth-Century Typefaces*, II vols, Library of the Written World 6 (Leiden: Brill, 2008), p. 73. See also Brigitte Moreau, Geneviève Guilleminot-Chrétien, and Monica Breazu, eds., *Inventaire chronologique des éditions parisiennes du XVIe siècle*, Histoire générale de Paris (Paris: Paris Musées, 2004).

[150] I. [Printed by Louis Cyaneus].

LE VALET
DE MAROT CONTRE
SAGON,
Cum Commento.
[woodcut. *Frippelippes* beating *Sagouin*]
On les vend a Paris en la Rue ſainct Iacques
pres ſainct Benoist, en la bouticque de
Iehan Morin, pres les troys Couronnes
dargent.
1537.

II. [Printed by Louis Cyaneus].

Les diſciples &
AMYS DE MAROT CONTRE
SAGON, LA HVETERIE, ET
Leurs adherentz.
On les vend a Paris en la Rue ſainct Iac-
ques, pres ſainct Benoiſt, a lenſeigne du
Croiſſant, en la boutique de Iehã Morin.
M.D.XXXVII.

III. [Printed by Louis Cyaneus].

Reſponce a Lab-
BE DES CONARS DE
ROVEN.

[woodcut: writers stamping on animals]

On les vend en la rue ſainct Iacques par
Iehan Morin.
M.D.XXXVII

IV. [Printed by Pierre Vidoue]

Le rommant
de la Roſe nouuellement reueu
et corrige oultre les pre
cedentes Im-
preſſions.
[device: Lady Probity]
on les vent a Paris en la Rue Sainct Iasqs
en la boutique de Iehan morin . md.xxxviii.

COLOPHON:

¶Fin du Rommãt de la roſe veu &
Corrige oultre les precedẽtes ĩpreſ-
ſions. Et imprime nouuellement a
Paris / Lan mil cinq cens . xxxviii.

V. CM 1537 [Printed by Louis Cyaneus].

Cymbalũ mũdi
EN FRANCOYS,
Contenant quatre Dialogues Poetiques,
fort antiques, ioyeux, & facetieux.
[device: Lady Probity.]
Probitas laudatur, & alget.
M.D.XXXVII

COLOPHON:

Fin du preſent Liure intitule Cymbalum

own type or press, but rather that his business consisted wholly of contracting books out to printers and then selling them in his shop.

The colophon of CM 1537 specifies that this shop was 'a lenseigne du croyssant'. On the 1537 *Roman de la rose*, however, and on *Pour Marot contre Sagon*, we read: 'Rue sainct Jacques pres sainct Benoist, en la bouticque de Jehan Morin, pres les troys Couronnes d'argent'. (A certain Jacques de Bourbon sold a book at this address in 1526.[151]) Given that this latter address was qualified with '*pres*', as opposed to '*a* lenseigne du croyssant', we can suppose that the landmark *Couronnes* was only approximate, and that the shop's real ensign was a crescent. The shop was in any case near the spot marked here:[152]

LES BERNARDINS
LOSTEL DE LO REINE
R. DES BERNARDINS
R. DE BIEVRE
R. ALEXANDRE LANGLOIS
R. PAVEE DADOULLE
R. S. NICOLAS
LA MARCHE
LA GRANT R. S. VITOIS
LA PLACE MAUBERT
LE PAVE
LESCARMITE S.
R. DES CARMES
PRELLE
BEAUVAIS
R. S. IEHAN DE BIAVVAIS
S. IEHAN DE LATRAN
R. DES NOIRS
R. DU MATRE
LOSTEL DIEV
PETIT PONT
S. CHRISTOFLE
S. GERMAIN LEVIEVS
S. S. EVERIN
COLLEGE DE GERVAIS
R. DE BRIE
LA GRANT R. DELA HERPE
LA GRANT R. S. IAQUES
C. SOPEONNE
CADVI
R. D'SOR BONNE
NER BONNE
RAIEVS
R. DES COLLES
R. DES POIRES
LOVVRE
S. HILAIRE
COQVERET
LEGRAND DECRE
LOMBARS
LA VIEVE
GERME
LEHON S.
LA MARCHE
HAVAR
R. L.
S. ETIENNE
S. MICHEL
MONTEGV
S. TIARE
RAINS
MARMOV
LES CHOLES
LA PAINT
R. DES ARCIS
R. DE LA VIEVE
R. DE LA VIEVE
R. DE LA VIEVE

that he is known to have employed: Cyaneus in the case of CM 1537, and Pierre Vidoue in the case of the *Roman de la rose*. Both of these printers used it as both a frontispiece and colophon. It therefore has no relationship to the author of the *Cymbalum mundi*, nor any connection with the text of either book. This is not true of *all* frontispiece woodcuts of the period: to take Hutten's *Fortuna* as our example again, the book containing its first printing was decorated with a similar allegorical vignette of Lady Fortune, blind, buffeted by the wind, and flanked by two apt monostichs from Menander.[154]

[154] Folger PA8533.D5 1520 Cage. Like *Probitas laudatur et alget*, the monostichs were set in type, and did not form part of the woodcut. They read together: *θεῷ μάχεσθαι δεινόν ἐστι, καὶ τύχῃ· Πᾶσιν γὰρ εὖ φρονοῦσι συμμαχεῖ τύχη* ('it is a terrible thing to fight a god, and fortune: for fortune fights with all the wise').

HVLDERICHI
HVTTENI EQ. GERM.
DIALOGI.

FORTVNA.
Febris prima.
Febris secunda
Trias Romana.
Inspicientes.

Cum priuilegio ad sexennium.

Its publisher Johann Schöffer intended it, and probably even had it made, to be an illustration of the dialogue *Fortuna*. But the woodcut on CM 1537 does not serve this purpose. It was never intended to illustrate any dialogue, but only to designate the bookseller Morin.

The woodcut's form can, however, tell us something about Morin's own intellectual complexion. Here it is in Morin's *Roman de la Rose*:[155]

[155] Supplied to me by Gaye Morgan at the All Souls Library and included here with her permission.

Measuring 6.2 x 7.9 cm, it is an illustration of Juvenal's phrase *probitas laudatur, & alget*, which is subscribed to the woodcut on the title page of CM 1537 (but does not appear on the title page of the *Roman de la rose*).[156] This was Morin's own motto. On the woodcut itself, Lady

[156] *Sat.* I.73–6:

> Aude aliquid brevibus Gyaris et carcere dignum
> Si vis esse aliquid: probitas laudatur et alget.

Probity stands in front of a city with a wan expression on her face, holding a palm in her right hand and a stick in her left. She wears a congratulatory laurel wreath.[157] Spirits in the clouds on her left and right cry out EVGE and ΣΟΦΟΣ, which mean *bravo!* in Latin and Greek, respectively.[158] Probity is lauded, indeed. But her blouse and skirts are ragged, her hair is matted, and her feet are bare. *Alget*, she freezes.

In profile at the top corners of the woodcut are two blackamoor-heads. These charges are a visual pun on Morin's name (*Maure* ≅ *Mor*-in). This particular application of arms parlant was common in sixteenth-century heraldry: to take an example close to hand, the same charge is on Michel Le Noir's coat of arms, which can be found on his 1500 edition of the *Roman de la rose*. (The cities of Morancé and Moret-sur-Loing have blackamoors on their arms down to this day.)

Scholars of this woodcut have often obsessed themselves with rooting out recondite references to the contents of *Cymbalum mundi*, or to other aspects of Des Periers' philosophy.[159] But in doing so they have treated it as a dedicated frontispiece, not a publisher's device as it really is. It is merely a funny sketch of Morin's motto, accompanied by a sly heraldic reference to his name. Its whimsical tone suits the books that Morin is known to have published: an antiquated romance, a book of poetical dialogues, and apologies for Marot. But although it reveals to us that Morin had a mind at once prankish and erudite, it was only obliquely related to the *Cymbalum mundi* itself.

ii. The Lyon edition (CM 1538)

The next man to print the *Cymbalum mundi* was Benoist Bonnyn in Lyon. Here is the title page of that edition:[160]

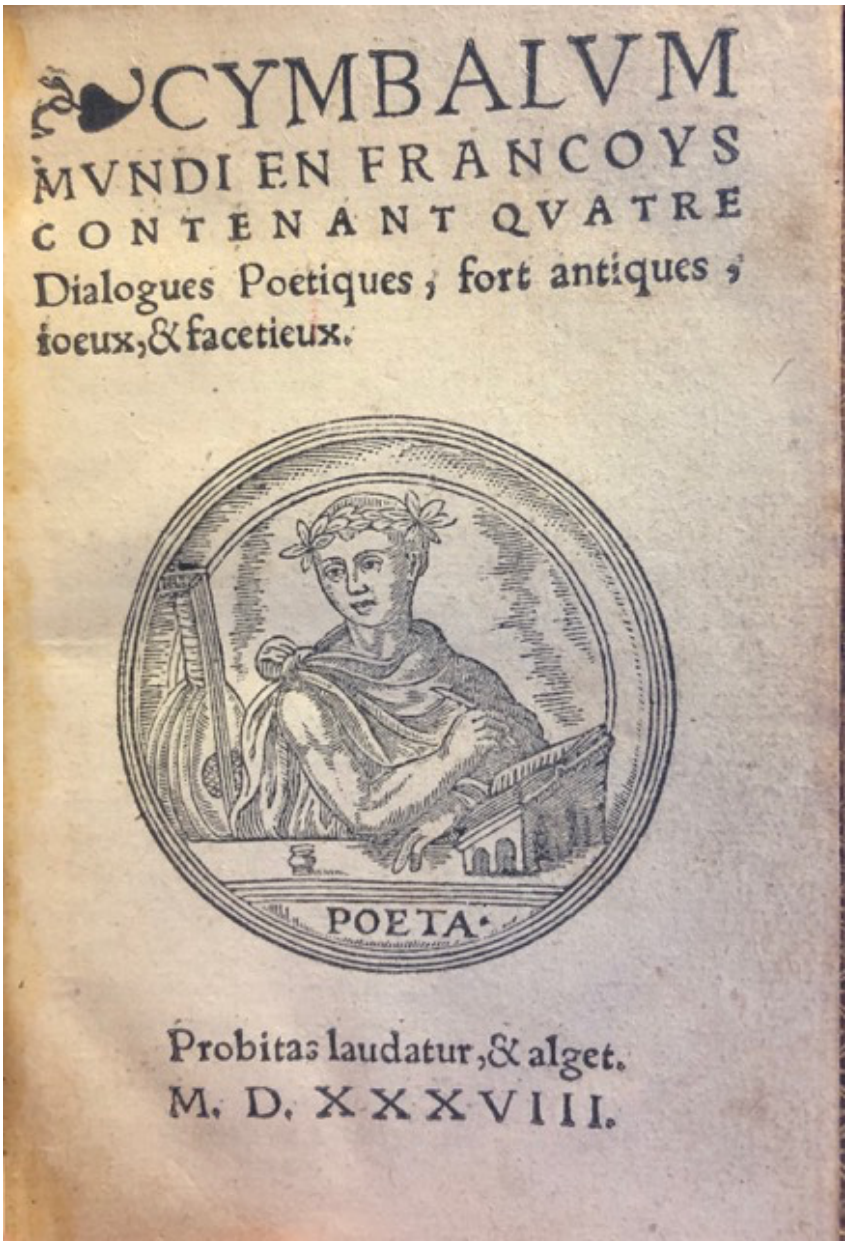
Criminibus debent hortos prætoria mensas
Argentum vetus et stantem extra pocula caprum.

[157] I am still looking in vain for the 'ass's ear' that Max Gauna has seen protruding from her left shoulder. Or rather not seen, but described in imitation of earlier secondary literature, like CM 1873 or Boerner, pp. 160ff. Why in any case would the ear be on her shoulder?

[158] *Euge* is derived from Greek *εὖγε*, but was a nativized and extremely common Latin word from the time of Plautus. The Greek word, for its part, is properly spelt ΣΟΦΩΣ. Gauna's proposal that EVGE, ΣΟΦΟΣ means 'courage, wise man!', a conceit that was borrowed from Félix Frank, is badly confused on at least three counts; namely 1) he thinks for some reason that *euge* means 'courage', 2) he does not explain why *σοφός* should be in the nominative, and 3) he fails to observe that the genii are addressing Lady Probity and not some third person. See *Upwellings: First Expressions of Unbelief in the Printed Literature of the French Renaissance* (London and Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1992, pp. 116–117.

[159] See Charles Perrat, 'Le titre des deux premières éditions du « Cymbalum Mundi » de Bonaventure Des Périers [Séance du 27 Février, 1952]', *Bulletin de la Société nationale des Antiquaires de France* Années 1952–1953 (1955): p. 39; and the extremely bizarre article: Trung Tran Quoc and Christophe Clavel, '*Euge Sophos*: Lecture syncrétique de la devise et de l'image', in *ACR2000*, pp. 593–591.

[160] My photograph of CM 1538_{ii}.


CYMBALVM
MVNDI EN FRANCOYS
CONTENANT QVATRE
Dialogues Poetiques, fort antiques,
ioeux, & facetieux.

POETA.

Probitas laudatur, & alget.
M. D. XXXVIII.

Bonnyn's edition was derived completely from a copy of CM 1537, which is apparent both from textual collation and from the fact that his typesetter misinterpreted Jehan Morin's device *Probitas laudatur et alget* as an integral part of the title page.

This edition presents the opposite difficulty to the first. CM 1537 advertises its publisher prominently, and leaves us to guess its printer. CM 1538's colophon states that its printer was Benoist Bonnyn, but not who published it. It would be no trivial discovery to identify that man, who played an important role in the *Cymbalum mundi*'s early history. Still, even though we do not know who he is, there are features of the edition that allow us to make some educated guesses; and also to ascertain the literary milieu into which his book was released.

First we should identify the typeface that Bonnyn used for the book, and then move on to the other distinguishing elements of the book. Unlike CM 1537, CM 1538 is printed in

bastard type. Though this is an important fact in itself, for reasons to be explained later, it also presents an obstacle to our research, since our taxonomic knowledge of late bastarda is extremely slight. Unlike for roman, there is no systematic work devoted to French gothic typefaces of the sixteenth century, let alone to bastarda.[161] Therefore, in order to identify the type that Bonnyn used for the book, we are compelled to pick up a ruler and magnifying glass for ourselves.

Here is the alphabet of Bonnyn's *Cymbalum*, including woodcut initial capitals. (The defective roman alphabet is derived from the printer's colophon and the title of the *Chronica rerum memorabilium* in the first dialogue).

All of the lettrines are attested in Bonnyn's other works, including the starry **I**, which I have found nowhere else but in three legal books which he printed in 1534–6.[162] Here are two of its appearances next to the one in CM 1538:[163]

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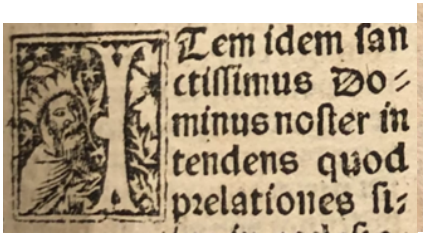
[161] Hendrik Vervliet declined to touch the subject in *French Renaissance Printing Types: A Conspectus* (New Castle, Delaware: Oak Knoll Press, 2010), explaining that gothic types are properly understood as a fifteenth-century phenomenon.

[162] *Liber Aureus practicis ipsis utilissimus / Regulas Cancellarie* […] *complectens* […] (Lyon: Guillaume Boullé, 1534), foll. xxi*v*., liii*r*., lxx*r*.; […]*Philippi Decii Mediolan[ensis] scripta sive Lectura super titulo: De regulis iuris* […](Lyon: Jacobus Giuncti, 1535), sig. C_{i}r.; *Aureus ac perutilis Tractatus D. Mansuerii* […](Lyon: Jacobus Giuncti, 1536) fol. lxiiii*r*.

[163] *Liber Aureus*, op. cit., foll. xxi*v*., lxx*r*.; CM 1538, sig. A_{iii}*r*.

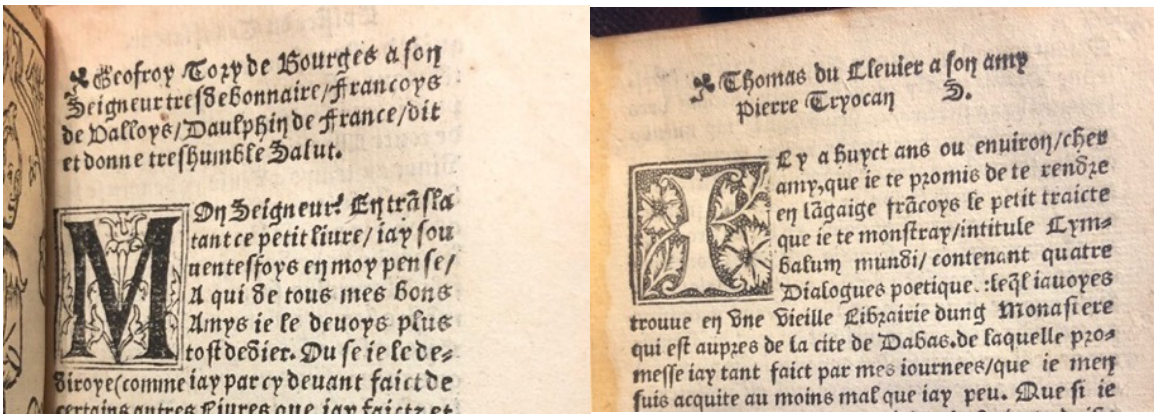


Differences in inking aside, that these initials were made with the same block is clear from their damage-marks, like the cut in the border immediately below the letter.

The bastard typeface in CM 1538, which has a 20-line height of 70 millimetres, is not attested sort-for-sort in any other surviving book. Its minuscules are somewhat similar to a face [B68–70] that is attested in a few books printed in Lyon by Pierre de Vingle, François Juste, and Jehan Barbou from 1530–1545. The capitals of that typeface are different, however, in numerous respects. It has a barred **B**, a taller **C**, a much more elaborate **M**, a wider **O**, a different **T**, and many other letterforms that distinguish it from CM 1538's face.

Much more similar is the face used in two books that Guillaume Boullé published in 1534, both of which, though anonymously printed, were almost certainly the work of Benoist Bonnyn:[164] Clement Marot's *Suite de l'Adolescence*[165] and Geoffroy Tory's French translation of Plutarch's *Præcepta gerendæ reipublicæ*.[166] In both of those books, twenty lines are 68 mm tall, a size easily producible by the same sorts as CM 1538's. Moreover, the face is graphically identical to CM 1538's in almost every respect. Even the curious clover-symbol ☘, common in Bonnyn's books, is to be found in all three of these editions, and for similar typographical purposes. For example, in both Tory's Plutarch and CM 1538, it was placed before a letter-writer's name:

[164] William Kemp, in unpublished notes that he has shared with me, was the first to identify the similarity between the type in CM 1538 and in Boullé's *Suite*.
[165] Cf. Claude Albert Mayer, *Bibliographie des éditions de Clément Marot publiées au XVIe siècle* (Paris: A. G. Nizet, 1975), p. 21. This book, is attested in two copies, both at the Bibliothèque Nationale: Rothschild 599 and Rés. Ye 1538.
[166] *Politiques ou Civiles Institutions pour bien regir la Chose publ.* (Lyon: Guillaume Boullé, 1534). (The book also contains a translated chapter from Aulus Gellius.) See BnF Rés. R-2020 (missing the last leaf), Arsenal 8-S-5955, and Bodleian Byw. R 6.18. None of these copies indicates the printer.

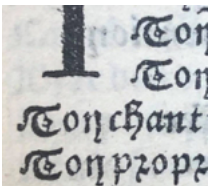

Geofroy Tory de Bourges a son Seigneur tresbonnaire/Francoys de Valloys/Daulphin de France/dit et donne tresbumble Salut.

Mon Seigneur. En trãsla tant ce petit liure/ iay souuentesfoys en moy pense/ A qui de tous mes bons Amys ie le deuoys plus tost dedier. Du se ie le desiroye(comme iay par cy deuant faict de certains autres liures que iay faictz et

Thomas du Cleuier a son amy pierre Tryocan S.

Ly a huyct ans ou enuiron/chez amy,que ie te promis de te rendre en lãgaige frãcoys le petit traicte que ie te monstray/intitule Cymbalum mundi/ contenant quatre Dialogues poetique. :lequel iauoyes trouue en vne vieille Librairie dung Monasiere qui est aupres de la cite de Dabas.de laquelle promesse iay tant faict par mes iournees/que ie mey suis acquite au moins mal que iay peu. Que si ie

It seems likely, therefore, that Boullé had hired Bonnyn in 1534 to print two books in bastarda, four years before Bonnyn accepted another commission for the *Cymbalum mundi*. Nevertheless, the majuscule **T** as it appeared in 1534 was different to the one in CM 1538. In the Boullé editions it looks consistently like this:



but in CM 1538 like this:

If we are to assume that the typefaces are in fact identical, and that Bonnyn printed all three books, it follows that at some point the **T** was switched out for a variant. Perhaps the following happened: after a lapse of four years since he had been hired by Boullé to print the *Suite* and Tory's Plutarch, Bonnyn received an order for the *Cymbalum mundi*. CM 1538 was just like the books that he had previously set in bastarda: a French book on a non-learned but classicizing subject. Therefore it made sense to set it in bastarda, rather than in rotunda or roman type. In the meantime, however, his bastard typeface had been languishing in the back of his shop. Upon pulling out his disused sorts, he discovered that the **T**s were missing or unusable, and replaced them with another set.[167] Whatever the case, it is not clear where the new **T** came from. I have scoured Bonnyn's printed corpus for another instance of it to no avail. Probably he bought it from another printer. It is no shock that Bonnyn swapped equipment with other printers: on another occasion, he acquired the same wooden frame

[167] William Kemp suggested this to me.

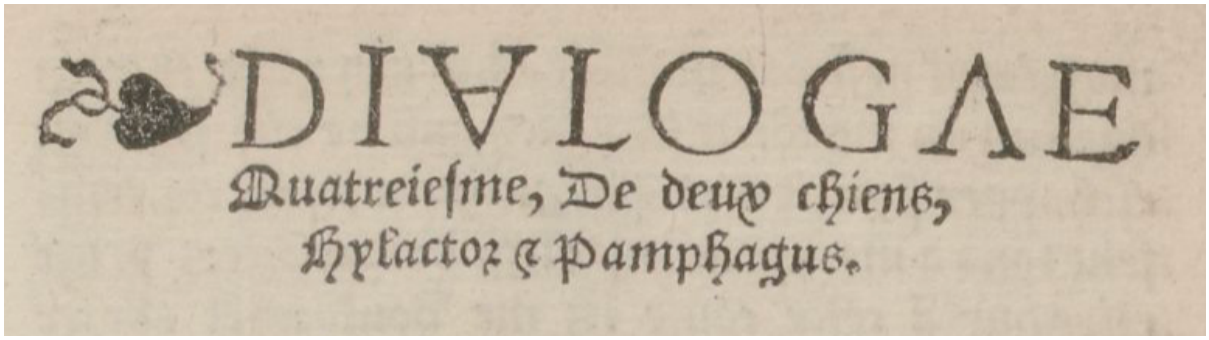
from Jacob Myt that was at some point used by Claude Nourry to print the title page of the first edition of *Pantagruel*.[168]

Substitution of a new **T** is far more likely than the two typefaces' being altogether different, especially given the presence of the rare clover and the complete absence of this typeface outside the three books under discussion. There can therefore be no real doubt that Bonnyn was the real printer of CM 1538, and that he printed it in the typeface B [68–70] which he had already used for two of Boullé's books.

With this established, it seems that the only books among dozens that Bonnyn ever published in bastarda were 1) a book by Clement Marot, 2) a French translation of Plutarch, and 3) CM 1538. He must have felt them to belong to the same genre; namely, vernacular works of a classicizing bent.

It is perhaps even worth asking whether Guillaume Boullé was not the publisher of CM 1538, renewing his partnership with Bonnyn from four years earlier. The bastarda books apart, Boullé had previously employed Bonnyn on two previous occasions: first, in 1531, for an edition of Ovid's *De arte amandi*, and again in 1534 for a *Liber aureus*, a book of canon law.[169] Both of these books were printed in rotunda, befitting (especially in the latter case) their learned, Latin content. The 1531 Ovid, for its part, was not signed by Bonnyn, but his work is identifiable by the frame on the title page, which is the same one that appears in the 1534 *Liber aureus* that does bear Bonnyn's name. All in all, there is not enough evidence to prove that Boullé published CM 1538. Nevertheless, he is perhaps the most likely man to have done so.

Whatever the case, there is no reason to think that either the publisher or the printer of CM 1538 believed himself to be producing anything more than an ordinary piece of lighthearted vernacular literature. Bonnyn even played up the unserious, carnivalesque nature of the book by introducing certain decorative eccentricities into the text. For example, the title of the fourth dialogue has two letters whimsically inverted:


DIALOGAE
Quatreiesme, De deux chiens,
Hylactor & Pamphagus.

[168] For the adventures of this frame, see Michael Andrew Screech, 'The first edition of *Pantagruel*', in *Études Rabelaisiennes*, vol. XV, THR, CLXXV (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1980), pp. 31–42 [34].
[169] The editions I have consulted are Mazarine 8° 21073 (for Ovid); and BnF E-9932 (for the *liber aureus*).

None of these frivolities had appeared in the relatively sober CM 1537, indicating that Bonnyn or his publisher had interpreted the book as a piece of Rabelaisian fun and made several typographical decisions on that basis.

It is worth mentioning the 'Poëta' woodcut that appears on the frontispiece of CM 1538, if only to discount its bearing on the book itself. The design is probably the work of Georges Reverdy, a prolific Lyonnese maker of woodcuts and especially printers' devices.[170] His woodcut had been used twice before, both in books printed by Jean Barbou. First was a copy of Nicholas Bourbon's *Παιδαγωγεῖον*, published in Lyon by Philippe Rhomain in 1536.[171] That book actually included a woodcut illustration of Bourbon in its colophon by Hans Holbein, which excludes the possibility that the *Poëta* was meant to represent Bourbon. Nor can it be interpreted as Rhomain's publisher's device, or as in any way proprietary to Rhomain. It does not appear in any of the three other surviving books that Rhomain published: not even in his *Ars poëtica* of 1536 (the same year as the *Παιδαγωγεῖον*), where it would have been an apt illustration of Horace.

Second is an edition published by Michel Parmentier in 1537 of Vulteius' *Epigrammata*. There, the woodcut appeared not on the title page but in the colophon.[172] The *Epigrammata*

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[170] Alfred Cartier wrote both a biography of Reverdy and a (posthumously published) catalogue of his work. See, respectively, Alfred Cartier, 'Georges Reverdy (1529–1564)', in *L'Art et les artistes à Lyon du XIVe au XVIIIe Siècle*, by Natalis Rondot (Lyon: Bernoux, Cumin & Masson, 1902), pp. 219–222; and Lamberto Donati, ed., 'Note inedite di Alfred Cartier su Giorgio Reverdino illustratore di libri', in *Miscellanea di scritti vari in memoria di Alfonso Gallo*, by Guido Arcamone (Florence: Leo S. Olschki Editore, 1956), pp. 379–401.

[171] The title page looks like this:

Nicolai
Borbonii VAN
DOPERANI LINGO
NENSIS
ΠΑΙΔΑΓΩΓΕ^ΙΟΝ.
[POËTA.]
[surrounded by motto: *Ἀρετῆς ἀγῆσης, / τυχης ἀκολεθῆσης, / Ἔσται πάντα καλῶς.*]

LVGDUNI
APVD PHILIPPVM
RHOMANVM,
ANNO M. D. XXXVI.

[172] The colophon reads as follows:

Nolit uelit
Inuidia.
[POËTA.]
IN INVIDVM.
Nostra probant docti, quid carmina liuide temnis?
Viuent, seu nolit, seu uelit inuidia.

[Next page]
Lugduni,
EXCUDEBAT IOAN-
NES BARBOVS,

was very similar in content to the *Παιδαγωγεῖον*: both were collections of Latin work by humanist poets. Parmentier did not, to my knowledge, publish anything besides Vulteius' *Epigrammata*, and we must presume that the woodcut was a piece of the printer Barbou's equipment, not his. (The appearance of the woodcut here caused one bibliographer of the eighteenth century to wrongly attribute CM 1538 to Parmentier himself.[173]

From these facts it appears that the woodcut was proprietary to the printer, Jehan Barbou, who sold or traded it to Bonnyn before 1538. There is no record of the sale, and there is no knowing what particular circumstances prompted it. In any case, we must distinguish the *Poëta* woodcut from the Lady-Probity device that appeared on Jehan Morin's edition. The *Poëta* was not used to identify the publisher or the printer; still less the author of any of the books it appeared on. It was merely a piece of typographical decoration used by printers; first Jehan Barbou and then Benoist Bonnyn. The most we can say is that these printers used it to announce the genre of the books they were making. Unlinked to any author or publisher, it was deemed by them to be both lighthearted and classical enough to adorn two books of Latin poetry and the *Cymbalum mundi*.

This judgment on the *Cymbalum mundi*'s genre was also reflected in Bonnyn's decision to print the book in bastarda at so late a date as 1538. By then, roman and rotunda type had almost entirely displaced bastarda for almost all books in both Latin and the vernacular. (The Neufchâtel Bible is a notable exception, but it was printed in bastarda for want of other type.) The use that each genre of typeface had in this period can be easily stated, even in the absence of a statistically founded monograph on the subject. Rotunda was suited to a non-humanist technical book in a discipline like law, theology or medicine. Unflamboyant and medieval, it was made to encode the scholastic body of thought that was characterized by nested glosses. Roman type, or its italic cousin, was suited to a purely humanist book—that is, a work of rhetoric, antiquarianism, or ancient literature. This was for historical as well as aesthetic reasons, as roman type was the typographical descendent of the neo-Carolingian humanist hand that had been developed in Italy in the early fifteenth century.

Bastarda was the middle child. Too whimsical for the serious university-men, and too quaintly gothic for the late humanists, it was eventually scorned as mawkish and puerile. In the early days of printing it had been used with a clean conscience for all kinds of books, but by the 1530s its province was heavily restricted. It was felt to be justified only for a vernacular

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M. D. XXXVII.

[173] Jean-Pierre Niceron, 'Bonaventure des Periers', in *Memoires pour servir à l'histoire des hommes illustres dans la Republique des Lettres. Avec un catalogue raisonné de leurs Ouvrages*, vol. XXXIV (Paris: Briasson, 1736), pp. 314–325 [317].

book that was light-hearted, nontechnical, and somewhat classicizing. These criteria included the works of Rabelais, Clement Marot, and Bonaventure Des Periers.

More evidence for the *Cymbalum mundi*'s perceived genre comes from its place on the shelf in the library of Gilbert de Hodic, a Parisian notary.[174] In the inventory of his books drawn up after his death in 1549, its title (unfortunately with no specification of the edition) was listed under the category *Histoires*, and grouped with books that were all literary and nontechnical. Included in this lot were works by Clement Marot, Lucian, and Plutarch, and the poet Pierre Gringoire.[175] All of the listed titles can be traced to contemporary editions set in bastarda. Plainly Hodic did not consider the *Cymbalum mundi* to be anything more serious or dangerous than these other literary entertainments.[176]

To review. The *Cymbalum mundi* was precisely the kind of book that we would expect Bonaventure Des Periers to have written on the basis of his foregoing works. It was philologizing, Lucianic, Erasmian, and sympathetic with the Evangelical fervour that pervaded 1530s France, both within and without the schismatic Lutheran sect. The bibliographical circumstances of both of its publications associated the book strongly with Clement Marot, and also with the wider genre of vernacular, Evangelical classicism. In none of this was it anything extraordinary.

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[174] 'Inventaire après décès de Gilbert de Hodic, notaire au Châtelet, demeurant rue du Mouton, près de la place de Grève, dressé à la requête de noble Geneviève Bureau, sa veuve, exécutrice testamentaire, tutrice de leurs enfants mineurs, de Jean de Hodic, avocat au Châtelet, subrogé tuteur, de Gilles de Hodic, procureur en la Chambre des comptes, et de Pierre de Hodic, prêtre, curé de Thionville, enfants du défunt.' AN MC/ET/III/300, 21 October 1549.

[175] 'Item la Division du monde / La chiromantie / Le livre de cuisine / Petit fatras / La complainte de la teste / Plutarque de la tranquillité d'esprit / Le premier livre de la metamorphose dovide / la fleur de toutes nouvelles / Adages de mere sotte / Ladresse de fourvoye / Oraison de Lucian / Les oeuvres de [C] marot La suite de ladolescence clementine / Les merveilles descosse / Les menuz propos / Cymbalum mundi / La decoration de nature humaine / le chevallier sans reproche tous lesd. livres Reliez en vingts petitz volumes Prisez ensemble xx s. p.' Ibid., foll. 31*v*.–32*r*.

[176] The existence of this document was pointed out to me by Alain Mothu, who had found it mentioned in A. H. Schutz, *Vernacular Books in Parisian Private Libraries of the Sixteenth Century According to the Notarial Inventories* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1955), p. 44. Schutz, however, identified '*Cymbalum mundi*' definitively as CM 1537, which not indicated by the inventory. He also gave the wrong date for the inventory, reading the modern archivist's notation *8bre* as 'August'.

Chapter II. The First Condemnations

The *Cymbalum mundi* was finished and printed—and now almost immediately condemned. Its printer Jehan Morin suffered gravely for publishing it, and two of the accomplices he named were strangled and burnt. Most of the contemporary documents that bear on these events have already been printed, but the story that can be inferred from them—if only we read them properly—is somewhat different to the one that has been commonly told.

THE ORDEAL OF JEHAN MORIN

On 5 March 1538 Pierre Lizet, the *premier president* of the Parlement of Paris, received a package from Moulins, where Francis I was holding court.[1] (The Parlement was the preeminent judicial body in France, and accordingly Lizet was the preeminent lawyer in the kingdom.) The package contained a copy of CM 1537 and two letters. Two days later, the Parlement's scribe recorded the following proceedings:

> Today Pierre Lizet, the *premier president* of this court, reported to the court that last Tuesday [5 March] he received a package containing a letter from the King and one from the Chancellor [Antoine Du Bourg], together with a little book in French intitled *Cymbalum mundi*. The king reported that he had caused the book to be read, and found great abuses and heresies in it, and that for this reason Lizet must inquire after the author [*compositeur*][2] and printer for the king's information, and then proceed to administer such punishment as he should deem fitting. In accordance with this order, [Lizet] had taken care to seize the said printer, who was called Jehan Morin, and to make him prisoner. He also caused Morin's shop to be visited, where many foolish and erroneous books from Germany were found that were intended for the press—even by Clement Marot. Lizet said as well that some theologians had warned him that there were now many foreign printers and booksellers in this city who were selling nothing but books with German imprints that contained many abuses and errors; and that nothing is taught anymore to young scholars in the colleges but books in which there are many errors; and that it was necessary to take prompt provision for this, it being certain that one would do service to God, good for the commonwealth, and agreeable service to the king, who had written that no service could be more agreeable to him than the swift execution of his wishes on this matter.[3]

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[1] 'Itinéraire de la chancellerie royale pendant le règne de François Ier', in *Catalogue des actes de François Ier*, vol. VIII, Collection des Ordonnances des Rois de France (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1905), pp. 411–533 [501].
[2] The word as used here almost certainly means 'author', not 'typesetter'; ignorance of this marred Michel Simonin's analysis of this document. See the entry 'Compositeur' in Edmond Huguet, *Dictionnaire de la langue française du seizeième siècle*, VII vols (Paris: Librairie Ancienne Édouard Champion, 1925).
[3] For the French original of this and many of the other documents cited here, see the testimonia in the attached edition.

Observe that the register of the Parlement does not say explicitly whose letter—the king's, or the chancellor Antoine Du Bourg's—contained the summary of the king's orders. As we will soon see, however, all further correspondence with the royal court on this matter was directed exclusively to Du Bourg, and I think it is in fact likely that the 'lectres du roy' consisted of little more than an endorsement of Du Bourg's expository letter. Indeed, it seems plausible that the last sentence of this parliamentary record, which reports the king's assent, constitutes a complete summary of the *lectres du roy*, as distinguished from the letter from Du Bourg which had just been summarized. This could suggest that Du Bourg was the author of this whole affair, and elicited a nod from the king for his purposes.

However we apportion authorship of their contents, taken together the letters from Du Bourg and the king to Lizet related little. That the king had 'fait veoir' the *Cymbalum mundi*—had *had* it read, not read it himself. And that it apparently contained great abuses and heresies. Therefore, Lizet was to find out who had written and published it, and then to punish the culprits. This was not a very specific mandate! The rest of the *greffier*'s entry then outlines what Lizet did with his instructions from the Court. His agents arrested Jehan Morin. They also raided Morin's shop, where they discovered many heretical books. In light of this discovery, Lizet made his statement before the Parlement in which he warned against the danger of heretical books.

It is apparent from subsequent parliamentary records that Lizet now took the opportunity to carry out a sweeping raid on the booksellers of Paris. Morin had presumably been tortured, and about a dozen people whom he had named were arrested, two of whom, the bookseller Jehan de La Garde and the student Estienne Sabray, were quickly burnt, their clerical status unavailing.[4]

Then Lizet wrote to Du Bourg on 16 April. In the course of that letter, he revealed that there were now additional charges against Morin: namely, that he had sold four heretical books to the recently executed Jehan de La Garde.

> My lord, I wanted to inform you that Jehan Morin, bookseller, who had the little book called *Symbalum mundi* printed (for which reason he has been held prisoner, according to the King's orders), has been charged with having sold to one Jehan de La Garde (also a bookseller) four little books that are the most blasphemous, heretical, and scandalous things that could be written against the Holy Sacrament of the altar and the whole Catholic doctrine. These books have been burnt together with the said de La Garde and the other men who were executed these past days. Now that the said bookseller Morin is a

[4] See James K. Farge, ed., *Religion, Reformation, and Repression in the Reign of Francis I: Documents from the Parlement of Paris, 1515–1547*, 2 vols, Studies and Texts 196 (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2015), no. 360, 361.

> prisoner by order of the king, may it be your pleasure to speak with [the King] on this subject so that his will might be made known to me.[5]

Lizet had been told only to speak unto the rock, but he had smitten it twice with his rod. With rather narrow instructions from the court—namely, to find out the name of the printer and author of *Cymbalum mundi*—he had caused several booksellers to be arrested in a large operation, two of whom had been put to death.

Antoine Du Bourg soon received another letter, this one a plea from the imprisoned Jehan Morin.[6] Morin made two arguments in it. First, he was suffering terribly at the hands of his jailors, and should be released from his ordeal on the grounds that he had cooperated with the authorities by revealing the name of the book's author. Second, he had had no idea that there was anything wrong with the *Cymbalum mundi*. If he had really known that the book was scandalous, he would never have been foolish enough to put his real name on its title page.

Morin's appeal to Du Bourg had no documented legal effect.[7] Meanwhile, the Parlement handed down the following decree on 17 June, more than three months after imprisoning Morin:

> The Court has reviewed the case heard by the Provost of Paris (or his lieutenant criminal) with respect to Jehan Morin, bookseller, who dwells on the Rue St Jacques in this city of Paris, now a prisoner in the Conciergerie of the Palace in Paris, and who has appealed against the sentence which was issued against him by the said provost (or his lieutenant criminal) on account of his having communicated, sold, and distributed some books that contained several errors and scandals; and of his having caused a book to be printed in his shop called *Cymbalum mundi*, in which there are, it is said, errors and scandalous words against the Catholic faith, as is set out more plainly in the trial record. He had been condemned to be brought in a cart to the church of Notre Dame de Paris, and there to make *amende honorable*, bareheaded and on his knees, holding a torch of burning wax in his hands, and to beg for mercy from God, from the King, and from justice; and the wicked books which had been found in his possession were to be burnt in his presence. Then, he was to be stripped and caned in the crossroads of this city of Paris, with a noose around his neck,

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[5] Monseigneur ie vous ay voulu aduertir que Iehan morin libraire qui a faict imprimer le petit livre Intitule symbalum mundi pourquoy il a este constitué prisonnier suivant lordonnance du Roy / Sest trouue charge dauoir vendu a ung Iehan de la garde aussi libraire quatre petits liures les plus blasphemes heretiques et scandaleux que lon sauroit poinct dire contre le St. sacrement de lautel & toute la doctrine catholique / lesquelz ont este bruslez auec led. de la garde & autres executez ces iours passez a mort & par ce que led morin libraire est prisonnier de lordonnance du Roy / vostre plaisir soit en parler aud seigneur a ce quil luy plaise me faire entendre sur ce son bon plaisir de commandement
Monseigneur apres estre treshumblement Racommande a vostre bonne grace priray le benoist saulueur vous donner tresbonne & tres longue vue de Paris ce xvi avril |AN J//968.

[6] The full French text of it can be found under CM 1538i in the bibliography.

[7] I am not persuaded by the statement by Pierre-Paul Plan (CM 1914, introduction) that the 'appeal' mentioned in following document is to be identified with the letter to Du Bourg.

> bound to the pillory, and then banished forever from this kingdom; his possessions forfeit to the King.[8]

Morin's attempts to save himself seem to have failed. The Parlement had apparently remanded his case to a lower court, which had convicted him of both counts. In light of Morin's subsequent appeal, however, the Parlement was willing to be merciful to him under one condition:

> …Now that this prisoner has been heard and questioned on his appeal, all things considered the Court has ordered and orders that before his sentence be carried out, the said book called *Cymbalum mundi* be shown and communicated to the Faculty of Theology in order to determine whether there are any errors or heresies in it. The Faculty shall also be informed of the said prisoner's *vita et mores*. When this is done, and when all is reviewed by this Court, it shall proceed to decide this case according to reason. Meanwhile the said prisoner shall be put in a safe place during these deliberations so that he may be healed and treated for the sickness that has befallen him. F[rançoys de Sainct-André; N[icole] Lesueur.[9]

Such a decree could only have one of two results. Either the Faculty of Theology would condemn the book, and the described sentence would be carried out: namely, the pillory, exile, and the subsequent escheat of all his property. Or else, if the Faculty absolved it, Morin would be set free.

The Faculty of Theology, like the whole University of Paris, resided on the left bank of the Seine. (So did Jehan Morin himself, whose shop was only one street away from the College of the Sorbonne. In fact, he probably sold most of his books to members of the University.[10]) The Parlement of Paris was doing something completely ordinary by sending

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[8] Veu par la Court le proces faict par le prevost de Paris ou son lieutenant criminel a l'encontre de Jehan Morin, libraire, demourant rue Saint Jaques en ceste ville de Paris, prisonnier en la Consiergerie du Palais a Paris, appellant de la sentence contre luy donnee par led. prevost ou sond. lieutenant par laquelle et pour raison de ce quil auroit baillé vendu, et delivré aucuns livres contenans plusieurs erreurs et scandales et fait imprimer en sa maison ung livre intitulé Cymbalum mundi, auquel y a, comme lon dit, aucuns erreurs et paroles scandaleuses contre la foy catholique, comme plus a plain est declairé oud. proces, il auroit esté condenné a estre mené en ung tumbereau devant leglise Nostre Dame de Paris et illec faire amende honorable, nue teste et a genoulz, tenant en ses mains une torche de cire ardant, et requerir mercy et pardon a Dieu, au roy, et a justice; et les meschans livres qui seroient trouvez en sa possession brulez en sa presance. Ce faict, estre batu nud de verges par les carrefours de ceste ville de Paris, aiant la corde au col, tourné au pilory, banny a tousiours de ce roiaume; et ses biens declairez confisquez au roy. | Archives Nationales X^{2B} 5, printed in Farge, *Religion, Reformation, and Repression*, 472–4.

[9] …et, oÿ et interrogé par lad. Court icelluy prisonnier sur sad. cause dappel, et tout consideré, il sera dict que, avant que proceder au jugement dud. proces, la Court a ordonné et ordonne led. livre intitulé *Cymbalum mundi* estre montré et communiqué a la faculté de theologie pour scavoir si en icelluy y a aucuns erreurs et heresies; et aussi sera informé super vita et moribus dud. prisonnier pour, ce faict et le tout veu par lad. Court, estre procedé au jugement dud. proces ainsi que de raison. Et ce pendant, led. prisonnier sera mis en lieu seur quil sera advisé pour le mieulx, a ce que ce pendant il se puisse faire panser et medicamenter de la maladie a luy survenue. F[rançoys de Sainct-André; N[icole] Lesueur. | *Ibid.*

[10] See Jacques Guignard, 'Imprimeurs et libraires parisiens, 1525–1536', *Bulletin de l'Association Guillaume Budé* Troisième Série, no. 2 (June 1953): pp. 43–73.

this book over the river to the Faculty's masters, whom it acknowledged as the chief intellectual authority in the French church.[11] Only these experts were qualified to tell whether a book was offensive to the faith.

The masters of the Faculty received the book on 1 July,[12] and they issued the following judgement eighteen days later:

> In the year of our Lord 1538, on 19 July, the Faculty of Theology met at the College of the Sorbonne to deliberate on the book called *Cymbalum mundi*, which had been sent to the Faculty by the Court of the Parlement. After the deliberations of our Masters, it was concluded that although this book does not contain open errors of faith, it is nevertheless harmful [*perniciosus*] and must therefore be suppressed.[13]

So the Faculty condemned the book: what grounds, then, for thinking that Morin was not now punished and banished? There is indeed one alternative possibility: that Morin, sick with the '*maladie a luy survenue*' alluded to in the report of 17 June, died in custody. He had presumably been tortured for information about La Garde, which could have caused or exacerbated his illness. It has, however, been argued that Morin survived imprisonment and remained in France, on the evidence of a copy of the 1538 edition of Clement Marot's *Roman de la rose* that we saw in the last chapter.[14] If Morin published this book in late 1538, after his ordeal, then obviously he had neither died nor gone into exile.

It appears, however, that this evidence is spurious, and thus that Morin is unattested in any documents that post-date his ordeal. The crucial facts can be found in F. W.

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[11] See James K. Farge, *Orthodoxy and Reform in Early Reformation France: The Faculty of Theology of Paris, 1500–1543*, Studies in Medieval and Reformation Thought, XXXII (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1985), pp. 220–270.

[12] See the document dated 1 July 1538 in my edition's testimonia, in which the masters appointed to read the book are named.

[13] Anno Domini millesimo quingentesimo XXXVIII°, die decima nona mensis julii, congregata facultate theologie apud collegium Sorbone super libro intitulato *Cymbalum mundi* misso ad facultatem per curiam parlamenti, auditis deliberationibus magistrorum nostrorum, conclusum fuit quod, quamvis liber ille non contineat errores expressos in fide, tamen quia perniciosus est, ideo supprimendus. | Out of Archives Nationales, MM 248 (formerly AE II 621), as printed in James K. Farge, ed., *Registre des conclusions de la Faculté de théologie de l'Université de Paris*, vol. II: Du novembre 1533 au 1er mars 1550, Textes et Documents sur l'Histoire des Universités 3 (Paris: Klincksieck, 1994), pp. 129–130 (f. 46v.; 147A); pp. 130–131 (f. 47r.; 148A). Bizarrely, Lucien Febvre consistently misspelt *ideo supprimendus* as *adeo supprimendus* in articles that spanned more than a decade. 'Une histoire obscure: la publication du *Cymbalum Mundi*', *Revue du Seizième Siècle* XVII (1930): pp. 1–41 [12, 26]; 'Origène et Des Périers ou l'énigme du *Cymbalum Mundi*', *BHR* II (1942): pp. 7–131 [108].

[14] This was first suggested by Alfred Cartier, 'Le libraire Jean Morin et le *Cymbalum Mundi* de Bonaventure des Periers devant le Parlement de Paris et la Sorbonne', *Bulletin de la Société de l'Histoire du Protestantisme Français* XXXVIII (1889): pp 575–588 [584–587]; but Cartier's dating of the edition was called into doubt by Lucien Febvre, 'Une histoire obscure: la publication du *Cymbalum Mundi*', *Revue du Seizième Siècle* XVII (1930): pp. 1–41. Abel Lefranc had in the meantime suggested that the Jehan Morin of the Roman de la Rose was a different man altogether to the one who had printed the Cymbalum mundi: Abel Lefranc, 'Rabelais et les Estienne. Le procès du *Cymbalum Mundi* de Bonaventure Des Périers', *Revue du Seizième Siècle* XV (1928): pp. 356–366 [365].

Bourdillon's bibliography of the *Roman de la rose*'s early editions.[15] The octavo edition we are concerned with (S. IV in Bourdillon's notation) was printed by one man, Pierre Vidoue,[16] but published—that is, underwritten—by ten, including Morin. Each publisher supplied Vidoue with his own device, and each received a batch of books with a customized title page and colophon. Some of them are dated 1537, and some 1538.[17] Bourdillon listed fifteen variants of the edition that he had 'seen or heard about'. There were ten publishers in total, five of whom had ordered books with both dates.[18] If we can rely on Bourdillon's eyes and ears, Morin ordered copies of both the 1537 and the 1538 variant. However, both surviving copies that bear Morin's name that I have seen—including Bourdillon's personal copy—are dated 1538.[19] I do not know of any others that have survived, whether from 1537 or 1538.[20]

The whole run of S. IV appears to have been printed by Vidoue at the same time, without any intervening jobs. All the copies have the same collation.[21] They are in fact all almost identical to each other; the title pages and colophons being the only elements that display any variations. Still, even these follow a formulaic pattern. The surviving title pages all

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[15] Francis William Bourdillon, *The Early Editions of the* Roman de la Rose, Illustrated Monographs, XIV (London: The Bibliographical Society, 1906), 33.

[16] Probably not 'Vidoué' as is often seen, since the spelling 'Vidou' is also attested. Cf. Farge, *Religion, Reformation, and Repression*, p. 586, n. 109. On the other hand, the Latin form was 'Vidouæus', which seems somewhat more likely to have been derived from *Vidoué* than *Vidoue*.

[17] For instance, Roman de la Rose 1537 in Aberystwyth.

[18]

Publishers of S. IV, 1537	**Publishers of S. IV, 1538**
Jehan St. Denys	Jehan St. Denys
Jehan Longis	Jehan Longis
Jehan Morin	Jehan Morin
Les Angeliers	Les Angeliers
Jehan André	Jehan André
	Jehan Massé
	François Regnault
	Guillaume Le Bret
	Pierre Vidoue
	Poncet Le Preux

[19] One is at the All Souls College Library in Oxford: ii.17.16 (Gallery); and the other, (from Bourdillon's library) is in the National Library of Wales in Aberystwyth, under the classmark Roman de la Rose 1538 (1). The All Souls copy is missing the title page, but it nevertheless contains Morin's device on the back-leaves and is dated in its colophon.

[20] See Andrew Pettegree, Malcolm Walsby, and Alexander Wilkinson, *French Vernacular books : Books Published in the French Language before 1601 / Livres vernaculaires français : livres imprimés en français avant 1601*, II vols (Leiden: Brill, 2007), no. 24293.

[21] That is, π^8 a–z^8 ꝛ^8 9^8 A–V^8 ^{2}x^8 yy–zz^8 aa–bb^8 cc^4.

read: 'Le rommant / de la Rose nouuellement reueu /et corrige oultre les pre / cedentes Im-/preſſions.' Then there is the publisher's device, and below that 'on les vend a ___' with the bookseller's address inserted. As for the colophons, they have identical text, with the exception of the variable date 1537/8. And that, in roman numerals, only makes the difference of a single jot. Moreover, stray marks of ink and other imperfections are identical in all four copies of S. IV that I have personally examined, three dated 1538 and one dated 1537. Evidently, then, these books were all made at the same time, with variations confined to the first and last sheets.

This leaves two possibilities, each completely plausible and in line with contemporary publishers' habits. First, that the whole run was printed before Easter 1538 (which marked the new year)—and then given variable dates so that some copies could be sold as brand-new in the upcoming year. Or else the large run was printed during a period that straddled Easter, which in 1538 was April 21. In neither case is it likely that any copies of S. IV were printed after the spring of 1538. In the latter case, it could even very easily be that Vidoue printed copies for delivery to Morin, unaware that he had been apprehended on 6 March. (Indeed, perhaps the very reason for the present paucity of Morin's 1537 copies is that most of these ended up in Morin's shop during the early phase of the edition's printing and were burnt at the Parlement's orders.) There is therefore no hard evidence that Morin printed any books after *Cymbalum mundi*. Morin left no indisputable traces in the historical record after his trial, whether because he was in exile or whether he was dead.

These, in outline, are the facts of Morin's ordeal. The question remains: why was the *Cymbalum mundi* condemned in the first place? As has been observed since the early eighteenth century, this answer to this question is crucial to the larger problem of the *Cymbalum mundi*'s supposed atheism.[22] If the book was seen as atheist by the royal court, the Parlement or the Faculty of Theology, then perhaps there is something to that interpretation after all. If, however, these three institutions had other reasons for punishing Morin and his associates, then the early story of the book's unbelief is much more likely to have sprung from a source unrelated to the book's contents themselves.[23]

There are four classical opinions as to the causes of Morin's prosecution. According to the first, the king and the doctors of the Faculty of Theology had detected secret atheist

[22] See, for instance, the preface to CM 1732, which I will discuss in chapter IV.
[23] As Paul Oskar Kristeller wrote (quoting his teacher Werner Jaeger), 'The test of a myth, as opposed to a true tradition, is that it grows more definite with the greater distance from its supposed origin, and conversely becomes increasingly dim as we approach the latter.' 'The Myth of Renaissance Atheism and the French Tradition of Free Thought', *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 6, no. 3 (July 1968): pp. 233–243 [236].

material in the *Cymbalum mundi*. This was the view of Éloi Johanneau, and it was taken for granted by Félix Frank.[24] It is not clear, according to this view, why the Faculty should have pronounced the book free of *errores expressi in fide*.

According to the second opinion, the king, the Parlement and the Faculty of Theology were not convinced that the *Cymbalum mundi* was atheist, but rather that it contained Evangelical heresies. This view was first expounded at length by the publisher of CM 1732.[25] (In my view it is the nearest opinion to the truth as far as the king and Parlement are concerned, but not the Faculty).

Lucien Febvre, for his part, believed that the *Cymbalum mundi* was indeed a work of the subtlest atheism, but that none of Des Periers' contemporaries appreciated this fact. Nor did any of Jehan Morin's persecutors really believe that the book was itself heretical. Instead, some allies of François Sagon were trying to punish Morin for printing pamphlets that favoured Clement Marot, and therefore denounced the *Cymbalum mundi* to King Francis.[26]

The last opinion was set out by M. A. Screech. He held that Des Periers was an orthodox Catholic. The *Cymbalum mundi* was a satire directed against the Evangelists, and against Gerard Roussel in particular, who was represented in the second dialogue by Drarig. This satire had offended Marguerite de Navarre, and it was on her orders that a reluctant king and Parlement condemned the book. Moreover, the Faculty of Theology's condemnation of the *Cymbalum* was an embarrassed concession to the king's pressure, and its description of the book as *perniciosus* was a forced and hollow excuse for condemning it. Marguerite had successively twisted the arms of her brother the king, the Parlement, and the Faculty, who had all acted against their better judgement. Indeed, according to Screech, Morin's fate was a bizarre aberration in a period of remarkable tolerance.[27]

No new information that bears directly on the Morin affair has come to light since Screech's essay, but we are not thereby relieved of our responsibility to clarify the real reasons for the Parlement and Faculty's actions. Though historians have not appreciated it, we are in

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[24] See CM 1841, p. 153; and CM 1873, p. LXXI.

[25] *Avertissement*, pp. xvii-xviii: [After citing the register of the Parlement.] 'En falloit-il davantage pour exciter l'attention du Ministere public, lui faire prendre les précautions necessaires pour prevenir les suites de ces nouvelles opinions qui depuis ont été si funestes au Royaume? Une des plus naturelles étoit d'arrêter les Ouvrages suspects. L'Auteur du *Cymbalum* se trouva dans ce cas. On ne douta point qu'il n'eût voulu sous ses allégories précher la prétendue Reformation sur laquelle tous les Sectaires dogmatisoient. Il étoit attaché à une Cour où l'erreur étoit protegée ouvertement. Il étoit ami déclaré & défenseur de Marot, désigné nommément pour Auteur reprouvé. On sevit donc contre son Imprimeur & contre son ouvrage, non pas que celui-ci fut impie & détestable, mais parce qu'il sembloit favoriser les hérésies qui s'introduisoient.'

[26] Lucien Febvre, 'Une histoire obscure: la publication du *Cymbalum Mundi*', *Revue du Seizième Siècle* XVII (1930): pp. 1–41.

[27] Michael Andrew Screech, 'Préface', in CM 1983, pp. 3–17.

a much better position to understand the Morin affair than we were even twenty years ago. This is thanks to the work of James Farge, who has published exhaustive collections of documents from the registers of both the Faculty of Theology and the Parlement de Paris that bear on religion and censorship. He has also written monographs on both institutions as they existed in the early sixteenth century, making it plain for the first time what their ordinary procedures were in stamping out heresy in the 1530s.

I think we can learn the following from Farge's books: The Parlement and Faculty behaved with respect to the *Cymbalum mundi* in a manner completely consistent with their treatment of many similar books. Morin was punished just like many other Evangelical booksellers of his day. His was a completely ordinary legal proceeding, and nothing so exotic as Des Periers' atheism or Queen Marguerite's direct intervention is required to explain it.

In order to establish this once and for all, let us begin by addressing what might seem to be a naïve question. Why were Evangelical booksellers punished at all?

THE DANGER OF TOLERATION

> Paris, Paris, fleur de noblesse,
> Soubstiens la foy de Dieu que on blesse,
> Ou aultrement fouldre et tempeste
> Cherra sur toy, ie t'advertis.
> —Lines from an anti-Lutheran placard, posted near the Sorbonne on 25 May 1533.[28]

The Parlement's behaviour in the period of Morin's trial can only be understood if we keep in mind how heavily it was informed by a certain repetitive theme in the Deuteronomic books of the Bible.[29] This was the imperative to exterminate heretical religion. The models so often adopted for the Kingdom of France were the two Israelite kingdoms, which had both met destruction for their toleration of alien religions. The northern kingdom of Israel was ruled by a series of irredeemably wicked kings who actively invited idolatry into their realms. This incensed God, who allowed Israel to be destroyed by Assyria. 'This happened,' we read,

> because the Children of Israel had sinned before the Lord their God, who had taken them out of the land of Egypt, from under the hand of Pharaoh King of Egypt; and because they had feared other gods.[30]

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[28] 'Paris, Paris, flower of nobility: sustain the faith of God, which is being injured: for otherwise, I warn you that thunderbolts and storms will fall on you.' | Quoted in a letter from Pierre Siderander to Jacques Bédrot, dated 28 May 1533; later printed and responded to by Clement Marot. Printed in Carl Schmidt, *Gérard Roussel, prédicateur de la reine Marguerite de Navarre: Mémoire servant à l'histoire des premières tentatives faites pour introduire la Réformation en France* (Strasbourg: Schmidt et Grucker, 1845), Pièces justificatives nº. XI, p. 206.

[29] That is, Deuteronomy through II Kings.

[30] II Kings 17.6–7, in the Vulgate: 'anno autem nono Osee cepit rex Assyriorum Samariam et transtulit Israhel in Assyrios posuitque eos in Ala et in Habor iuxta fluvium Gozan in civitatibus Medorum / factum est enim cum

Judah, the kingdom in the south, met the same doom, but it was spared for a hundred years because there were pious kings intercalated with the impious. With the exceptions of Hezekiah and Josiah, even these pious kings were lax in exterminating the cult of Baʿal, and the wicked kings embraced it openly. Therefore the Babylonians were eventually allowed to capture Jerusalem. Implicit in this history was a political lesson, repeated constantly in the Deuteronomical text: a king is suffered by God to rule so long as he is sufficiently zealous in purging his kingdom of the worshippers of Baʿal on the hilltops.

This lesson was developed into an important principle of law and politics at the beginning of the sixteenth century. In the Parlement of Paris, Pierre Lizet and Guillaume Poyet were its chief exponents. Their legal argument was twofold: first, the kingdom's health depends on the extermination of heretics. Second, the king and his secular courts have the sole responsibility and authority to carry out this extermination. In a long book that he wrote after his retirement from the Parlement, Lizet laid this theory out explicitly:

> Perhaps, judges, you will say that [the task of eradicating heretics] is not within your purview, and should be relegated to the leaders of the Church, on the grounds that these are crimes of schism and heresy, and not civil but ecclesiastical matters which accordingly belong to the cognizance of an ecclesiastical, not a secular judge. But I pray, judges, that you not take this as a pretext for shirking such a holy duty. Indeed, though the kings of the chosen people of Israel recognized splendidly that the duties of priests should no wise be exercised by secular princes, nevertheless did King Josiah (of whom it is written in the holy Book of Kings that no king before him had been like unto him, who returned to the Lord with all his heart and with all his soul and all his might, according to the law of Moses, nor did his like arise after him) remove the blasphemies of the priests of Baʿal, and pull down their altars, and utterly exterminate whatever they had done against the law and honour of God: and he removed the bones of the priests of Baʿal from their tombs, and burned them on the altar.[31]

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peccassent filii Israhel Domino Deo suo qui eduxerat eos de terra Aegypti de manu Pharaonis regis Aegypti / coluerunt deos alienos'.

[31] Atqui dicetis fortasse, Iudices, provinciam hanc haudquaquam vestri muneris esse, eam potius in ecclesiæ præsules relegandam, quòd schismatis & hæreseos crimina, non civilia, sed ecclesiastica sint, quæ proinde ad ecclesiastici, non secularis iudicis notionem pertinere videntur. Hunc (quæso Iudices) à tam pio munere vacationis colorem minime prætexere velitis. Nempe, & si electi Israelitici populi reges quàm luculentissime agnoscerent sacerdotum officia, nequaquam à principibus secularibus usurpanda fore, nihilo secius sanctus Iosias Rex (de quo sacer textus in libris Regum ait, [4. Reg. 23.] quod similis illi, non fuit ante eum rex, qui reverteretur ad dominum in toto corde suo, & in tota anima sua, & universa virtute sua, iuxta legem Mosi, neque post eum surrexit similis illi) sacerdotum Baal blasphemias abstulit, aras & altaria illorum destruxit, & quæcunque illi adversum legem & Dei honorem egerant, prorsus exterminavit: sed & ossa de sepulchris sacerdotum Baal tulit, & combussit super altare. | *Adversum pseudoevangelicam hæresim libri seu commentarii novem* (Paris: Michael Vascosanus, 1551), fol. 253r.–v.

Tyler Lange has made a careful study of both Poyet and Lizet's construction and application of the principles outlined here.[32] These two judges, he has shown, argued strenuously for prosecuting blasphemy and heresy in secular courts like the Parlement. In 1523, in the case of Jehan Guibert, a hermit on trial for heresy, Pierre Lizet argued that a sentence handed down by an ecclesiastical court was illegitimate. Only a secular tribunal could condemn someone, even for an apparently ecclesiastical offense such as heresy. He reasoned as follows:

> But as for correction and reparation, these things seem to belong to the secular judge, even as a matter of divine law, by which the power to make restitution for offenses against the honour of God is conceded to the secular authority. So it is written in Exodus 7, where the power to overthrow idolatrous altars is given to the people; and as for the secular prince, it is spoken in [II] Kings 9 of Jehu King of Israel, who carried out such punishment and correction; and even more favourably of Josiah the King (in [II] Kings 23), who caused the bones of the heretics to be dug up and burnt. And though it might be said that these are examples from the Old Testament rather to be wondered at than imitated, even so this is seen to be proven by the canon law.[33]

In this period, the pair of lawyers applied this logic to simony as well as heresy. Thus in 1525, Poyet defended Guillaume Briçonnet, bishop of Meaux, for invoking the secular authorities against some simoniac Franciscans, on the grounds that the Franciscans were no better than the priests of Ba'al in their heresy, and therefore liable to punishment by the king and his officers rather than just an ecclesiastical court.[34] Not long after Luther's condemnation at the

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[32] *The First French Reformation: Church Reform and the Origins of the Old Regime* (New York, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), especially 'Heresy Before the Parlement', cap. IV, pp. 188–210. Dr Lange was kind enough to share his transcripts of three archival manuscripts with me: AN X^{1A} 4876, AN X^{2A} 76, and BnF MS NAF 6528.

[33] Mais quant au demeurant de la correction et reparacion ea ipsa ad laicum iudicem pertinere videtur etiam de iure divino par lequel laice potestati est baillee la puissance de faire la reparation qui faict[e] est des choses qui touchent contre lhonneur de dieu Comme est escript Exodi cap vii.o ubi populo datur potestas subvertendi aras ydolatrarum Et de principe seculari quarti regum cap xi.o ou Il est parlé de rege israel ihehu qui fist semblable punicion et correction et melius de Iosia rege quarti Regum c xxiii.o qui fist exhumer les os des hereticques pour les faire brusler Et suppose que lon peult dire quod sunt exempla veteris testamenti que sunt magis miranda quam imitanda Toutesfoys etiam par le droict canon istud videtur probari.' | AN X 2a 76, fol. 8v [Lange's transcription, with my corrections]

[34] '*Obliti sunt patres eorum nominis mei propter baal* Ainsi que ont faict lesd cordeliers Lesquelz sont entrez en habitz de prophetes et predicateurs euvangelicques au troppeau des brebiz dudict evesque pour les devorer par menteries evidentes et controuvees par songes et faulses doctines prinses en leur specule et nouvelles tradicions Aumoyen dequoy ne les devoit trop increper / et redarguer led evesque Lequel apres avoir tant travaille et laboure a cuyde reduire lesd cordeliers et a ediffier son peuple de leuvangille et parolles euvangelicques a trouve lesd cordeliers tant de foys semer et voulloir renouveller leurs faulses / et mauvaises doctrines et voullu inficir son peuple a le mal ediffier de lhonneur de dieu estat de leglise sans espargner la personne dudict evesque qui est leur vray pasteur par leurs detraction menteries et controuvees maledictions Tellement que quant il y eust procede par fureur ainsi que ont dict lesd cordeliers (quamvis falso) Il nen seroit reprehensible Car il lauroit faict comme fist nre seigneur en parlant aux faulx prophetes Jhere xxiii.o. *Contritum est enim inquit cor meum in medio mei contremuerunt omnia ossa mea factus sum quasi vir ebrius et quasi homo madidus a vino a facie domini / et a facie verborum sanctorum eius Quia adulteriis repleta est terra.*' BnF NAF 6528, foll. 148v.–150r. [Lange's transcription. The document is printed in Farge, *Religion*, no. 125, pp. 160–187, but he omits this passage.]

Diet of Worms, however heresy took the place of simony as the chief religious offense that the Parlement saw itself as responsible for punishing. In August 1523, the Parlement ordered all books by Luther to be burnt in front of Notre Dame, and decreed that anyone henceforth found in possession of such books were to be sent into exile, their goods forfeit to the crown.[35] (This was precisely the penalty that they imposed fifteen years later on Morin.)

The true turning point came in 1525, when Francis I was captured at the battle of Pavia and led captive to Madrid. Thereafter, the Parlement became increasingly hardened in the persuasion that it bore a responsibility to root out heresy from its jurisdiction. The king himself was not always in favour of this broad interpretation of the secular Parlement's powers. For example, the Queen Mother wrote to the Parlement in November 1525 to protest the Parlement's prosecution of Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples, Pierre Caroli and Girard Roussel, reformers of Meaux, for heresy. The members of the Parlement responded to her collectively as follows:

> Madam, the nature of the present times requires that all crimes and scandals committed directly against God and his Catholic Church his spouse (an injury against whom God our Creator takes for an injury against himself, just like an injury against the glorious Virgin and the blessed saints in paradise) be swiftly, sedulously and eagerly punished and uprooted in order to appease the wrath and indignation of God, who, as one can easily learn from many examples in the Old and New Testament, would be wonderfully provoked by such crimes and evil doings, and send grievous punishments down upon mankind.[36]

This was a clear appeal to the Deuteronomical Theory in favour of an even more zealous prosecution of heretics than the royal court was at the time willing to countenance. In April of the following year, during the Parlement's attempt to prosecute the Evangelical publisher Louis Berquin for heresy, the members of the Parlement wrote a letter to the king that pleaded:

> May it please you to take provision against these wanton and erroneous teachings, and scandalous Lutheran propositions, and to command strong justice in order to uproot, destroy, and utterly exterminate them, and to order us to take every pain to examine the trial of the said Berquin, and to administer justice to him. For we cannot delay as we would in other cases, in which only the injury and offence of men were concerned. We must appease the wrath and indignation of God our Creator, which, as we learn from the

[35] James K. Farge, ed., *Religion,* no. 58, p. 63.

[36] Madame, la qualité du temps ou nous sommes de present requiert que tous delicts et scandalles commis directement contre Dieu et son eglise catholique, qui est son epouse, liniure de laquelle Dieu nostre Createur repute [Farge: *reputé*] estre faicte a luy mesme, aussi de la glorieuse Vierge et les bienhereux sainctz et sainctes de Paradis, soient promptement et en extreme diligence par tres grand zele et desir pugniz et extirpez afin dappaiser lire et indignation de Dieu, laquelle, comme lon peult facillement congnoistre par plusieurs exemples du Vieulx et Nouveau Testament, seroit merveilleusement provocqué par semblables crimes et malefices, en envoyant aux humains de tres griefves pugnicions.' | Ibid., no. 153, p. 233.

> example of the Old and New Testament, has been frequently provoked by similar crimes and evil doings, against which justice, correction and atonement had been too long delayed.[37]

In all these documents we can see something which we should bear in mind when we consider the case of Jehan Morin: the Parlement, and especially Lizet and Poyet, were far readier than the king himself to have the royal power wielded against heretics. By 1534, the following pattern had developed. The Parlement was extremely eager to punish blasphemy, but the King was hesitant to allow them to do so, not least because his sister Marguerite often lobbied zealously to protect Evangelicals (like the just-mentioned Berquin). In this period, anti-Evangelical members of the Faculty of Theology like Noël Beda, were never able to persuade either the king or the Parlement to suppress all the heretical books that they hated.[38]

The *Affaire des placards* of winter 1534–5 changed the situation somewhat. On two separate occasions,[39] sacramentarian posters appeared all over France that ridiculed the presence of Christ in the Eucharist.[40] The royal court and the Parlement, taking the posters as a pretext, unleashed a violent wave of persecution against heretics, simultaneously begging God for mercy on a kingdom that had harboured such an impious infection.[41]

These events determined future royal policy towards heresy, and especially towards heresy that had been printed. Queen Marguerite's influence was no longer sufficient to protect any given protégé against legal persecution. For example, the printer Antoine

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[37] '[Nostre souverain seigneur, lhonneur de Dieu nostre Createur, le grant zele, vostre amour, desir, et affection a son service aussi, a lentretenement, defense, et exaltacion de la foy chrestienne, le devoir soubz vous et vostre auctorité que nous luy devons et a la iustice, nous contraignent vous advertir de ce que nous avons trouvé et cogneu par ses] temeraires et erronees doctrines et scandaleuses propositions lutheriennes a ce quil vous plaise y pourvoir et commander vigoureuse iustice pour les extirper, destruire et du tout exterminer, estre content et nous ordonner proceder a tout diligence a faire veoir le proces dud. Berquin, luy administrer et faire iustice, et que lon ne peult licitement differer comme en autres cas concernans seulemment liniure et offense des hommes, afin dappaiser lire et indignation de Dieu nostre Createur, laquelle souventesfoys par les exemples du Viel et Nouveau Testament a esté merveilleusement provocquee par semblables crimes et malefices, desquels la iustice, correction et reparation avoit esté et estoit trop longuement differee'. | Ibid., no. 185.

[38] Not but that they desired desperately to do so: see Beda's tirade against the humanists at *Annotationum Natalis Bedæ Doctoris Theologi Parisiensis in Iacobum Fabrum Stapulensem libri duo: et in Desiderium Erasmum Roterodamum liber unus, qui ordine tertius est* (Paris, 1526), fol. Aa_i v.

[39] For a good description of the two stages of the affair, see M. A. Screech, *Marot évangélique* (Geneva: Libraire Droz, 1967).

[40] The original text of the placards is printed in Robert Hari, 'Les placards de 1534', in *Aspects de la propagande religieuse*, ed. Gabrielle Berthoud, THR, XXXVIII (Geneva: Droz, 1957), pp. 79–142 [114–119].

[41] For a description of the royal and legal reaction to the *Affaire*, see E. William Monter, *Judging the French Reformation: Heresy Trials by Sixteenth-Century Parlements* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1999), pp. 69–72.

Augereau, whom she had forced to include new Evangelical material in his latest edition of her *Miroir de l'âme pécheresse*, now met his death almost immediately.[42]

The *Affaire des placards* opened a period of severe and indiscriminate censorship. In the decade that followed it, the Parlement prosecuted dozens of defendants for heretical blasphemy, of which Lutheranism was considered the principal category. A condemned blasphemer was usually burned, and depending on the severity of his offence, he might be mercifully strangled in advance or else have his tongue cut out.[43] These punishments were not principally meant to be deterrent, rehabilitative, rectificatory, celebratory, confiscatory, or vengeful; but something that does not even appear in Nietzsche's famous catalogue:[44] *expiatory*. They were attempts to turn God's wrath away from France. In fact, punishment was only one of several means to that same end. When a culprit could not be found, the Parlement usually put on a solemn procession to repair the injury that had been done to the sacrament or the Virgin. Thus after the *Affaire des placards* there was both a burning of heretics and a grand supplicatory procession, in which the king marched barefoot before the Host.[45] Both elements of this secular auto-da-fé had the same aim.

In addition to the wave of ad-hoc burnings and confiscations, Francis also banned all printing in the kingdom. After that, he authorized a very small list of printers to resume printing, and meanwhile instituted a system of legal deposit that required all newly published books to be reviewed by royal censors.[46] In practice, this did not mean that all unauthorized printing ceased, or that all publishers of unregistered books were henceforth punished. But the decrees did give the Parlement a ready pretext to condemn any book that had not been approved in advance. In general, the decade after the *Affaire des placards* was a period of stricter censorship of books than had ever existed in France. Repression of suspect material only increased as the reign of King Francis approached its end.[47]

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[42] For an account of this matter that pays close attention to bibliographical details, see William Kemp, 'Marguerite of Navarre, Clément Marot, and the Augereau Editions of the *Miroir de l'âme pécheresse*', *Journal of the Early Book Society for the Study of Manuscripts and Printing History* II (1999): pp. 113–156.

[43] Lev 24:16: 'Whoever curses the name of God, shall surely die: the whole congregation shall surely stone him. Whether stranger or a native, he shall die for cursing the Name.'

[44] *Zur Genealogie der Moral*, II.13.

[45] Guillaume Budé's praise of the event is illustrative: of its purpose: 'Imperatáque viritim lampadephoria, tute è regia in proximum fanum progressus, unde erat ineunda universa supplicatio, splendidissimo tuo comitatu & officio, tanquam aulico ministerio, incredibilis agminis pompam, ex quóque homines meminerunt amplissimam, frequentandam ac celebrandum duxisti. ad placandam utique iram dei, portentúmque sceleris procurandum, iustis omnibus excogitatis, è veteríque memoria repetitis, quàm fieri potuit expiabilissimis.' *De transitu hellenismi ad christianismum, Libri tres* (Paris: Robert Estienne, 1535), foll. Av r.–v.

[46] See *Ordonnances des rois de France: Règne de François Ier*, vol. VI-1: 1533 (Paris: Académie des Sciences Morales et Politiques, 1941), no. 686.

[47] For a convincing statement of this position, see James K. Farge, 'The Origins and Development of Censorship in France', in *The Renaissance in the Streets, Schools, and Studies: Essays in Honour of Paul F. Grendler*, ed. Konrad

Indeed, the prosecution of Morin and the *Cymbalum mundi* does not appear to have been an end in itself, but rather a means for opening a larger inquiry into unauthorized printing in Paris. As we have seen, Jehan de La Garde and Estienne Sabray were burnt after their names were revealed (under torture, probably) by Jehan Morin.[48] Many other booksellers were arrested with these two, but presumably escaped with their lives. Thus the *Cymbalum mundi* quickly became an afterthought amid a larger roundup of heretic booksellers. It was only a prelude, perhaps even a pretext, for searching the bookstore of Jehan Morin, and then for making a wider search of Paris bookstores for heretical books. In the end, it was Jehan de La Garde who was strangled and burned, and Morin was only sentenced to exile.

In the years that followed, the Parlement ordered searches of bookstores on many occasions, and passed incessant decrees against the printing of blasphemous books.[49] (From time to time they also received letters from the Court exhorting them to keep up their inquisition against heresy.)[50] On a few occasions, they imposed sentences on booksellers and book-owners that were identical to the one that they had given to Morin. In December 1540, Estienne de Monterrain was sentenced to *amende honorable* and exile for owning unstated heretical books.[51] In May 1542, Jehan de L'Hospital met the same fate on account of owning a Calvinist book.[52] And in July of the same year, the bookseller Anthoine Le Noir, who had imported Calvin's *Institutes* itself, was sentenced to make *amende honorable* before being exiled from the kingdom.[53] In this case, the forbidden books in question were so obviously execrable that no appeal to the Faculty of Theology was necessary. Immediately after sentencing Le Noir, the Parlement issued a long denunciation of Calvin without needing any external advice.[54]

Seen in its wider context, the Parlement's persecution of Jehan Morin no longer seems like anything strange. For more than a decade, Lizet and his associates had been uprooting Lutheran books, and they went on doing that long after 1538. Whether anyone in the Parlement actually believed that the *Cymbalum mundi* contained Lutheran heresies is of only minor relevance: they were in doubt on that head, and referred the question to the Faculty of

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Eisenbichler and Nicholas Terpstra, Essays and Studies 16 (Toronto: Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, 2008), pp. 233–255.

[48] See Farge, *Religion*, no. 60.

[49] Ibid., no. 384, 391, 459, 465, 493, 516, 623, 774.

[50] The first of these appeared a year after Morin's trial: ibid, no. 367.

[51] Ibid., no. 417.

[52] Ibid., no. 445.

[53] Ibid., no. 464.

[54] Ibid., no. 465.

Theology. Perhaps not a single member of the Parlement actually read it. It was sufficient that the book was vaguely associated with other ones that were definitively scandalous, and that it emerged from a nest of heterodox printers. Atheism, it goes without saying, did not come into their thinking at all.

THE CONDEMNATION OF THE ROYAL COURT

Lizet and the Parlement were the principal actors in Morin's ordeal. Still, the fact remains that Antoine Du Bourg wrote the original letter that set the affair off, and claimed while doing so to be acting in the name of the king. What are we to make of the royal attitude to the *Cymbalum mundi*?

In answering this question, we cannot regard Francis I as a lone actor, or even assume that he had a considered personal view of humanist literature. That approach has little power to explain his erratic attitude to Evangelism over the course of the 1530s, and even less to account for the specific letter sent on his behalf to the Parlement concerning the *Cymbalum mundi*. Michel Simonin, in the very last scholarly contribution of his life,[55] insisted that we view the Morin affair as a question of court intrigue.[56] He was absolutely right. Francis I is best analysed as a kind of fickle Ahasuerus, susceptible at all times to the influence of councillors who vied for control over his signet ring. Only the right question to ask is not merely, 'on whose urging was the *Cymbalum mundi* condemned?' but also 'who could have *protected* a given book from being condemned, and why did no one act in the case of the *Cymbalum mundi*?'

The traditional champion at court of humanist letters against the Faculty of Theology was Jehan Du Bellay, the bishop of Paris.[57] On account of his sympathies for Evangelism, Du Bellay was often harassed by traditionalist opponents at court. His secretary had been executed for heresy, and he himself was the subject of rumours that he was a heretic. Due to his theological sympathies, it was almost always he who intervened to protect Evangelical printers and authors. He was also the usual vehicle for Marguerite's interventions on behalf of

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[55] See Jean Céard, 'Michel Simonin: in memoriam', in *ACR2000*, pp. XIII–XV.
[56] Michel Simonin, 'Vol au-dessus d'un nid de corbeaux: le prince, les lettres et le *Cymbalum mundi*', in ibid., pp. 43–56. Simonin's article elicited an extremely speculative and strange reply from one scholar who claimed that Estienne Dolet (!) had denounced Des Periers to the king. Jean-François Vallée, 'Le corbeau et le cymbale. Etienne Dolet et le *Cymbalum Mundi*', *BHR* LXVII, no. 1 (2005): pp. 121–135.
[57] See Victor-Louis Bourilly and Nathaniel Weiss, 'Jean du Bellay, les Protestants et la Sorbonne (1529–1535)', *Bulletin de la Société de l'Histoire du Protestantisme Français* LII, no. 2 (March–April 1903): pp. 97–127.

her favourites.[58] Now, Du Bellay was travelling with the court during the period of Morin's ordeal.[59] He could have stepped in to prevent the King from sending a letter, but here he evidently did not. Naturally enough, the obscure printer Morin did not enjoy the same kind of patronage as François Rabelais.

No records survive to tell us which Haman approached the King with the *Cymbalum mundi*. Anne de Montmorency and François de Tournon, the two most prominent conservatives on the council in 1538, deserve some consideration.[60] Montmorency, however, is unlikely to have agitated against a book like the *Cymbalum* at this particular moment. He had just received a dedicated collection of poetry from Clement Marot, and did not show any signs of zeal against humanists or their printers in 1538.[61] Tournon, meanwhile, was probably travelling with the court in March 1538.[62] But in any case, he was also friendly to Marot in this period, and unlikely to have pressed for the persecution of one of Marot's allies. The collection that Marot presented to Montmorency included a poem in Tournon's honour, and there is evidence that Tournon himself sent a friendly poem in return.[63] Tournon had also written to Montmorency in 1536 to convey his acceptance and approval of Marot's *amende honorable*.[64]

I think that it is possible that the whole affair was a put-up job, directed from within the Parlement from the start. Guillaume Poyet, a notorious anti-Evangelical, sat both on the *conseil privé* and in the Parlement as *president à mortier*. He was also closely connected to Antoine Du Bourg. Poyet was in Moulins with the court when the letter about the *Cymbalum mundi* was sent to the Parlement,[65] and he could very well have presented the *Cymbalum mundi* to the king and overseen the drafting of the letter. As we have already seen, Poyet and Pierre Lizet were the most enthusiastic proponents in Paris of the Deuteronomic Theory. And Poyet was

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[58] See Jonathan A. Reid, 'Marguerite de Navarre, la sœur fidèle', in *Les conseillers de François Ier*, ed. Cédric Michon, Collection Histoire: «L'Univers de la cour» (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2011), pp. 415–442.

[59] This is evident from the letters he sent during the whole affair, which were consistently dated from the places where the court was stationed. He wrote from Moulins on 27 February, La Côte-Saint-André on 18 April, and Avignon on 15 May. See Rémy Scheurer and Loris Petris, eds., *Correspondance du Cardinal Jean Du Bellay*, vol. III (Paris: Société de l'histoire de France, 2008), pp. 90–102.

[60] For lists of the annual composition of the *Conseil*, see Michon, ed., *Les Conseillers de François Ier*, appendix I.

[61] François Rigolot, ed., *Recueil inédit offert au Connétable de Montmorency en mars 1538 (Manuscrit de Chantilly)*, Textes Littéraires Français (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 2010).

[62] See Michel François, ed., *Correspondance du Cardinal François de Tournon, 1521–1562*, Bibliothèque de l'École des Hautes Études 290 (Paris: Librairie Ancienne Édouard Champion, 1946), pp. 211–217.

[63] Rigolot, ed., *Recueil*, pp. 234–6, 270.

[64] François, ed., *Correspondance*, p. 155 (no. 214).

[65] Cf. Charles Porée, 'Un parlementaire sous François Ier: Guillaume Poyet, 1473–1547. Chapitre III: Poyet, président au Parlement (31 décembre 1534–12 novembre 1538)', *Revue de l'Anjou* XXXV, juillet-août (1897): pp. 107–127 [126].

ascendant in the king's favour: in November 1538, he was chosen to succeed Antoine Du Bourg as Chancellor of France.

We should also consider a problem of motive. The Parlement had a very good reason for prosecuting the *Cymbalum mundi*: it gave them a pretext for opening a much larger investigation into the Evangelical underworld in Paris. Lizet and his Parlement had been champing at the bit, and his persecutory machinery sprang immediately into action upon receipt of Du Bourg's letter. No one at Court, however, seems to have had much to gain from punishing Morin or even Des Periers. Du Bourg's letter to Lizet had stated that an (unnamed) reader had found 'great abuses and heresies in it'; and that was all. It was *Lizet* who then went on to denounce, in very specific terms, the problem of Lutheran and German books in his address to the Parlement. There is no document pre-dating 5 March 1538 to prove it, but it would not be surprising if the Court was acting on the Parlement's instructions, and not the other way around.

THE FACULTY'S CONDEMNATION

Finally, let us examine the Faculty of Theology's judgement on the *Cymbalum mundi*: 'quamvis liber ille non contineat errores expressos in fide, tamen quia perniciosus est, ideo supprimendus'. ('Even if the book does not contain express errors in the faith, nevertheless because it is harmful, it is to be suppressed'.) This language need not strike us as unusual, or even as particularly interesting. Lucien Febvre complained that it did not tell us enough: in both of his articles on the *Cymbalum mundi*, he sighed that it was impossible to tell whether the Faculty was being merciful or harsh without new documents. Screech, for his part, was less cautious, and argued that the Faculty's judgement was obviously reluctant and unserious.[66]

We do not need more sources on this particular judgement. We only need to understand its context, and this is most easily done by flipping through James Farge's edition of the Faculty of Theology's surviving registers.[67] The following two lexical points become quickly apparent. First, *supprimendus* was the basic term employed to condemn a book, and is absolutely unremarkable in itself. Second, *perniciosus* was neither a mark of special condemnation nor, as M. A. Screech believed, an embarrassed admission that there was

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[66] CM 1983, 'Préface', p. 8.

[67] *Registre des procès-verbaux de la Faculté de théologie de l'Université de Paris*, vol. I: De janvier 1524 à novembre 1533, Textes et Documents sur l'Histoire des Universités 2 (Paris: Aux amateurs de Livres, 1990); id, ed., *Registre des conclusions de la Faculté de théologie de l'Université de Paris*, vol. II: Du novembre 1533 au 1er mars 1550, Textes et Documents sur l'Histoire des Universités 3 (Paris: Klincksieck, 1994). Despite the variant titles and publishers, these are two volumes of the same book.

nothing really wrong with the book. It meant no or more less than that the book had the potential to damage the faith or morals of an innocent reader.

Here are some examples. On 20 May 1525, the Faculty condemned Louis Berquin's translations of three of Erasmus' books in the following language:

> Audita relatione finali de contentis in tribus libellis Erasmi Roterodami in vulgare translatis, qui sunt *Encomium matrimonii*, *Brevis admonitio de modo orandi*, et *Symbolum*, fuit dictum quod, cum multa in illis contineantur vel impia vel absurda vel bonis moribus pernitiosa aut heretica, nullatenus permitti debet ut imprimantur Parisiis sic translata, sed quod omnino deberent supprimi, cum pias offendant in multis aures.[68]

In 1540, they passed the following sentences:

> Audita relatione […] super libro Erasmi, cui titulus est *Enchiridion militis christiani*, lectisque ibidem ex eo multis cum scandalosis tum hereticis, censuit eundem, ut rei christiane pernitiosum, esse supprimendum.
>
> Audita etiam eorundem deputatorum relatione super libellis, quibus est titulus *De corrigendis studiis* Melanchthonis, *Christiana studiose iuventutis institutio* per Hegendorphinum, cum adiuncto *De doctrina et institutione puerorum* Brunfelsi, lectisque ibidem ex illis multis tum scandalosis tum a consuetis studiis ad inconcessa avocantibus, censuit eosdem, ut iuventuti pernitiosos, esse suprimendos.[69]

And on 13 March 1548:

> Audita relatione magistrorum nostrorum qui visitaverunt et examinaverunt septem libros a senatu missos: primum inscriptum *Familiarium colloquiorum formulæ* per Desiderium Erasmum, et qui summa est maiorum colloquiorum eiusdem iam pridem damnatorum, censet admodum perniciosum totiusque iuventutis corruptellam.[70]

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[68] 'After the final report had been heard on the contents of three books by Erasmus of Rotterdam that had been translated into French, viz. *Encomium matrimonii*, *Brevis admonitio de modo orandi*, and his [*Explicatio in*] *symbolum* [*apostolorum*], it was decreed that since there is much matter in these books that is either impious, absurd, harmful to good morals or heretical, it should not be permitted on any account that they should be printed in Paris in translation, but rather that they should be completely suppressed, as being offensive in many respects to pious ears.' | Ibid., p. 96, no. 94 A. Emphases here and in the following quotations are mine.

[69] 'Having heard the report on the book of Erasmus called *Enchiridion militis christiani*, and having heard many things read out of it that were both scandalous and heretical, [the Faculty] judged that the book was to be suppressed, as being harmful to Christianity. Having also heard the same deputies' reports on the books *De corrigendis studiis* by Melanchthon and *Christiana studiose iuventutis institutio* by Hegendorf, with the appendix *De doctrina et institutione puerorum* of Brunfels, and having heard many things read out of them that were both scandalous and liable to tempt one away from one's usual studies and into illicit ones, it judged that they were to be suppressed, as being harmful to the youth.

[70] 'Having heard the report of the masters who consulted and examined the seven books sent to it by the Parlement; the first of which, by Desiderius Erasmus, was called *Familiarium colloquiorum formulæ*—a compendium of his longer dialogues which have already been condemned—[the Faculty] deems it very harmful to and seductive of all the youth.' | Vol. II, no. 427A, p. 412.

Here there is no possibility that *perniciosus* was an empty term, or even a light one. A book judged as *pernciosus rei christianæ* or *perniciosus iuventuti* was thereby damnable. *Pernicies* was not the same thing as heresy, but it was dangerous all the same; and it is no accident that Erasmus' books were accused of it. The *Colloquia*, for instance, are not a theological work, and in the mass of its learned and chucklesome dialogues, it is hard to find a statement that expressly contradicts the doctrine which the Faculty had charged itself with defending. Nevertheless it was dangerous to the morals of the youth, and therefore condemnable. The *Cymbalum mundi*, a work of far coarser wit, must have been even more obnoxious to this charge.

In the preface to its 1551 catalogue of all the books it had censored, the Faculty of Theology gave a list of several reasons why a book might need to be suppressed:[71]

> Some of these [books] are obviously heretical and worthy of the flames. Some labour gravely under the suspicion of heresy. Some are a stumbling-block and a scandal. Some give off a whiff of blasphemy. And some are such as it is not in the interest of a Christian commonwealth to see published and disseminated among the people.[72]

Books in the last three categories do not contain *errores expressi in fide*, and still the Parlement thought that they should be suppressed. The *Cymbalum mundi* was apparently just such a book. It is not hard to conceive of reasons why the Faculty (and indeed the Parlement) should have deemed it a scandal to good Christians. Its Lucianic and silly banter apart, it contains smut. There is the ribald pastiche of Marot's verses,[73] Cupid's lustful reverie,[74] horse-sex,[75] dog-sex,[76] infanticide,[77] and a line from a poem about a clerk and the landlord's daughter.[78] Even if we assume that *Cymbalum mundi* was as atheist a book as can be imagined—the work of a sixteenth-century Jean Meslier—still its secret radicalism meant nothing to the Faculty of Theology's masters, who appear to have condemned it for the sole reason that it was too louche. If they had had more philosophical reasons for their sentence, nothing would have stopped them from stating these explicitly, as they did on countless other occasions. As we have seen, the *Cymbalum mundi* did indeed contain Evangelical satires against

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[71] *Le Catalogue des livres examinez & censurez, par la Faculté de Theologie de l'Université de Paris: suyvant l'Edict du Roy, Publié en la Court de Parlement, le troisiesme iour de Septembre, M. D. LI.* (Paris: Jehan Dallier, 1551), fol. C_{iii} r.
[72] 'Sunt autem ex eorum numero quidam planè hæretici, flammísque digni. Sunt & qui suspicione hæreseos vehementer laborant. Sunt qui offendiculum & scandalum præbeant. Sunt qui blasphemias suboleant. Sunt & quos non expediat reipublicæ Christianæ in lucem & vulgus emitti.'
[73] F_i v. 15–17.
[74] F_i v. 2–7.
[75] F_{iv} r.–v., passim.
[76] H_{ii} v., 16–18.
[77] A_{iii} v., 6–7.
[78] F_{ii} v., 9–11.

the corruptions of the visible Church. But these were either too subtle or too mild to merit explicit denunciation.[79]

M. A. Screech wrote that the Faculty's judgment on the *Cymbalum mundi* was 'astonishing' and even of 'doubtful legality', because 'a book can only be condemned for specific heresies'.[80] Therefore it must be concluded that 'the Sorbonne [*sic*] murmured its disagreement' with the views of Court and the Parlement.[81] It should be obvious from the Faculty condemnations just quoted that this view is completely wrong.

SUMMARY

There were three institutions that dealt with Jehan Morin and CM 1537: the Parlement, the royal Court, and the Faculty of Theology. They all cooperated with each other, yet each had its particular attitude to the book.

The *Parlement*, dominated intellectually by the lawyers Pierre Lizet and Poyet, was eager to stamp out all Lutheran printing in Paris. Its members feared that if the secular authorities failed to do so, then France would be ruined. The *Cymbalum mundi* itself was of minor concern to them: far more important was the network of Evangelical printers with which Jehan Morin was associated. The Parlement's persecution of Morin can only be explained as part of their general attempt to save France from the divine wrath that necessarily attended the toleration of heresy.

The *Court* worked very closely with the Parlement. Unlike the Parlement, however, it was not dominated by any single person or intellectual programme when it came to heresy. In the case of the *Cymbalum mundi*, the allies of Lizet—Antoine Du Bourg and possibly Guillaume Poyet—successfully wielded royal power against the *Cymbalum mundi*, and did not meet with any resistance from the patrons of humanist authors. This was consistent with the Court's general cooperation with the Parlement's heresy-prosecutions in the years following the *Affaire des placards*. There is nothing to suggest that King Francis himself took a special interest in the *Cymbalum mundi*, and in fact Du Bourg's letter to the Parlement implied that he never even read it.

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[79] This was the conclusion of the first critical assessment of the Faculty's judgment: *Histoire ecclesiastique, pour servir de continuation à celle de Monsieur l'Abbé Fleury*, vol. XXVIII (Paris: Emery / Saugrain / Pierre Martin, 1730) pp. 221–222.

[80] 'Ce jugement étonne. Il est d'une légalité douteuse: on condamne un livre pour des hérésies spécifiques.' | CM 1983, 'Préface', p. 8.

[81] 'Cette conclusion des théologiens n'est pas sans une certaine lâche et timide dignité: le roi, avec beaucoup d'éclat, prétendait que le *Cymbalum Mundi* contenait «de grands abuz et heresies». Interrogée, la Sorbonne murmura qu'elle n'était pas d'accord.' Ibid.

Finally, the masters of the *Faculty of Theology* played only a passive role in the Morin affair. They were not asked about the wider raid which Morin's prosecution had provoked, and were only consulted by the Parlement on the restricted question of whether the book *Cymbalum mundi* contained heresy. In their judgement it did not, but it was nevertheless a danger to public morals. The Faculty did not even bother to inquire after the book's author, even though this information had already been divulged to the authorities by Jehan Morin. In their 1551 list of books that they had censored, they listed *Cymbalum mundi* under the rubric of 'French books by unknown authors'.[82]

So it must be said: neither Jehan Morin, nor Bonaventure Des Periers, nor Pierre Lizet, nor Antoine Du Bourg, nor the Faculty of Theology's masters understood the *Cymbalum mundi* to be anything like a programmatic rejection of positive religion. No hypothesis could be more doubtfully supported by contemporary documents.

And yet—the *Cymbalum mundi* did eventually earn a reputation for atheism; and its author, damned as a blasphemer in his own century, has been celebrated in modernity as an heroic pioneer of freethought. In order to account for this, we must look elsewhere: not at the contents of the book itself, or at the trial of its publisher, but at the development of literary rumours about it in later years.

[82] *Le Catalogue des livres examinez & censurez, par la Faculté de Theologie de l'Université de Paris: suyvant l'Edict du Roy, Publié en la Court de Parlement, le troisiesme iour de Septembre, M. D. LI.* (Paris: Jehan Dallier, 1551).

Chapter III. Development of the Myth

Tam ficti pravique tenax quam nuntia veri.

Suppose that Bonaventure Des Periers was a singular genius, who conferred not with flesh and blood but only with the purest wisdom of the ancients; who escaped from the mentality of his time and wrote the *Cymbalum mundi* as a work of studied atheism, a gospel for free humanity. Every name in the dialogues was an anagram; every twist in the plot a mocking allusion to Christ's life and resurrection. Suppose this—and still the historical problem of how *Cymbalum mundi* came to be seen as an atheist work has not yet been solved. For as we are about to see, the tale of the *Cymbalum mundi*'s atheism was fashioned by scholars who were only very slightly acquainted with its contents. In order to understand the rumour's development, we cannot (for the time being) consider the question of whether it was justified, because no justification was ever necessary for its coming into existence.

It is the myth, not the reality of the *Cymbalum mundi* that we are concerned with now, and this can only be understood by collecting testimonia of the book. Prosper Marchand, beginning his work in 1706, was the first and last author to attempt a comprehensive and synoptic review of such passages.[1] Here I am picking up where he left off. Marchand assembled his testimonia with the principal aim of showing that they were all unsupported by anything in the book itself. This was quite right. But now that the myth's untruth has been established, it remains to trace the precise lines of descent by which one telling of it influenced the next. We will then have explained how the *Cymbalum mundi*'s atheism came to pass for an obvious truth, even in the absence of any readily available edition of its text.[2]

NOTATION

The myth as it had emerged by the end of the seventeenth century contained four elements.

α – Bonaventure Des Periers was an atheist.

β – The *Cymbalum mundi* is an atheist book.

γ – The *Cymbalum mundi* was written by Des Periers. (The only true element.)

δ – Des Periers died by falling on his propped-up sword.

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[1] In the lost manuscript CM *Com; see the later printing of Marchand's testimonia in CM 1711a, pp. 26–50.

[2] The testimonia that follow can all be read in full and in their original languages in the appendix to the attached edition.

All of these are logically independent of each other, and whereas α and β might each conceivably have been deduced syllogistically from the other plus γ, versions of them actually emerged as rumours on their own, and were each committed to print before γ had been established.

We can distinguish earlier variants of α and β. Only in some later sources were Des Periers and the *Cymbalum mundi* described explicitly with the label *atheist*. But the weaker, primitive versions of these propositions (Ur-α; Ur-β) only asserted a vaguer impiety. Given the sense-development of 'atheism', the actual philosophical distinction between these propositions and their Ur-variants was actually slight in the early sixteenth century. But there is nevertheless some value to observing the semantic distinction, because starting around the mid-seventeenth century, authors *did* begin to distinguish atheism, as a systematic denial of Christianity and all revealed religion, from mere impious mockery. Thus when Ur-α and Ur-β evolved into explicit accusations of atheism, the eventual consequences for the *Cymbalum mundi*'s reputation were very serious.

Proposition γ, which explicitly attributed authorship of the *Cymbalum mundi* to Bonaventure Des Periers, is to be distinguished from γ', according to which he merely translated it from Thomas Du Clevier's original Latin.

Proposition δ also underwent important variation. Some authors stated that he killed himself, but did not refer to his falling onto his sword. This is to be denoted by δ'. The proposition was then degraded further, so that some authors merely stated that he died miserably, with no reference to suicide. This statement I will denote by δ''.

Due to a series of intellectual accidents, all four propositions were woven into a single legend by the turn of the eighteenth century. Since each element had earlier appeared in isolation, it is possible by tracking them to reconstruct the exact lines of transmission by which *Cymbalum mundi* and its author came to be known as stock examples of atheism.

None of them are present in any of the documents that touched on Morin's trials. The worst statements about the book in them were 1) the king's reader's judgement that it contained *grans abuz et heresies*, and 2) the Faculty of Theology's condemnation of it as *perniciosus*. Nor was the book connected in writing to Bonaventure Des Periers.[3]

THE SEIZED LETTER

On 8 August 1538, the officer Jehan Tignac wrote a letter to Antoine Du Bourg,

[3] As Morin wrote in his plea to Du Bourg, however, he had betrayed the name of the author to his captors. (He wrote: …*attendu que par sa deposition il a declaré lauteur dudict livre*'.) Apart from this passing remark, no other record of the confession survives, and the Faculty of Theology, for its part, did not know who the author was.

chancellor of France, summarizing the contents of several letters that he had intercepted from a suspected Lutheran. One of these letters, addressed by the Reformer Andreas Zebedæus to Charles de Candeley on 31 July, discussed the *Cymbalum mundi*. The letter itself has perished, but Tignac's summary of it reads as follows:

> The next item says that France has been rallied to the flag of Epicurus by certain men of genius, and that the man who made *Cymbalum mundi* aimed at nothing other than this. He (the letter says) was one of their number, and had been a clerk for Olivetain when he translated the Bible into French. The third item contains these words: 'I remember Dolet, Rabelais and Marot well, and I am astonished when I think of what they told me about them in Lyon.'[4]

The 'clerc de Olivetain' is almost certainly Bonaventure Des Periers, who was advertised prominently as an 'amanuensis' in the front- and backmatter of Olivetan's Bible. (The only other amanuensis, named only as 'H. Rosa', is mentioned only once. He has never been identified).[5] It is not entirely clear whether 'the man who made *Cymbalum mundi*' are the words of Zebedæus himself, or merely the gloss of Jehan Tignac, who might have read 'Bonaventure Des Periers' in the original letter and referred to him allusively, while assuming that Du Bourg would remember Morin's case from earlier in the year.[6] As the letter's first publisher pointed out, Zebedæus had most probably written in Latin, and Tignac's summary represented a translation into French.[7]

Zebedæus's letter seems to have contained Ur-α and γ, but probably not (Ur-)β. Nor did he state explicitly that *Cymbalum mundi* formed the grounds for considering Des Periers an atheist. Such questions, however, are of only limited importance. Until its rediscovery in the twentieth century, Tignac's summary sat uncatalogued and unread, and thus played no part in the development of the *Cymbalum mundi*'s reputation.

Guillaume Postel

The very first mention in print of the *Cymbalum mundi* was in Guillaume Postel's *Alcorani et evangelistarum concordiæ liber* of 1543.[8] In the course of his argument that the so-called Cænevangelists were antichrists, he wrote:

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[4] Printed in Gabrielle Berthoud, 'Lettres de réformés saisies à Lyon en août 1538', *Revue de théologie et de philosophie* 24, no. 99 (June 1936): pp. 154–178, but I have corrected the transcript against the original MS (BnF Dupuy 402).
[5] According to Eugénie Droz it was a certain Hugues Sureau du Rosier, but he is not attested anywhere else until many decades after 1535. See 'Pierre de Vingle, l'imprimeur de Farel', in *Aspects de la Propagande Religieuse*, THR, XXXVIII (Droz, 1957), pp. 38–78 [73].
[6] I have never seen this question raised in print before: the former is usually taken for granted.
[7] Berthoud, 'Lettres de réformés saisies', p. 160, n. 1.
[8] Guillaume Postel, *Alcorani, seu Legis Mahometi et evangelistarum concordiæ liber, in quo de calamitatibus orbi Christiano imminentibus tractatur* (Paris: Petrus Gromorsus, 1543), p. 72.

> […] This is confirmed by the habit they all have of living impiously, and of following like beasts whatever they find agreeable. Not a few of them even make public profession of their impiety: this is what Villanovanus' *On the Three Prophets*,[9] *Cymbalum mundi*, *Pantagruel*, and *The New Islands*[10] show, whose authors were standard-bearers for the Cænevangelists.[11]

Here Postel only asserted Ur-β, and a weak version of it at that. He did not identify the author, or even write that *Cymbalum mundi* was an atheist book. The reference is in fact so slight that it seems Postel knew very little about the book, other than its vague association with Rabelais and the authors of the three other books that he mentioned alongside it. And in fact, the doubtful existence of *Novæ insulæ* and *De tribus prophetis* gives the sense that this whole passage probably owed more to Postel's feverish imagination than to any real information about Bonaventure Des Periers' *Cymbalum mundi*. A similarly hazy list of works appeared in a later manuscript, in which Postel mentioned

> the nefarious commentaries of Villanovanus, the new Moria, Salciza, cimbalum mundi, Marcellus Palingenesius, Rabelais, and similar scoffers.[12]

Here it is even unclear whether *cimbalum mundi* refers to a book, or (as originally with Pliny) an author. Finally, in a manuscript of 1560, Postel mentioned the *Cymbalum mundi* again, and here his description of it was even cloudier:[13] he referred to the 'first authors of the cymbalum

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[9] I think it is possible that a treatise of Arnaldus de Villa Nova (fl. 1280–1300) is intended here. In a letter written in 1543 and printed in the *Concordia* itself, Postel denounced 'Arnaldus Villanovanus' for falsely predicting the Second Coming. Perhaps both citations refer to Arnaldus' *Tractatus de tempore adventûs antichristi*, or to its earlier redaction *De mysterio cymbalorum ecclesiæ*. In both versions of the treatise, Arnaldus predicted the coming of the Antichrist with reference to Daniel, Ezekiel, and the Apocalypse of John—*tres prophetæ* if there ever were any. See Josep Perarnau i Espelt, 'El text primitiu del *De mysterio cymbalorum Ecclesiae* d'Arnau de Vilanova', *Arxiu de Textos Catalans Antics* 7/8 (1988–9): pp. 7–182. The oft-repeated association between *De tribus prophetis* and the legendary tract '*De tribus impostoribus* relies on nothing but the appearance of the supposedly tell-tale words 'de' and 'tribus'.

[10] There has been some scholarly debate on the proper parsing of this list. M. A. Screech (CM 1983, Préface, p. 10) proposed that [Villanovani de tribus prophetis, Cymbalum mundi] and [Pantagruellus & novæ insulæ] should be taken as only two books. He used this as evidence for his insinuation that Des Periers was likely not the author of *Cymbalum mundi*, but that it was rather a mysterious Villanovanus. (Heather Ingman endorsed this theory in her otherwise captious review of CM 1983, thus heaping madness on madness: Review of 'Bonaventure Des Périers?: *Cymbalum Mundi*, *French Studies* XL, no. 1 [January 1986]: p. 63.) Screech's interpretation, however, has been rightly rebuked as a syntactical impossibility by most scholars who have come across it, several of whom had views on the *Cymbalum mundi* that were even less sensible than his. See for instance Malcolm Smith, 'A Sixteenth-Century Anti-Theist (on the *Cymbalum Mundi*)', *BHR* LIII (1991): pp. 593–618 [616, n. 63]; Corrado Bologna, 'Lo «spirito» del *Cymbalum mundi*', in *ACR2000*, pp. 201–35 [208, n. 30].

[11] 'Facit fidem impie vivendi & more brutorum quicquid collibitum est sequendi omnium consuetudo, non paucorum etiam publica impietatis professio, id arguit nefarius tractatus Villanovani de tribus prophetis, Cymbalum mundi, Pantagruellus & novæ insulæ quorum authores erant Cenevangelistarum antesignani.'

[12] 'Extant impie Villanovani, Moriæ novæ, Salcizæ, cimbali mundi, Marcelli Palingenesii Rabelesi & similium impietatum nefariæ commentationes Deum omnino & Christum omniaque diuina & sancta ideo ridentes.' *De summo in hac vita apprehensibili, seu De sapientia secunda sive creata dispunctio. Ad sacrosanctum Theologorum Parisientium coetum et Galliae concilium*. Bibliothèque Méjanes (Aix-en-Provence), MS 52 (395) foll. 69–92; BnF, MS François 2115, foll. 85v.–95r.

[13] פתיחת או מאירת עינים / *Apertio sive illuminatio oculorum*. Basel, Universitätsbibliothek, O III 52, fol. 9v.

mundi', as if it were a collaborative work or even a entire literary genre. It seems that his knowledge of the book had faded with time.

LISTS OF FORBIDDEN BOOKS

From the middle of the sixteenth century, several official and widely distributed lists of prohibited books included the *Cymbalum mundi*. The first of these was the Paris Faculty of Theology's, published in 1544, which correctly listed it as a French book, but described it as anonymous.[14] (For some reason, the *Cymbalum mundi* had not appeared on the earlier manuscript list of forbidden books which the Faculty had drawn up the previous year.)[15]

The Roman Inquisition then incorporated it into its own list of forbidden books, together with most of the books on the Paris Faculty's list.[16] There it was included among the 'prohibited books by unknown authors'. In 1557, this entry was incorporated into the Pauline Index of heretical books; and from there into the Tridentine *Index librorum prohibitorum* of 1564, which was itself recopied into innumerable editions down to the twentieth century.[17] There is nothing to indicate that the *Cymbalum mundi*'s inclusion was owed to anything other than the Faculty's condemnation of it in 1538, or that the compilers of the Roman Indices had any idea what this book was; let alone who had written it. Regardless of the reason, the *Cymbalum mundi* had now appeared in the most famous and widely reprinted catalogue of forbidden books in Christendom.

DE SCANDALIS

The next contemporary attestation comes from John Calvin himself.[18] In 1550, he mentioned Des Periers——but not the *Cymbalum mundi*—in his fulgurous tract *De scandalis*. Hence this passage contained a profession of Ur-α only. Here is Calvin's comment in context:

> The contempt for the Gospel that now reigns all over is a sure foreboding of a beastly life. Forasmuch as God applies a *final* remedy to human lives when he

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[14] *Le Catalogue des livres censurez par la faculté de Theologie de Paris* (Paris: Jehan André [printed by Benoist Prevost], 1544). The Cymbalum mundi was listed again in a second edition: *Le Catalogue des livres examinez & censurez, par la Faculté de Theologie de l'Université de Paris: suyvant l'Edict du Roy, Publié en la Court de Parlement, le troisiesme iour de Septembre, M. D. LI.* (Paris: Jehan Dallier, 1551).

[15] This is printed as Appendix III in James K. Farge, ed., *Registre des conclusions de la Faculté de théologie de l'Université de Paris*, vol. II: Du novembre 1533 au 1er mars 1550, Textes et Documents sur l'Histoire des Universités 3 (Paris: Klincksieck, 1994), pp. 453–460.

[16] *Index auctorum, et librorum, qui tanquam heretici, aut suspecti, aut perniciosi, ab officio S. Ro. Inquisitionis reprobantur, et in uniuersa Christiana republica interdicuntur* (Rome: Antonio Blado, 1557, p. 14.

[17] *Index librorum prohibitorum, cum Regulis confectis per Patres a Tridentina Synodo delectos, auctoritate Sanctiss. D. N. Pii IIII, Pont. Max. comprobatus* (Rome: Paulus Manutius, 1564), p. 37.

[18] John Calvin, *De scandalis quibus hodie plerique absterrentur, nonnulli etiam alienantur à pura Evangelii doctrina* (Geneva: Johannes Crispinus, 1550), pp. 54–55.

> shines on them with his Gospel, it follows that whoever is not cured by this remedy is incurable. But those who knowingly and willingly escape or expel their doctor intentionally bring death upon themselves. To conclude this topic, those who rightly deem impiety to be a foul evil may see in the harshness of these people's punishment how ill the Lord takes contempt for his Gospel: and they are strengthened by this evidence in their own faith and obedience to Him. It is known how Agrippa, Villeneuve,[19] Dolet, and others like them always spurned the Gospel in their pride, like so many Cyclopes.[20] Finally they went so far in their mindless madness as not only to spew execrable blasphemies against the Son of God, but to think themselves no different from dogs and swine, as far as the life of the soul was concerned.[21] Others (like Rabelais, Deperius and [Antoine] de Govea), having first tasted the Gospel, were struck with the same blindness. Wherefore? Was it not because they had once profaned the holy pledge of eternal life in their sacrilegiously licentious sport and laughter? I only name a few, but let us know that all men of this sort have been pointed out by God, as if by His finger, as a reminder to continue eagerly in the pursuit of our calling lest the like befall us.

The theory here is that God had punished a class of men for despising the Gospel. To take Calvin at his word, it was not their raillery that invited punishment: rather their raillery was itself a punishment for having previously taken the word of God too lightly. Making sport of holy things was the main object of Calvin's accusations, just as it had been of Estienne's. There was a close relationship in the minds of sixteenth-century Christians between atheism and triviality, so much so that philosophical minutiæ were decisively secondary to the accusation that so-and-so was a gross man of the world.[22]

I think it is likeliest that Calvin had learned Ur-*α* from Andreas Zebedæus, with whom he was in frequent contact after about 1539.[23] There is nothing to suggest that Calvin knew

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[19] This is probably Simon Villeneuve, Estienne Dolet's teacher. See Henry Peter Bayon, 'Calvin, Serveto and Rabelais', *Isis* 38, no. 111, 112 (1947): pp. 22–28 [22–23]. Thus it would seem that Postel's and Calvin's references to 'Villanovanus' each refer to a different person. For information on Simon Villeneuve himself, see Nicole Bingen, 'Villeneuve, Dolet et Arlier à Padoue', *BHR* LXXV, no. 1 (2013): pp. 119–139.

[20] A reference to Homer, *ι*.275–276:

> *Οὐ γὰρ Κύκλωπες Διὸς αἰγιόχου ἀλέγουσιν*
> *Οὐδὲ θεῶν μακάρων ἐπεὶ ἦ πολὺ φέρτεροί εἰμεν.*
>
> 'For the Cyclopes regard not ægis-bearing Jupiter, nor the blessed gods, forasmuch in truth we are far better than they.'

See also Euripides' *Cyclops*, vv. 316–345.

[21] Another Odyssean reference; this one to a famous passage in Horace. If Ulysses had drunk Circe's brew, '*vixisset canis immundus vel amica luto sus*' (*Ep.* I.ii.26).

[22] This is what Lord Bacon meant when he remarked in his essay *Of Atheisme* that 'the Contemplative *Atheist* is rare; A *Diagoras*, a *Bion*, a *Lucian* perhaps, and some others; And yet they seeme to be more than they are; For that, all that Impuge a received *Religion*, or *Superstition*, are by the adverse Part, branded with the Name of *Atheists*. But the great *Atheists*, indeed, are *Hypocrites*; which are ever Handling Holy Things, but without Feeling.' *The Essayes or Counsels, Civill and Morall, of Francis Lo. Verulam, Viscount St. Alban. Newly Written* (London: John Haviland, 1625), p. 93.

[23] The earliest letter between the two that I know of dates to May 1539, but Calvin had already mentioned Zebedæus in other correspondence: see Baum, et al., eds., *Joannis Calvini opera quae supersunt omnia*, vol. X.i, Corpus Reformatorum, XXXVIII.i (Brunswick: C. A. Schwetschke, 1871), no. 171, pp. 344–347.

anything about the *Cymbalum mundi*, or that he had any specific knowledge of Des Periers' writings. The suggestion of one recent author that he unscrambled the supposedly shocking anagrams in it is pure fantasy.[24]

THE SUICIDE

The next attestation comes from Henri Estienne, in his *Traité preparatif à l'Apologie pour Herodote*.[25] This book advanced the argument that the bizarre customs and events related by Herodotus were not to be dismissed on the mere grounds of their strangeness, given that the present age was just as infested by grotesque wonders as Herodotus' had been. In three places Estienne mentioned Bonaventure Des Periers. He was the first author to assert his authorship of the *Cymbalum mundi* (γ) and to tell the story of his suicide (δ).

Chapter XVIII covered homicide, of which suicide formed a subcategory. In this discussion, Estienne asserted that Des Periers had been visited by God with suicidal madness because he had written an impious book:

> Now forasmuch as men find many other occasions for despair, let us also hear of several people who undid themselves for other reasons. And among others, we can adduce a rather large number of usurers in our days, who by a just punishment of God did not wait for any other executioners in this world. And in general, all such as are tried by their consciences are obnoxious to this kind of wicked and execrable death. For when the inner trial has been completed by an extraordinary procedure, the sentence is carried out in an extraordinary way of its own. […] I shall not omit Bonaventure Des periers, the author of the detestable book entitled *cymbalum mundi*, who, notwithstanding the pains that were taken to guard him (as he had been seen to be desperate, and like to undo himself) was found so thoroughly pierced by his sword, on which he had thrown himself after propping its pommel against the ground, that the point which had gone into his stomach had come out through his spine.[26]

He repeated the same story in chapter XXVI, which was devoted to divine punishments.[27]

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[24] Christiane Lauvergnat-Gagnière, *Lucien de Samosate et le lucianisme en France au XVIe siècle: athéisme et polémique*, THR, CCXXVII (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1988), p. 273.

[25] Henri Estienne, *L'introduction au traité de la conformité des merveilles anciennes avec les modernes: ou, Traité preparatif à l'Apologie pour Herodote* ([Geneva]: [Henri Estienne], 1566). This is the first edition of 572 pages, and to be distinguished from others that bear the same date. The *Traité preparatif* is not to be confused with another document, the *Apologia pro Herodoto*, which Estienne published in the same year: *Herodoti Halicarnassei historiæ lib. ix, & de vita Homeri libellus. Illi ex interpretatione Laur. Vallæ adscripta, hic ex interpret. Conradi Heresbachii: utraque ab Henr. Stephano recognita. Ex Ctesia excerptæ historiæ. Icones quarundam memorabilium structurarum. Apologia Henr. Stephani pro Herodoto* ([Geneva]: Henri Estienne, 1566), sig. $**_{v}$ r.–$****_{vi}$ v.

[26] Estienne, *Traité preparatif*, pp. 261–262.

[27] Ibid., p. 350. 'I spoke above (in my discussion of those who undid themselves) of Bonaventure Des periers, the author of a detestable book called *cymbalum mundi*; and of how he, notwithstanding the pains that were taken to guard him (as he had been seen to be desperate) was found so thoroughly pierced by his sword—which he had propped up with its pommel against the ground—that the point which had gone into his stomach had come out through his spine.'

In the first place, this story cannot be taken at face value. It is contradicted by the little evidence that we do have about Des Periers' death. Antoine Du Moulin, a fellow valet with Des Periers at the court of Navarre, had lamented his dead friend in 1544: 'Implacable death surprised him in the midst of his designs, when he was ready to prepare and arrange his compositions, to offer them to you [Queen Marguerite] during his lifetime.[28] This is hardly a way to describe deliberate suicide, and seems more appropriate to sudden death of another kind. As Prosper Marchand observed, Du Moulin's testimony is more reliable than the grisly story in Estienne's *Apologie*, as he was almost certainly better informed about the circumstances of his friend's death than Estienne more than two decades after the fact.[29]

But we are not concerned with truth now; only with provenance and influence. Some elements of Estienne's story have their predecessors in earlier printed sources. Postel had written Ur-β, and Calvin Ur-α. However, it is certain that Estienne did not rely only on *De scandalis* as his only source for α. In both the French and the Latin versions of the book, Calvin had only called him *Deperius*. Therefore Estienne's knowledge of the name *Bonaventure Des Periers* must have come from elsewhere.

Propositions γ and δ for their part, had not appeared in print before the *Traité preparatif*. Later, as we will see, Estienne Pasquier reported γ in a letter; and because of the chronological sequence in which their works appeared, it is natural to assume either that Pasquier copied it from La Croix du Maine, who copied it from Estienne; or that Pasquier copied it from Estienne directly. However, Estienne was a contemporary of both men, and it seems as likely to me that he had learnt γ from Pasquier as that Pasquier learnt it from Estienne's *Traité preparatif*.

As far as δ is concerned, the story is suspiciously similar to one that had been circulating about Filippo Strozzi, a Florentine rebel against Cosimo de' Medici who killed himself in 1538 to avoid torture at the hands of his captors. The story of his suicide was recorded in at least two documents that pre-date Estienne's *Traité preparatif*: the manuscript

[28] 'Mort implacable, implacable Mort l'a surprins au cours de sa bonne intention, lors qu'il estoit apres à dresser & à mettre en ordre ses compositions, pour les vous offrir & donner, luy vivant.' From the preface to Du Moulin, ed., *Recueil des œuvres de feu Bonaventure des Periers*, 1544.
[29] CM 1711a, p. 24.

Storie fiorentine of Bernardo Segni,[30] and Paolo Giovo's *Historiæ sui temporis*,[31] which was reprinted in a French edition two years after its first appearance in Italy.[32] There are two basic points of similarity between these accounts and the one that Estienne related about Des Periers. First are the circumstances of the suicide. Both Des Periers and Strozzi are said to have acquired a sword despite being heavily guarded, and then to have propped it up against their bodies and leant heavily on it. Second is the implied causal relationship between atheism

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[30] 'S' udì poi l' anno MDXXXVIII. come Filippo da se stesso s' era ammazzato in prigione per ajuto d' una spada appoggiatasi alla gola, statavi lasciata a caso da uno di quei, che lo guardavano; e di più pubblicarono alcuni suoi scritti lascati in sur un desco, che dicevano: *Se io non ho saputo insino a qui vivere, io saprò morire*; e pregando Dio, che li perdonasse, diceva anco: *S' io non merto perdono, manda almanco quest' anima, dov' è quella di Catone*. Pubblicossene ancóra un altro in questa sentenza:

Exoriatur [*sic*] *aliquis nostris ex ossibus ultor*.

Il suo corpo non fu mai veduto, nè si seppe mai in che luogo fosse sepolto, e la fama ottenne nel volgo, ch' ei si fosse per se stesso ammazzato, vedutosi, o credutosi da lui di dovere ire in mano del boja ad esser giustiziato. […] Questa cosa, che Filippo si fosse da se stesso ammazzato, facilmente credettono alcuni, perchè Filippo era appresso di essi tenuto empio, e come uomo, che non credesse in Cristo; onde il popolo disse, che Dio l'aveva gastigato con tal supplicio meritamente, e con esempio conveniente a uno, che s'era sempre mai fatto beffe della religione; non fu per questo, che Filippo non avesse qualità rare, e degne d'un Cittadino molto illustre per ogni qualità onorata.' | 'It was then heard in the year 1538 how Filippo had killed himself in prison, by means of a sword which he had propped up against his throat, which had been left for him by one of the men who had been guarding him. […] This story that Filippo had killed himself was easily believed by some who had just about taken Filippo for a scoffer, and for a man who did not believe in Christ. Thus the people said that God had punished him deservedly with such a torture, and made a useful example of him as one who had always made a joke of religion. Not but that Filippo had rare qualities, worthy of a Citizen who was famous for every honourable trait.' First printed as: *Storie fiorentine di messer Bernardo Segni, gentiluomo fiorentino, dall'anno MDXXVII. al MDLV. Colla Vita di Niccolò Capponi, Gonfaloniere della Repubblica di Firenze, descritta dal medesimo Segni suo Nipote* (Augsburg: David Raimondo Mertz & Giovanni Jacopo Majer, 1723), pp. 245–246.

[31] At quum diu Strozza in arce à Vitellio, & demum à Ioanne Luna, cui arcem tradi Cæsar iusserat, custodiretur, misérque auro oblato, & datis impensè muneribus sese redimere frustra contenderet; ad extremum Cosmus à Cæsare impetravit, ut sibi traderetur de nece Alexandri atque Hippolyti Cardinalis quæsituro. Quod ubi Philippus rescivit, ne perferre immitia tormenta, & in perniciem amicorum arcana fateri, & indignam natalibus suis necem subire cogeretur, animum tam generosè quàm impiè despondens, gladio, quem Hispanus carceris custos temere exiens reliquerat, gutturi apposito, eo nixu & corporis pondere incubuit,* ut quum exeuntem Hispanum adacto statim vecte ostio exclusisset, nec cito postes cardine revelli possent, patefacto aliunde ingressu exanimis cruento in pavimento reperiretur; relicto in mensa chirographo, quo testabatur, se qui rectè vivere nescivisset, generoso animo vitæ & miseriis finem imposuisse. Indignus certè eo vitæ fœdo exitu, quum ingenio erudito, appriméque liberali, summè gratiosus apud cives, & elegantissimus evasisset, nisi de superis atque inferis male sentire, apertiúsque illudere Christianæ disciplinæ præceptis, esset solitus; atque inde procaciùs quàm deceret Vestalium virginum amoribus servire crederetur.' | '[Filippo] laid down his life no less nobly than impiously. A Spanish gaoler had happened to leave a sword behind for him. This Filippo held up to his throat, and leant on it with such a great application of weight that […] when his cell was finally forced open, he was found dead on the blood-sodden floor. […] He was certainly unworthy of such a foul end to his life, for he would surely have been remembered as one who was learned, singularly generous, beloved by the people, and graceful; had he not been used to thinking wrongly about heaven and hell, and to mocking openly the precepts of Christian teaching; and had he not been believed besides to have cultivated the love of the Vestal virgins [nuns] more eagerly than was fitting.' Paolo Giovo, *Pauli Iovii Novocomensis … Historiarum sui temporis Tomus Secundus* (Florence: Lorenzo Torrentino, 1552), p. 340.

* Giovo was apparently influenced in this phrasing by the Epitome of Book 89 of Livy's *Histories*, in which it is said of the praetor Brutus (a follower of Gnaeus Papirius Carbo) that '*in se mucrone verso ad transtrum navis obnixus corporis pondere incubuit*.'

[32] Paolo Giovo, *Pauli Iovii Novocomensis … Historiarum sui temporis Tomus Secundus* (Paris: Michel de Vascosan, 1554); fol. 233v.

and suicide. Giovo merely remarked on Strozzi's blasphemy in passing, but Segni, just like Estienne, wrote explicitly that Strozzi's suicide was a divine punishment for his scoffing.

I do not mean to claim that either one of these specific written sources was known to Estienne. I do, however, think it is quite plausible that the story of Filippo Strozzi (many elements of which are quite true)[33] had somehow become attached to Des Periers before reaching Estienne's ears. Or else that Estienne connected it himself to Des Periers, whether wilfully or accidentally, despite having heard the original story in connection with Strozzi. Whatever the case, it seems that δ owes its details to the suicide of Filippo Strozzi, not Bonaventure Des Periers.

Here I think we can supersede the three-hundred-year-old theory of Jacob Le Duchat, who saw a possible source for δ in an anecdote told in passing in the *Nouvelles recreations*.[34] In that tale, the eccentric Seigneur de Vaudrey tests out some armour by running into a sword stuck in the wall, and accidentally runs himself through.[35] (Le Duchat did not believe in δ himself, and was attempting to find Estienne's source for it.) Le Duchat correctly denied Des Periers' authorship of the *Nouvelles recreations*, but he intimated that Estienne, believing Des Periers to be its author, had carelessly transplanted a story from the book into his own historical account of Des Periers' death. This was a perfectly reasonable view, but it gave occasion to madness: one nineteenth-century biographer aired,[36] and another all but endorsed,[37] the outlandish theory that Des Periers, having fallen into delirious madness, actually committed suicide in *imitation* of his own character. In fact, the story of the Seigneur de Vaudrey bears numerous differences in both tone and detail to Estienne's description of Des Periers' madness. Unlike Des Periers, the Seigneur de Vaudrey 1) survives, 2) is eccentric rather than despairing or insane, 3) is not trying to kill himself, 4) shows no signs of atheism, and 5) runs rather than falls onto the sword, which is 6) jammed in the wall, not propped up

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[33] See the archival evidence adduced by the anonymous editor of Lorenzo Strozzi's 'Vita di Filippo Strozzi', in *Filippo Strozzi, tragedia*, by Giovanni Battista Niccolini (Florence: Felice Le Monnier, 1847), pp. IX–CXXIV [CXVIII, n. 4]; also Leopold von Ranke, 'Note über den Tod Filippo Strozzis', in *Historisch-biographische Studien* (Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1877), pp. 441–445.

[34] *Apologie pour Herodote. Ou traité de la conformité des merveilles anciennes avec les modernes.*, ed. Jacob Le Duchat, vol. I.2 (The Hague: Henri Scheurleer, 1735), pp. 616–617, n. *o*.

[35] '…et quant une foys voulant esprouver un collet de Buffle qu'il avoit vestu, ou un Iacques de maille ne scay lequel, fit planter une espée toute nue contre une muraille la poincte devers luy: et se print à courir contre lespée de telle roydeur, qu'il se persa d'oultre en oultre: Et toutesfois il n'en mourut point.' *Les Nouvelles Recreations et Ioyeux devis de feu Bonavanture des Periers valet de chambre de la Royne de Navarre.* (Lyon: Robert Granjon, 1558), Conte LV, fol. lxxii r.

[36] CM 1856, vol. I, p. lviii.

[37] Adolphe Chenevière, *Bonaventure des Periers: Sa vie, ses poésies.* (Paris: E. Plon, 1885), p. 104.

on the ground. In all of these points, the story is less similar to Estienne's than are any of the extant accounts of Filippo Strozzi's death.

In addition to telling his story about Des Periers' suicide, Estienne also supplied an explanation of how the *Cymbalum mundi* had managed to communicate an atheist message. This was in chapter XIV, which covered blasphemy and atheism. Here he did not mention the *Cymbalum mundi* by name but, fitting the subject of the chapter, he described Des Periers' works in far more damning terms than in the passages cited above:

> Who is there who does not know that our century has caused a Lucian to live again in one François Rabelais, in his writings that mock every kind of religion? Who does not know what a scoffer and mocker of God Bonaventure des Periers was, and what evidence of this he gave in his books? Surely we know that the goal of these men and their fellows was, by pretending to aim only at banishing melancholy from the mind with pastimes, and by insinuating themselves with many japes and mockeries which they hurled against the ignorance of our forebears (who had let themselves be strung along by sanctimonious imposters), to 'throw stones into our garden', as the proverb goes—that is, to peck at the true Christian religion. For to comb through all their sayings, one cannot but find that they mean to teach the readers of their books to become as righteous as themselves—that is, not to believe in God or his providence any more than the wicked Lucretius did—and to teach them that everything believed about them is taken on faith, that everything which we read about the life eternal is only entertainment and fodder for poor bumpkins, that all the threats made to us of Hell and God's Last Judgement are no different from threats made to children about werewolves, and finally that all religions have been forged in the brains of men.

Here is a precise description not only of the supposed content of Des Periers' atheist beliefs, but also of the Trojan-horse stratagem which he and his fellow scoffer Rabelais had employed to slip their atheism into the minds of unwary readers. What Estienne did not provide, however, was any precise description of which parts of the *Cymbalum mundi* (or *Pantagruel*, for that matter) had meant to convey which principles of atheism. This can probably be explained in the first place by the great likelihood that Estienne had never actually seen a copy of the *Cymbalum mundi* himself. But even if he had, it is no sure thing that he would have written a *Clef du Cymbalum*. Estienne objected to subversive allegory in itself, which rendered a book *ipso facto* suspicious in his view. This is why he even quoted the objection that Rabelais and Des Periers had supposedly made against pharisaic imposture. Even if it could be shown that Des Periers had crafted a satire against those elements of religion that should be criticized, like priestly hypocrisy, the very fact of his having couched it in jokes made his work a stumbling-block before the blind. As he explained a few pages later in connection with

Castellio's over-colloquial translation of the Bible, any levity on the subject of religion was a mark of blasphemy.[38]

Estienne had not only stated α, β, γ, and δ, but also explained the theoretical mechanism by which the *Cymbalum mundi* could have spread atheism without containing any open philosophical arguments against the Christian faith. Only not all in one place: in the passages about his suicide, Estienne did not write explicitly that Des Periers was an atheist. And in the passage about Lucianic subterfuge, he did not mention the title of the *Cymbalum mundi*. Of course, an alert reader of the *Traité preparatif* could have come across the paragraph describing Bonaventure Des Periers' death and naming the *Cymbalum mundi*, and then collated it with Estienne's earlier statement that the same Des Periers had written a Lucianic book that used jokes as a pretext for characterizing the whole Christian religion as a fable. But as there was no single summary of all this information, the *Cymbalum*-myth had yet to be fully articulated.

THE THEATRE OF GOD'S JUDGEMENTS

Jean Chassanion adopted Estienne's story for his 1581 treatise on God's punishments, and he even applied it to the same polemical purpose as Estienne had.[39] He rendered it as follows:

> This unfortunate Bonaventure des Periers, author of the detestable book called *Cymbalum mundi*, in which he openly mocks at God, and at all religion, fell finally into despair, and killed himself for all that they guarded him.[40]

He preserved most elements of Estienne's anecdote, viz. β, and γ. But he omitted the detail of Des Periers' leaning onto his sword *capulo tenus*, writing only that '*il […] se tua soy-mesme maugré toutes ses gardes*.' Thus δ decayed in his telling into δ′. It also seems that Chassanion had consulted Estienne's earlier passage on Des Periers' Lucianism, and summarized it in the clause 'in which he openly mocks at God, and at all religion'. This had the effect of bringing the *Cymbalum*-myth to near completion, for Des Periers' open atheism had now been described in immediate juxtaposition to his authorship of the *Cymbalum mundi* and his consequent suicide.

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[38] *Traité preparatif*, pp. 109–110.
[39] [Jean Chassanion], *Des grands et redoutables iugemens et punitions de Dieu advenus au monde, principalement sur les grands, à cause de leurs mesfaits, contrevenans aux Commandemens de la Loy de Dieu. Le tout mis en deux livres suivant la distinction des deux tables de la dite Loy: où il y a plusieurs points notables & d'importance, dont la cognoissance est bien utile & profitable à un chacun* (Morges: Jean le Preux, 1581).
[40] Ibid., p. 140.

Incidentally, after he had written the first edition of his treatise, Chassanion noticed the similarity between Estienne's account of Des Periers' death and the account of Filippo Strozzi's death which Paulo Giovo had supplied. Far from causing him to question the veracity of either account, he counted it just one more example of God's punishment of blasphemy, and in the second edition of his book he inserted a paragraph about Strozzi's death immediately above the one about Des Periers.[41]

BIBLIOTHECARII

In 1584 and 1585, two large bibliographies of French books were published independently. Both included entries on the *Cymbalum mundi*, though their treatments of it differed starkly from each other.

François Grudé, sieur de La Croix du Maine included it under his list of Bonaventure Des Periers' books in his *Bibliothèque* of 1584.[42] He wrote:

> He is the author of a detestable and impiety-ridden book called Cymbalum Mundi, or 'Bell of the World'. It was first written in Latin by this des Periers, and then translated into French by the author himself under the name Thomas du Clevier. It was printed in Paris in 1537. He killed himself in the end with a sword that he stuck into his belly, having become mad and senseless.

Thus he stated Ur-β, γ, and δ, but not α. This indicates very strongly that La Croix du Maine had read the *Traité preparatif*, but only with attention to the passages in which Des Periers' suicide was described, not Estienne's longer reflections on the atheism of the book and its author. Given this and also the presence of δ rather than δ', it is plain that he was relying on Estienne himself, and not on Chassanion's retelling of Estienne's story. La Croix du Maine's knowledge of the *Traité preparatif* is further demonstrated by his inclusion of it in his *Bibliothèque*.[43]

What was original to La Croix du Maine was not any element of the *Cymbalum*-legend, but his real knowledge of the book. He was the first man to report the existence of CM 1537, and may in fact have seen a copy of it. After this, no one knew of CM 1537 again until the

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[41] 'Philippe Strozzi, dit Pol Iovio [To. 2. liv. 36.] eut le bruit d'estre un atheiste. Ce fut l'un des exilez de Florence, & qui depuis estant prisonier en la ville, du temps de Cosme Medicis prince de cete Republique (contre lequel il avoit entreprins de faire la guerre) se tua soy mesme en la prison, d'une espée qu'un espagnol qui avoit charge de le garder, y avoit laissée par mesgarde. Il se la mit sous sa gorge, & s'affessant dessus s'occit malheureusemant.' Jean Chassanion, *Histoires memorables des grans et merveilleux iugemens et punitions de Dieu avenues au monde, principalement sur les grans, à cause de leurs mesfaits, contrevenans aux Commandemens de la Loy de Dieu* ([Geneva]: Jean le Preux, 1586), pp. 169–70.

[42] François Grudé, *Premier volume de la bibliotheque du sieur de La Croix-Du-Maine. Qui est un catalogue general de toutes sortes d'Autheurs, qui ont escrit en François depuis cinq cents ans & plus, iusques à ce iourd'hui: avec un Discours des vies des plus illustres & renommez entre les trois mille qui sont compris en œuvre, ensemble un recit de leurs compositions, tant imprimees qu'autrement* (Paris: Abel l'Angelier, 1584), pp. 36–37.

[43] Ibid., p. 163.

eighteenth century. (With one exception: there is an anonymous librarian's note on CM 1538_i that notes the existence of a 1537 copy of the same book in roman type. This fact had not been recorded by La Croix du Maine, so whoever wrote this note must have seen the book itself, not just La Croix du Maine's description of it.)

Unlike La Croix du Maine, Antoine Du Verdier knew nothing about the *Cymbalum mundi* apart from what he gleaned from the copy of CM 1538 that was in front of him. Thus he did not know ϑ, and listed the book under his entry for the fictitious Thomas Du Clevier; who, he wrote,

> translated a treatise from Latin into French called *Cymbalum mundi: containing four very ancient, joyful and witty Poetic Dialogues*. It was printed in 16° in Lyon by Benoit Bonnyn in 1538.

Then he proceeded to summarize its contents in great detail. He described most elements of the plot and gave a thematic overview of each dialogue.[44] A more correct and sane summary of the book has probably never been written. It is an example of what a curious reader was capable of seeing in the *Cymbalum mundi,* if only his mind could remain uncontaminated by prejudices about it.[45] (Guillaume Colletet, reading Du Verdier's entry, relied on it for his

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[44] Antoine Du Verdier, *La Bibliotheque d'Antoine du Verdier, Seigneur de Vauprivas, Contenant le Catalogue de tous ceux qui ont escrite, ou traduict en François, & autres Dialectes de ce Royaume, ensemble leurs œuvres imprimees & non imprimees, l'argument de la matiere y traictee, quelque bon propos, sentence, doctrine, phrase, proverbe, comparaison, ou autre chose notable tiree d'aucunes d'icelles œuvres, le lieu, forme, nom, & datte, où, comment, & de qui elles ont esté mises en lumiere. Aussi y sont contenus les livres dont les autheurs sont incertains* (Lyon: Barthelemy Honorat, 1585), pp. 1177–1178.

[45] In what follows I have adapted Du Verdier's flamboyantly periodic phrasing into something more readable:
'In the first Dialogue, the author introduces Mercury, Byrphanes and Curtalius. These two find themselves in a tavern in Athens at the sign of the White Coal. Mercury arrives, having descended from the heavens on a mission from Jupiter, who had given him a book to have rebound. When he goes off to amuse himself, these two rascals steal it from a package which he had left on the bed, and in its place they put another one containing all of Jupiter's little amorous pastimes and follies; as when he made himself into a Bull to ravish Europa, or when he disguised himself as a Swan to sleep with Alcmena, when he transmuted himself into a shower of gold to enjoy Danaë, when he turned himself into Diana, into a Shepherd, into a fire, into an Eagle, into a serpent: and sundry other little follies.
'In the second Dialogue some Philosophers are introduced, who are searching for pieces of the Philosophers' stone amid the sand of the theatre. Once, when they had been disputing there, Mercury had shown it to them, whereupon these dreamers begged him so much for it that he, not knowing to whom he should give it whole, broke it and made it into powder, and then scattered it in the arena, so that everyone might have a little of it. He told them to search well for it, and that if they found even one piece of it, they'd work miracles; transmuting metals, breaking the locks of open doors, healing people who had nothing wrong with them, and obtaining anything they wanted from the Gods, provided it was something licit, and bound to happen: like the rain after good weather, flowers and dew in spring, dust and heat in summer, fruit in autumn, and cold and mud in winter. (Here the author mocks the vain labour of the Alchemists.) Finally, after Trigabus [a slip; Du Verdier had not previously introduced him] has said that Mercury can restore and take away the power of the Philosopher's Stone, Mercury (who is also in the scene), who has changed his face into another form (turning from the handsome young man which he had been into a grey old man) shows himself to them and tells them that ever since they've been searching, there have been no news of their doing a single act that is worthy of the Philosopher's Stone, which makes him think that it isn't the Stone at all, or (if it is) that it does not have anything like the power that it is said to have: but rather that it is only a fable, and that their Stone is good for nothing but keeping accounts.

judgement that Des Periers was innocent of the impiety with which Estienne Pasquier had charged him.)[46]

Remarkably, none of the propositions that Estienne or La Croix du Maine had advanced appeared in Du Verdier's entry. In the first place, he did not attribute the *Cymbalum mundi* to Des Periers, but rather to its ostensible translator Thomas Du Clevier. Nor did he accuse its author of anything so serious as atheism. He did, however, make an oblique reference to the book's notoriety. At the beginning of his summary, he wrote that 'I have not found anything in this book that deserves any more censure than the *Metamorphoses* of Ovid, the dialogues of Lucian, and books of foolish argument and fabulous fictions.' I think it is likeliest that Du Verdier was alluding here to the presence of the *Cymbalum mundi* on one of the official lists of forbidden books, whether it was the Faculty of Theology's *Catalogue des livres examinez & censurez* or the Roman Index.

Now that these bibliographers had written their entries on the *Cymbalum mundi*, it was possible for any interested researcher to look up information on the book in well-organized reference works. It is telling, however, that whereas La Croix du Maine's proved decisively influential, Du Verdier's entry was almost completely ignored. Actual knowledge of the dialogues and characters was completely irrelevant to an author who wanted to make use of the *Cymbalum*-myth for polemical or philosophical purposes.

PASCHASIUS.

Around this time, the jurist Estienne Pasquier sent a letter to Estienne Tabourot, in which he reproached him for attributing the *Nouvelles recreations* to Jacques Pelletier and

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'In the third dialogue, the plot of the first is picked up and continued, concerning the book that was stolen from the author of all thefts, entitled:
'*Contained in this book: Chronicle of the deeds that Jupiter did before he existed. Prophecy of the Fates: or, certain tables of what is to be. Catalogue of the immortal heroes who are to live an eternal life with Jupiter.*
'With this, the author mocks in the first place the idolatrous Pagans and their false God Jupiter, as if to say that he never existed, or if he did, that he was a man, and never did any admirable acts, or such things as are fabulously written of him. By the second part of the book's title, he derides Destiny and fatal necessity, and (tacitly) judiciary Astrology. And by the third, he mocks those who in their grandeur think themselves like Gods. Then he has Mercury tell of the memoranda and duties which each one of the Gods and Goddesses has given him to carry out on earth during his voyage. The same Mercury, by the power of some words which he mumbles, causes a horse named Phlegon to speak and reason with his groom. In the fourth and last Dialogue there are two dogs, one called Hylactor and the other Pamphagus, who were once among the number of the dogs who devoured Acteon, and who both tore off a slab of the tongue that stuck out of the mouth of that Hunter, who had been transformed into a stag. They meet a long time afterwards, and speak of many pleasant things.'

[46] 'Vie de Bonaventure Desperiers, 1542', in *Vies des poètes françois par ordre chronologique depuis 1209 jusqu'en 1647*, BnF, NAF 3073, foll. 150–153 [152*v*].

denying Bonaventure Des Periers' authorship of that book.[47] He furnished him with what he took to be the correct bibliographical details:[48]

> I have found that in the second edition of your book, you attribute the *Faceties* of Bonaventure du Perier to Jacques Pelletier. You will forgive me, but I believe that your memory deceives you on this point. I was one of the best friends that Pelletier had, and belonged to the circle to which he most willingly opened the receptacle of his thoughts. I know which books he told me he had written. Never did he make mention of that one. He was a true Poet, and jealous of his name; and I certify you that he would not have hidden it from me, since the book is so worthy after its kind that it would not have deserved any more to be disavowed by its author than the Latin *Facetiæ* of Poggio the Florentine.[49]

And now he added, almost as an afterthought:

> Du Perier composed it, and also another book called *Cimbalum mundi*, which is a Lucianism that deserves to be cast into the fire, together with its author if he were still living.

Here is a clear assertion of γ and Ur-β (but not α or δ). It might be that Pasquier was relying on La Croix du Maine here, who had also stated Ur-β without α. But La Croix du Maine had not stated that the book was Lucianic in nature, and therefore it seems that Pasquier had some other source of information about the *Cymbalum mundi*. This source could have been Estienne's *Traité preparatif*. On the other hand, as I have already suggested, Pasquier could also have been the one who told Estienne about the *Cymbalum mundi* and its Lucianism, not the other way around. (The partial, and in places erroneous, reconstruction of Pasquier's library that I have seen does not include a copy of the *Traité preparatif*.)[50] If this is so, then it is easy to imagine Estienne learning γ and β from Pasquier, and then generating δ by attaching the story of Filippo Strozzi's suicide to Bonaventure Des Periers.

AN ANNOTATOR

At the end of the sixteenth century, the jurist Pierre de L'Estoille, who owned CM

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[47] Tabourot had written (in the chapter *Autre façon des rebus*): 'Le compte est vulgaire, que raporte Iaques Peletier en son livre des contes publiez souz le nom de Bonaventure des Periers, d'un Abbé qu'on sollicitoit de resigner son Abbaye: lequel fit responce, il y a trente ans que ie suis à apprendre les deux premieres lettres de l'alphabet A, B, ie veux encor autant de temps pour dire les deux suivantes, qui sont C, D. Par A, B, il entendoit Abbé, & par C, D. *cede*, mot Latin qui signifie quicter la place.' Estienne Tabourot, *Les bigarrures du Seigneur Des Accordz* (Paris: Jehan Richer, 1583), fol. 20r.

[48] Estienne Pasquier, *Les lettres d'Estienne Pasquier, Conseiller et Advovocat* [*sic*] *general du Roy en la chambre des Comptes de Paris* (Paris: Abel l'Angelier, 1586).

[49] Ibid., fol. 246 r., in the letter: *A Monsieur Tabourot Procureur du Roy au balliage de Dijon*.

[50] 'Lectures de Pasquier pour *Les recherches*', in Marie-Luce Demonet, Marie-Madeleine Fragonard, and François Roudaut, eds., *Les recherches de la France*, vol. 3, Textes de la Renaissance 11 (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1996), pp. 2139–2166.

1538_i, scrawled his name across its title page together with the inscription: 'The author, Bonaventure Des Periers: a wicked and atheist man, as is evident from this detestable book.'[51] Then, above the first dialogue, he wrote out the famous first line of Psalm 14: '*Dixit insipiens in corde suo, non est Deus*'. Also, perhaps under the mistaken impression that it was a portrait of Des Periers himself, he wrote on both sides of Bonnyn's *Poëta* woodcut: '*Such a life, such an end*: proven by the death of this wretch, unworthy to bear the name of man.' One eighteenth-century bibliographer asserted that this particular inscription was in another hand, and Lionello Sozzi followed him in this opinion.[52] There is no reason to think that this is true, though Estoille probably wrote this latter annotation on a different occasion to the former, considering that its ink now appears much darker.

Thus here, for the first time, γ was stated in the very same place as the most explicit possible formulations of α and β. (Meanwhile, however, δ was replaced by δ'', as L'Estoille did not give any indication of how Des Periers had died, whether by suicide or otherwise.)

What was the basis of this judgement? There is no evidence that L'Estoille actually read his copy of CM 1538 before he marked up it with his opinions. It would seem that he got it from the *Bibliotheque* of La Croix du Maine. This is apparent in the first place from his Latinized spelling *Bonadventure*, derived from La Croix du Maine's BONNADVENTVRE. Also, he owned a copy of the *Bibliotheque*, but apparently not of Estienne's *Traité preparatif* or Chassanion's derivative thereof.[53] (He also owned a copy of Du Verdier's *Bibliotheque*, but did not apparently make any use of its description of the *Cymbalum mundi*).[54]

A dangerous object had therefore been created. An intelligent reader could now come across CM 1538_i and find not only the full text of *Cymbalum mundi*, but also an explicit declaration that Bonaventure Des Periers, the man who had written it, was an atheist, and also that the book itself was an expression of his atheism.

ANNOTATOR ANNOTATUS

This reader was Marin Mersenne. In his massive work *Quæstiones in Genesim*, published

[51] Tom Hamilton has recently identified the author of the note, superseding an earlier attribution to Louis de L'Estoille, Pierre's father. See *Pierre de L'Estoile and His World in the Wars of Religion*, The *Past & Present* Book Series (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), p. 174; Florence Greffe and José Lothe, *La Vie, les livres et les lectures de Pierre de L'Estoile: Nouvelles recherches*, Pages d'Archives 15 (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2004), pp. 170, 548.
[52] Guillaume-François De Bure le Jeune, *Bibliographie instructive: ou Traité de la connoissance des livres rares et singuliers*, vol. II (Paris: Guillaume-François De Bure le Jeune, 1765), p. 299; Lionello Sozzi, *Les contes de Bonaventure Des Périers: contribution à l'étude de la nouvelle française de la Renaissance*, Università di Torino: Pubblicazioni della Facoltà di Lettere e Filosofia, Volume XVI, Fascicolo 2 (Turin: G. Giappichelli, 1965), pp. 45–46.
[53] Greffe and Lothe, op. cit., p. 688.
[54] Ibid., p. 603.

in 1623, Mersenne wrote a section on atheism as part of his discussion of God's creation of the world.[55] He estimated that since any given house might contain up to twelve atheists, that the city of Paris contained roughly fifty thousand. In his general discussion of atheists in France, he spoke of the—

> …mundi cymbalum, which the impious wretch Bonaventura de Peréz translated into French, lest there should be any monster wanting in France. Many declared him to be an Atheist. Thus it happened that there were some who wrote as a warning in the beginning of this cymbalum: *Dixit insipiens in corde suo, non est Deus*, and observed that he had been utterly impious in life, and to have perished impiously in his death.

Mersenne accomplished a sleight of hand here, making it seem that he had formed a broad view of the *Cymbalum mundi*'s reception that rested on many testimonies. In fact, it seems that he relied on exactly one document to form his judgement of it; namely, CM 1538_i, which Pierre L'Estoille had marked up with his damning commentary. That is why he only wrote δ'', having only a vague idea of how Des Periers had died. Moreover, the fact that he had likely never seen it in print, but only in L'Estoille's handwriting, might explain his uncertain spelling of the author's name; here as 'de Peréz' and later as 'Peresius'.

Now he described the book and its contents.

> It was printed in 1538, and consisted of four dialogues. In the first of these are the characters Mercury, Rhetulus, and Cubercus; in the second Trigabus, Mercury, Retulus, Cubercus and Drarig; in the third Mercury, Cupid, Celia, Phlegon, Statius, and Ardelio; and in the fourth the two dogs Hylactor and Pamphagus are presented in conversation. In all these dialogues, Peresius includes many fables of Mercury, Jupiter, etc., by which he seems to have intended to deride the Catholic faith, and everything which we say and believe to be certain of God.

Mersenne had obviously read the *Cymbalum mundi* himself. Though may also have read Du Verdier's summary of the book, he did not rely on it exclusively, as he gave details (like the character *hospita* in the first dialogue) that Du Verdier had not mentioned. A little later, Mersenne gave another summary of the second dialogue, this one somewhat more detailed:

> We hardly need to mention the fable translated by the impious Peresius from Latin into French, of Mercury's coming down from heaven and deriding[56] all men as alchemists and seekers of the Philosopher's Stone. In his three

[55] Marin Mersenne, *Quæstiones celeberrimæ in Genesim, cum accurata textus explicatione* (Paris: Sebastian Cramoisy, 1623), coll. 669–672.
[56] The meaning of this passage is garbled beyond sense unless one inserts the word *deridentis* in its proper place, as indicated by the errata. I do not think this has ever been done before.

> dialogues,[57] unless I am mistaken, he insinuates that whatever is said of religion rests on no foundation and is to be taken for nonsense.

Note that in neither of these descriptions of the *Cymbalum mundi*'s dialogues did Mersenne actually explain what was objectionable about them. But it seems his grounds were very similar to Estienne's. Mersenne was learned enough to recognize and denounce the Lucianic sources of the *Cymbalum mundi*'s contents without any outside help. He wrote:

> Many of Lucian's dialogues are to be found from which the foregoing material could easily have been drawn. And indeed I wonder at the stupidity of many Christians who spend good hours reading this atheist Lucian; so much so that you will hardly find a book that has been read more, even though it pours poison into souls. […]

Here followed a long diatribe against Lucian and those Christian authorities who suffered his books to be printed.

It is clear that Mersenne did not discover atheism in the *Cymbalum mundi* unprompted. He had been furnished by L'Estoille with α, β, γ, and δ'', all of which he repeated almost unmodified, though he supported them with some novel descriptions of the dialogues' plot. (His scrutiny of the book's contents also caused him to replace γ with γ'). Unaided by rumour, it is hard to imagine that he could have been roused to such an intense denunciation of the book.

The two successive leaves on which this discussion was printed, Ee_{vi} and Ff_{i}, were cancelled in most copies of the book.[58] Both sides of the former and the first of the latter had contained detailed descriptions of atheist books, and the pages that replaced them contained only a general discussion of deism that was probably intended as filler. (A second leaf that contained discussions of atheism, IIII_{i}, was also cancelled in most of these copies, and curiously the leaf that replaced it restored some of the material, principally on Vanini, that

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[57] This was a mere slip of the pen, as Mersenne had already described the *Cymbalum mundi* as having four dialogues. Or else Mersenne was referring only to the three dialogues in which Mercury actually appears. We do not need to accuse Mersenne of confusion on this point, as did the editor of CM 1732 (p. xxii) and Bruna Conconi, 'Lettura di due leggende incrociate: Pietro Aretino e l'autore del "Cymbalum Mundi"', in *ACR2000,* pp. 273–927 [278].

[58] Their censored content was reproduced in part by CM 1732 (pp. xix–xxii), but not reprinted in full until later in the eighteenth century. See 'Lettre de Mr. D. M. à Mr. D. L. C. contenant plusieurs Particularitez curieuses, qui ont été supprimées dans le *Commentaire* du Pere Mersenne sur la *Genese*', *Bibliotheque Britannique, ou histoire des ouvrages des sçavans de la Grande-Bretagne* XVIII, no. 2 (March 1742): pp. 406–421; Jaques George de Chaufepié, 'Mersenne (Marin)', in *Nouveau dictionnaire historique et critique, pour servir de supplement ou de continuation au* Dictionnaire historique et critique*, de Mr. Pierre Bayle*, vol. III: I–P (Amsterdam: Zacharias Châtelain et al. / The Hague: Pierre de Hondt, 1753), pp. 79–82; and for modern scholarship, Claudio Buccolini, 'Un esemplare delle *Quaestiones in Genesim* con annotazioni di Mersenne', *Nouvelles de la République des Lettres* I (1999): pp. 143–144; Conconi, 'Lettura di due leggende', op. cit.; Claudio Buccolini, 'Dal *De tribus impostoribus* ai *Quatrains du déiste*. Metamorphosi dell'ateismo nella doppia redazione del colophon di Mersenne', *Bruniana & Campanelliana* XIII, no. 1 (2007): pp. 167–175.

had originally appeared on Ee_{vi} v.) Uncastrated copies are not quite so rare as is often supposed: I have not attempted anything like an exhaustive search, but I know of nearly ten copies in three countries that have survived with their original leaves intact.[59]

Since the cancelled leaves were not conjugate, they left stubs behind onto which the new leaves were pasted, which created a detectable seam. Furthermore, the indices were not revised to reflect the change, so that the *Index rerum & verborum* in all castrated copies retained two phantom references to column 669: one to 'Cymbalum mundi' and one to 'Athei Bonaventuræ cymbalum mundi'.[60] Both of these details were first noticed (in connection with the *Cymbalum mundi*, at any rate) by Prosper Marchand.[61]

ULTRAIECTINUS.

If Mersenne's printer had succeeded in castrating every copy of *Quæstiones in Genesim*, then the principal statement of the *Cymbalum*-myth would have been permanently lost. If this had happened, the *Cymbalum mundi* would likely never have attracted such a wide reputation for atheism.

It was not to be. Gisbertus Voetius, a professor of theology at the University of Utrecht, came across an uncastrated copy of the *Quæstiones in Genesim*, and in the summer of 1639, he worked its report on the *Cymbalum mundi* into a multi-part theological disputation on atheism that he was writing for his student Walter de Bruyn.[62] (Four years earlier, he had mentioned the *Cymbalum mundi* in passing amid a list of noxious books, without noting its author or its contents.)[63] It is not certain what happened to Voetius' copy of Mersenne, which does not appear in either of the auction catalogues of his library that I have consulted.[64]

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[59] For a digitized copy, see Augsburg, Staats- und Stadtbibliothek: 2 Th Ex 286 (permalink <http://mdz-nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:bvb:19bsb11203572-1>).
[60] Sig. $NNnn_{iv}$ v., $NNnn_{ii}$ v.
[61] CM 1711a, pp. 34–35, n. 51.
[62] 'De atheismo', parts II and IV. The disputation was included in Gisbertus Voetius, *Selectarum disputationum theologicarum pars prima*, (Utrecht: Joannes à Waesberge, 1648), though its text might also have been printed separately when it took place in 1639.
[63] Gisbertus Voetius, *Thersites Heautontimorumenos. Hoc est, remonstrantium hyperaspistes, catachesi, et liturgiæ Germanicæ, Gallicæ, & Belgicæ denuo insultans, retusus; idemque provocatus ad probationem mendaciorum, & calumniorum quæ in Illustr. DD. Ordd. & ampliss. Magistratus Belgii, Religionem Reformatam, Ecclesias, Synodos, Pastores &c. sine ratione, sine modo effudit* (Utrecht: Abraham ab Herwiick & Herman Ribbius, 1635), p. 80.
[64] *Pars prior bibliothecæ variorum & insignium librorum, theologicorum & miscellaneorum, reverendi & celeberrimi viri D. Gisberti Voetii, dum viveret, in Academiâ & Ecclesiâ Ultrajectinâ Professoris & Pastoris fidelissimi, quorum Auctio habebitur in Ædibus defuncti* by den Dom. *Die 10. Septemb. 1677. St. Vet.* (Utrecht: Willem Clerck, 1677); *Catalogus variorum librorum instructissimæ bibliothecæ præstantissimi, doctissimique; viri in Anglia defuncti; ut & aliorum in omnibus scientiis atque linguis, insignium, ex Bibliothecæ clarissimi Gisberti Voetii emptorum, cum multis aliis, tum antiquis tum modernis nuperrime ex varias partibus Europæ advectis quorum Auctio habebitur Londini apud Insigne Albi Cervi, in vico vulgo vocato St. Bartholomew Close, Novembris 25, 1678* (London: s.n., 1678).

Prosper Marchand, who saw the copy now in Leiden, seems to have speculated that it had once belonged to Voetius, but could not satisfy himself with any proof of this.[65]

In addition to Mersenne, Voetius also consulted the passages on Des Periers in Estienne's *Apologie pour Herodote* and in Chassanion's *Des grands et redoutables iugemens* (which he referred to as the *Theatro iudiciorum Dei of* 'Honsdorffius').[66] He was therefore able to assert δ where Mersenne had only reported L'Estoille's δ″, and ϲ where Mersenne had reported ϲ′. From these authors he also learnt the spellings *Bonaventura de Perieres*; *Periers* (for Mersenne's *Bonaventura de Peréz*; *Peresius*).

The first mention, for a disputation on 29 June, was relatively brief:[67]

> Bonaventura de Perieres, the author of *Cymbalum mundi* (which Honsdorfius accuses of Atheism or Epicureanism in his *Theatrum Iudiciorum Dei*, cap. 24, just like Mersennus in *in Genesin*, passim) fell into desperation and laid deadly hands on himself, as Honsdorfius, loc. cit., relates.

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[65] See Marchand's handwritten note pasted to the front flyleaf of UBL 518 A 9. Another possible interpretation of the note is that Marchand only speculated that the book had belonged to Pierre Jurieu, not necessarily to Voetius. He wrote:
Cet Exemplaire de l'Ouvrage du Pere Mersenne doit être conservé avec d'autant plus de soin, qu'il est peut-être le seul complet qu'on ait dans ces Provinces; tous les autres aïant été tronqués, & les colones 669–674 en aiant été enlevées, et d'autres choses substituées en place. Voetius, qui a le premier cité ce qui étoit contenu prémiérement dans ces Colonnes, en avoit un Exemplaire; et ce n'est absolument que sur son Témoignage que l'on a cité depuis ce qu'il y avoit de scabreux dans ce livre. Lorsque je fis imprimer le *Cymbalum Mundi*, je consultai en vain douze ou quinze Exemplaires des *Questions du Pere Mersenne* dans les meilleures Bibliotheques de Paris, et même celui de la Bibliotheque des Minimes, Congregation dont avoit été cet Autheur; n'ayant trouvé dans aucun d'eux ce que citoit Voetius. Je trouvois bien dans les Lettres C & A de l'*Index*, qui se trouve à la Fin de cet Ouvrage, *Cymbalum Mundi* col. 669, *Athei Bonaventuræ Cymbalum Mundi* 669; mais, je ne trouvois dans ces Colones quoi que se soit qui eut rapport, ni à cet Auteur, ni à son Ouvrage. Ainsi, je fus obligé de faire imprimer ce que je citois du P. Mersenne, sur la citation & la Bonne-Foi de Voetius. Mais, après mon Arrivée en Hollande, aïant trouvé dans la vente publique des Livres de Jurieu un Exemplaire du Pere Mersenne, je le consultai avec empressement, et y trouvai avex satisfaction, la Citation de Voetius. Peut-être même etoit-ce son Exemplaire, qui de chez Jurieu à pu passer à Mr Wittichius, de la Bibliotheque de qui celui-ci vient. Quoi qu'il en soit, je reconnus alors, que le Défaut de tous les autres venoit de ce qu'en cet Endroit du Livre l'on avoit mis deux Cartons en place de deux Feuillet qu'on avoit ôtez. Le Pere Mersenne, comme on le voit ici, y faisoit l'*Enumeration des Athées* de son Tems, il y parloit de leurs différens *Ouvrages*, & il y rapportoit leurs *Sentimens* & leurs *dogmes*. On crut apparemment, que tout ce Détail pouvoit être de dangereuse Conséquence; & il y a tout lieu de croire, que ce fut la Raison pour laquelle on le fit retrancher. Quoi que le Calcul du Pere Mersenne soit sans doute outré, aussi bien que celui du *Giges Gallus* & des *Somnia Sapientis* du Capucin Zacharie de Lisieux, qui portoit de même le Nombre des Athées jusqu'à la Reverie et l'Extravagance; cependant les Faits qu'il rapporte sont très curieux, & doivent d'autant plus soigneusement se conserver, qu'ils [ne] se rencontrent point ailleurs. On ne sauroit donc trop précieuse[men]t gar[de]r un Exemplaire d'une aussi grande Rareté et Singularité que celui-ci.

[66] Andreas Hondorff wrote no book with this title, and there is no evidence either that he knew of the *Cymbalum mundi*. But Chassanion's *Des grands et redoutables iugemens*, cited above, was an expanded version of (Philipp Lonicer's Latin translation of) Hondorff's German *Promptuarium exemplorum.* Voetius' confusion is probably explained by the fact that the first edition of *Des grands et redoutables iugemens* had appeared anonymously, so that in researching the author of the book in his hands, he went too far up the filiation-chain and hit on Hondorff instead of Chassanion. Voetius' rightful zeal for tracking down the original editions of books had led him into error in this case. On this propensity of his, see Jos van Heel, 'Gisbertus Voetius on the Necessity of Locating, Collecting and Preserving Early Printed Books', *Quærendo* 39 (2009): pp. 45–56.

[67] Voetius, *Selectarum disputationum pars prima*, p. 136.

His second was somewhat longer. It began with a summary of everything Voetius had read about Des Periers and the *Cymbalum mundi*:[68]

> Problem 15. What is to be thought of Bonaventura de Periers? Honsdorffius numbers him among the atheists. So does Henri Estienne in this *Traité preparatif*, where he says that he was the author of a detestable book called Cymbalum mundi, and that he killed himself by falling on his sword. Mersenne, in his *in Genesim*, p. 669, calls him Bonaventuram de Perez, and describes him as a *monster*[69] and an *impious wretch*, adding that *he had been utterly impious in life, and perished impiously in his death*. In the same place he reported that Des Periers had not been the author of the *Cymbalum Mundi*, (as Honsdorffius and Henri Estienne had held) but only translated it into French and had it published in 1538. He also reported that the book was made up of four dialogues, and that it contained many fables about Jupiter, Mercury, and so on, *by which Des Periers seems to have intended to deride the Catholic faith, and everything which we say and believe to be certain of God.*

This paragraph was cited many times in the ensuing decades. It included α, β, γ, and δ, and even the names of the authors who had first advanced them. Thus it made a handy compendium for anyone who wanted to learn about the *Cymbalum mundi*.

Now Voetius entered on a more detailed discussion. He posed himself the question: what could make the *Cymbalum mundi* evidence of its author's atheism? In the first place, he outlined one condition under which it would *not* be such evidence:

> If the *Cymbalum mundi* rejects what had been revealed about God, Heaven and Hell, then we may by all means subscribe to Mersenne's judgement. But if it merely rejects fables about Purgatory and other inventions of men, then it may certainly not be convicted of atheism on that account.

This was clever: by raising the logical possibility that the *Cymbalum mundi* was a *justified* religious satire against Roman superstition, the Calvinist Voetius broke a lance against the friar Mersenne, who had believed in fictions like purgatory. However, Voetius did not rest in the conclusion that Catholicism was the only target of the *Cymbalum mundi*. He inclined after all to the view that it was a suspect work, which hid its impieties under the garb of antiquarian fables. He reasoned like this:

> Now there might some who plead that [Des Periers] was an excellent speaker and poet, and that he only portrayed such things in the style of the old popular poets and grammarians. (I will not inquire here how Christian or pious this style is.) To these it can be replied that there is no reason why someone who is imitating Lucian and all the profane, impious poets and ancient wordsmiths cannot also be cunningly instilling the minds of men with atheism, epicurism, and heathenism; though indeed he might season his style with ridiculous

[68] Ibid., pp. 199–200.
[69] Mersenne had actually called the *Cymbalum mundi*, not Des Periers himself, a *monstrum*.

ambiguities, jokes, imitations, and dramatizations, so that if anyone calls him to account, he can always get off on some pretext.

Voetius' argument was rather subtle. We can sketch it like this:

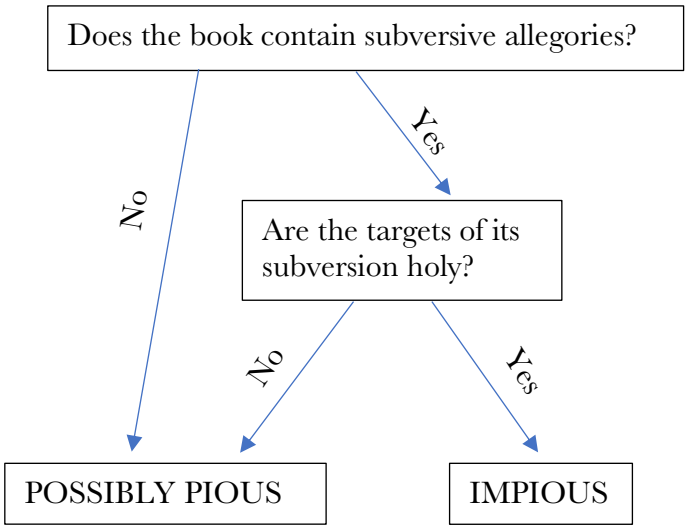
—Mersenne has argued that the *Cymbalum mundi*, because it contained satire of religious subjects, was an attempt to undermine belief in Christ.

—But this is not fair: after all, maybe it was only a mockery of those aspects of Christianity that *should* be mocked, like Purgatory.

—It might be said on the other side that the *Cymbalum mundi* can be cleared of atheism because it only touched on profane and pagan subjects.

—But this is no excuse at all, for after all anyone, even an atheist, has recourse to the argument that he had only meant to satirize heathen gods and rites. It might be that he had used them after all as allegories for the Christian religion.

Thus to Vossius the following criteria were to be applied to a book that was suspected of atheism:



In illustration of the dangers of allegory, Voetius now brought up Samuel Coster's *Iphigenia*, a tragedy that had been performed twenty years earlier.[70] Written in 1617 and sporadically revived for over a decade, this play was a satire against what Coster saw as overbearing Calvinist tyranny.[71] His particular choice of classical allegory was far from original: in fact, the story of Agamemnon's sacrifice of Iphigenia had already been used as a stock motif in

[70] The first edition was Samuel Coster, *Iphigenia. Treur-Spel* (Amsterdam: Nicolaas Biestkens, 1617). Voetius did not name Coster or identify this particular play explicitly, but it is almost certainly the one he was referring to.
[71] Identical couplets in the editions of 1626 and 1630 tell of the play's revival on 1 November 1621 and 1630, respectively: '*Dit Treur-Spel is ghespeelt op Alder-Heyl'gen dagh, / In't openbaar, voor volck van allerhande slagh*'.

antiquity to criticize superstitious tyranny.[72] The polemical point of Coster's play was not lost on the Calvinist church council of Utrecht, who lodged a complaint with the secular authorities shortly after its first revival in 1621.[73]

A man like Voetius, who was squarely opposed to the Remonstrant faction, was not disposed to see this play as anything but an impious endorsement of atheism itself:

> We recall how all piety and Christian faith have been pilloried by this means by some Sceptico-Libertines and Epicurean rascals in the Low Countries. For example, a tragedy is written and exhibited in the theatre with the title *Iphigenia*. The play grazes two heathen subjects: the triple goddess Hecate,[74] and the appeasement of the gods with human blood at the bidding of the priests. Perhaps some pious person, acquainted with its authors, fears that they have intended to expose the Mystery of the Trinity and our redemption by the blood of Christ, and so to prepare a way for Epicureanism, Deism, or Turco-Socinianism. But how shall he carry his point, seeing that there is always the ready reply that only the heathen fables have been satirized?

Voetius' examples of Hecate and blood-sacrifice were an ominous development in the *Cymbalum mundi*'s history. Mersenne had contented himself with stating that Des Periers had attempted to insinuate the falsity of Christianity in his dialogues. He had not stated how this could have been accomplished. But now Voetius explained, with concrete examples, how such a literary subterfuge might be accomplished. Beginning with the 'paragraph-series' of 1711 that we will encounter in the next chapter, the elaboration of such supposed allegories emerged as the dominant means by which *Cymbalum mundi* was convicted of atheism. Now, Voetius did not give any such interpretation of the *Cymbalum mundi* itself. But by his analysis of *Iphigenia*, he gave clear instructions to posterity for how such an analysis might be done.

In any case, Voetius did not say conclusively that the *Cymbalum mundi* was a collection of blasphemous allegories. All he meant to argue was that this possibility could not be ruled out *a priori*. His real intention was to dismiss overhasty arguments: one, Mersenne's, which automatically condemned the *Cymbalum mundi* for its raillery at pagan gods; and another

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[72] See e.g. Lucretius, *De rerum natura* I.84–101.

[73] See Henk Duits, '11 november 1621. De Amsterdamse kerkeraad stuurt twee afgezanten naar de burgemeesters om te klagen over een opvoering van Samuel Costers *Iphigenia* in de Nederduytsche Academie. De moeizame relatie tussen kerk en toneel in de zeventiende eeuw', in *Een theatergeschiedenis der Nederlanden: tien eeuwen drama en theater in Nederland en Vlaanderen*, ed. R. L. Erenstein (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1996), pp. 178–85.

[74] Coster's *Iphigenia* opens with Achilles' warning to Agamemnon that he is thought an atheist for disobeying Hecate's commands (ibid., p. 1):

> Ziet eens Myceensche Vorst, ghy ziit alree ten hoof
> (Inzonder by't ghemeene volck) in dat gheloof,
> Dat ghy schier niet gelooft an eenighe der Goden,
> Om dat ghy tegen streeft de bittere gheboden
> Van Hecate; en 'tvolck dat dwingt een Vorst dat hy
> Ghelooven moet, oft toch hem veynsen moet, als zy.

which automatically vindicated it for the same reason. The horse outside the walls might either be a gift for the gods or a trap, and there was no telling from the outside. Without further investigation, it would be no less foolish to hurl a spear at it than to pull it into the city.

Luckily for Voetius, he was not forced to choose between these two options. He was not overtroubled to resolve the *Cymbalum mundi*'s status, since after all it was only a subordinate point to the question he had originally posed himself; that is, whether α was true and Des Periers himself an atheist. Realizing that he could not make a ruling on the basis of the *Cymbalum mundi* alone, he turned to other works to settle the question. In the remainder of his discussion, Voetius described how he had procured a copy of the *Nouvelles recreations* and read it through.[75] He found it full of gross obscenities, and came to the final conclusion that—

> I cannot see how [Des Periers] can have been, or at any rate tried to represent, anything other than a plump 'piglet in Epicurus' herd', or rather a Menippus, or a Diogenes.

Diogenes—not Diagoras. Voetius stopped short of calling Des Periers an outright denier of the Christian faith. It is perhaps for this reason that in his later manual for the writers of theological disputations, Voetius did not list Des Periers among his stock examples of atheist authors.[76]

Besides Voetius, there were two other authors who reproduced some of the information on the *Cymbalum mundi* that had appeared on the atheism-leaves of the *Quæstiones*. The first was Robert Burton, author of the famous *Anatomy of Melancholy* and librarian of Christ Church Library in Oxford from 1624 until his death in 1640. Burton did not refer to Mersenne at all in the first two editions (1621 and 1624) of the *Anatomy*.[77]

Only in the third edition of 1628 did Burton cite the *Quæstiones*. He made about ten references in total. In one section on 'religious melancholy', he made several citations of the cancellable atheism-leaves, including one to the passage about the *Cymbalum mundi*.[78] To Burton, atheism was a 'monstrous' or 'poysoned melancholy' which, though it had its root in

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[75] He bought the edition: *Les nouvelles recreations et Ioyeux Devis de Bonventure des Periers, Varlet de Chambre de la Royne de Navarre. Reveues, corrigées & augmentées de nouveau* (Rouen: Raphaël du Petit Val, 1606).

[76] See the 'Apparatus ad controvers[ias] Atheorum Epicureorum Scepticorum, &c.', in Gisbertus Voetius, *Exercitia et bibliotheca, studiosi theologiæ*, Editio Secunda, Priore auctior & emendatior (Utrecht: Joannes à Waesberge, 1651), pp. 542–544.

[77] Angus Gowland has stated that Burton cited the *Quæstiones* already in the second edition of the *Anatomy*, but this is wrong. See *The Worlds of Renaissance Melancholy: Robert Burton in Context*, Ideas in Context 78 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 95.

[78] The recent edition of Burton does not comment on the fact of Burton's having seen an uncastrated copy of Mersenne: J. B. Bamborough with Martin Dodsworth, *Robert Burton's* The Anatomy of Melancholy, vol. VI. Commentary on the Third Partition, together with Biobibliographical and Topical Indexes (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000), p. 268.

a pre-rational disease of the soul, could best be cured by intellectual refutation of the kind offered by *Quæstiones in Genesim*. In his discussion of this subject, he reproduced Mersenne's citation of the *Cymbalum mundi* as an illustration of atheist literature, but in nothing more than a glancing bibliographical notice.[79] He did not even bother to translate Mersenne's words into English: '*mundi Cymbalum dialogis quatuor contentum, Anno 1538. auctore Peresio, Parisiis excusum*' was the full extent of his citation.[80]

Where had Burton found his uncastrated copy of *Quæstiones in Genesim*? There is no copy of the book, castrated or not, in the modern catalogue of Burton's surviving library; nor anywhere in Christ Church's collections.[81] There is also no copy traceable to him in the Bodleian Library. As so often, it seems likely that he consulted a copy in someone else's library.[82] Apparently Burton had regular access to this copy, because the fourth edition of the *Anatomy* contains additional references to *Quæstiones in Genesim* that had not appeared in the third, which indicates that he consulted it on several occasions.[83]

There are nine catalogued copies of *Quæstiones in Genesim* in Oxford. Of these, five are castrated and can be immediately ruled out.[84] Of the four uncastrated copies, three seem to have arrived in Oxford only after 1628.[85] The only remaining candidate is the uncastrated copy at the Queen's College.[86] It was once owned by Gerard Langbaine the Elder (1609–1658), who donated it to his college at unknown date. In 1628, however, Langbaine was still a lowly batteler at Queen's, and it was only in the 1640s that he became prominent as the university archivist and the provost of his college.[87] It is hardly likely that he owned a copy of a sumptuous folio like *Quæstiones in Genesim* while still a poor student. If indeed his copy is the one used by Mersenne, then it probably belonged to someone else in Oxford—perhaps even Burton himself—during the preparation of the 1628 third edition of the *Anatomy of Melancholy*.

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[79] Robert Burton, *The Anatomy of Melancholy. What it is, with all the Kinds, Causes, Symptomes, prognostickes & Severall cures of it*, The thirde Edition, corrected and augmented by the Author (Oxford: Henry Cripps, 1628), pp. 27, 240, 413–414, 614, 616, 619, 621, 623, 629.
[80] Ibid., p. 619. This reference was noticed by M. A. Screech, who represented it erroneously as Burton's independent assertion of ?, and not simply as a crib from Mersenne. See CM 1983, 'Préface', p. 15 n. 12.
[81] Neither *Quæstiones in Genesim* nor any other work by Mersenne is listed in Nicolas K. Kiessling, *The Library of Robert Burton*, New Series, vol. XXII (Oxford: The Oxford Bibliographical Society, 1988). SOLO does not list any copies as belonging to Christ Church.
[82] See William Poole, 'Robert Burton and His *Anatomy of Melancholy*: Some New College Musings', *New College Notes* 6 (2015): pp. 1–4 [1].
[83] Robert Burton, *The Anatomy of Melancholy. What it is, with all the Kinds, Causes, Symptomes, prognostickes & Severall cures of it*, The fourth Edition, corrected and augmented by the Author (Oxford: Henry Cripps, 1632), e.g. p. 688.
[84] Bodleian B 3.11 Th.Seld.; Douce M 436; Magdalen b.5.4; Corpus Christi G.23.5; New College BT3.122.11.
[85] Bodleian Lawn C.122, Jesus B.15.4 (bequeathed by Herbert of Cherbury, 1648); St John's F.1.8 (bequeathed by one William Thomas, 1639).
[86] Queen's College Library 78.D.3.
[87] See Sidney Lee, 'Langbaine, Gerard', in *Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. Sidney Lee, vol. XXXII. Lambe–Leigh (London: Smith, Elder, & Co., 1892), pp. 91–93.

But there are no identifying marks on the copy apart from Langbaine's name, so it is impossible to draw any sure conclusions here.

Gottlieb Spitzel, a pastor of Augsburg, also had independent access to the atheism-leaves, and likewise did not need to rely on Voetius' paraphrase of it.[88] His case is more straightforward than Burton's, because it is plain that he personally owned an uncastrated (and still-preserved) copy of *Quæstiones in Genesim*.[89] In two of his books, one devoted to the subject of atheism and one to the abuses of printing, Spitzel made wide use of the cancellable passages in the *Quæstiones* for his profiles of various atheists, and on both occasions he mentioned the *Cymbalum mundi*.[90] In the former book, the *Scrutinium atheismi*, Spitzel even excerpted Mersenne's summary of the plot, and though he misspelled *Phlegon* as *Phlegan* and *Ardelio* as *Ardelius*, he explained more of the *Cymbalum mundi*'s actual plot and characters than Voetius had. Unlike Voetius, he did not engage in any independent reflection on the *Cymbalum mundi*, and was content merely to report what Mersenne had written about it.

Then it was open season. Nicolas Catherinot,[91] Daniel Morhof,[92] Immanuel Weber,[93] Vincent Placcius,[94] and Peter Dahlmann,[95] each of whom had his own occasion for discussing atheism, all used Des Periers and the *Cymbalum mundi* as a stock example thereof in their

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[88] In fact, to judge from the catalogue of his library (cited in the next footnote), Spitzel appears not to have owned a copy of Voetius' disputations at all.

[89] See *Catalogus bibliothecæ a clarissimi, dum viveret, nominis theologo domino Theophilo Spizelio, Min. Aug. Seniore & ad D. Jac. Pastore B.M. olim collectæ; et a filio Hærede viro itidem rever. & clarissimo domino Gabriele Spizelio ad Div. Jacob. Diacon. B.M. auctioris redditæ; nunc venum prostantis apud Hujus viduam & hæredes* (Ausburg: Andreas Maschenbauer, 1705), p. 13; also Spitzel's comment on the book in *Scrutinium Atheismi historico-ætiologicum* (Augsburg: Johannes Prætorius, 1663), pp. 135–136, which Prosper Marchand cited in his *lettre critique* on the *Cymbalum mundi* (CM 1711a, p. 36). The copy was inherited by Spitzel's son Gabriel, who died in 1705. According to a manuscript note on the cover, it was then bought for nine florins in 1706 by the pastor Andreas Harder, and eventually it ended up in the library of the Gymnasium bei St Anna, which was the basis of what is now the Augsburg Staats- und Stadtbibliothek. It now bears the classmark 2 Th Ex 286.

[90] Gottlieb Spitzel, *Scrutinium Atheismi*, op. cit., pp. 55–57; id., *Felix litteratus ex infelicium periculis et casibus, sive de Vitiis literatorum commentationes historico-theosophicæ, quibus infelicium ex animo, h. e. vitiosorum literatorum calamitates et miseriæ, conquisitis exemplis et documentis selectioribus exponuntur, atque eruditis, ad veræ et imperturbatæ felicitatis sedem tendentibus via tutissima ostenditur* (Augsburg: Gottlieb Göbeln, 1676), p. 124.

[91] Nicolas Catherinot, *L'art d'imprimer* ([Bourges]: [Nicolas Catherinot], 1685), pp. 7–8.

[92] Daniel Georgius Morhofius, *Polyhistor, sive de notitia auctorum et rerum commentarii. Quibus præterea varia ad omnes disciplinas consilia et subsidia proponuntur*, vol. I (Lübeck: Peter Böckmann, 1688), p. 74.

[93] Immanuel Weber, *Beurtheilung der Atheisterey / Wie auch derer mehresten deßhalben berüchtigsten Schrifften* (Frankfurt: Henning Grossen, 1697), pp. 132–133.

[94] Vincent Placcius, *De scriptoribus occultis detectis Tractatus Duo, quorum prior Anonymos detectos, in capita, pro argumentorum varietate distinctos, posterior Pseudonymos detectos Catalogo Alphabetico, exhibet.* (Hamburg: Christian Guth, 1674), pp. 124–125. For his second edition of this book, Placcius returned to the subject of the *Cymbalum mundi* and gave it a much more considered and independent bibliographical treatment: *Theatrum anonymorum et pseudonymorum, ex Symbolis & Collatione Virorum per Europam Doctissimorum ac Celeberrimorum* (Hamburg: Sumptibus Viduæ Gothodredi Liebernickelii, 1708), p. 105.

[95] Peter Dahlmann, *Schauplatz der masquirten und Demasquirten Gelehrten bey ihren verdeckten und nunmehro entdeckten Schrifften / aus gewissen Anzeigungen / glaubwürdigen Nachrichten / und wahrscheinlichen Conjecturen bewährter Männer / nach ihren vornehmsten Denckwürdigkeiten / samt Beyfügung neuer Raisonnements und Autoritäten* (Leipzig: Johann Ludwig Gleditsch und M. G. Weidmanns, 1710), p. 360.

respective books. As an anonymous commentator pointed out in 1705, all of these authors relied entirely on the testimony of either Voetius or Spitzel, or both.[96] All of them, therefore, were in a position to repeat α, β, γ, and δ, whether or not they actually did so. (Louis Moreri does not belong to this line of influence, as his dictionary entry on Des Periers was derived entirely from La Croix du Maine's.)[97]

Nor should a family of German academic disputations be passed over here, each of which mentioned Des Periers and the *Cymbalum mundi* in formulaic lists of supposedly atheist books.[98] All of these citations were likewise derived from Voetius and Spitzel. Time and tedium have prevented me from making a comprehensive list of these disputations, and I cannot say with any certainty which was the first of its kind. The important fact is that they are extremely similar to each another, and in some cases even identical in their phrasing. Here is a typical specimen, from 1692:

> …The same stone [of atheism] was doubtless rolled by Geoffroy de la Vallée, in his *Liber de Arte nihil credendi*; by another man in the book called *Cur receptum sit Evangelium*; and not least by the author of the book that is called *Cymbalum Mundi*. Whether or not this man was *Bonaventura de Perez* is disputed by Honsdorffius, Henry Estienne and Mersenne, and finally by Voetius (*Disp. Sel.* P. 1. p. 155). And that is to say nothing of the impious wretch who wrote the book that appeared under the title *Simonis Religio*…[99]

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[96] *Observationum selectarum ad rem litterariam spectantium*, vol. X (Halle: Officina Libraria Rengeriana, 1705), p. 229.

[97] Louys Moreri, 'Des Periers (Bonaventure)', in *Le grand dictionaire historique, ou le mélange curieux de l'histoire sacrée et profane, qui contient en abbregé les vies des Patriarches, des Iuges et des Rois de l'Ancien Testament, des Souverains Pontifes de l'Eglise; des saints Peres & Docteurs Orthodoxes, des Evêques des quatre Eglises Patriarchales, des Cardinaux, des Prelats celebres; & des Heresiarques*, 3rd ed., vol. II (Paris: Jean Giran & Barthelemy Riviere, 1683), p. 856.

[98] I know of the following four, but there are surely many more that I have missed: Nathanael Falcken, 'Q.B.D.V. de Falsa recentiorum auctorum dæmonologia, Dissertatio Præliminaris, Varias Recentiorum ad Atheismum Vias ac Methodos, imprimis per negatam Dæmonum existentiam, commonstrans, Respondente Joh. Isaaco Trempenau. Gedan.', in *Nathanaelis Falcken/ D. SS. Theol. In Gymn. Carol. Prof. Publ. Primar. Nec non ad Div. Mariæ Pastoris & Synodi Stetinensis Præpositi, antehac Collegii Philosoph. In Almâ Leucoreâ Assess. & Decani, Νῦν ἐν ἁγίοις, Dissertationes Quatuor, De Dæmonologia recentiorum autorum falsa, Anno 1692. Wittebergæ habitæ, Nunc verò Præfixis literis Schomerianis ibidem recusæ.* (Wittenberg: Martin Schultz, 1694), pp. 1–23 [2]; Ehregott Daniel Colberg, *Disputationem de tolerantia librorum noxiorum politica, Divinâ favente gratiâ, & Annuente Amplissima in inclyta Academiâ Gryphicâ Facultate Philosophica, M. Ehre-Gott Danielis Colbergii, Moral. Prof. Ordin. Eruditorum Censuræ exponit Nicolaus Engelholm, Austria-Svecus, in Auditorio majori, ad diem Julii Anni Jubilæi Svedici qui est post natum Christum M DC. XCIII.* (Greifswald: Daniel Benjamin Starck, 1693); Gottlob Timæus, *Dissertatio moralis de Indifferentismo morali, quam in florentissima Academia Wittebergensi pro loco in Amplissima Facultate Philosophica benevole sibi assignato Præses M. Gottlob Timæus, Crottendorffio Misn. Respondente M. Christian Gottlieb Beiche / Damens. Sax. Eruditorum censuræ exponit D. XIII. Jul. A.O.R. M DC XCIX* (Wittenberg: Christian Kreusig, 1699); Georg Classen, *θεῦ Συνεργοῦντος: Disputatio Theologica de Miraculis Quoad naturam suam & probandi valorem consideratis. Henrico Cornelio Agrippæ, Beckero & Fleetwoodo imprimis opposita, Quam in Celeberrima ad Varnum Academia Prævia Reverendissimæ F[a]c[ulta]tis Theologicæ approbatione sub umbone viri summe reverendi, amplissimi atque excellentissimi Dni. Henrici Ascanii Engelken / S.S. Theologiæ D. Celeberrimi, ejusdemqve P.P. Ducalis fulgidissimi, Dni. Patroni, Fautoris, Præceptoris sui ætatem omni reverentia pie devenerandi Die 23. Julii Anno MDCCVII. Publicæ, placidæque Disquisitioni sistit Autor & Respond. Georgius Classen, Rendesburgo-Holsatus, Theol. Stud.* (Rostock: Nikolaus Schwiegerau, 1707); pp. 3–4.

[99] Falcken, op. cit., p. 2.

Note that whereas this author implied that he had read the four authors 'Honsdorffius', Estienne, Mersenne, and Voetius, he had actually only read Voetius' summary of the other three. Even that is probably too generous an assumption, for he might well have plagiarized this passage from another disputation.

The value of these disputations as sources on Des Periers himself is obviously nil. They were only rubbings of earlier writings, and they do not represent any independent knowledge of the *Cymbalum mundi*. But if one wants to get a sense of the *Cymbalum mundi*'s general reputation at the end of the seventeenth century, there is no better place to look than these derivative passages. The book and its author had become so closely associated with atheism that any selection of α, β, γ, and δ could be stated as an uncontroversial piece of erudition.

GENEALOGY OF THE RUMOUR

Now we are in a position to summarize the history of the *Cymbalum*-myth.

In the beginning there was the *Cymbalum mundi* itself. It contained literary satires, written in imitation of Lucian, some of which were related to sacred topics. It was condemned by the Faculty of Theology for its general scurrility. The result of this was that Ur-β ended up in print, in that the title *Cymbalum mundi* was entered into the Faculty's list of banned books.

Then, in the immediate aftermath of Jehan Morin's trial, some scandal relating to Des Periers was ventilated in the circle of John Calvin. Apart from Zebedæus' letter, the only trace of this particular rumour came up in Calvin's *De scandalis*, which mentioned Ur-α.

The next phase was opened by Estienne's *Traité preparatif*, which stated both γ and δ for the first time. It is unclear how Estienne learnt γ, but it happens to be true. Meanwhile δ was probably his own invention, and a literary variation on the story of Filippo Strozzi's suicide. Estienne also stated Ur-β in the same place as γ and δ, and both α and β could be inferred from his separate reflection on Rabelaisian atheism.

Now L'Estoille, reading La Croix du Maine's summary of Estienne's description of Des Periers' suicide (possibly in addition to Chassanion and Estienne's books themselves), compiled all four elements of the myth and wrote them onto his copy of CM 1538, probably without reading very extensively in the book itself. Mersenne read these annotations, Voetius and Spitzel copied Mersenne, a wilderness of theologians copied Voetius and Spitzel—and with that, the myth was popular knowledge.

A BLIND TRIAL

Hundreds of years later, the journalist Émile Henriot (1889–1961) bought an

anonymous seventeenth-century copybook in Aix-en-Provence. Fascinated by it—and perhaps overestimating its interest—he wrote a long article for *Le Temps* summarizing its contents.[100] Unfortunately, Henriot's description was loquacious and imprecise, and despite my search I have not been able to track down the manuscript's present whereabouts. Nevertheless it appears from his summary that the owner of this copybook had seen and made excerpts from the *Cymbalum mundi*; in particular from Venus' list of instructions to Mercury in dialogue III.[101] The paraphraser did not copy them word-for-word; and he even inserted an interpretative gloss of his own, in comparing the Vestals to nuns who had taken religious vows at too early an age. There is no indication, however, that this anonymous reader detected any atheism in the book. If he *had* written a comment to that effect, then it would surely have caught Henriot's notice. This teaches us a similar lesson to Du Verdier's reading of the *Cymbalum mundi*: that a reader who came to the book unprejudiced by its reputation for atheism was liable to react in any number of ways to it, and was not bound to see it as a work of detestable atheism. It was only Mersenne who read the book and found it damnable—and the copy he saw had ATHEE scrawled across its title page.

Of course, the *Cymbalum*-myth proved to be of greater interest than the old-fashioned puerilities of the *Cymbalum mundi* itself. That is why Mersenne, who read it casually if at all, was the ultimate the arbiter of its reputation, whereas the attentive readers of the book—Du Verdier and the author of Henriot's manuscript—were historical irrelevancies.

BAYLE

Finally, at the turn of the eighteenth century, the myth of the *Cymbalum mundi* was

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[100] Émile Henriot, 'Le manuscrit d'un inconnu', *Le Temps*, 7 August 1934, p. 3.

[101] To wit, E_{iii} r. 8–9; E_{iii} r. 25–E_{iii} v. 7; E_{iii} v. 21–E_{iv} r. 1. Henriot wrote: 'From the first pages, I come across this astonishing entry: 'Six pairs of ebony crutches', and, immediately afterwards these lines follow, which have always seemed to me to be of a very pretty turn of phrase, but which I have not been able to find anywhere in print: 'That he go and find Somnus, who has so often brought boys to these Vestals, and made them to find in their sleep very charming what they so blame (with their mouths) while they wake; and that he cleave to the chinks of their doors to listen to their regrets at having been pretty well buried alive by undertaking vows that were against nature, at an age when they barely knew what they were undertaking. Above all, the girls should have many *no*s in their mouths, and nothing but a pretty *yes* in their eyes; dressed up, though, with wise refusals, for that's all the good in the game'.
Henriot himself incorporated this last phrase [*tout le bon du jeu*] into his own journalistic prose on at least one occasion, preserving its original association with patient supplications. In a review of some verse, he wrote: 'Son dernier recueil de poèmes, les *Etoiles dans l'encrier*, est d'un bon technicien, lui aussi, d'autant plus capable de plier sa fantaisie aux contraintes serrées de la rime, du rythme et des régularités du poème à forme fixe, qu'il sait en artisan expert que tout le bon du jeu est là : *Le goût sûr n'est atteint que par longue prière*.' 'Émile Henriot, '*La Balance inférieure*, de Charles Maurras et *Les Etoiles dans l'encrier*, d'André Salmon', *Le Monde*, 3 September 1952.
Unbeknownst to Henriot, *tout le bon du jeu* was a blend between two phrases that had originally been separate in the *Cymbalum mundi*: 'pource que cest tout le bon. la parolle faict le ieu'.

discussed from a critical standpoint, and in light of Du Verdier's extensive summary of it. In the second edition of his *Dictionaire historique et critique*, Pierre Bayle gave a long account of everything that was to be known about the book and its authors.[102] He had consulted the following authorities (in the editions that I have given in the footnotes):

Henri Estienne, *Traité preparatif à l'apologie pour Herodote*.[103]
Jean Chassanion, *Histoires memorables des grans et merveilleux iugemens de Dieu.*[104]
François Grudé, Sieur de La Croix du Maine, *Bibliotheque françoise.*[105]
Antoine Du Verdier, *La Bibliotheque d'Antoine Du Verdier, Seigneur de Vauprivas.*[106]
Estienne Pasquier, *Lettres*.[107]
Gisbertus Voetius, *Disputationes Theologicæ*.[108]

Of the important printed attestations, Bayle missed only Calvin and Postel. (Curiously enough, in the first edition of his *Dictionaire* he had in fact cited verbatim the passage from Calvin's *De scandalis* that mentioned 'Deperius'.[109] But he probably did not realize the connection to Bonaventure Des Periers, especially since at the time he was not composing a dedicated article for him.) Thus he had access to all four components of the myth: α, β, γ, and δ. He repeated all of them, but only explicitly endorsed γ and δ. Just as importantly, he reproduced *in extenso* the summary of the *Cymbalum mundi* that Du Verdier had written. This was his introduction to footnote B, which contained his reflections on the *Cymbalum mundi*.

Bayle took Voetius' literary speculations on the *Cymbalum mundi* with the utmost seriousness, to the point of quoting them approvingly and in full. He was particularly interested in the possibility that a seemingly innocuous satire might be a secret mockery of existing religion, whether on behalf of piety or atheism. He supplemented Voetius' example of Coster's *Iphigenia* with Toland's citation of John Milton's *History of Britain*, which was

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[102] Pierre Bayle, 'Periers (Bonavanture des)', in *Dictionaire historique et critique*, 2nd ed., vol. III (Amsterdam: Reinier Leers, 1702), pp. 2380–2381. Bayle's spelling 'Bonavanture' in the headword was derived from the entry (which he cited) in Guy Allard, *La Bibliotheque de Dauphiné, Contenant les noms de ceux qui se sont distinguez par leur sçavoir dans cette Province, & le denombrement de leurs Ouvrages, dépuis XII. Siecles.* (Grenoble: Laurens Gilibert, 1680), pp. 172–173. In his footnotes, however, Bayle reverted to the more ordinary 'Bonaventure'.
[103] Henri Estienne, *L'introdution au traité de la conformité des merveilles anciennes avec les modernes. Ou, traité preparatif à l'Apologie pour Herodote* (Antwerp: Henrich Wandellin, 1567).
[104] The seond edition: Jean Chassanion, *Histoires memorables des grans et merveilleux iugemens et punitions de Dieu avenues au monde, principalement sur les grans, à cause de leurs mesfaits, contrevenans aux Commandemens de la Loy de Dieu* ([Geneva]: Jean le Preux, 1586). Bayle was the first man to cite Chassanion himself, as Voetius and his copiers had attributed the passage, mistakenly, to 'Honsdorffius'.
[105] Ed. cit.
[106] Ed. cit.
[107] *Les lettres d'Estienne Pasquier conseiller & Advocat general du Roy à Paris. Contenans plusieurs belles matieres & discours sur les affaires d'Estat de France, & touchant les guerres civiles*, vol. I (Paris: Jean Petit-Pas, 1619).
[108] Ed. cit.
[109] Pierre Bayle, 'Govea (André)', in *Dictionaire historique et critique*, 1st ed., vol. I.ii (Rotterdam: Reiner Leers, 1697), 1265–68 [1267, n. H].

apparently aimed secretly against present abuses in the church of Charles II.[110] Unlike *Iphigenia*, however, which had been written as surreptitious propaganda for atheism, Milton's history had, in Toland's mind, been a just defence of true religion.[111]

Then Bayle made a very curious comment, which he cast as a summary of Voetius' views but was actually a substantial modification of them:

> The reflections of this Professor of Theology are very reasonable. There are two ways of mocking superstitions; one very good, and the other very bad. The Fathers of the Church who cast down the whole ridiculous structure of false gods are very praiseworthy, for they undertook to open the eyes of the heathens, and to strengthen the faithful. They were not unaware that by instilling hatred and aversion for paganism, they fortified attachment to the

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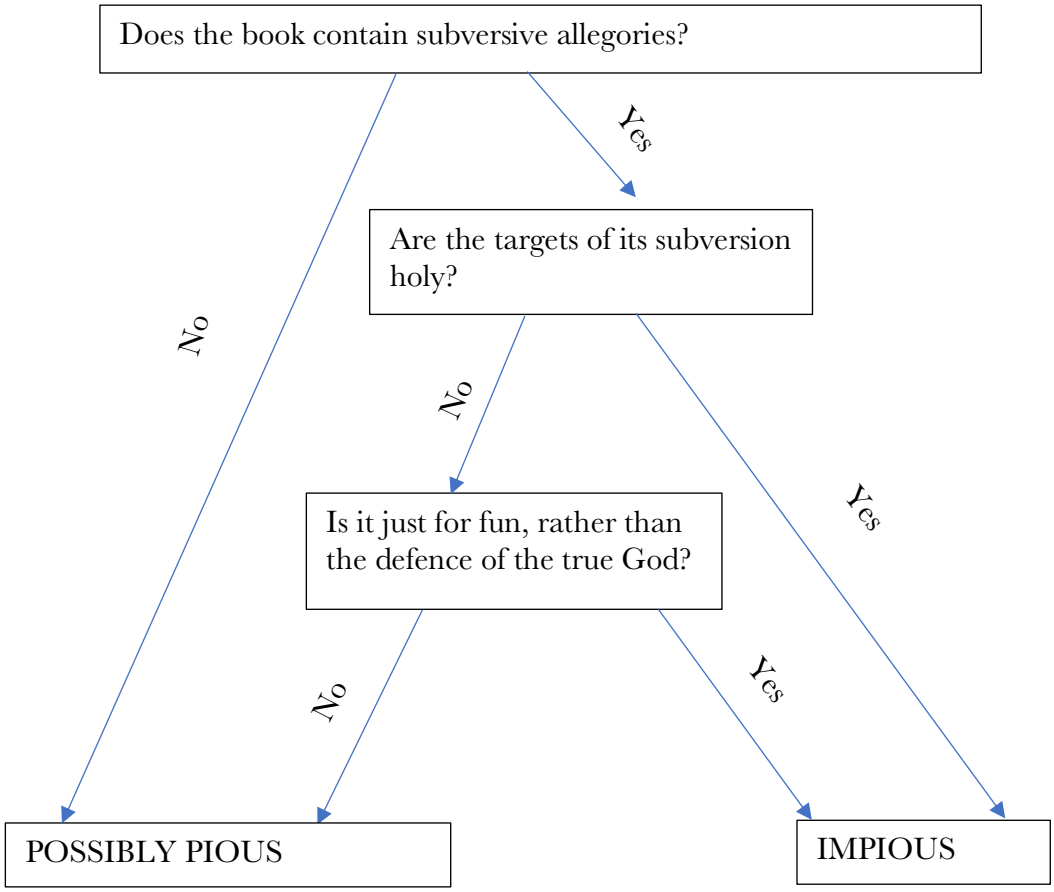
[110] 'In the year 70 also came abroad his *History* of *Britain*, wherof we had occasion to speak before. He deduc'd it only to the *Norman* Conquest, and yet we have it not as it came out of his hands; for the Licensers, those sworn Officers to destroy Learning, Liberty, and good Sense, expung'd several passages of it wherein he expos'd the Superstition, Pride, and Cunning of the Popish Monks in the *Saxon* Times, but apply'd by the sagacious Licensers to *Charles* the Second's Bishops. This puts me in mind of a *Reply* to a certain Person by Sir *Robert Howard* lately deceast, a Gentleman of great Generosity, a Patron of Letters, and a hearty Friend to the Liberty of his Country. Being told that he was charg'd in a Book with whipping the Protestant Clergy on the back of the Heathen and Popish Priests, he presently ask'd what they had to do there?' Here Bayle cited John Toland, *The Life of John Milton, Containing, besides the History of his Works, Several Extraordinary Characters of Men and Books, Sects, Parties, and Opinions* (London: John Darby, 1699); but the work had already been printed a year earlier: John Toland, 'The Life of John Milton. To Thomas Raulina of Kilread in Herefordshire, Esq.', in *A Complete Collection of the Historical, Political, and Miscellaneous Works of John Milton, Both English and Latin. With som Papers never before Publish'd. To which is Prefix'd the Life of the Author, Containing, Besides the History of his Works, Several Extraordinary Characters of Men and Books, Sects, Parties, and Opinions*, vol. I, III vols (Amsterdam: s.n., 1698), pp. 5–47.

[111] Toland later elaborated this position even more extensively than in the brief passage cited by Bayle. The occasion was his history of the Druids, in the preface to which he brought up the possibility that the falseness of the Celtic religion might be compared to abuses in the present day of the Christian religion. 'True Religion', he wrote, 'does not consist in cunningly devis'd fables, in authority, dominion, or pomp; but in spirit and truth, in simplicity and social virtue, in a filial love and reverence, not in a servile dread and terror of the Divinity. As the fundamental Law of a Historian is, daring to say whatever is true, and not daring to write any falshood; neither being sway'd by love or hatred, nor gain'd by favour or interest: so he ought of course to be as a man of no time or country, of no sect or party; which I hope the several nations, concern'd in this present enquiry, will find to be particularly true of me. But if in clearing up antient rites and customs, with the origin and institution of certain religious or civil Societies (long since extinct) any communities or orders of men, now in being, shou'd think themselves touchd; they ought not to impute it to design in the author, but to the conformity of things, if indeed there be any real resemblance: and in case there be none at all, they should not make people apt to suspect that there is, by crying out tho they are not hurt. I remember when complaint was made against an honourable person (Sir Robert Howard), that, in treating of the Heathen Priests, he had whipt some Christian Priests on their backs; all the answer he made was only asking, *What made them get up there?* the benefit of which answer I claim beforehand to myself, without making or needing any other Apology. Yet if the correspondence of any Priests with heaven be as slenderly grounded as that of the Druids, if their miracles be as fictitious and fraudulent, if their love of riches be as immoderate, if their thirst after power be as insatiable, and their exercise of it be as partial and tyrannical over the Laity: then I am not only content they shou'd be touch'd, whether I thought of them or not; but that they shou'd be blasted too, without a possibility of ever sprouting up again. For Truth will but shine the brighter, the better its counterfeits are shown: and all that I can do to show my own candor, is, to leave the reader to make such applications himself, seldom making any for him; since he that is neither clear-sighted nor quick enough of conception to do so, may to as good purpose read the *Fairy-tales* as this *History*.' John Toland, 'A Specimen of the Critical History of the Celtic Religion and Learning: Containing An Account of the Druids, or the Priests and Judges; of the Vaids, or the Diviners and Physicians; and of the Bards, or the Poets and Heralds of the antient Gauls, Britons, Irish and Scots. With the History of Abaris the Hyperborean, Priest of the Sun. In Three Letters to the Right Honourable the Lord Viscount Molesworth', in *A Collection of Several Pieces of Mr. John Toland, Now first publish'd from his Original Manuscripts: with Some Memoirs of his Life and Writings*, vol. I (London: J. Peele, 1726), pp. 3–228 [15–16].

> true faith, and armed Christians against the shock of persecution. But Lucian, who made so much fun of the false heathen gods, and who put so many adornments into his description of the stupidities and impostures of the Greek religion, never stops being worthy of detestation, because instead of doing this for a good reason, he sought only to suit his mocking mood, and only bore witness to the truth through falsehood. Here we have two models—that of the Fathers of the Church, and that of Lucian—which can help us make reasonable judgements of many satires against abuses of religion that have been made in the last few centuries.[112]

Voetius had actually proposed a different criterion: for him, a book was not atheist so long as it can be shown that the modern abuses which it was covertly satirizing deserved the ridicule hurled at them. But Bayle imposed another test: a satire had to be meant piously in the mind of its author. It could not simply be an exposure of abuse for the sake of fun, but it must have been intended to shore up true religion. Bayle's modified procedure for judging a book can be shown schematically like this:



[112] 'Periers (Bonavanture des)', n. B.

With this preface out of the way, Bayle finally revealed what he thought about the *Cymbalum mundi*:

> Rabelais is to be considered an imitator of Lucian, and I think that we must say the same of Bonaventure des Periers, for I find that the Protestants (La Croix du Maine and Henri Estienne) are no less enraged at the cymbalum mundi than the Catholics.

He seems to have reasoned here that if Des Periers' purpose had been to mock papist abuses, then he would have found more favour with the Protestants. Instead, those Protestants had condemned it for being Lucianic, and therefore even if Du Verdier had been correct that its only target had been superstition, the *Cymbalum mundi* was nevertheless to be condemned.

This was all very tortuously expressed, and Bayle's readers were understandably befuddled as to what he had been getting at. Burkhard Struve, for instance, summarized the argument of footnote B like so: whereas Mersenne had thought that the *Cymbalum mundi* had satirized *all* religion, Bayle had only detected in it a few satires against abuses *in* religion.[113] Bayle had indeed said something vaguely like this, but then immediately added that the *Cymbalum mundi* was detestable anyway for its Lucianic and godless spirit.

Meanwhile in Sweden, the theologian Johan Upmarck read Bayle's article and digested it into a paragraph for one of his student's disputations.[114] He misinterpreted it in the opposite direction to Struve, and accomplished the feat of turning every diffidently expressed excerpt that had appeared in Bayle's article into a damning and unequivocal statement of the *Cymbalum mundi*'s atheism, as if Bayle had himself endorsed everything that had been said about it. (Upmarck was also badly confused by Bayle's quotation of Du Verdier's summary, and took the title of the Book of Fate for a précis of the first three dialogues.)

One man read Bayle's article and was not confused, but scandalized by it. This was Prosper Marchand, a young bookseller and printer in Paris. After centuries of rumours that had been only slightly informed by the *Cymbalum mundi*'s actual text, Marchand was the first man to compare the tangled mass of testimonia against what could actually be found in Des Periers' book. His publication of the *Cymbalum mundi* opens a new chapter in its history, and also in this dissertation.

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[113] Burkhard Gotthelf Struve, *Introductio ad notitiam rei litterariæ & usum bibliothecarum. Accessit dissertatio de doctis impostoribus*, Editio secunda, auctior & emendatior (Jena: Ernest Claude Bailliar, 1706), p. 453.

[114] Johan Upmarck, *Ἀθεομάστιξ. Dissertatione historico-philosophica, quam suffragante ampliss. ordine philosoph. in illustri Upsaliensi Athenæo sub auspiciis viri amplissimi Dn. Johannis Upmarck / eloq. & polit. prof. reg. & skytt. h.t. Decani spectabilis, ad diem 31 Martii Anno MDCCIX. in Audit. Gustav. Majori publico candidorum examini submittendam constituit S:æ R:æ M:tis Alumnus, Folcherus Morin Calmariensis* (Uppsala: Johan H. Werner, 1709), pp. 23–26.

Chapter IV. Bibliographers and Idlers

Now we turn to the *Cymbalum mundi*'s reception in the eighteenth century. At that century's beginning, it was a work of vaguely dubious reputation, read by a tiny few and denounced by many more. By its end, its text was available in no fewer than seven new editions, including two separate English translations; and the circumstances of its first two publications were known to anyone who cared to look them up. But it had not lost its association with atheism: on the contrary, it had been explained through and through as a carefully constructed allegory that concealed an atheistic teaching. This interpretation of the *Cymbalum mundi* as a subversive text was never universal in the eighteenth century, but it was enough to classify the book as a 'curiosity', and to make it attractive to prurient collectors who sought out books and manuscripts for their outrageous contents.[1]

Two men were responsible for the early stages of this development, both of whom published their decisive contributions in 1711. First was Prosper Marchand, a Huguenot bookseller and scholar, who lifted the *Cymbalum mundi* out of oblivion by publishing it for the first time since 1538. The second was an anonymous author who wrote a commentary on Marchand's edition. (He can probably but not definitively be identified as the bookseller Jean Fréderic Bernard.) He was the very first man to make a 'subversive' reading of the *Cymbalum mundi* and disclose its supposed atheist secrets to the world.

FELIX DE COMMERCI

Prosper Marchand was a remarkable figure of French intellectual history. Born in Saint-Germain in 1678, he had become a bookseller in Paris by 1698. Soon after, he became a Protestant and, as the Edict of Nantes had already been revoked, thereby ensured his own exile from France. He fled to the United Provinces in 1709, where he spent the remaining forty-seven years of his life.[2]

Marchand is best known for his *Dictionaire historique*, which was issued in two densely printed folio volumes shortly after his death in 1756.[3] This book bore a formal resemblance to Bayle's more famous *Dictionaire historique et critique*. But unlike that work, it was focused on

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[1] The connotation of a 'curious book' in pre-modern Europe was coloured by Acts 19.19, which recounts a book-burning at Ephesus: *multi autem ex his qui fuerant curiosa* [περίεργα] *sectati contulerunt libros et conbusserunt coram omnibus et conputatis pretiis illorum invenerunt pecuniam denariorum quinquaginta millium*.

[2] For a copious but unreliable biography, see Christiane Berkvens-Stevelinck, *Prosper Marchand: la vie et l'œuvre (1678–1756)*, Studies over de geschiedenis van de Leidse Universiteit 4 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1987).

[3] Prosper Marchand, *Dictionaire historique, ou, Mémoires critiques et littéraires, concernant la vie et les ouvrages de divers personnages distingués, particuliérement dans la république des lettres*, ed. Jean-Nicholas Sébastien Allamand, II vols (The Hague: Pierre de Hondt, 1758).

bibliography to the near exclusion of all other topics. Indeed, as we will soon see for ourselves, Marchand was for the most part uninterested in abstract theological, historical, philosophical, and philological questions, except inasmuch as an investigation into such matters could contribute to the solution of a specific bibliographical problem.

In 1706, three years before his exile from Paris, Marchand published a sale-catalogue for the Bigot family library.[4] It contained a large number of octavoes under the heading *Erotici, Narratores, & Faceti*, which included works by Erasmus and the *Nouvelles rescreations* of [pseudo-]Des Periers. One of these volumes contained one of the first editions of the *Cymbalum mundi*. But by Marchand's own telling, he had not catalogued it properly, and failed to spot it among the other books that it was bound with.[5] The man who chanced to buy it was overjoyed, and, like Byrphanes and Curtalius, immediately divulged his discovery to the world.

Marchand was not a little embarrassed by his oversight. He immediately set to work on the *Cymbalum mundi*, as if to compensate for his blunder with feverish scholarship. He procured a manuscript copy of CM 1538_i, which had been lent by the Bibliothèque du Roy to his friend the bookseller Charles Osmont; and also began compiling testimonia of the *Cymbalum mundi* from as many sources as he could find.[6] The result of his labours was a long *lettre critique*, which he signed 'Felix de Commerci', a Latinized equivalent of 'Prosper Marchand'. He appended this letter to a manuscript transcript of CM 1538, and then stopped working on the book for the next five years. He had worked at speed: the Bigot sale had taken place over the first week of July 1706, and the *lettre critique* was finished on 10 October.

This early redaction of the *lettre* is attested in the manuscripts CM Buc and CM Eug. Addressed to the engraver Bernard Picart, it was by far the most sophisticated commentary that had ever been made on the *Cymbalum mundi*.

The letter itself was divided into three parts. The first of these was Marchand's basic bibliographical description of the *Cymbalum mundi*, together with his biography of Bonaventure

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[4] This was one of the very earliest auction catalogues ever printed in Paris: *Bibliotheca Bigotiana. Seu, Catalogus librorum, quos (dum viverent) summâ curâ & industriâ, ingentíque sumptu congressêre vir clarissimi DD. uterque Joannes, Nicolaus, & Lud. Emericus Bigotii, domini de Sommesnil & de Cleuville, alter Prætor, alii Senatores Rothomagenses. Quorum plurimi MSS. antiqui bonæ notæ tàm Græci quàm Latini; alii ipsorum Bigotiorum, nec-non & diversorum doctrinâ Illustr. Virorum manu & annotatis ornati. Horum fiet Auctio die 1. mensis Julii 1706. & seqq. à primâ pomeridianâ ad vesperam, Parisiis in Regiâ Gervasianâ, viâ Fœnea: vulgò College de Me. Gervais ruë du Foin.* (Paris: Jean Boudot, Charles Osmont, Gabriel Martin, 1706).

[5] CM 1711a, *Avertissement*.

[6] Marchand in CM 1711a referred only to 'Mr. C. O. L. à P.', which I think must stand for 'Charles Osmont, Libraire à Paris'. Osmont had previously collaborated with Marchand on the Bigot catalogue. The addressee of the *lettre critique* was similarly named as 'B, P; D, & G', which, as explained by the publisher of CM 1732 (p. 1n), stands for 'Bernard Picart, Dessinateur & Graveur'.

Des Periers. At the time, Marchand had no knowledge of CM 1537, and only described CM 1538, from which his edition was derived. He wrote that Bonaventure Des Periers had been the *Cymbalum mundi*'s author, but confessed that he knew nothing about his life. Nor did he know anything about the circumstances of Morin's trial or the Faculty of Theology's condemnation of CM 1537. But he cited Du Verdier and La Croix du Maine to establish a bibliography of Des Periers, as well as Estienne's description of his miserable death. In all, he concluded, there was very little to know about Des Periers, and certainly no independent evidence to justify the proposition that he was an atheist. In this section Marchand also addressed the numerous literary conceits in the opening letter, and argued in favour of ȝ over ȝ'. There was no evidence, Marchand argued, that there had ever been a Latin edition of the *Cymbalum mundi*, despite what 'Thomas Du Clevier' had written about a mysterious manuscript in a monastery near the mysterious city of Dabas. One person of his acquaintance even claimed to own a copy of the original Latin *Cymbalum mundi*, but (like any good Parisian librarian) had refused all requests to inspect the manuscript on account of its great age and illegibility. He was plainly not to be believed.[7]

The second section contained an analysis of the *Cymbalum mundi* itself. Marchand stated his position in advance. The *Cymbalum mundi* was only a set of trivial dialogues, and contained nothing to justify the repeated accusations of atheism and impiety that had been levelled against it over nearly two centuries. Then he gave a bare summary of the four dialogues. He did not enter into much argument about the dialogues' meanings: the extent of his interpretation was to remark that the second dialogue was a satire against alchemists, and that the dogs' dispute in the fourth dialogue was between the public and the private life.

The third part contained the analytical core of the *lettre.* First, Marchand stated his fundamental position: on the basis of the summary he had just given, there was no reason whatsoever to think that the dialogue was atheist. He wrote:

> Here you have in summary everything that the *Cymbalum mundi* contains. I admit that I cannot find any of that 'Impiety' or that 'Atheism' for which it 'deserves to be thrown into the fire with its author'.[8]

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[7] 'Quelques recherches que j'aie faites pour le trouver en Latin, je n'ai pu y reussir; & de tous ceux à qui j'en ai parlé, il ne s'est trouvé qu'une seule personne qui m'ait dit l'avoir veu, & même l'avoir en sa possession. Mais ce témoignage m'est fort suspect; car, outre que l'homme dont je le tiens, m'a plusieurs fois avancé des Anecdotes qui ne se sont pas trouvées véritables, un de mes Amis, que j'avois prié de le voir, & de le presser de lui montrer ce Livre, m'a rapporté qu'il s'en étoit excusé sur ce *que c'étoit un Manuscrit si vieux, & si mal écrit, qu'il étoit presque impossible d'y rien connoitre*. Cette mauvaise défaite me persuade que c'est mal à propos qu'il s'est vanté de posseder cet Ouvrage; Et come je ne doute point que cette Lettre ne vienne à sa connoissance, il est de son intérêt de nous desabuser, en donnant ce rare trésor au public.' CM 1711a, pp. 7–8.

[8] 'Voilà, en abregé, tout ce que contient le *Cymbalum mundi*; & j'avouë que je n'y decouvre nullement cette *Impieté* & cette *Athéisme*, pour lesquels *il meriteroit d'être jetté au feu avec son Auteur*.' CM 1711a, p. 19.

It might be thought, he went on, that *Cymbalum mundi*'s unstinting use of mythological subjects was enough to bring the book under suspicion: but if that were so, why was Scarron's *Gigantomachie* acceptable? and why Sorel's *Berger extravagant*? Besides, the comedies put on at the Théâtre Italien were full of ribald satires of paganism. If the *Cymbalum mundi* was to be condemned, why not these? And indeed the Fathers themselves wrote mocking screeds against false gods: are *these* works to be suspected of impiety for it? No, the raillery in the *Cymbalum mundi* was nothing blasphemous, and if it were to be judged so, then so many other books would have to be judged similarly that the term blasphemy would lose all its meaning.

As for the story of Des Periers' suicide, it was in the first place very unlikely to be true. Antoine Du Moulin, who had described his friend Des Periers' death as a sudden tragedy, was to be believed more readily than Henri Estienne, who had claimed, decades later and with no evidence, that he had run himself through with his sword. More importantly, even if *δ were* true, it would be of no relevance. Providence did not operate so mechanically as to punish all blasphemers with suicide; nor were all suicides blasphemers. Whether true or false, *δ* was an independent fact that had no certain bearing on the fate of Des Periers' soul; still less on the question of the *Cymbalum mundi*'s impiety.

Next, Marchand examined thirteen testimonia of the *Cymbalum mundi* which he had uncovered. All of these are familiar to us from the last chapter. Marchand turned his critical eye on them, and indulged in a repetitive but instructive polemic against the cloud of self-reinforcing rumours which had accumulated around the book. His judgements were as follows:

I. Sentiment de HENRY ESTIENNE (pp. 26–28)

Estienne had mentioned the *Cymbalum mundi* in passing only, and given no indication that he had read it himself. If he had, he would have learnt that it was no evidence of Des Periers' impiety. Furthermore, Estienne was only one man, and unrepresentative of Protestant opinion of the book. His weak testimony aside, there was no reason to believe that there had ever been a general Protestant reaction against the *Cymbalum mundi*.

II. Sentiment de LA CROIX DU MAINE (pp. 28–30)

La Croix du Maine had written that the *Cymbalum mundi* was *detestable & rempli d'impieté*. But it was doubtful that he had ever seen the book, for he cited Morin as its publisher and 1537 as its date—an imprint that Marchand had never seen. Furthermore, Du Maine had inappropriately questioned the *Nouvelles recreations*' authorship by Des Periers; and if Du Maine had erred on that point, then he could have easily erred in his judgement on the *Cymbalum*

mundi. (Marchand made a series of errors here: he struck out this whole passage in his later revision, after being apprised of the existence of CM 1537 and the doubtfulness of the *Nouvelles recreations*' attribution to Des Periers.)

III. Sentiment de DU VERDIER (pp. 30–32)

Antoine Du Verdier had given a thorough summary of the *Cymbalum mundi* in his *Bibliothèque Françoise*, and come to the conclusion that there was nothing impious in it. To Marchand, this was the exception that proved the rule. Unlike any of the other twelve authors on Marchand's list, Du Verdier *had* read the *Cymbalum mundi*, and found it no more offensive than the *Metamorphoses* of Ovid.

IV. Sentiment de CHASSANION (pp. 32–33)

Jean Chassanion's testimony, Marchand argued, had no worth, as it was derived in its entirety from Henri Estienne's *Apologie*, and not based on any independent examination of the *Cymbalum mundi* itself.

V. Sentiment de PASQUIER (pp. 33–34)

Estienne Pasquier had written that the *Cymbalum mundi* was a Lucianic book that 'deserved to be thrown into the fire along with its author'. But, Marchand observed, Pasquier had approved of the *Nouvelles récreations* in the same passage, a book that contained many more obscenities and impieties than the *Cymbalum mundi*. At any rate there was nothing to suggest that Pasquier had ever read the book.

VI. Sentiment du Pere MERSENNE (pp. 34–38)

Marin Mersenne had written that 'De Perez' was an atheist blasphemer who had hidden his impiety under the veil of four innocent fables.[9] Marchand responded by quoting Gisbert Voetius to the effect that while it was indeed true *a priori* that a given author might be accused of allegorical atheism, before a close analysis of the text it was equally possible *a priori* that the author's accusers were defaming him.[10] This was not quite an accurate

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[9] Marchand cited Marsenne in one place at second hand, because he had not (yet) seen an uncastrated copy of *Quæstiones in Genesim*.

[10] 'L'on a deja repondu plus haut à cette accusation, & Mr. VOETIUS y repond encore mieux, en disant, qu'*on peut* bien *sous le voile de la Fable se mocquer de la Religion, afin d'avoir des echapatoires; mais* aussi, *que l'on peut soutenir que ceux qui le prennent de la sorte, sont des Calomniateurs.*

En effet, c'est inutile qu'on a recours à cette distinction, puis que ceux qu'on accuse, sont toûjours en état de dire qu'ils n'ont point eu d'autre intention que de se divertir de la Fable & des Divinitez des Payens. D'ou je conclus, que quelque intention secrete qu'ait pu avoir DES PERRIERS en composant son Ouvrage; Et que quand bien même son dessein caché auroit été d'y attaquer directement le premier être, & de s'y mocquer avec assurance de toute Religion, on ne peut pas neantmoins l'accuser raisonnablement de Libertinage ni d'Atheisme, puisqu'il est constant qu'il n'y a rien dans son Livre qui puisse servir, je ne dis pas à prouver, mais seulement à favoriser une telle accusation; & qu'au contraire, tout ce qu'on y trouve est si necessairement susceptible d'un bon tour, qu'on ne peut pas absolument le prendre en mauvaise part, à moins qu'on ne le torde, & qu'on le fasse une violence extreme.'

representation of Voetius' views. We will recall that Voetius had not cleared the *Cymbalum mundi* of suspicion, and had in fact stated explicitly that it might well be a dangerous allegory like Coster's *Iphigenia*. The principle that an ambiguous text was subject to two possible interpretations was precisely what made it such an attractive instrument in the first place for a secret atheist. But unlike Voetius, Marchand was not trying to answer the question whether Des Periers was an atheist, but only whether atheism could be detected in the *Cymbalum mundi*. And here he had no use for Voetius' pious warnings: if a book was not provably atheist, then it could not be convicted.

VII. Sentiment de Mr. DE L'ETOILLE (pp. 38–40)

On the copy of the *Cymbalum mundi* that Marchand had read, Pierre de l'Estoille had written that the book's contents proved its author to have been an atheist. Marchand's comment on this marginal note deserves quotation, as it is a good example of the intense sarcasm against carelessness which he occasionally allowed himself:

> This Mr. De l'Estoille wrote his name in red letters on the first page of this book, with the note: 'Bonaventure Des Perriers—a wicked man and an Atheist, as is apparent from this hateful book.' If the man who put this note onto this book only did so after reading it, he must have had a very lively understanding, and a very particular knack for recognizing Atheists. For it is not 'apparent', as he says, from reading the book. Underneath this note there is a second one which reads as follows. '*Such a life, such an end*—a saying proved by the death of this miserable one, unworthy to bear the name of man.' And as if this were not enough to describe the author, we see these words written in red at the top of the first Dialogue: *Dixit insipiens in corde suo: non est Deus*. This motto is as well suited to this book as the tree which an ignorant painter put in the middle of the sea was suited to the wreck of Simonides which he had tried to represent.[11]

VIII. Sentiment de SPIZELIUS (pp. 40–42)

Gottlieb Spitzel, in two different works, had cited Mersenne's commentary on the *Cymbalum mundi* almost word-for word.[12] Predictably, Marchand castigated him for uncritically repeating the commentary of another man without seeking out the book himself.

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[11] '…ce Mr. de l'Estoille a écrit son nom en caracteres rouges sur la premiere page de ce Livre, avec cette Note. Bonaventure des Perriers, *homme meschant & Athée, comme il appert par ce detestable Livre*. Si celui qui a mis cette Note à ce Livre ne l'a fait qu'aprés l'avoir bien lû, il falloit qu'il eut des lumieres bien vives, & des talens bien particuliers pour reconnoitre les Athées; Car cela *n'appert* point, comme il le dit, pour la lecture du Livre. Au dessous de cette Note il y en a une seconde, que voici. *Telle vie, telle fin, averé par la mort de ce miserable, indigne de porter le nom d'homme*. Et comme si cela ne suffisoit pas pour caracteriser l'Auteur, on voit encore ces mots écrits en rouge au dessus du premier Dialogue, *Dixit insipiens in corde suo: non est Deus.* Ce qui convient aussi bien à ce Livre, que l'Arbre, qu'un Peintre ignorant plaça dans le milieu de la Mer, convenoit au naufrage de Simonides, qu'il avoit entrepris de representer.'

[12] *Scrutinium Atheismi historico-ætiologicum* (Augsburg: Johannes Prætorius, 1663), p. 56; *Felix litteratus ex infelicium periculis et casibus, sive de Vitiis literatorum commentationes historico-theosophicæ, quibus infelicium ex animo, h. e. vitiosorum*

IX. Sentiment des Continuateurs de MORERY (p. 42)

The editors of Moreri's *Dictionaire Historique* had merely cited the entry of La Croix du Maine, and said nothing original themselves.

X. Sentiment de Mr. CATHERINOT (pp. 42–44)

Nicolas Catherinot had written that the *Tractatus de tribus impostoribus* and the *Cymbalum mundi* were both so impious that he had never read them, nor ever wished to see them.[13] 'I don't think', wrote Marchand, 'that one could reason more pitiably. To condemn a book as impious, and at the same time to admit that one has never seen it: is that not to give a sign of small judgement?'[14] In his contempt for bibliography, Catherinot had committed a grave offence, but a common one. What so aggrieved Marchand was Catherinot's pride in his own ignorance. In his anger, Marchand went on to write that one of Catherinot's other works displayed 'a ridiculous ostentation and an inexcusable vanity.'

XI. Sentiment de Mr. MORHOFIUS (pp. 44–45)

Daniel Morhofius had mentioned the *Cymbalum mundi* in passing amid a list of impious books.[15] But it was apparent to Marchand that he had only done so on the basis of Estienne and Mersenne's testimony.

XII. Sentiment de Mr. BAYLE (pp. 45–48)

Pierre Bayle, as we have seen earlier, had summarized condemnations of the *Cymbalum mundi*, without making a definitive statement one way or the other on its guilt or innocence. Marchand was scandalized by this lack of honesty with respect to a book that Bayle had not seen. In fact, Bayle's article on Bonaventure Des Periers was so ill-judged that it had forced him to reconsider Bayle's authority—and, *a fortiori*, the authority of every author less judicious than Bayle, which was to say just about everybody. Marchand wrote:

> Up till now I had regarded the sentiments of Mr Bayle as literary decisions from which one could not reasonably distance oneself. And the reputation which this famous critic has gained for himself in the Republic of Letters would seem to deserve this deference. Nevertheless, one sees that it is good to read with some precaution: and such examples of inexactness given by a man of

literatorum calamitates et miseriæ, conquisitis exemplis et documentis selectioribus exponuntur, atque eruditis, ad veræ et imperturbatæ felicitatis sedem tendentibus via tutissima ostenditur (Augsburg: Gottlieb Göbeln, 1676), p. 124.

[13] Nicolas Catherinot, *L'art d'imprimer* (Bourges, 1685), p. 8.

[14] Je ne crois pas qu'on puisse raisonner plus pitoiablement. En effet, condamner un Livre comme Impie, lorsque dans le même temps l'on convient qu'on ne l'a jamais vu, n'est-ce pas donner une marque de petit jugement.

[15] Daniel Georgius Morhofius, *Polyhistor, sive de notitia auctorum et rerum commentarii. Quibus præterea varia ad omnes disciplinas consilia et subsidia proponuntur* (Lübeck: Peter Böckmann, 1688), p. 74.

> such reading should impress on us with how much wariness we should read the works produced by authors of lesser merit.[16]

XIII. Sentiment de Mr. STRUVE (pp. 48–50)

Earlier in 1706, Burkhard Gotthelf Struve had discussed the *Cymbalum mundi* in the second edition of his *Introductio ad notitiam rei litterariæ*.[17] He summarized the views of La Croix du Maine, Du Verdier, and Mersenne on the book. At the end of his discussion, however, he wrote: 'I have not seen the book, and have kept myself to setting out what others thought about it.'[18] This statement, diffident as it was, earned him the highest praise from Marchand for its very diffidence. He was a model of bibliographic integrity for refusing to speculate about a book that he had not seen with his own eyes.

As a coda to these testimonia, Marchand addressed the manuscript copy of Morin's plea to Antoine Du Bourg which was attached to the copy of CM 1538 which he had read. He cast some doubt on its authenticity, and then observed that even if the *Cymbalum mundi* had been suppressed in Paris, there was an infinity of reasons besides atheism why this might have happened. Perhaps its publisher had run afoul of one printing regulation or another, or of some person at court.

In Marchand's view, almost all of the testimonia he had cited were illustrations of the dangers involved in passing judgement on a book without reading it. His commentary was well-considered, marred only by his ignorance of documents that he did not have at his disposal in 1706, like Calvin's *De scandalis* and the judgement of the Faculty of Theology. But the point here is not that Marchand was correct. It is enough to observe that Marchand felt an almost zealous hatred of prurient rumours that had no basis in bibliography and documentary analysis. To make war against such rumours was the reason why he wrote his *lettre critique*. The question that guided Marchand's researches was not, *was Bonaventure Des Periers an atheist?* (for such an inquiry into a man's soul could not be answered on the basis of fragmentary sources) but rather, *with what documentary justification has the* Cymbalum mundi *been accused of impiety?*

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[16] Jusqu'icy j'avois regardé les sentiments de Mr. Bayle comme des Decisions Litteraires desquelles on ne pouvoit pas raisonablement s'éloigner; Et la reputation que s'est aquise cet illustre Critique dans la Republique des Lettres sembloit meriter cette deference. Cependant, on voit qu'il est bon de le lire avec quelque precaution; Et de semblables exemples d'inexactitude donnez par un homme de cette litterature, doivent nous faire sentir avec combien de défiance nous devons lire les ouvrages faits par des Auteurs d'un merite mediocre.

[17] Burkhard Gotthelf Struve, *Introductio ad notitiam rei litterariæ & usum bibliothecarum. Accessit dissertatio de doctis impostoribus*, Editio secunda, auctior & emendatior (Jena: Ernest Claude Bailliar, 1706), cap. 9, 'De libris damnatis et prohibitis', § XII, p. 453.

[18] Librum non vidimus, quid sentiant alii exposuisse contenti.

In fact, the *lettre critique* was only ostensibly an apology for the *Cymbalum mundi*, a book which by Marchand's own admission was more trivial than its literary reputation had suggested.[19] It was really an apology for bibliography itself, which set up the *Cymbalum mundi* as an instructive demonstration of the need for scrupulosity. To Marchand's mind, the only way to avoid error and confusion on any subject at all was to pay careful attention to the contents and publication-history of books. *Litteræ una custodia fidelis memoriæ rerum gestarum*. This was the spirit of all of Marchand's works, but he insisted on it most explicitly and repeatedly in his *Dictionaire historique.* Consider two of his most forceful statements of the principle, each of them aimed against his fellow Huguenot refugees.

Here, he criticized Pierre Jurieu for relying on weak evidence for a story that he had repeated:

> In effect, the famous Mr Cuper had asked [Jurieu] where this story [of a vision of kings to come, revealed to an ambassador of King Henry VII] was to be found, he wrote back that he had this story *on an old and yellowed paper which bore all kinds of marks of its antiquity, and which had been written a good twelve or fifteen years before the death of Charles I. It was filed among the loose papers in the study of André Rivet, a man of much principle, and found there by one Marie du Moulin, a girl of much ability.* But unfortunately *the paper was at last lost from the hands of Mr Rivet's children*.
>
> What fine evidence we have here! And a man who dares cite such proofs—how elegant of him to denounce those authors who seem to him '*to fill up their text and their remarks with so many citations that a reader is terrified by them, and revolted by the very sight of them*' as people who '*seem to have written for no other purpose than to show the public that they have read a good deal*'! Any sensible reader, far from taking fright so ridiculously, will always be charmed to see proofs, carefully and exactly cited, of what one has argued to him. Only writers who give themselves up without restraint to all the fire of their imagination, and who want us to take their empty conjectures for solid truths, can blame an exactitude which is as worthy as it is useful.[20]

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[19] CM 1711a, p. 1.

[20] En effet, le célébre Mr. Cuper lui aïant demandé *où se trouvoit cette Histoire*, il lui récrivit […] qu'on tenoit cette Histoire d'*un papier, jaune & vieux, aiant toutes sortes de marques de quelque antiquité, écrit bien certainement 12 ou 15 ans avant la mort de Charles I, enfilé parmi les piéces fugitives & courantes du Cabinet d'André Rivet, Homme de beaucoup d'ordre, trouvé là par une Marie du Moulin, fille de beaucoup d'habilité*, mais qui s'est enfin malheureusement *perdu entre les mains des enfans de Mr. Rivet.*
Ne voilà-t-il pas de beaux garants! Et un Homme, qui ôse bien citer de pareilles preuves, n'a-t-il pas bonne grace de décrier, comme gens *qui semblent n'avoir écrit que pour apprendre au Public qu'ils ont beaucoup lû*, les Auteurs qui lui paroissent *charger, & leur texte, & leurs remarques, de tant de citations, qu'un Lecteur en est épouvanté, & rebutté par la seule vuë*? Tout Lecteur sensé, bien loin de prendre jamais si ridiculement l'épouvante, sera toujours très charmé de voir les preuves de ce qu'on lui avance soigneusement & exactement citées: & il n'y a que des Ecrivains, qui se livrent sans mesure à tout le feu de leur imagination, & qui veulent qu'on prenne leurs vaines conjectures pour des véritez solides, qui puissent blâmer une éxactitude d'autant plus estimable qu'elle est plus utile. | 'Catherine de Medicis', in *Dictionaire historique*, vol. I, p. 172.

Marchand cried out against the vulgar proclivity to delight in lively stories and to yawn at repeated citations and proofs. No, what should quicken the blood was precisely the bibliographical exactitude that pulled a scholar free from a morass of vague half-truths. It is hard to shake the thought that the *lecteur sensé* that Marchand described here was nothing less than the image of his own unborable self, set up as a model to be imitated by the whole literate world.

Next, a criticism of Jurieu's arch-enemy. Pierre Bayle had told a story on insufficient evidence, and Marchand replied:

> I don't think that one is more disposed to believe this tale than the tradition of which we have just been speaking. It can be affirmed as much as you like by 'an honest man and a man of wit': that's the finest thing in the world, but when it comes to history, probity and wit are not enough. What is needful is proof, and proof of good authority; and that is what this honest man does not give. True, he added a great many details to his tale, and it is a shame that Mr Bayle neglected them so badly. Perhaps he did not find any of them strong enough to take the place of proofs for the tale that had been told to him. Whatever the case, Bayle seems to me a man of too great character to believe, on the simple testimony of a man living today, a thing which happened nearly a hundred and forty years ago. I would rather remain in doubt on this head, and suppose that the person who told this tale had certain reasons that are unknown to us, and which it would be pointless to investigate.[21]

We have already seen Marchand admit his disappointment with Bayle's scholarly exactness in connection with the *Cymbalum mundi*. Here his criticism has the same flavour of disillusion: Bayle, the prince of the documentary footnote, had committed the same witty speculation as the mass of his inferiors.

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[21] Mr. Bayle, qui ne doutoit point de la fausseté de cette tradition, n'a pas laissé d'insérer dans le Tome II. de sa Réponse aux Questions d'un Provincial (page 270), un morceau qui y a du raport. Il dit qu'il le tient d'un fort honnête homme & de beaucoup d'esprit, qui joignoit à son récit un grand nombre de circonstances. Le voici. *Jeanne d'Albret épousa en secondes noces, à petit bruit, le Comte de Goion, qui fut tué à la St. Barthelemi. Elle en eut un fils qu'un Seigneur de la Maison d'Albret fit élever incognito sur les Frontiéres d'Espagne. Ce fils, étant repassé en Guienne, se maria avec la fille d'un Cabaretier, dont il eut un fils qui fut Ministre à Bourdeau, & qui mourut à Amsterdam, quelques années après la révocation de l'Edit de Nantes.*
Je ne crois pas qu'on soit beaucoup mieux disposé à croire ce récit, que la tradition dont nous venons de parler. Il sera affirmé tant qu'on voudra par *un honnête homme & homme d'esprit*: cela est le mieux du monde; mais, en matiére d'Histoire, la probité & l'esprit ne suffisent point. Il faut des preuves, & des preuves de bon aloi; & c'est ce que cet honnête homme ne donne pas. Il joignoit, à la vérité, un grand nombre de circonstances à son récit; & c'est dommage que Mr. Bayle les ait si fort négligées. Peut-être n'en troivoit-il aucunes assez fortes pour tenir lieu de preuves au récit qu'on lui faisoit. Quoi qu'il en soit, ce seroit, ce me semble, être de trop bonne composition, que de croire sur le simple témoignage d'un homme vivant aujourdui, un fait passé il y a près de cent quarante ans; j'aime mieux rester dans le doute à cet égard, & supposer que la Personne qui faisoit ce récit avoit pour cela quelques raisons qui ne nous sont point connuës, & dans lesquelles il nous seroit fort inutile de vouloir pénétrer. | 'Aubigné, in ibid., p. 68.

On the special subject of atheism, we can get more insight into Marchand's general attitude from his article on the *Tractatus de tribus impostoribus*.[22] He listed in it a full twenty-six historical persons who had been suspected of writing that notorious irreligious book. For almost every one of them, he supplied a long footnote explaining not only why the author in question had been suspected of atheism, but also why the suspicion of authorship was groundless. Usually he did not bother to deny that the author in question was an atheist; only that he could not have written the *Tractatus*. For example, he wrote of Estienne Dolet that his works contained some arguably impious suggestions that had been taken by Burkhard Struve to be atheist, and also as reasons to suspect that Dolet had written the atheist *Tractatus*. Marchand did not (here) defend Dolet against the charge of atheism, but merely pointed out that Struve had offered no evidence whatsoever for his specific bibliographical claim, and also noted a series of other errors in his account of Dolet's trial and death.

It is crucial to recognize that unlike Lucien Febvre two hundred years later, Marchand did not at any time make a statement about the *a priori* possibility or impossibility of unbelief in any given age. All of his dismissals of suspected atheism were only expressed in defence of one particular author or another who had been accused of having secretly rejected Christianity. The *lettre critique* was just such a narrow dismissal: apart from bibliographical exactness Marchand had no wider philosophical motives for pronouncing Bonaventure Des Periers innocent of atheism.

This was usual for someone who scrupulously avoided putting his personal convictions into writing, or allowing them to interfere with his descriptive scholarship. (Still his biographer did not scruple to call him a '*libertin érudit*',[23] or Jonathan Israel to describe him, without explanation, as a 'providential deist' who was nevertheless 'resolutely opposed to more radical strains of deism').[24]. Even Marchand's basic Protestant convictions must be rather inferred from the facts of his life than read in his books and correspondence. For example, when he attacked the Catholic authorities for their wilful suppression of good books after the Council of Trent, he gave only glancing attention to the distortion of Scripture and the Fathers that resulted, and complained chiefly of their bibliographical slovenliness as an evil in itself.[25]

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[22] Ibid., pp. 312–329.
[23] Berkvens-Stevelinck, *Prosper Marchand: la vie et l'œuvre (1678–1756)*, pp. 170–171.
[24] Jonathan I. Israel, *Radical Enlightenment: Philosophy and the Making of Modernity 1650–1750* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 576.
[25] Prosper Marchand, *Histoire de l'origine et des prémiers progrès de l'imprimerie* (The Hague: La veuve Le Vier et Pierre Paupie, 1740), pp. 107–118.

If a reflection like this can be forgiven, Marchand's ultimate importance to history does not consist in any religious philosophical convictions he might have held, but in his readiness to put these aside in the interests of bibliography. In doing so, he made a conscious and early commitment to *Wertfreiheit*, according to which exactness of description must be abstracted as far as possible from considerations of value.[26] This ideal has obviously never been embodied perfectly, and it has never been totally absent in Europe since the revival of letters: but for all the lurking prejudices of our own generation's scholarship, and for all the monumental empirical work that was done five hundred years ago, it cannot seriously be denied that the standards of scholarly argument have undergone a change; that objectivity-as-such both prized and practised more widely in 1900 than in 1600, and that the insensible diminishment of an agrarian religion's intellectual domain (though not necessarily its direct refutation) allowed for a less value-saturated science to flourish in its place. In this respect it is with Prosper Marchand, not the supposedly atheist Des Periers, that a precursor of modernity can be discerned in our story.

THE EDITIONS OF 1711

It is not clear why Marchand did not immediately publish his *lettre critique*. Perhaps he was simply too busy as a working publisher and bookseller. Whatever the reason, from 1706 to 1711 his work remained in manuscript circulation, and known only to a small circle of men in Paris.[27] In 1709 Marchand left permanently for the Netherlands, taking his working copy with him, and in 1711, he published it as CM 1711a in his new shop in Amsterdam.[28] Its title page looked like this:

[26] The principal defect of the concept *Wertfreiheit*, as elaborated and defended amid two great academic controversies in the twentieth century, is ironically that it was advanced normatively as a rule to be followed by modern scientists—not as a phenomenon whose all-important emergence in European history could itself be traced scientifically. See Max Weber, 'Der Sinn der „Wertfreiheit" der soziologischen und ökonomischen Wissenschaften', *Logos, internationale Zeitschrift für Philosophie der Kultur* VII (1917–1918): pp. 40–88.

[27] It was erroneously stated to have been published in 1706 by some bibliographers, like Carl Friedrich Buddeus and Johann Freidlieb Stübelius, *Schediasma litterarium de criteriis boni libri* (Leipzig: Immanuel Titius, 1714), p. 9n. This gave Prosper Marchand occasion for mockery of rare-book fetishizers: seeing Buddeus and Stübelius' error repeated in Johann Vogt, *Catalogus historico-criticus librorum rariorum. Sive ad scripta huius argumenti Spicilegium*, Editio nova (Hamburg: Christian Herold, 1738), p. 218, he wrote (CM Mar) that the supposed edition of 1706 was 'incomparablement plus rare qu'aucune de celles qu'il [Vogt] nous indique, puis qu'elle n'a jamais existé. Et c'est ainsi que ces Messieurs les Prôneurs de Livres rares, nous en proposent quelque fois de *chimeriques*. Ce ne fut qu'en 1711, que je publiai la *Cymbalum Mundi* et ma *Lettre*, composee à la verité dès 1706.'

[28] CM 1711a in the bibliography.

CYMBALUM MUNDI,

OU

DIALOGUES SATYRIQUES

Sur differens Sujets,

PAR

BONAVENTURE DES PERRIERS

Valet de Chambre de MARGUERITE DE VALOIS, *Reine de Navarre.*

Avec une Lettre Critique dans laquelle on fait l'Histoire, l'Analyse, & l'Apologie de cet Ouvrage,

Par PROSPER MARCHAND, Libraire.

A AMSTERDAM,

Chez PROSPER MARCHAND, Libraire, dans le Nes, à l'Enseigne de l'Etoile.

M. DCC. XI.

p e

CM 1711a was substantially the same as its manuscript first redaction: it contained the *Cymbalum mundi* and a slightly revised and expanded version of the *lettre critique.* In the latter, Marchand included two new testimonia on the *Cymbalum mundi*, but he did not substantially change the position that he had taken in October 1706.

Bernard Picart, to whom Marchand had dedicated the *lettre critique* five years before, made five engravings for the edition; one as the frontispiece, and one for each dialogue.[29] They depict the events of the dialogues without verging into philosophical interpretation, and are remarkable for their closely observed antiquarian details.[30]

[29] They face the title page and pp. 61, 77, 101, and 125. They are listed as 'Le Titre & quatre autres Sujets pour le *Cimbalum mundi*, 1711' in the posthumous catalogue of Picart's works: 'Catalogue des pièces qui composent l'œuvre de Bernard Picart, Dessinateur et Graveur', in *Impostures innocentes, ou Recueil d'estampes d'après divers peintres illustres, tels que Rafaël, Le Guide, Carlo Maratti, le Poussin, Rembrandt, &c. Gravées à leur imitation, & selon le gout particulier de chacun d'eux, & accompagnées d'un Discours sur les Préjugés de certains Curieux touchant la Gravûre* (Amsterdam: Chez la Veuve de Bernard Picart, 1734). I took all photographs of CM 1711a and CM 1732 from my own copies of them.
[30] For a contrary view, see the comments of a recent literary scholar (who only saw CM 1753, and appears not even to have known that he was looking at a later counterfeit of these engravings): 'Une de ces gravures – figure qui sert de frontispice au volume – exprime bien cette fonction presque messianique du *Cymbalum Mundi* dans l'histoire des idées. On y voit Mercure qui réveille les hommes grâce au son des cymbales. Fait étonnant, le livre de Jupiter s'est transformé en un livre sur lequel est désormais écrit *Cymbalum Mundi*. Les hommes s'éveillent de leur torpeur, prêts à prendre en main leur propre destin. Les cymbales résonnent et le livre des Destins se dégrade sur terre – sans reliure il est voué à disparaître.' *Per styga!* Philippe Desan, 'La reliure du livre de Jupiter: lecture bibliogique du *Cymbalum mundi*', in *ACR2000*, pp 57–64 [63–64].

The frontispiece: Mercury sounds a pair of (correctly depicted) *cymbala*, while a buffoon tinkles a *clochette*. They stupefy a group of mortals surrounded by alchemical equipment.

Dialogue I: While Mercury steals a golden statue from a dresser, Byrphanes and Curtalius replace his Book of Destinies, which he left on the bed, with a lookalike.

Dialogue II: Philosophers search the sands of the arena for shards of the Stone. (Note the stand of conical *metæ* behind the two men on the ground.) Cubercus stumbles and drops his sand. At extreme right in the middle distance, Trigabus and a disguised Mercury look on.

Dialogue III: Cupid grabs one of Mercury's *talaria*, lovestruck Celia pines in an orchard, and Statius rides his horse near town.

Dialogue IV: Next to a cracked pyramid, Pamphagus reads the letter from the Lower Antipodes to Hylactor. In the background, Gargilius leads the rest of the pack on a hunt.

Jean Fréderic Bernard and the paragraph-series

In reality, even before CM 1711a was published, Marchand had already lost control over his work on the *Cymbalum mundi*. His edition, *lettre critique* and all, had been circulating in manuscript ever since he had first written it in 1706. One day, when Marchand was still a bookseller in Paris, a colleague of his sat in their shared workshop and annotated a manuscript that contained Marchand's *lettre critique* and the *Cymbalum mundi*.[31] These notes were mostly citations from dictionaries and other reference works that explained obscure turns of phrase in the *Cymbalum mundi*.

This manuscript later came into the hands of the captain and collector Charles-Jérôme de Cisternay Du Fay, a man who was amassing a large collection of books that contained or were rumoured to contain scandalous material.[32] It is likely that Du Fay then lent it to the scholar Bernard de La Monnoye, who wrote his own set of notes below the ones that were already on it. (It may be, however, that the second annotator was not La Monnoye.) His notes were mostly similar to the first layer in that they largely amounted to lexicographical observations on this or that phrase in the text. But in some places he criticized and corrected the work of the first annotator. (For instance, he noted his predecessor's mis-parsing of the phrase *ieu de barbue & perpetuelle enfance*).[33] He also identified a few of the anagrams in Dialogue II. *Cubercus*, he wrote, was a stand-in for Martin Bucer, and *Rhetulus* was a certain *Thurelus*, i.e. one Pierre Turrel of Autun. *Drarig* was also *Girard* backwards, but there was no telling which historical Girard this was.

After Marchand's anonymous colleague and the second annotator had each written their notes on it, Du Fay allowed the manuscript to be copied *in extenso* at least twice. One of the resulting copies, CM Eug, was acquired by the Baron von Hohendorff on behalf of his patron Prince Eugene of Savoy, and it is from this copy that we have the best witness to what the original manuscript *CM Fay contained.[34] Each time it was copied, all of its notes were reproduced in the same hand, which obliterated the visible distinction between the two layers of annotation.

Another copy—or *CM Fay itself—ended up in the hands of one Jean Fréderic Bernard, who like Prosper Marchand was a Huguenot bookseller in Amsterdam.[35] In 1711,

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[31] For the evidence underlying this and subsequent observations, see the bibliography.
[32] To my knowledge none of Du Fay's correspondence or private papers have survived, which complicates the reconstruction of this whole chain of events.
[33] CM fol. D_{iii} v.; CM Eug, fol 41r.
[34] CM Eug, i.e. Österreichische Nationalbibliothek Cod. 10182 HAN MAG | [Eugen. Q. 34].
[35] For a sketch of Bernard's life, see 'Jean Frederic Bernard: The Tumultuous Life of a Refugee Publisher', in Lynn A. Hunt, Margaret C. Jacob, and Wijnand W. Mijnhardt, *The Book that Changed Europe: Picart and Bernard's*

right after CM 1711a appeared, Bernard published an edition of Des Periers' *Nouvelles recreations*, and used it as an occasion to publish the notes which he had found in his copy of *CM Fay.[36] He printed the *Nouvelles recreations* themselves without any annotations. Neither did he include the text of the *Cymbalum mundi* in his edition. But he appended a large set of notes on the *Cymbalum mundi* as an appendix to the end of volume II. These were indexed to page numbers from CM 1711a, which demonstrates that Bernard had directly consulted that edition in making his own. There is no reason, however, to assume with Alain Mothu that there was an explicit agreement between Marchand and Bernard to divide the publication of the *Nouvelles recreations* and the *Cymbalum mundi* between themselves. This version of events is not backed up by any evidence more substantial than a stray and anonymous comment which was printed several decades after the publication of CM 1711a and CM 1711b.[37] Mothu also overlooked the fact that Marchand was not apparently aware who had edited 1711b.[38] This would hardly be possible if Marchand and Bernard had personally negotiated over its contents.

The only question is whether Bernard acquired his copy of the *Cymbalum mundi* before or after CM 1711a was published, which bears on his precise intention in publishing CM 1711b. If after, then he had probably not been aware of the *Cymbalum mundi* at all before Marchand's edition brought it to his attention, whereupon he acquired his manuscript of it in order to embellish his edition of Des Periers' *Nouvelles recreations*.

It is also possible that Bernard had already had his copy from Du Fay and was planning to publish its contents in their entirety; the *Cymbalum mundi* together with the *lettre critique* and the notes on it. But when CM 1711a was published, Bernard could longer publish a manuscript that had been just avowed by Marchand for his own work. Still, he could publish the notes that he had found on his manuscript, which did not belong to Marchand and had not appeared in CM 1711a.

Religious Ceremonies of the World (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2010), pp. 89–111. But there are some strange defects in the chapter, like the description of the *Nouvelles recreations as* 'the skeptical novels of the sixteenth-century humanist Bonaventure Des Périers'. In another chapter of this book, (op cit., p. 120) the authors refer to 'the free-spirited novel [*sic*]of Bonaventure Des Périers', as if it went without saying that the *Nouvelles recreations* belonged to Des Periers, and (of course) that they were 'radical'.

[36] *Contes et novelles, et Joyeux Devis, de Bonaventure des Periers. On a joint à cette Edition des Observations sur le* Cymbalum Mundi *de cet Auteur* (CM 1711b).

[37] See my comments in the bibliography under CM 1711b, and Alain Mothu, 'Règlement de comptes à Amsterdam: Autour du *Cymbalum mundi* de 1711', *La Lettre clandestine* 24: Le traité des trois imposteurs et la littérature philosophique clandestine (2016): pp. 255–285. Relatedly, Mothu's citation of a letter sent from Bernard to Marchand in 1740 is no evidence for any relationship between the two men in 1711. See Sébastien Drouin, 'Une lettre de Jean Frédéric Bernard à Prosper Marchand (1740)', *La Lettre clandestine* 17: Le délit d'opinion à l'Âge classique : du colporteur au philosophe (2009): pp. 309–314.

[38] This is apparent from a section in CM Mar which I excerpt below.

Bernard divided the notes into two series, one of which he marked A, B, C, etc.; and the other with the symbol §. (From now on I will call these for convenience the alphabetical and the paragraph-series, respectively.) The alphabetical series contained the notes which Bernard found in his copy of *CM Fay, which represented a composite of notes belonging to Marchand's collaborator and those written (possibly) by Bernard de La Monnoye. Bernard's copy was probably written in a single hand, and therefore did not indicate which notes belonged to which author. Bernard probably did not notice that the notes as a whole contained internal contradictions, and published them in a single series as if one man had written them.

The alphabetical series consisted exclusively of historical and philological notes on the *Cymbalum mundi*. It glossed difficult words, and explained a few allusions; but in general, neither one of its two authors passed any philosophical judgement on the dialogue as a whole. The paragraph-series was of a very different nature. These notes were almost certainly the work of Bernard himself, who wrote an *Advertissment* for the first volume of CM 1711b that was very close in tone and content to the notes in the paragraph-series. They included some philological notes after the pattern of the alphabetical series. And in some places they corrected the alphabetical series; proposing for instance that *Rhetulus* was not an anagram for *Thurelus*, but rather for *Lutherus*. Unlike the alphabetical series, however, the paragraph-series also advanced a theory of the *Cymbalum mundi*'s meaning that was elaborately conceived and opposed directly to Marchand's.

Read together, the paragraph-series and Bernard's *Avertissement* constitute a turning point in the interpretation of the *Cymbalum mundi.* Up to that point, no one had ever examined the *Cymbalum mundi* and identified any specific atheist contents in it. But that is exactly what CM 1711b did. In the *Avertissement,* Bernard characterized the *Cymbalum mundi* as an equivocal work. He then introduced a supposedly hypothetical interlocutor who might question its piety:

> One might say that the author of the *Cymbalum mundi* wanted, perhaps, to let on more than he actually believed himself when he entitled the Book of Destinies *Chronica rerum Memorabilium, quas Jupiter gessit antequam esset ipse,* etc. This title, which is ironical and affectedly self-contradictory, is telling. Vanini found a more or less similar way of destroying Divinity by a contradictory definition in his *Amphitheatrum Sapientiæ*.[39]

[39] A l'égard du *Cymbalum Mundi*, contre lequel on a tant crié, & contre lequel on pourra sans doute crier encore; le but de cet Ouvrage est assés équivoque. […] Peut être, dira quelqu'un, que l'Auteur du *Cymbalum Mundi* a plus voulu donner à penser, qu'il ne pensoit effectivement lui-même; quand il a donné pour titre au livre des Destinées, *Chronica rerum Memorabilium, quas Jupiter gessit antequam esset ipse*, &c. Ce titre ironique & renfermant une

Aneantir la divinité: here was something new. But this was only a suggestion of guilt by association with Vanini's supposed atheism.[40] Bernard's hypothetical critic soon entered on a more specific accusation:

> The theft of the Book of Destinies could certainly be a mockery at the expense of the Divinity, and of the efforts that men make to penetrate its secrets: and perhaps it is a malign insinuation that men, by sheer force of their mind, have penetrated as far as God. And who knows if the book of Dalliances, etc., which the two thieves put in place of the Book of Destinies isn't an allusion to the weaknesses that appear in the Divinity, such as men conceive it? And the Philosopher's Stone, which is sent up in the second dialogue—is it not the Truth? Surely, one might continue, Des Periers wanted to mock the conduct of philosophers (perhaps of the Catholic theologians and reformers of his time) in their search for the Truth, and to explode the Truth itself as an object of reason. In short, everything that is said in the second dialogue applies just as naturally to the Truth as it does to the art of transforming metals, which goes by the name of the Philosopher's Stone.[41]

These were insinuations of real atheism in the *Cymbalum mundi*, no less serious for their being put in the mouth of an anonymous interlocutor. At the end of his *Avertissement*, Bernard gave a tongue-in-cheek disavowal of this interlocutor's views and an endorsement of the conclusion of Marchand's *lettre critique*, but it is clear enough that the interlocutor's interpretation was actually his own.[42] At the end of his *Avertissement* he referred his reader to the paragraph-series

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contradiction affectée dit beaucoup. Vanini n'a pas oublié une maniere à peu près semblable d'aneantir la divinité, par une definition contradictoire, dans son *Amphitheatrum Sapientiæ*.

[40] For a sane account of supposed impiety in Vanini and other Italian humanists, and its reception by French *libertins érudits*, see Paul Oskar Kristeller, 'The Myth of Renaissance Atheism and the French Tradition of Free Thought', *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 6, no. 3 (July 1968): pp. 233–243.

[41] 'Le Vol du livre des destinées pourroit bien être une raillerie injurieuse à la Divinité, des efforts que font les hommes, pour penetrer dans ses secrets: & peut être une maligne insinuation, que les hommes, par la seule force de leur esprit, ont penetré aussi loin que Dieu. Qui sait encore si le livre des Amourettes &c. que les deux voleurs supposent, à celui des Destinées, n'est pas une insinuation des foiblesses, qui paroissent dans la Divinité, de la maniere dont les hommes la conçoivent? La pierre philosophale, dont on se moque dans le Dialogue second, ne seroit-ce pas la verité? Sans doute, continuera ce quelqu'un, Des Periers a voulu railler la conduite des philosophes, (peut être des Theologiens Catholiques & des reformateurs de son tems,) dans la recherche de la verité, & détruire cette verité elle-même, comme un Etre de raison. Enfin tout ce que l'on debite dans ce second Dialogue s'applique bien plus naturellement à la Verité, qu'à l'art de transmuer les metaux, compris sous le nom de *Pierre philosophale*.' | CM 1711b I, foll. [*3r.–*4r.]

[42] 'Sans entrer dans les objections de ce quelqu'un Anonyme, croions que le but de sanctifier un Ouvrage crû mauvais & dangereux, est loüable & digne de la charité Chrétienne; qu'ainsi ce ne doit plus être l'impie, le detestable Des Periers, qui écrivoit un livre que l'on devoit jetter au feu, avec son Auteur. Ce sera bien plûtôt un pieux imitateur du zéle des Saints Peres, un devot qui veut ruiner le Paganisme. Le parallele de Rabelais & du Saint Auteur du *Cymbalum*, que Mr. Bayle a osé faire, croions que c'est un parallele odieux; puisque dans le *Cymbalum Mundi* rien ne choque, tout est dans la bienséance; au lieu que dans le *Pantagruel* & le *Gargantua*, ou [*sic*] trouve un libertinage grossier & des profanations continuelles.' Ibid., foll. [*4r.–v.]

in the second volume, which contained a thorough exposition of the supposedly hypothetical atheist reading of the *Cymbalum mundi*.[43]

The paragraph-series can be read in full in the attached edition, but the note on the beginning of the second dialogue is worth special attention:

> *When you told them that you had the Philosopher's Stone, and showed it to them, &c.*) If I may disclose my suspicions here, I should say that Mercury plays in these dialogues a role that is pernicious to Christianity. I should say, for instance, that this is mockery of the one who descended from the heavens and brought us eternal Truth: Truth, which (if it can be said) has upset the whole universe by the divisions which it has caused, letting it be filled with schisms, heresy, and extravagant opinions. I should also say that the rest of Trigabus' speech here is an impious and outrageous mockery of what this Truth produced when it began to establish itself here in the world; and that our author has tried to load it with contradictions and ridiculous acts in order the better to destroy it. If these suspicions have any foundation, goodbye to the holiness of the *Cymbalum* and its pious design of destroying Paganism.[44]

Thus, according to Bernard, the *Cymbalum mundi* was nothing other than a concealed attack on Christianity itself. Its seeming mildness was nothing but a gaudy screen for its contempt for revealed Truth. In so interpreting the *Cymbalum mundi*, Bernard attributed to it an extreme version of the argument he had made in his *Reflexions morales*. There, he had not gone so far as to call Christian truth itself into question, but he had cast doubt on any theologian's ability to arrive at it.[45] Here he attributed to Des Periers the view that not only the theologians (represented by the men in Dialogue II) but even Christ himself (represented throughout by Mercury) was a fraud. Now, Bernard did not endorse such atheist views himself. But to judge from his comments in the *Reflexions morales*, he presumably felt enough elective affinity with them to be capable of printing an expression of them without explicitly withholding his endorsement.

Without speculating too much on the nature of Bernard's religious principles in 1711, we can say that his paragraph-series stood at the head of an hermeneutical tradition that can be followed down from CM 1711b through Charles Nodier, Éloi Johanneau, Félix Frank, Abel Lefranc, and Lucien Febvre; and at last into the marshy delta of our own generation's

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[43] 'Ceux qui souhaiteront quelques éclaircissements sur le *Cymbalum*, trouveront dequoi se satisfaire dans les Observations.' Ibid., fol. [*4v.]

[44] CM 1711b II, p. 281. The original of this and other extracts from the paragraph-series can be found as notes in the attached edition.

[45] 'Huitiéme Fragment du Philosophe Persan. Touchant les Prejugez', in Jean Fréderic Bernard, *Reflexions morales, satiriques & comiques: sur les Mœurs de nôtre siécle* (Cologne [Amsterdam]: Pierre Marteau le Jeune [Jean Fréderic Bernard], 1711), pp. 290–303.

commentators. The true purpose of the *Cymbalum mundi*, this tradition holds, was to destroy Christianity under the clever guise of an *ouvrage-à-clef*, and replace it with—

With what? Later authors would be ready with elaborate answers, but Bernard left this all-important question unaddressed. In fact, in his very last note, he argued that the true purpose of the *Cymbalum mundi* was not actually revealed in any of the surviving four dialogues, and that Des Periers had intended to make his meaning plain in a complementary work which he never completed.[46] A time would come when a class of commentators could say very plainly what greater system Des Periers had intended to install in Christianity's place.[47] But from Bernard at the turn of the eighteenth century, there was nothing but diffidence as to the positive beliefs that Des Periers had secretly nurtured. Unable to make any confident hypothesis, he absolved himself of responsibility for describing the secret motives of the *Cymbalum mundi* by averring that the Des Periers' thought had not come down in its complete form.

One recent author characterized Bernard as having deemed 'religion in its political manifestation' to be 'a sugarcoated opiate, robbing the public of the command of their senses'. According to him, Prosper Marchand himself was also a renegade, having both recognized and sympathized with the 'skeptical views of religion' to be found in the *Cymbalum mundi*. His statements to the contrary could only be attributed to the fact that he was more 'timid' than Jean Fréderic Bernard.[48] This goes too far. To judge from his own explicit statements, it goes without saying that Marchand was never 'timid' about his views on any matter; and in this particular case, he deemed the belief that there was anything 'skeptical' in the *Cymbalum mundi* to be a rumour and a lie. As for Bernard, his writings show a certain giddy fascination with atheism, but nothing like the proto-Marxism attributed to him here. Certainly we still have more to learn about his precise intellectual complexion, which may not have been settled or consistent in the first place. Such an effort, however, can only be frustrated by speculation that he was a 'radical' according to modern standards. In the case of an author like him, who unlike Bayle and Marchand actually *did* flirt with unbelief, we must be more and not less circumspect in our description of his views.

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[46] CM 1711b vol. II, p. 300–301.
[47] Éloi Johanneau criticized the paragraph-series, whose author he named erroneously as 'La Monnoye', for refusing to state outright what Des Periers' system had been. Cf. CM 1841, pp. 84–85.
[48] Wijnand Mijnhardt, 'Jean Frederic Bernard as Author and Publisher', in *Bernard Picart and the First Global Vision of Religion*, ed. Lynn Hunt, Margaret Jacob, and Wijnand Mijnhardt, Issues & Debates, XVIII (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2010), pp. 17–34 [23].

When the paragraph-series was published, Jean Meslier was at work on his anti-Christian screed, and manuscripts of the all-but-atheist *Theophrastus redivivus* were appearing in libraries. For the first time in a thousand years, the denial of Christianity had become a serious intellectual possibility in Western Europe. But it cannot be concluded *a priori* that any given author in this period embraced, or even conceived of, a coherent alternative to sacred history. Even though Bernard was apparently tempted by atheism to the point of excitedly pointing out its presence in the *Cymbalum mundi*, his notes in the paragraph-series were not rendered any the less insipid by the parallel progress of Meslier's secret impiety. They were unserious and haphazard, and did not belong to any consistent atheist, materialist, or deist philosophy. Of course, that did not prevent them from being exploited by later authors who *did* espouse just such systems.

SECUNDAE CURAE

Meanwhile, Prosper Marchand had been busy revising his edition of the *Cymbalum mundi*, and finished his first round of corrections by August 1712. He never managed to republish the book, but his notes for a second edition have been conserved in his archive in the library of Leiden University.[49] His revision was prepared from a copy of CM 1711a, into which he wrote ample marginal notes, and to which he added even ampler notes on loose scraps of paper which he tucked into the pages. He wrote all of these notes in his regular and small, but unpretty handwriting, which was the outward expression of his meticulous and busy soul.[50]

There were two basic motives for Marchand's new revision. First was a simple emendation of the earlier text. He corrected errors and eccentricities of spelling (like 'Perriers' for 'Periers' throughout) and made other changes of formatting. More substantially, he made large additions to the *lettre critique*. He discovered some new testimonia, and also changed his attitude to some of the material he had already treated in CM 1711a.

The most substantial addition was a response to the paragraph-series in CM 1711b. (Marchand was careful to spare the alphabetical series, which he attributed to Bernard de La Monnoye, with the exception of the notes which he had seen copied into *CM Fay in his own

[49] CM Mar.
[50] Jean-Nicholas Allamand, the editor of the *Dictionaire historique*, complained of requiring a magnifying glass to read the late Marchand's notes. *Dictionaire historique*, vol. I, *Avertissement*, p. [2].

shop in Paris.)[51] This insertion has never been published, and it is unfortunately too long to be reproduced here *in extenso*. But a few excerpts can give a sense of his reaction.

In the first place, Marchand was offended by the paragraph-series' puerility:

> The latest author to speak of the *Cymbalum mundi* is the one who wrote the *Avertissement* that appears at the head of the new edition of the *Contes* of Bonaventure des Periers, of which I have already spoken many times in this Lettre. I suspect that he is also the author of the *Observations marked off by Paragraphs* that are to be found at the end of that work. I cannot guarantee positively that they were all from the same hand: but I think I notice the same wit and character in them.
> Whatever the case, I have already shown above that this *Avertissement* is of very little authority: and I don't scruple to add here that the authority of the Observations is not much greater. By all appearances, they are the work of a young student, recently loosed from the birch, in whom the pleasure of bandying boyish trifles takes the place of merit and ability. One can judge this from the two witty Observations that he makes on page 293 on the words *Vallée de Jouissance* and *Chosette.*
> 'The *Vallée de Jouissance*', he says, 'where the Fountain of Youth is, is the *non plus ultra* of lovers. It is the country where the god Cuckoldry lives, and whence he sends horns to the foreheads of husbands, by certain vapours that he sends up to their heads.'
> '*Chosette*', he adds, 'is that trifle that makes pretty girls blush: *Verbum sat sapienti*.' What a pretty commentary, and how nobly expressed!
> Surely this wanted explaining! And how very brilliant these explanations are! At the least they smack of the boy who wrote them, who has not yet learned to keep from making a foolish parade of impertinences and puerilities.[52]

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[51] He wrote (CM Mar):

On trouve à la fin du second Tome des *Contes de Bonaventure des Periers*, reimprimez à *Amsterdam*, en 1711. en 2 volumes in 12°, des *Observations sur le Cymbalum Mundi*.

Ces *Observations*, comme on prend soin de nous en avertir à la page 275. de ce Volume, & comme il est tres facile de s'en appercevoir, *sont de differentes personnes:* et c'est pour cela qu'elles *sont distinguées par Lettres,* (A.B.C.&c.) *et par* (Paragraphes.).

Celles qui sont distinguées par Paragraphes, sont visiblement composées par l' *Auteur* de l'*Avertissement*, qui est à la tête de la Nouvelle *Edition* des *Contes de des Periers*: Et, par cette raison, je n'en parlerai que dans l' *Article* suivant; me contentant de parler dans celui-ci de celles qui *sont distinguées par Lettres*.

On les attribuë à une *Personne de beaucoup de merite* deja connuë depuis longtems dans la *Republique des Lettres* par une infinité de semblables *Observations* fort recherchées, qu'elle s'est faite un plaisir de communiquer à plusieurs *Auteurs* distinguez, et entre autres au celebre Mr. Bayle, qui en a enrichi son *Dictionaire Historique & Critique*. S'il est vrai que ses *Observations* soient de cette *Personne*, il est bien certain au moins qu'elles ne sont pas toutes de sa composition. Il y en a quelques unes, qui sont tirées mot pour mot du *Dictionaire de Furetiere*, imprimé à *Trevoux* en 1704: Et particulierement celles des pages 276, et 291, sur les mots *Jaseran*, & *Tourets de Nez*, qui ont eté copiées en ma presence au bas d'un *Manuscrit* du *Cymbalum Mundi* par un de mes Confreres, qui n'entendoit pas la plupart des vieux Termes de cet *Ouvrage*. C'est de là sans doute qu'elles se sont glissées parmi les autres.

Ces *Observations*, qui n'accusent en aucune maniere le *Cymbalum Mundi* d'*Impieté*, ni d'*Atheisme*, & qui ne contiennent par consequent rien que je sois obligé de refuter, sont ou *Historiques*, ou *Grammaticales*; mais la pluspart *Grammaticales*: & generalement assez curieuses & assez recherchées.

[52] Le dernier *Auteur*, qui ait parlé du *Cymbalum Mundi*, est celui de l'*Avertissement* qu'on a mis à la tête de la nouvelle Edition des *Contes* de Bonaventure des Periers, & dont j'ai deja parlé diverses fois dans cette *Lettre*. Je le soupçonne d'etre aussi l'*Auteur* des *Observations distinguées par Paragraphes*, qu'on trouve melées avec d'autres à la fin de cet *Ouvrage*. Je ne pourrois pas assurer positivement qu'elles fussent de la même main: mais je crois y remarquer le même Esprit et le même caractere.

Thus the paragraph-series was maddeningly boyish, and too trivial to be taken seriously by any scholar. Later, as we will soon see, Marchand made the same accusation against Voltaire. It was a natural line of attack for someone so intensely bent on his bibliographical work as Marchand, and so intolerant of imposters who pretended to humanistic achievement without having undergone the hand-cramping labour of citation-hunting.

But this was only the opening salvo in Marchand's attack on the paragraph-series. His next objection was against its allegorical interpretation of Dialogue II. Its suggestion that the Philosopher's Stone stood for eternal Truth attributed something so bizarre and implausible to Des Periers that it was obviously a distortion of the text:[53]

> It being absolutely necessary that the author of the *Avertissement* and the *Obvervations* should find something criminal in the *Cymbalum mundi*, he searched everywhere in it for some cunning, and after racking his poor brain, he finally persuaded himself that he had happily found what he was looking for; by replacing the *Philosopher's Stone*, which gave a reasonable and natural sense, with the *Truth*, which gave a ridiculous and unreasonable sense.
> But, the author of the *Avertissement* and the *Obvervations* might say, it is not so much the *Truth* that Des Periers meant to mock as the *Search* for it, which men carry out with such care and such pains. Even worse. This mockery would not be any better founded, or any less ridiculous. For the efforts which men make to discover the Truth are not by any means blameworthy. Far from it: they are rather very praiseworthy; and one would have to be a fool to condemn them. Useless to say that Atheists and Impious men condemn the search most often, because that would be totally false. If they did so, they would be acting against their own principles: for it is only for the sake of this search that they pretend to be free from thousands and thousands of prejudices, and that they have attained such a degree of Enlightenment that they pride themselves on having risen above other men.
> It is therefore in all cases ridiculous to say that Des Periers had it in for the *Truth*, that it is *this* which he meant to expose to the ridicule of the whole world under the guise of the *Philosopher's Stone*, and which he finally meant to destroy as a *figment of thought*.[54]

Quoi qu'il en soit, j'ai deja fait voir ci-dessus que cet *Avertissment* etoit d'une tres petite Autorité: et je ne fais point de difficulté d'ajouter ici, que celle des *Observations* n'est pas beaucoup plus considerable. C'est, selon touttes les apparences, l'ouvrage de quelque jeune Etudiant, nouvellement affranchi de la Ferule, à qui le plaisir de debiter librement des Bagatelles de jeunesse tient lieu de Mérite et de Capacité. On en jugera par les deux spirituelles *Observations* qu'il fait à page 293 sur les mots *Vallée de Jouissance*, & *Chosette*.
La Vallée de Jouissance, dit-il, *où est la Fontaine de Jouvance, c'est le* non plus ultra *des Amans: C'est le païs où le Dieu cocuage reside, et d'où il envoïe des cornes sur le front des Epoux, par je ne sçai qu'elles* [sic] *vapeurs qu'il éleve jusqu'à leurs têtes. Chosette, ajoute-t-il, c'est cette bagatelle qui donne de la couleur aux belles: à bon entendeur demi-mot.* Beau Commentaire, et bien noblement exprimé!

Cela n'avoit-il pas bien besoin d'etre expliqué? et les Explications qu'on nous en donne ne sont-elles pas fort ingenieuses? Elles sentent bien au moins leur jeune-homme, qui n'a point encore appris à ne point faire sottement parade d'impertinences & de puerilitez.

[53] See §5 on B_{iv} v.

[54] Malgré cela, comme il falloit de toute necessité, que l'*Auteur* de l'*Avertissement* et des *Observations* trouvât quelque chose de Criminel dans le *Cymbalum Mundi*, il y a cherché finesse partout, et, à force de se tourmenter la pauvre

The last argument is: even if it could be shown that Des Periers meant to attack the search for the Truth, it would by no means follow that he was an atheist for it. Atheists, as is well known, are only atheists because they *want* the truth, not because they spurn it as such. It would be ridiculous to equate disdain for the truth with impiety, as the paragraph-series' author seems to do.

Here, as usual, Marchand reasoned from a general philosophical principle to work out a specific bibliographical point; not the other way around. He was not at bottom concerned with rebutting the suggestion that the search for Truth should be opposed, and only used the absurdity of such a proposition as a premise on the way to concluding that Bonaventure Des Periers had intended no such thing in the *Cymbalum mundi*. He had little interest in disputing the object-level philosophical issue; if he wrote about Truth at all, it was in illustration of a broader bibliographical point.

Now Marchand addressed the second possibility raised by the paragraph-series: that Des Periers had not just denied the Truth, but religion. This hypothesis was at least more reasonable in itself, but it was also unsupported:

> We can make out in one way or another what the *Author* of the *Avertissement* and these *Observations* meant to say. It would appear that he believed that Des Periers had it in for *Religion in general*: and if this was his idea, it would undeniably have been much more reasonable and incomparably better reasoned than the other; given that it is not impossible that a man should not admit any religion, or that he should therefore mock at all of the religions which have been established in the world under the guise of some emblem or allegory.
>
> But granting that this is what he meant, he would not have got any farther. For as there is nothing in Des Periers' Dialogue which could sufficiently support this opinion, and since conversely there is nothing which does not correspond perfectly to the Philosopher's Stone, it would be a crying injustice to accuse him of having had such an intention. Nothing, in fact, is more unjust or more unrighteous than to make an Author out to have said things which by all

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cervelle, il s'est enfin persuadé qu'il avoit heureusement trouvé ce qu'il cherchoit, en substituant à la *Pierre Philosophale* qui formoit un sens tres juste et tres naturel, la *Verité*, qui formoit un fort ridicule & fort deraisonnable, ainsi que je me flate de l'avoir suffisament fait voir.

Mais, dira l'*Auteur* de l'*Avertissement* & des *Observations*, ce n'est pas tant la *Verité* que DES PERIERS a eu dessein de railler, que la *Recherche* qu'en font les hommes avec tant de soins et tant de peines. Encore pis. La Raillerie n'en seroit ni mieux fondée, ni moins ridicule. Car, les *efforts* que font continuellement les hommes pour decouvrir la *Verité* ne sont nullement blamables. Bien loin de là; ils sont au contraire tres louables; et il faudroit etre fou, pour les condamner. Il ne serviroit de rien de dire que les *Athées* et les *Impies* le font le plus souvent; car ce seroit avancer une chose absolument fausse. Ils agiroient même contre leurs Principes, s'ils le faisoient: puisque ce n'est qu'à l'aide de cette *Recherche* qu'ils pretendent s'être degagez de mille et mille Prejugez, & qu'ils sont parvenu à ce degré de Lumiere et ce clarté qu'ils se flattent d'avoir par dessus les autres hommes.

Il est donc ridicule de touttes manieres de dire que DES PERIERS en ait voulu à la *Verité*; que c'est elle qu'il a eu dessein d'exposer à la risé de tout le monde sous le voile de la *Pierre Philosophale*; et enfin, qu'il ait eu pour but de *la detruire comme un Etre de Raison*.

> appearances he had no intention of saying, and to interpret in an evil sense those things which in themselves have a very good and well-supported sense. Now, this is precisely the case of Des Periers. All of the things that he wrote, not only in this Dialogue but also in his entire work, are so susceptible of a good interpretation that they cannot be given bad interpretations without distortion. And besides, they are so unobviously bad, and so little susceptible of wearisome interpretations, that the *Author* of the *Avertissement* and these *Observations*, for all his tendentiousness, could not but recognize that the passage of the Book of Destinies (which to my mind is the only passage in the whole book which could be reproached with some semblance of reason), *could be taken in either a good or an evil sense*, likewise *the whole speech of Byrphanes* [CM 1711b, vol. II, p. 277].[55]

Now he insinuated that the author of the paragraph-series must himself have been a libertine to have been capable of accusing Des Periers of the same:

> It is true that everywhere else he gives the book impious interpretations, and with so little restraint that he often gives grounds for thinking that it is his *own* thoughts which he attributes to the *Cymbalum mundi*; and that the impieties which they contain belong much more to his imagination than to Des Periers' book. One must have been be at least as impudent as this man is to have dared publish the impieties to be found about Jesus Christ on pp. 81 and 299, §5 of his *Observations*. They are infinitely more criminal and more impious than anything which Des Periers ever has in his work, and if indeed Des Peries had slipped in something of the sort (I do not mean anything so bad, but even something less offensive), how many reproaches and insults would have been heaped up on him! for however unimpeachable he might be, one wants at all costs, and against every semblance of equity and justice, to accuse him of Atheism and Libertinism.[56]

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[55] On entrevoit, au reste, en quelque sorte ce qu'a voulu dire l'*Auteur* de l'*Avertissement* et des *Observations*. Il y a quelque apparence, qu'il a cru que DES PERIERS en vouloit à la *Religion en general*: Et si c'estoit son idée, il ne doit point disconvenir qu'elle ne fut beaucoup plus vraisemblable, & incomparablement mieux raisonnée que l'autre; puisqu'il n'est pas impossible qu'un homme n'admette aucune *Religion*, et ne se raille, par consequent, sous le voile de quelque *Embleme*, ou de quelque *Allegorie*, de touttes celles qui se trouvent établies dans le Monde.

Mais, apres qu'on lui aura accordé cela, il n'en sera certainement pas beaucoup plus avancé. Car, comme il n'y a dans la *Dialogue* de DES PERIERS quoi que ce soit qui puisse servir à appuier suffisament cette opinion, & qu'il n'y a rien, au contraire, qui ne convienne tres parfaitement à la *Pierre Philosophale*, il y auroit une injustice criante de l'accuser d'avoir eu un semblable dessein. Rien, en effet, n'est, ni plus injuste, ni plus inique, que de vouloir faire dire à une *Auteur* des choses, que, selon touttes les apparences, il n'a point eu dessein de dire, et d'interpreter en un mauvais sens des choses qui d'elles mêmes en ont un tres bon, et tres bien soutenu.

Or, c'est là precisement le cas de DES PERIERS. Touttes les choses qu'il a dites, non seulement dans ce *Dialogue*, mais encore dans tout son *Ouvrage*, sont si naturellement susceptibles d'un bon tour, qu'on ne les peut prendre en un mauvais, sans leur faire une violence extreme; & dailleurs, elles sont si peu necessairement mauvaises, & si peu necessairement susceptibles d'Interpretations facheuses, que l'*Auteur* de l'*Avertissement*, & des *Observations*, tout prevenu qu'il etoit, n'a pu s'empescher de reconnoitre que l'endroit du *Livre des Destinées*, qui est a mon sens le seul endroit de toutte la Piece qu'on pourroit reprendre avec quelque apparence de raison, *se pouvoit prendre en bonne et en mauvaise part*, de même que *tout le Discours de BYRPHANES*. (**Observations sur le* Cymablum Mundi, *p. 277*.)

[56] Il est vrai, que partout ailleurs, il lui prête des Interpretations *impies*; et même avec si peu de menagement, qu'il donne souvent lieu de croire que ce sont ses propres Pensées qu'il lui prête; et que les *Impietez*, qu'elles renferment sont bien plus dans son imagination, que dans le *Livre* de DES PERIERS. Il ne faut pas, du moins, etre moins temeraire que l'est cet homme, pour en avoir osé publier de telles que celles qui se trouvent sur Jesus-Christ à la page 81. et à la page 299, §5. de ses *Observations*. Elles sont infiniment plus *criminelles*, et plus *impies*, que

And finally he revived the principle which he had stated in his original *lettre critique*, which he had derived (by misinterpretation) from Voetius: if a book is accused on no evidence, then it can be cleared on no evidence.

> Nothing, therefore, is more unjust than to accuse Des Periers of impiety and irreligion, as is done continually. And if after all these considerations someone were to insist on doing so, all he could say against Des Periers would necessarily degenerate into calumny, and it would be nothing more than one of those vague accusations which are absolutely impossible to prove, and of which one can consequently vindicate himself with a simple denial.[57]

Marchand was plainly very exercised by the paragraph-series, and it is worth considering why. Yes, it was puerile, and yes, it bewrayed a weakness for blasphemy. But I think that the basic reason why Marchand hated it so intensely was the fact that it robbed him of his ordinary means of defence against other scholars' mistakes. For Marchand the error *par excellence* was a blunder; a slip in a name or date or title. A blunder could be immediately exposed and just as immediately refuted. Yet here he was not faced with ignorance of the documents, but a clear-headed and confident interpretation of the very same document that had been in front of his own eyes; indeed, a document which he had published himself. Marchand could rail endlessly and justly against his anonymous enemy's incorrect blathering. But he could not definitively overcome him, because there was no simple criterion of bibliographical fact according to which a victor could be declared in this contest. Marchand had divided scholarship into ironclad proof and baseless speculation, and was upset by any intermediate form of interpretation.

At any rate, it never came to a real confrontation, as Marchand's resentful polemic was forever confined to his own private notes. Not but that he continued to work hard on the interpretation of the *Cymbalum mundi*. After he first called his revision complete in 1712, he continued to add to his *lettre critique* until the end of his life. Indeed, it was probably his very wish for thoroughness that prevented him ever from publishing it. Like Edward Casaubon's *Key to All Mythologies*, the *lettre critique* was never satisfying to its author until it was perfect, and

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tout ce que DES PERIERS a jamais dans son *Ouvrage*; et, s'il y avoit fait entrer, je ne dis pas même quelque chose d'approchant, mais simplement quelque chose de bien moins criminel, de combien de reproches et d'injures ne l'auroit-on point accablé; puisque, tout hors d'atteinte qu'il se trouve, on veut, à quelque prix que ce soit, et contre tout apparence d'equité et de justice, l'accuser continuellement d'*Atheisme*, et de *Libertinage*?

[57] Rien n'est donc plus injuste que d'accuser, comme on fait continuellement, DES PERIERS d'*Impieté* et d'*Irreligion*. Et, si, aprés de semblables considerations, l'on s'obstinoit à le faire, tout ce qu'on pouroit dire contre lui degenereroit necessairement en *Calomnie*, et ce ne seroit plus qu'une de ces miserables *Accusations* vagues, dont il est absolument impossible de donner des bonnes Preuves; et dont, par consequent, on peut toujours entierement se justifier par un simple desaveu.

therefore its completion was deferred infinitely into the future, for only infinity could give sufficient time for perfection. It was for the same reason that Marchand never published his *Dictionaire historique*, which only death redeemed from his drawer. Jean-Nicholas Allamand, who edited it, wrote in its preface:

> Perhaps one will be surprised that Mr Marchand did not publish these Articles himself. He had planned to do so several times, but always put it off, because he was always finding new additions to make to them.[58]

Marchand had found himself closed up in a labyrinth of his own ingenious devising. Unable to synthesize his innumerable slips and notes into a connected argument, he never had the freedom to correct misunderstandings of fact or interpretation with any of the promptness that participation in a live controversy would have demanded. In the end, Marchand's own ponderous research made him a powerless spectator of the scholarship that his own book had produced. For example, a popular literary review alluded approvingly to CM 1711a but re-endorsed the conclusion of Bayle that the *Cymbalum mundi* was offensive in its satire.[59] Marchand wrote an sarcastic rant against this passage, but it joined the mass of inert papers in CM Mar.[60] If not for his fear of error and incompleteness, he could easily have published a

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[58] On sera peut-être surpris que Mr. MARCHAND n'ait pas publié lui même ces Mémoires; il en avoit formé plusieurs fois le projet, mais toujours il en a differé l'éxécution, parcequ'il trouvoit toujours de nouvelles additions à y faire. | *Dictionaire historique*, vol. I, *Avertissement*, p. [1].

[59] Nicolas Lenglet Du Fresnoy, *De l'usage des Romans, où l'on fait voir leur utilité & leurs differens caracteres: avec une bibliotheque des Romans, accompagnée de Remarques critiques sur leur choix & leurs Editions*, vol. I (Amsterdam: Chez la Veuve de Poilras, 1734), pp. 137–138.

[60] Marchand wrote (CM Mar): 'Un Ecrivain tout recent vient d'absoudre de même le *Cymbalum Mundi* d'Athéisme; mais, il donne une autre Cause de la Mauvaise Opinion qu'on a eue de cet Ouvrage; savoir, la Raillerie en Matiere de Religion. En effet, on ne devroit jamais en user, non pas même envers les Religions du Monde les moins sages et les plus déraisonnables: vû que ceux qui les professent ne les regardent jamais comme telles, mais au contraire comme très raisonnables, très salutaires, et aboutissant uniquement à rendre Homage à la Divinité; et que ce But est toujours extrémement respectable, en quelque Endroit qu'il se rencontre; et qu'en blamant avec raison l'Erreur, rien ne seroit plus injuste que de consamner indiscrétement la bonne Intention. Mais, écoutons notre Auteur. *Qui a fait autrefois*, dit-il, (+De l'Usage des Romans, où l'en fait voir leur Utilité, et leur différens Caracteres; avec une Bibliotheq. des Romans, accomp. de Rem. Crit. sur leur Choix et leurs Editions: par le C. Gordon de Percel. A Amsterdam chez la Veuve de Poilras, 1734. Tom. I. p. 137. 138.) *si vivement crier contre le* Cymbalum Mundi *de* Bonaventure des Periers, *qui n'est rien dans le Fond? C'est le Ton railleur qu'il y prenoit contre Jupiter, et son grand* Livre des Décrets & des Destinées. *On l'a imprimé de nos jours; et l'on a été surpris de n'y trouver aucun Fondement à l'Accusation d'Athéisme formée contre ce Livre. Mais, Bonaventure des Periers, qui outroit la Raillerie dans le Discours familier, étoit peu chargé de Religion, et se déclaroit même ouvertement. L'on croïoit remarquer dans une Raillerie équivoque qu'il faisoit contre les Faux-Dieux, les Principes dangereux que ses Railleries verbales ne faisoient que trop sentir. Les circonstances de sa conduite étoient plus fortes contre son Livre, que son Livre même ne l'étoit contre son Auteur: mais, il railloit en Matiere de Religion; et jamais l'Honnête-Homme ne le doit faire, ni même souffrir qu'on le fasse devant lui, s'il est en état de l'empécher.* Voilà qui est digne des Catons et des Epictetes; et une Proposition si sage meriteroit certainement beaucoup de Louanges, si elle étoit sincere. Mais l'on ne sauroit qu'en être forcement indigné, lors qu'on sait qu'elle ne part que d'un Prophane, qui a rempli son *Commentaire sur Marot* de Railleries semblables et même incomparablement plus criminelles, jusqu'à fourrer celle-ci, *Quand on a perdu Jesus-Christ, Adieu Paniers, Vendanges sont faites*; et d'un Impie déclaré, qui, sous le preux prétexte de réputer les Impietez de Spinosa en a publié non seulement un Systême plus développé et plus méthodique, mais même ne s'est fait aucun Scruple de n'imprimer purement et simplement Spinosa lui-même, et d'en multiplier ainsi le Venin aussi bien que les Exemplaires. Et cette

revised version of the *lettre* as it appeared in CM Mar, and given the world his treatment of the *Cymbalum mundi* in a considerably more complete and correct form than what he had put into writing in 1706 or into print in 1711.[61] If he had in fact published his revised version on time in 1712, then the history of the book's interpretation might have taken a different course.

MALUM QUO NON VELOCIUS ULLUM

But the *Cymbalum mundi*'s notoriety grew as it went, and Marchand's own edition of 1711 was at fault. First, there appeared two English translations of CM 1711a, one in 1712 and another, far worse, in 1723. Both of these editions were simple translations of the text and the *lettre critique* as they had appeared in CM 1711a, and did not show any knowledge of the commentary in CM 1711b. CM 1724, the second edition of the latter translation, nevertheless included a preface that noted the pious, anti-pagan element of Des Periers' book.

In 1732, an edition of the book appeared that synthesized the contents of CM 1711a and CM 1711b. This was its title page:

Indignation ne sauroit qu'augmenter lorsqu'on sait que cet Homme-là est un Ecclesiastique, un Prêtre, qui fait des Liveres sur la Confession et ses Usages, et qui se mêle d'en donner des Directions à ses Confréres.'

[61] Some extracts from CM Mar have already been published by Paul J. Smith, 'Prosper Marchand et sa «Lettre critique sur le livre intitulé *Cymbalum Mundi*»', in *ACR2000*, pp. 115–128.

CYMBALUM MUNDI,

OU

DIALOGUES SATYRIQUES

Sur differens Sujets,

Par BONAVENTURE DES PERIERS.

Avec une Lettre Critique dans laquelle on fait l'Histoire, l'Analyse, & l'Apologie de cet Ouvrage.

Par PROSPER MARCHAND, Libraire.

NOUVELLE EDITION.

Revûë, corrigée & augmentée de Notes & Remarques, communiquées par plusieurs Sçavans.

A AMSTERDAM,
Chez PROSPER MARCHAND, Libraire dans le Nes, à l'Enseigne de l'Etoile.

M. DCC. XXXII.

Despite the careless assumption repeated by almost every subsequent commentator, this is an abusive imprint if there ever was one, and Marchand had no part in the edition.[62] Skilful reproductions of Bernard Picart's plates were included in it,[63] but none of the corrections that Marchand had made in CM Mar—whether to the text or the *lettre critique*—were incorporated. Furthermore there was a prefatory *Avertissement* that departed from the conclusions in Marchand's letter and referred to him in the third person. Also, CM 1732 reproduced much of the paragraph-series, which Marchand had excoriated in CM Mar. If any more proof were needed of his non-involvement, Marchand had not been listed as a bookseller in Amsterdam after 1713;[64] and if still more, Marchand himself referred to CM 1732 as 'the new edition made in Paris in 1732'.[65] Finally, one of Marchand's correspondents wrote to him in 1749 to ask who had printed CM 1732.[66] We do not have Marchand's reply, but this man subsequently referred in two later letters to the 'counterfeit edition made at Paris in 1732', which is information that he had presumably received from Marchand.[67] It is plain, meanwhile, that the publisher of CM 1732 was the same man who printed an edition in 1735 of the *Nouvelles recreations* under the name 'Zacharias Châtelain'. In a handwritten note which he attached to his copy of this edition, Marchand dismissed the possibility that the real Châtelain, who had never written anything but business correspondence, could have published it and written its critical *Avertissement*.[68]

As I have argued in the bibliography, the real publisher of both CM 1732 and the 1735 *Nouvelles recreations* was apparently Jacques Clouzier in Paris, who had traded on Marchand's reputation, just like that of many other publishers, by fraudulently reproducing his imprint.

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[62] The most careless bibliographer of all was none other than Christiane Berkvens-Stevelinck, Marchand's sole biographer. She vacillated over CM 1732's attribution to Marchand (diffidently denying it on p. 145, but affirming it on p. 216, nn. 107, 109, and on p. 67 of her catalogue of Marchand's manuscripts), and invented two further editions out of thin air: *CM 1731 (p. 91) and *CM 1738 (p. 148). *Prosper Marchand: la vie et l'œuvre (1678–1756)*, Studies over de geschiedenis van de Leidse Universiteit 4 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1987).

[63] Together Alain Mothu and I compared the sets of engravings to each other; he convinced me on the basis of many closely observed details that they were made with different plates.

[64] This was observed by Berkvens-Stevelinck in *Prosper Marchand*, p. 145, but she did not press her reasoning to its natural conclusion. If she had checked CM 1732 against the handwritten corrections in CM Mar, she would have realized that the former was not Marchand's work.

[65] 'La N^le^ Edition faite à Paris en 1732'. CM Mar.

[66] Lambert Ignace Douxfils to Prosper Marchand, 24 March 1749, MAR 2. Printed as letter 30 in Christiane Berkvens-Stevelinck and Jeroom Vercruysse, *Le métier de journaliste au dix-huitième siècle: correspondance entre Prosper Marchand, Jean Rousset de Missy et Lambert Ignace Douxfils*, Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century 312 (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 1993), pp. 64–65.

[67] *Ibid.*, letter 108 (Lambert Ignace Douxfils to Jean Rousset de Missy, 14 May 1753); letter 124 (Lambert Ignace Douxfils to Prosper Marchand, 6 August 1753). The bibliographical significance of all of these letters was completely missed by Christiane Berkvens-Stevelinck in her biography of Marchand.

[68] '… l'Imprimeur Z. Chatelain qu'on fait parler ici, n'a jamais écrit que ses Lettres et Papiers de Commerce, et n'étoit nullement propre à faire l'Avertissement critique, qui se voie ci-dessous.' Universiteitsbibliotheek Leiden, 700 E 10.

The text in CM 1732 was based not only on CM 1711a (which was itself founded on a copy of CM 1538) but also on a collation of CM 1537, whose title page was reproduced by the same artist who had done the imitations of Picart's engravings:[69]

CYMBALUM MUNDI,
En Françoys, contenant
IV. DIALOGUES POËTIQUES,
FORT ANTIQUES, JOYEUX,
& FACETIEUX,

Probitas Laudatur, & Alget.
M D. XXXVII.

Also, following the text of the *Cymbalum mundi*, the editor inserted most of the notes in CM 1711b, including both the alphabetical and the paragraph-series. To these he added a third series of supplementary philological notes, which were designated by asterisks. I do not

[69] CM 1732 (my copy), p. [67]

know—and I do not think that the editor himself knew—who had written these last notes. Probably he had found them written in the margins of a copy of CM 1711a. (Three years later, in 1735, he repeated the procedure by printing Bernard de La Monnoye's notes on the *Nouvelles recreations*, which he had discovered in a copy of a sixteenth-century edition in the Royal Library.) Since as early as 1745, the notes in the asterisk-series have been attributed jointly to Camille Falconet (1671–1762) and Antoine Lancelot (1675–1740).[70] But there is no contemporary document that connects either man to the edition. Though Alain Mothu has reported testimony of one Hélène Himelfarb that Lancelot referred to the edition in his papers conserved at the Bibliothèque Nationale,[71] I have examined the same files and found no reference in them to the *Cymbalum mundi*.[72] Himelfarb seems rather to have followed the common attribution of the asterisk series to Lancelot than to have discovered any independent proofs for herself.

Whoever prepared its asterisk-series, CM 1732 was a major improvement on CM 1711a; not least because of its incorporated collation of CM 1537, which Marchand had never seen.[73] The editor's *Avertissement* was also the first text to publish documents from the trial of Jehan Morin, on which Marchand had only touched in passing. Finally, though CM 1732 did include most of the bizarre paragraph-series, the alphabetical and the asterisk-series together made for a much more thorough philological gloss on the *Cymbalum mundi* than what Marchand had been able to supply in CM 1711a.

For these reasons Marchand could find no fault in CM 1732, and he even incorporated many of its improvements into CM Mar. In those papers, Marchand wrote approvingly of CM 1732, despite the fact that it had used his own name for its abusive imprint. He noted that its original content (that is, excepting its reprint of the paragraph-series) was nothing objectionable. He also took its editor's narration of the Morin affair as a confirmation of his own longstanding views on the book; namely, that its bad reputation could not be due to any

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[70] [Jean Boudot], Catalogue des livres du cabinet de M. de Boze (Paris: [Gabriel Martin] 1745), pp. 175–176.
[71] Alain Mothu, 'Règlement de comptes à Amsterdam: Autour du *Cymbalum mundi* de 1711', *La Lettre clandestine* 24: Le traité des trois imposteurs et la littérature philosophique clandestine (2016): pp. 255–285 [276, n. 1]; citing Hélène Himelfarb, 'Saint-Simon et les «nouveaux savants» de la Régence: Sa collaboration avec Antoine Lancelot', in *La Régence: Communications présentées au colloque sur la Régence qui s'est tenu à Aix-en-Provence les 24, 25 et 26 février 1968*, Centre aixois d'études et de recherches sur le dix-huitième siècle (Paris: A. Colin, 1970), pp. 105–124 [109, n. 22].
[72] BnF NAF 9632–9826; especially MSS 9648 and 9776.
[73] The edition was reviewed favourably in the Journal de Verdun in the winter of the year it was published. See Claude Jordan [?], Review of 'Cymbalum Mundi, ou dialogues satyriques sur differens Sujets', *Suite de la Clef, ou Journal historique sur les matières du tems* XXXII (November 1732): pp. 329–333.

real scurrility, let alone libertine atheism, in the *Cymbalum mundi*.[74] In truth, the editor of CM 1732 had pointed out to Marchand an important feature of the *Cymbalum mundi* that he had only vaguely grasped in 1711, and belatedly admitted now. Namely, the authorities in Paris had had very good reason after all to condemn the publisher of the *Cymbalum mundi*. In his original researches on the book, Marchand had overlooked the possibility that the *Cymbalum mundi*'s author and publisher might have been subversive after all: not on behalf of a half-formed impious system, but on behalf of the Gospel.

The chief historical significance of CM 1732, however, is that it united the sober scholarship of Marchand with the speculative commentary in the paragraph-series. From 1732 until 1841, the standard reference edition of the *Cymbalum mundi* was thus one that presented it as a well-understood text that could very plausibly be interpreted as a basically impious manifesto. Without the convenience of CM 1732, it would have been much harder for the atheist radicals of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to take *Cymbalum mundi* for granted as a forerunner of their cause.

MARCHAND'S ENEMY

Long before CM 1732 had such an effect, however, there was one man who read its reprint CM 1753 and was unimpressed. This was Voltaire, whose contempt for the supposed atheism attributed to it by the paragraph-series was so great as to move him to write a commentary on the *Cymbalum mundi* in mocking parody. He included it in the third volume of his miscellany *Les choses utiles et agréables*.[75] For instance, he proposed that Ardelio's calling Phlegon a 'present fit for King Ptolemy' at F_{iv} r. 4–5 was a coded reference to the Septuagint, which had after all been presented to a King Ptolemy; and at the mention of the Antipodes at H_{iii} r., he wrote the note: 'Are not the Lower Antipodes the Protestants, and the Upper Antipodes the Catholics?'[76] These notes were too insipid to be serious, and in fact Voltaire probably wrote them so fast that he did not detain himself with attention to the difference between sincerity and jest. He even stated openly in one of his notes that he was thoroughly bored by the book he had read.[77] Later, Éloi Johanneau would take these notes for Voltaire's

[74] On a loose slip: 'L'Editeur de la N^le^ Edition faite à Paris en 1732, dans son *Avertissement*, où il reconnoit qu'il n'y a aucun lieu à l'Accusation d'Atheisme, et qui prouve par un Arrêt du Parlem^t^ qu'il ne s'agissoit que d'Opinions suspectes ou hérétiq.' See CM 1732, p. ix–xvii.
[75] CM 1770; i.e. Voltaire, ed., in *Les choses utiles et agréables*, vol. III ([Geneva]: [Gabriel and Philibert Cremer], [1770]), pp. 167–242. See my remarks in the bibliography; also Nicholas Cronk, 'The 1770 Reprinting of Des Périers's *Cymbalum Mundi*: Voltaire's Uncritical Edition', *Revue Voltaire* IV (2004): pp. 177–96.
[76] 'Les Antipodes inférieurs ne sont-ils pas les protestants, & les supérieurs, les catholiques?'
[77] He summarized his position in his remark at the end of Du Clenier's letter (p.182): 'Ce *Cymbalum* intitulé joyeux & facétieux, n'est ni l'un ni l'autre. C'est une froide imitation de Rabelais, c'est l'âne qui veut donner la patte

studied commentary on the *Cymbalum mundi*. But the truth is that Voltaire probably spent almost no time on the book, and used it only as a pretext for insulting weaker-minded scholars.

A few years before (but plausibly after he had first written the annotations which he published in the *Choses utiles*), Voltaire had discussed the *Cymbalum mundi* at length in one of his letters to Carl I von Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel. He wrote:

> One of the first examples in France of persecution founded on panic was the strange outcry that lasted for so long on the subject of the *Cimbalum mundi*, a little booklet of four dozen pages at the very most. It is by one Bonaventure des Périers, who lived at the beginning of the sixteenth century. This Des Périers was a servant of Marguerite of Valois, sister of Francis I. The revival of letters had begun. Des Périers wanted to make a few Latin dialogues in the spirit of Lucien: so he composed four dialogues, quite insipid, on prognostications, on the Philosopher's Stone, on a talking horse, and on Actæon's dogs. There is not a single word in this mass of schoolboyish banter that has the least connection to the things which we are bound to revere.
> Some learned men were persuaded that they had been signified by the dogs and horses. (As far as the horses were concerned, they were not used to such an honour.) So the doctors barked, and forthwith the work was searched out, translated into the vernacular and printed. Every idler believed that he'd found allusions in it. The Doctors cried heresy, impiety, atheism. The booklet was brought before the magistrates, the bookseller Morin was thrown in jail, and the author into terrible anguish.
> The injustice of his persecution struck Bonaventure's mind so sorely that he ran himself through with his sword in Marguerite's palace. All the tongues of the prognosticators and all the pens of the theologians were set to work describing this dreadful death. He had killed himself; therefore he was guilty; therefore he had not believed at all in God; therefore his little book, which admittedly no one had had the patience to read, was the catechism of the atheists. Everyone said it; everyone believed it. *Credidi propter quod locutus sum*—I have believed because I have spoken—is the motto of mankind. One repeats something foolish, and one is persuaded merely by repeating it.
> The book became extremely rare: new grounds for thinking it hellish. None of the authors of literary anecdotes and dictionaries have omitted to affirm that the *Cimbalum mundi* was the forerunner of Spinoza.
> Here we have a work by a Councillor of Bourges, named Catherinot—one who is certainly worthy to carry the Arms of Bourges.[78] This great judge says: 'here we have two books that I have never seen, one the *Three Imposters*, and the other the *Cimbalum mundi*.' Now, my friend, if you have never seen them, why do you talk about them?
> The Minim Mersenne, the agent of Descartes—the same one who attributed twelve apostles to Vanini—says of Bonaventure Des Périers: 'He is a monster

comme le petit chien. Les juges qui entendirent finesse à cette ineptie n'étaient pas les petits chiens. Cet Ouvrage n'a eu de la réputation que parce qu'il a été condamné. Rabelais ne le fut point; c'est une nouvelle preuve qu'il n'y a qu'heur & malheur dans ce monde. Lira qui pourra le *Cymbalum Mundi*, autrefois si célèbre chez un peuple grossier, & commenté dans ce siécle-ci par des sots.'

[78] *Porter les armes de Bourges* is said proverbially of an ignoramus.

> and a knave, and utterly impious.' You will notice that he had not read the book. There were no more than two copies in Europe when Prosper Marchand reprinted it in Amsterdam in 1711. Then the veil was torn off. One no longer cried impiety and atheism; one cried boredom, and ceased to talk about it. [79]

Voltaire's judgement of the *Cymbalum mundi* was plainly influenced by Prosper Marchand's. Indeed, it was derived almost entirely from Marchand's *lettre critique.* His quip about Catherinot—*Eh mon ami, si tu ne les a pas vus pourquoi en parles-tu?*—was even a direct reformulation of Marchand's own ironic remark. But the difference in tone between the two men's treatments of the book could hardly have been greater. Whereas Marchand had used the *Cymbalum mundi* as an occasion for his impassioned defence of bibliographical exactness, Voltaire treated it as a chance to send up the lugubriousness of censors and the frivolity of idlers. He was bored by the *Cymbalum mundi*, and dismissed it from his consciousness after passing his judgement on it.

Fortunately for Marchand he was dead, and never had the chance to read either of Voltaire's travesties of his own work. Marchand had always despised Voltaire, and for much

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[79] Un des premiers exemples en France de la persécution fondée sur des terreurs paniques, fut le vacarme étrange qui dura si longtemps au sujet du *cimbalum mundi*, petit livret d'une cinquantaine de pages tout au plus. Il est d'un nommé Bonaventure des Périers, qui vivait au commencement du seiziéme siècle. Ce Des Périers était domestique de Marguerite de Valois sœur de François I. Les Lettres commençaient alors à rénaître; Des Périers voulut faire en latin quelques dialogues dans le goût de Lucien: il composa quatre dialogues très insipides sur les prédictions, sur la pierre philosophale, sur un cheval qui parle, sur les chiens d'Actéon. Il n'y a pas assurément dans tout ce fatras de plat écolier, un seul mot qui ait le moindre & le plus éloigné raport aux choses que nous devons révérer.

On persuada à quelques docteurs qu'ils étaient désignés par les chiens & par les chevaux. Pour les chevaux ils n'étaient pas accoutumés à cet honneur. Les docteurs aboiérent; aussi-tôt l'ouvrage fut recherché, traduit en langue vulgaire & imprimé: & chaque fainéant crut d'y trouver des allusions, & les docteurs de crier à l'hérétique, à l'impie, à l'athée. Le livret fut déféré aux Magistrats, le libraire Morin mis en prison, & l'auteur en de grandes angoisses.

L'injustice de la persécution frappa si fortement le cerveau de Bonaventure, qu'il se rua de son épée dans le palais de Marguerite. Toutes les langues des prédicateurs, toutes les plumes des théologiens s'exercèrent sur cette mort funeste. Il s'est défait lui même, donc il était coupable, donc il ne croyait point en Dieu, donc son petit livre, que personne n'avait pourtant la patience de lire, était le catéchisme des athées; chacun le dit, chacun le crut: *credidi propter quod locutus sum, j'ai cru parce que j'ai parlé*; est la devise des hommes. On répéte une sotise, & à la force de la redire on en est persuadé.

Le livre devient d'une rareté extrême; nouvelle raison pour le croire infernal. Tous les auteurs d'anecdotes littéraires, & des dictionnaires, n'ont pas manqué d'affirmer que le *cimbalum mundi* est le Précurseur de Spinosa.

Nous avons encor un ouvrage d'un Conseiller de Bourges, nommé Catherinot, très digne des armes de Bourges, ce grand juge dit, nous avons deux livres impies que je n'ai jamais vus, l'un de *tribus impostoribus*, l'autre le *cimbalum* mundi. Eh mon ami, si tu ne les a pas vus pourquoi en parles-tu?

Le Minime Mersenne, ce facteur des Descartes, le même qui donne douze apôtres à Vanini, dit de Bonaventure Des Périers, *c'est un monstre & un fripon, d'une impieté achevée.* Vous remarquerez qu'il n'avoit pas lu son livre. Il n'en restait plus que deux exemplaires dans l'Europe quand Prosper Marchand le réimprima à Amsterdam en 1711. Alors le voile fut tiré, on ne cria plus à l'impieté à l'athéisme, on cria à l'ennui, & on n'en parla plus. | 'Sur les Français', in *Lettres a son Altesse Monseigneur le Prince de **** sur Rabelais & sur d'autres auteurs accusés d'avoir mal parlé de la Religion Chrêtienne* (London: s.n., 1768), septième lettre, pp. 52–55.

the same reason as he despised the ignorant commentators on the *Cymbalum mundi*; that is, for his carelessness. In Marchand's papers one can read all kinds of more general invective against his enemy.[80]

The two men corresponded on at least two occasions, and both times they were at odds. First, in January 1724, Voltaire contacted Marchand as a potential seller of his *Henriade*. But for one reason or another Marchand did not answer his first inquiry, and Voltaire's follow-up letter on 22 March was full of mocking anger at Marchand's dilation, closing with the sentence: 'I am the humble servant of Your Laziness, Voltaire'.[81] Fourteen years later, Voltaire wrote again to accuse Marchand of slanderously attributing a scurrilous poem *La pucelle* to him. Marchand responded to this accusation with bewilderment. Not only had Marchand never attributed this poem to Voltaire; it was not even conceivable to him how Voltaire, who did not know him, could possibly have seized on his name. 'Natural fairness', he wrote, 'demanded that before charging me so lightly with such accusations, you should have informed yourself as to whether they were founded.'[82]

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[80] Like this piece of anonymous table-talk (MAR 48, p. 20):

> Distique sur Monsr. de Voltaire fait *ex tempore* à une partie de Campagne, sur ce que Voltaire avoit parlé de Milton avec mépris sur le choix du sujet de son Paradis Perdu.
>
> Thou art so witty, so wicked, and so thin,
> That thou art Milton, and his Death and Sin.

There is also the draft of a poem in Marchand's hand of a satire against Voltaire, a 'libertine who infected the Universe' The part concerning Voltaire reads (MAR 48, no. 2):

> deux Libertins infectent l'Univers,
> l'un de sa prose, et l'autre de ses vers.
> l'un est connu sous le nom de VOLTAIRE.
> Bien qu'ARROUËR soit son nom, l'Angleterre
> Plus d'une fois l'a vû patiemment sous le baton
> faire la canne & demander pardon.
> Paris a vu ce héros du parnasse
> dans les prisons expier son audace
> puis en sortir plus fou, plus enragé;
> puni souvent et jamais corrigé.
> Du grand newton ~~extravagant~~ temeraire copiste,
> de cet anglois il croit suivre la piste,
> & son orgueil la si bien perverti,
> qu'il prend le pas devant Algarotti.
> Eh pourquoi-non? puisque sa *Henriade*
> a fait d'Homere oublier l'*Iliade*.
> à tout le moins l'Auteur le croit ainsi,
> & plus d'un sot le croit peutêtre aussi,
> mais c'est assez. laissons à la folie
> l'enfame auteur de l'*Epitre à Julie*.

[81] 'Je suis de votre paresse le tres humble serviteur Voltaire'. Voltaire to Prosper Marchand, 22 March 1724, UBL MAR 2.

[82] 'L'Equité naturelle demandoit de vous, qu'avant que de me charger si légérement de pareilles Accusations, vous vous informassiés si elles étoient fondées.' 'Prosper Marchand to Voltaire, 28 August 1738,' in *Electronic Enlightenment Scholarly Edition of Correspondence*, edited by Robert McNamee et al., University of Oxford.

It is notable that Marchand's strongest personal attack against Voltaire was this plea for proof, and not any direct imputation of his moral character. Indeed, even beyond this personal quarrel, Voltaire's basic offence in Marchand's eyes was his looseness with facts. Marchand resented Voltaire's carelessness so intensely that he even kept a manuscript register called *Erreurs, Bévues, ou Expressions impropres de Mr. de Voltaire* which, true to its title, consisted of a long list of blunders with dates, names, and words which his rival had committed.[83] This was not a lone feminine *culex* such as had once contented Politian, but a whole drawerful of monstrous scholarly specimens, each carefully pinned in its place and described with its label.

In his *Dictionaire historique*, he also criticized Voltaire in numerous places for his carelessness, as here:[84]

> Mr de Voltaire's harshest reproach of Amelot de la Houssaie, that he 'cites inappropriately' (which is something that can happen to the ablest people) is a fault which he has himself found a failsafe method of skirting: by not citing at all. And he surely has reason to do so: nothing is more tiring and unpleasant for a writer so fertile and eager to make a show as Mr de Voltaire, than the awkward and servile morosity of asserting nothing without good evidence.[85]

There followed a sample of Voltaire's historical errors.[86] Then Marchand went on:

> Born a poet, it seems Mr de Voltaire should content himself with being distinguished through *Poetry*. But since he wanted to shine, not only in *History*, which he treats in a novelesque way, but even in *Philosophy* (in which he does not hesitate at all to pronounce confidently on the very greatest men ancient and modern), he has shown all too well that he only a very pitiful philosopher, and an extremely bad historian.[87]

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[83] UBL MAR 48, fol. 6ff.

[84] *Dictionaire historique* I, p. 45.

[85] Ce que Mr. de Voltaire reproche de plus à Amelot de la Houssaie, de *citer mal-à-propos*, & qui peut quelquefois arriver aux plus habiles Gens, est un défaut dans lequel il a trouvé *le Secret* infaillible de ne jamais tomber lui-méme; vû qu'il ne cite point du tout. Et il a sans doute très grande raison: Rien n'est plus fatigant & plus dèsagréable pour des Ecrivains aussi fertiles & aussi impatiens de paroître que Mr. de Voltaire, que cette éxactitude importune & servile de ne rien avancer sans de bonnes preuves…

[86] 'L'on a bien plûtôt fait, par éxample, de placer, à tout hazard, une *Journée de Nanci en 1567*; de faire *toute la maison de Bourbon protestante*, non seulement sans s'inquiéter des Contis & des Soissons, non plus que des Cardinaux de Bourbon & de Vendome, mais même en dépit de l'impitoïable Montpensier grand Massacreur de Huguenots, & de son terrible Guidon grand exploiteur de Huguenotes: de faire venir *Henri III. à Paris d'abord* après le meurtre des Guides; d'oublier en son lieu naturel, savoir le 10. de Juin, *l'empoisonnement & la mort de Jeanne d'Albret*, & de les placer seulement *trois ou quatre jours avant le Massacre de la St. Barthelemy*; de faire ridiculement *chanter, aux Parisiens*, pendant l'affreuse famine de 1591, des Lampons cent ans avant leur éxistence; & diveres autres singularitez de cette espéce, trop fréquentes & trop nombreuses pour une simple Brochure de 50. pages (Voltaire, Essai sur les Guerres Civiles de France, pagg. 15, 30, 37, 46, & 48.): c'est bien plûtôt fait, dis-je, d'avancer tout cela tel que l'imagination troublée le suggére, que de se fatiguer à rechercher si de pareilles chiméres ont au moins quelque fondement dans l'Histoire.'

[87] Né Poëte, Mr. de Voltaire devoit, ce semble, se contenter de s'être distingué par la *Poësie*. Mais, aïant aussi voulu briller, non seulement dans *l'Histoire* qu'il traite d'une maniére un peu trop romanesque, mais même dans la *Philosophie*, où il n'hésite point à prononcer décisivement sur les plus grands Hommes tant anciens que modernes, il n'a que trop fait voir, qu'il n'est qu'un très pitoïable Philosophe, & qu'un fort mauvais Historien.

This particular criticism of Voltaire—that history and philosophy must be more sharply divided from poetry—was a principle that eventually became a main tenet of modern humanistic research. Value and truth were orthogonal categories for Marchand, who insisted more fervently than any of his contemporaries on documentary exactness as the sole criterion of what could be rightfully asserted by a scholar. Voltaire was a blasphemer to Marchand; not because of his hostility to Christian orthodoxy, but because of his contempt for self-evident rules of scholarly conduct.

The two men thus studied clandestine literature in general, and the *Cymbalum mundi* in particular, according to two completely different sets of rules. Marchand wrote for his colleagues in their studies, and Voltaire for his friends in the salon. All the same, they came to the same basic conclusion about the book. Marchand was punctilious and intolerant of sentimental embellishment, and therefore he defended the *Cymbalum mundi* from baseless slander. Voltaire was restless and intolerant of boredom, and he too attacked that slander; not, however, because it was baseless, but because it was tasteless.

CYMBALUM MUNDI AND THE CLANDESTINE MANUSCRIPTS

As Voltaire described so vividly in his satirical rant, the *Cymbalum mundi* had become an object of rampant gossip and excitement. (His only error was the statement that the publication CM 1711a put a stop to its notoriety.) Partly allured by the shocking commentary in the paragraph-series of CM 1711b, and partly by the book's pre-existing reputation for anti-Christianity, there were many men in the early eighteenth century who hunted after the *Cymbalum mundi* because they were excited by the very possibility of a book that denied traditional religion. These collectors were almost without exception powerful noblemen, and none of them seriously interested in—or capable of conceiving of—the destruction of organized Christianity itself. Still, their weakness for curiosities like the *Cymbalum mundi* allowed it, along with other supposedly impious books that they collected, to be taken up as an emblem of unbelief by later anti-clerical atheists.

First, some context. Marchand was not the only scholar of his time to be interested in the genre of supposedly atheist literature from the medieval and recent past. Analogous to his work on the *Cymbalum mundi* was Bernard de La Monnoye's exactly contemporary dissertation on the legendary *Traité des trois imposteurs*. This had been written in the 1690s, and was first

published in an expanded form in 1715.[88] Like Marchand, La Monnoye did intensive research to find out the truth about this atheist manuscript, assembling information and rumours about it from as many quarters as he could. But he was also interested in the philosophical problem of atheism as such, and went beyond Marchand by offering a theory of why so many people sought out books with bad reputations:[89]

> As for myself, I am persuaded that [the discovery of the treatise of the *three imposters*] was only ever imaginary. The commonplace that the world was seduced by three charlatans, continually peddled by the libertines, will have given one of them the occasion to say that this subject would have been a good exercise for his wit, and that it would make a good subject for a book. Once this idea was favourably received, there was nothing more to stop the rumour of the supposed book *de tribus Impostoribus* from spreading throughout the world.[90]

In other words, the supposed existence of *De tribus impostoribus* was a pleasant talking point for the salon, and so interesting that the book's unreality was no obstacle to its being widely discussed as real. La Monnoye did not deny that there were scholars who actually had a practical purpose for atheist books like *De tribus impostoribus*; namely, that these books would help to ease their fears of Hell.[91] But this was a secondary consideration.

La Monnoye had put his finger on the fact that many of his contemporaries were buying and speculating about secret atheist books for reasons that were only partially philosophical. Yes, there might be some unbelievers who really wanted books like *De tribus impostoribus* to steel themselves in their godlessness. But most of the men who collected and read them were not clear-thinking atheists; but merely hunting after literary curiosities, whether smutty or blasphemous.

Prosper Marchand never fully appreciated this point. On one slip in CM Mar, he criticized the editor of CM 1711b for appearing to praise the *Nouvelles recreations* and the *Cymbalum mundi* in his *Avertissement* for being filled with libertinism. 'It is certainly no praise', he wrote, 'or else this is praise of a rather new kind: indeed it would be perhaps the first time that

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[88] Bernard de La Monnoye, 'Lettre au président Bouhier sur le prétendu livre des Trois imposteurs', in *Menagiana, ou les bons mots et Remarques critiques, Historiques, morales & d'érudition, de Monsieur Menage, recueillies par ses Amis.*, 3rd ed., vol. IV (Paris: Florentin Delaulne, 1715), pp. 283–312.
[89] Ibid., pp. 298–299.
[90] Pour moi je suis persuadé qu'elle n'a jamais été qu'imaginaire. Le quolibet, que le monde a été séduit par trois pipeurs, continuellement rebatu par les libertins, aura donné l'occasion à quelqu'un d'entre-eux de dire qu'il y auroit bien là dequoi exercer son esprit, & que ce seroit un beau sujet de livre. Cette idée étant agréablement reçuë, il n'en a pas falu davantage pour repandre dans le monde le bruit du prétendu livre *de tribus Impostoribus*.
[91] 'L'avidité des curieux leur a fait recueillir cette nouvelle avec d'autant plus de plaisir qu'ils la souhaittoient vraie. Les hommes les plus incrédules ne pouvant se défaire de certaine image des peines qu'ils n'ont que trop de sujet d'appréhender en l'autre monde, sont ravis de trouver en celui-ci des raisons qui les délivrent de cette crainte. Ils ont tous cherché le livre.' Ibid.

someone had had the audacity to praise an author by saying that he had taken pains to fill his books with *libertinism that anyone could perceive*.'[92] Evidently he did not grasp the intrinsic literary value of a book with a scandalous reputation, or the economic advantages to the publisher of selling such a book.

All the better if a subversive book was still in manuscript. Anyone could read a printed book, and though its contents might have been unusual, heretical or even downright atheist, there was still no excitement to be had from a book that any man on the street could also have bought. But a manuscript was a far more precious intellectual object. Around 1720, Polycarp Leyser remarked to this effect on Jean Bodin's manuscript *Colloquium heptaplomeres*, whose very unavailability in print, he thought, was the cause of its being held in suspicion. Because the book had never been printed, it was suspected of poisonous atheism with little possibility of refutation. Moreover, this suspicion worked to the advantage of anyone who already owned a manuscript of it, as the air of mystery and occultation that surrounded the book caused its price to be artificially inflated.[93]

Indeed it is easy to underestimate the extent to which the 'clandestine manuscripts' made up a perfectly coherent genre in the minds of some collectors in the eighteenth century. In the 1725 catalogue of the library of Charles-Jérôme de Cisternay Du Fay, there appeared a long list of books now recognized as 'clandestine' and included in the standard printed handlist of such manuscripts.[94] These were listed together under the heading 'Single treatises by sectarians of Freethought and Naturalism, commonly called atheists, deists, Epicureans, Stoics, etc.'[95] The famous bibliography of Jacob Friedrich Reimann included a similarly grouped list of curious manuscripts.[96] The main catalogue of Zacharias Uffenbach, the

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[92] 'C'est un de ces misérables *Eloges* mandiez par les *Libraires*, dont la plus part des *Avertissements* des *Editions d'Hollande* sont remplis, et qui sont moins fondez sur la Lecture et sur l'Examen des Ouvrages, que sur l'Envie qu'ont ces *Libraires* de faire valoir, au moins par quelque endroit, les Editions qu'ils entreprennent, et sur le Dessein qu'ils ont de s'en procurer un Debit plus promt et plus avantageux. C'est probablement dans cette seule vûë qu'on a ôsé mettre dans cet *Avertissement* que les *Nouvelles Recreations* sont *soutenues d'un Libertinage de Cour, et d'un Libertinage poli, qui se fait sentir au Lecteur le moins attentif*. Ce n'est pas ^certainement au moins pour en faire l'*Eloge*; ou ce seroit un *Eloge* d'un Tour bien nouveau: Et ce seroit peut-être la premiere fois qu'on se seroit avisé, pour louër un *Auteur*, de dire qu'il a pris soin de remplir ses *Livres* d'*un Libertinage dont chacun peut s'appercevoir*.' See CM 1711b, vol. I, sig. $*_2$ v. for Marchand's citation.

[93] 'Joh. Bodini *Colloquuium Heptaplomeres, de abditis rerum sublimium arcanis*, in tot eruditorum habetur manibus, ut libro facile obvio typos denegantes pretium præter meritum eidem concilient, occultationeque intempestiva suspicionem veneni, omnem respuentis medicinam, animis hominum ingerant.' From one of his advertisements for subscriptions to a projected edition of the *Colloquium*: see Herzog August Bibliothek, 337 Helmst. Drucke (27).

[94] That is: Miguel Benítez, *La cara oculta de las luces: investigaciones sobre los manuscritos filosóficos clandestinos de los siglos XVII y XVIII* (Valencia: Biblioteca Valenciana, 2003).

[95] 'Tractatus singulares Sectatorum Libertatis philosophicæ & Naturalismi, qui vulgò Athei, Deïstæ, Epicuri, Stoïci &c. nuncupantur.' Gabriel Martin, *Bibliotheca Fayana, seu Catalogus librorum bibliothecæ ill. viri D. Car. Hieronymi de Cisternay Du Fay* (Paris: Gabriel Martin, 1725), pp. 108–111.

[96] Jacob Friedrich Reimmann, *Catalogus Bibliothecæ Theologicæ, systematico-criticus, in quo, Libri Theologici, In Bibliotheca Reimanniana Extantes, Editi & inediti, in certas classes digesti, qua fieri potuit solertia, enumerantur, Et quid in unoquoque sit*

famous traveller and describer of Europe's curiosities, did not,[97] but Uffenbach drew up a special catalogue on another occasion of 'MSSta nonnulla rariora in Bibliotheca Uffenbachiana existentia', and still another catalogue of printed books that had atheist or otherwise blasphemous contents.[98]

The list of manuscripts read in part as follows:

> Anonymi de imposturis Religionum schediasma.
> De tribus Impostoribus liber lingua Gallica.
> Mich. Villanovani s[eu] potius Serveti Christianismi restitutio, cum nonnullis epistolis ejusdem et aliorum ad eundem.
> Jo. Bodini Dialogus Heptaplomeres.
> Mut. de Bath de vera religionis inventione et forma.
> Cymbalum mundi. [The pseudo-*Cymbalum*]
> […]
> Cabbalistica plurima.
> l'Alcibiade fanciullo en scola di Piero Aretino.
> Dubii amorose di Pietro Aretino etc. etc.

Another list of blasphemous curiosities was to be found in the catalogue of Baron Hohendorff,[99] a general under Prince Eugene of Savoy who doubled as Eugene's book-runner in Western Europe.[100] Like Uffenbach's, Eugene's concept of curious literature encompassed sexual oddities like the erotic works of Aretino just as easily as atheist philosophical treatises. Eugene himself was interested in curiosities of all kinds, and not just

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peculiare vel vulgare, quæ laudes et labes, quæ virtutes quæ maculæ, quæ asterisco quæ obelo digna, sine fuco & fallaciis, iraque & studio, At non intemperanter tamen, & temere, nec sine ratione & argumentis, indicatur, Ut Historicæ Bibliognosiæ opes aliquantulum augeantur, & Criticæ *inopia, qua maxime premitur, his, quasi drachmulis quibusdam, quodammodo sublevetur* (Hildesheim: Ludolph Schröder, 1731).

[97] Johannes Henricus Maius and Zacharias Conrad von Uffenbach, *Bibliotheca Uffenbachiana Mssta seu catalogus et recensio msstorum codicum qui in bibliotheca Zachariae Conradi ab Uffenbach Traiecti ad moenum adervantur et in varias classes distinguuntur quarum priored Io. Henricus Maius fil. prof. ordinar. giess. recensuit, reliquas possessor ipse digessit qui omnem etiam hand supellectilem literariam suam ad usus publicus offert.* (Halle an der Saale: Impensis Novi Bibliopolii, 1720).

[98] Zacharias Conrad von Uffenbach, *Commercii Epistolaris Uffenbachiani selecta. Variis observationibus illustravit ad primam sectionem commentationis de studio B. Uffenbachii bibliothecario præmisit Io. Ge. Schelhornius*, vol. III (Ulm and Memmingen: Johann Friedrich Gaum, 1753), pp. 410–411.

[99] Abraham de Hondt, *Bibliotheca Hohendorfiana, ou catalogue de la bibliothèque de feu Monsieur George Guillame Baron de Hohendorf, dans son vivant, Colonel des Cuirassiers au service de Sa Majesté Imperiale & Catholique. Gouverneur de la Ville & de la Chatelenie de Courtrai, & Commandant des Gardes à Cheval de son Altesse Serenissime le Prince Eugene de Savoye, &c. &c. &c.*, vol. III (The Hague, 1720), pp. 234ff.

[100] In the Austrian State Archive are some letters from Eugene to Hohendorff, under the shelfmark AT-OeStA/HHStA Belgien DDB 32–4. In between military instructions, Eugene sent bibliographical queries to his loyal adjutant-general. In a typical passage, Eugene wrote (vol. 33–4, p. 147): L'attention, que vous continuez d'avoir a des bons autheurs pour ma Bibliotheque est une suite de vôtre partialité à mon égards. Je vous en remerçie bien sincerement et en particulier des amours de Daphnis et de Cloé traduits par Amiot dans lesquels concourrent bien des raretés.'

literary ones: his art collection contained enough male nude bronzes to make the eccentricity of his character plain enough.[101]

Incidentally, that there was a close connection in the minds of Uffenbach, Eugene and Hohendorff between sodomite and atheist literature is a fact worth meditating on. It shows that they did not have a primary intellectual concern for any atheist philosophy as such, but rather viewed both *Theophrastus redivivus* and *Alcibiade fanciullo* as members of a single class of curiosities. Max Braubach, in his biography of Eugene, asked whether he had really interested himself in the content of the books he collected, or if he was rather pulled along by the attraction of sumptuous bindings and the conceit of owning a great library.[102] Braubach answered (almost arbitrarily) in the affirmative, but he had posed a false dilemma. Prince Eugen probably did not read the *Theophrastus redivivus* with enough care to put his soul in danger, or even to understand its basic arguments, but he must nevertheless have been sensitive to the thrill of owning such an outrageous book. Its attraction consisted neither in its philosophical details nor in its physical trappings, but in what some of our contemporaries would celebrate as its 'transgressiveness'.[103]

It cannot be denied that collectors of the eighteenth century had a concept of the 'clandestine manuscript' that was just as robust as the one that animates modern scholarship. Only these rich and powerful men went after these manuscripts with amused equanimity, and with none of the fevered radicalism that is so often attributed to collectors and readers of the period. Now, I say that the *concept* 'clandestine manuscript' existed, but not that the manuscripts were actually clandestine. In fact, there is almost no evidence that atheist books were actually traded in secret in the eighteenth century.

What, after all, was a secret in the eighteenth century? Nothing particularly exciting; only a piece of information that its bearer actually intended to keep from strangers, competitors, or enemies. Many people, in totally unmystical and unphilosophical lines of business, had use for such secrets: tradesmen, spies, diplomats, soldiers, lovers.[104] But nothing

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[101] See Otto Mazal, ed., *Bibliotheca Eugeniana: Die Sammlungen des Prinzes Eugen von Savoyen. Ausstellung der Österreichischen Nationalbibliothek und der graphischen Sammlung Albertina, Prunksaal, 15. Mai—31. Oktober 1986* (Vienna: Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, 1986).

[102] 'War es, so fragen wir am Schluß, nur der Trieb des Sammlers, nur der barocke Stolz auf den Besitz von Kostbarkeiten und einer Bücherei, wie sie kaum ein anderer der großen Herrn vorweisen konnte, die den Prinzen zu dem mit größten kosten verbundenen Erwerb dieser Bibliothek veranlaßt haben, waren ihm wohl gar die Einbände […] wichtiger als der so ungemein vielfältige Inhalt?' Max Braubach, *Prinz Eugen von Savoyen: Eine Biographie*, R. Ouldenbourg Verlag, vol. V: 'Mensch und Schicksal' (Munich, 1963), p. 113.

[103] On this subject, see Jean-Pierre Cavaillé, *Postures libertines: la culture des esprits forts* (Toulouse: Anacharsis, 2011), pp. 191–204.

[104] See chapters 4 and 5 of David Kahn, *The Codebreakers: The Story of Secret Writing*, revised edition (New York: Scribner, 1996).

was less secret than the clandestine manuscripts. They were sold in public sales and discussed in published letters. Their owners bound them in sumptuous bindings, displayed them prominently on their shelves, and wrote them up in widely diffused library catalogues. These men might have been thrilled by the thought that they owned dangerous or scandalous material, but their excitable puerility was only permitted in the first place by their complete safety from being hanged, or even scorned by polite society. Thus Carl Heinrich von Hoym traded in clandestine literature, and also in Saxon state secrets during the War of Polish Succession.[105] His ownership of the former did not prevent him from living a comfortable life at court, but his dissemination of the latter earned him a life sentence in prison, where he killed himself.[106] And Prince Eugene, who made no attempt to conceal his trade in Ganymedean art and atheist literature, required the safest possible encryption when it came to diplomatic secrets.[107]

Or again, in order to understand them properly, compare the secret atheist books of the eighteenth century to a category of literature that really *was* dangerous for much of the period: Protestant literature under the Counter-Reformation. Here we can see a state of affairs that so many historians have longed to find in the eighteenth-century 'Republic of Letters': seized correspondence, secret codes, death sentences for sedition, books hidden under the stairs. While the *edle Ritter* was titillating himself with atheist manuscripts, elsewhere in Austria there were Protestants who were forced by savage persecution to hide their books and letters from the authorities.[108]

The same goes for France. In 1538, Jehan Morin was tortured to the point of death on the merest suspicion of trading in Lutheran books, including the *Cymbalum mundi*. He never intended for his book to be secret, but he ought to have: he suffered for his incaution. Two

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[105] His library included a copy of the *Theophrastus redivivus* and one copy each of CM 1711a and CM 1711b. See Gabriel Martin, *Catalogus librorum bibliothecæ illustrissimi viri Caroli Henrici comitis de Hoym, olim regis Poloniæ Augusti II. apud Regem Christianissimum Legati extraordinarii* (Paris: Gabriel & Claude Martin, 1738).
[106] For a small biography, see Virginie Spenlé, 'Hoym, Karl Heinrich Graf von', in Martina Schattkowksy, ed., *Sächsische Biografie* (Institut für Sächsische Geschichte und Volkskunde e.V., online edition: http://www.isgv.de/saebi/, 15 May 2006).
[107] See Hermann E. Stockinger, 'Die Geheimdiplomatie Prinz Eugens und die Ermordungspläne des Grafen-Pascha Bonneval', in *Kriminelle – Freidenker – Alchemisten: Räume des Untergrunds in der Frühen Neuzeit*, ed. Martin Mulsow and Michael Multhammer (Tagung. Forschungszentrum Gotha, Köln: Böhlau, 2014), pp. 203–233.
[108] See Martin Schuetz, 'Die „fünfte Kolonne": Geheimprotestanten im 18. Jahrhundert in der Habsburgermonarchie und deren Inhaftierung in Konversionshäusern (1752–1775)', *Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung* 114, no. 1 (2006): pp. 329–380; id., 'Das Licht aus den geheimnisvollen Büchern vertreibt die Finsternis. Verbotene Werke bei den österreichischen Untergrundprotestanten', in *Räume des Untergrunds*, pp. 321–351; and the contributions by Rudolf Leeb, Stephan Steiner and Ute Küppers-Braun in Rudolf Leeb, Susanne Claudine Pils, and Thomas Winkelbauer, eds., *Staatsmacht und Seelenheil: Gegenreformation und Geheimprotestantismus in der Habsburgermonarchie*, Veröffentlichungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung 47 (Vienna: Oldenbourg, 2007), pp. 181–230.

centuries later, the *Cymbalum mundi* was a byword for atheism and not for Lutheranism, and therefore it could be safely published again. So Prosper Marchand published CM 1711a, and Jean Fréderic Bernard published notes that uncovered its anti-Christian message. Both of them, it happens, were exiles who had escaped from France to save their lives. But for atheism? No, for Protestantism! *That* was what really constituted a dangerous and radical belief in Catholic countries. If there were any underground radicals in France at the turn of the eighteenth century, they were not the men who collected and published philosophical books in safety, but the Camisards who defied the Edict of Fontainebleau.

Still it remains the case that some of the clandestine manuscripts and printed books were dressed up with trappings of secrecy: printed books had false imprints, and manuscripts false dates. Many—though not all—of these books were anonymous or pseudonymous. It is worth asking, however, how much of this secrecy was actually intended to avert censorship. Collectors often courted secrecy for its own sake, whether out of curiosity or else out of a deeper longing to be initiated into an underground brotherhood.

Therefore it is easy to overstate the contemporary utility and thus the significance of clandestine manuscripts. The traditional view of them has been summarized by Peter Burke, who described 'curious literature' as a sort of early-modern *samizdat*; that is, as a set of truth-telling documents that were traded among a circle of underground egregori.[109] In fact, clandestine manuscripts were generally not of any great literary or philosophical quality, and their circulation was narrowly circumscribed. The important collectors of clandestine manuscripts as such numbered under a dozen; in fact, I have already mentioned the principal ones. Whatever the ideological reasons for their misconception, modern historians have been enraptured by a fantasy of subversion and secrecy that a small set of noblemen and giddy men of letters dreamt up for their own facetious amusement.

This is the background against which we must see the eighteenth century's interest in the *Cymbalum mundi*. When Jean Fréderic Bernard found a secret atheist code in it, he must have been elated to have discovered an allegorical expression of Renaissance anti-Christianity. Not because he actually was participating in a hidden brotherhood of unbelievers, but because he was thrilled by the *thought* of doing so, even if not as a full initiate himself. Of course, the *Cymbalum mundi* was not a clandestine book in the traditional sense,

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[109] Peter Burke, 'A Map of the Underground: Clandestine Communication in Early Modern Europe', in *Jean Bodins* Colloquium heptaplomeres*: Vorträge, gehalten anläßlich eines Arbeitsgespräches vom 8. bis 11. September 1991 in der Herzog-August-Bibliothek*, ed. Günter Gawlick and Friedrich Niewöhner, Wolfenbütteler Forschungen 67 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1996), pp. 59–71.

inasmuch as it did not contain openly scandalous (though secret) material, but rather advanced its dangerous beliefs by allegory. In order to enter the class of clandestine works, it thus had to be given a *clef* that explained why it was dangerous and subversive. Bernard's paragraph-series was just such a key, and it made the *Cymbalum mundi* appear subversive to scholars down to this very day.

Bernard was not the only man of his generation to be excited by the hidden atheism in the *Cymbalum mundi*. In fact, Marchand's work on the book had brought it to the attention of many curiosity-hunters even before he published CM 1711a. On 11 January 1711, the Baron von Hohendorff wrote to Marchand, reminding him of a promise to send along a catalogue of 'livres rares et curieux.'[110] Immediately afterward, Hohendorff asked specifically:

> Shall we have a printed edition of the *Cimbalum Mundi*? If so, you would do well to put the learned notes of Mr de La Monnoye in it.[111]

Marchand presumably replied by asking where the said notes of La Monnoye were to be found, to which Hohendorff replied (on 11 March) that they were in a manuscript owned by Charles Du Fay. Marchand must have suspected Hohendorff's real motives behind his interest in the *Cymbalum mundi*. Hohendorff, after all, was a hunter after *curiosités*, both for his own library and for his patron Prince Eugene's. Hohendorff attached a list of books he was after to the letter just cited, which included two works by Geoffroy Vallée of extremely dubious reputation.[112]

In the event, Hohendorff did acquire a copy of *CM Fay, which he had transcribed and sent to his patron. Hohendorff's own collection eventually came to include many other questionable items, including an unrelated atheist manuscript that was also called *Cymbalum mundi*.[113] This was a haphazard piece of deist philosophizing, which had apparently been so titled in an attempt to trade on the reputation for atheism that the real *Cymbalum mundi* had acquired. Zacharias Uffenbach, as we saw in passing above, also boasted of owning a copy of the same manuscript. Plainly, the very name *Cymbalum mundi* had become a byword for a desirable atheist curiosity, even though the actual contents of the manuscripts that bore that title seem to have been more or less replaceable.

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[110] Baron Hohendorff to Marchand, 11 January 1711, UB Leiden, MAR 2.

[111] Aurons nous l'Impression du *Cimbalum Mundi*? Il seroit bon qu'en ce cas vous y joignies les doctes Notes de Mr de La Monoye.

[112] Namely:

> 'de la Valée. Le fleaux de la Foy bigarrée
> Idem l'art de ne rien croire'.

[113] It is fortunate that it has been well-published in a critical edition, for the text exists in a wild diversity of variant redactions. See Guido Canziani, Winfried Schröder, and Francisco Socas, eds., *Cymbalum Mundi sive Symbolum Sapientiae: Edizione critica* (Milan: FrancoAngeli, 2000).

The atheist reputation of the *Cymbalum mundi* was thus carried over from the seventeenth century. But whereas in the seventeenth century the men denouncing the book had been frightened of its supposed atheism, now the *Cymbalum mundi*'s covert unbelief presented a positively attractive prospect to the class of men that wanted to own it.

Now, the renowned atheists of century's end—the Baron D'Holbach, for instance—took no notice of the *Cymbalum mundi* or the paragraph-series' silly *clef*. Or else they disdained it: Sylvain Maréchal, commenting on the *Cymbalum mundi* in his dictionary of atheists, reproached Bonaventure Des Periers for trying to hide his message under allegories, and so polluting the truth with ridiculous fables.[114] It is just as well. As Alan Kors and others have shown, modern philosophical atheism was born without needing the help of any of the writings called 'curious' in the eighteenth century and 'clandestine' in our own.

We will now see that in the nineteenth century, long after the eighteenth century's prurience had waned, an intellectual accident occurred. The *Cymbalum mundi* was rediscovered, but neither out of aristocratic curiosity nor anything resembling Marchand's disinterested bibliography. There was a new and sorer need for the *Cymbalum mundi* and its author Des Periers: a young religion of freethought needed its scripture and saints. As we are about to see, the writers of the eighteenth century had unwittingly supplied the scholarly materials that the new generation needed for its histories.

[114] Sylvain Maréchal, *Dictionnaire des athées anciens et modernes* (Paris: Grabit, 1799), pp. 334–335. His comment: 'N. B. Cette pauvre vérité a beau faire et prendre tous les masques, pour tromper la vigilance de ses ennemis, elle finit toujours par être reconnue et proscrite. Il ne lui reste plus qu'un parti, le seul qu'elle aurait dû employer; c'est de se montrer à front découvert. Elle en imposerait. Du moins, on n'aurait pas à lui reprocher de se compromettre par des travestissemens indignes d'elle.'

Chapter V. Eccentrics and Radicals[1]

After Voltaire published his notes on the *Cymbalum mundi* in CM 1770, the book was mostly ignored for the better part of a century. Not for the first time in its history, the *Cymbalum mundi* might now have passed into oblivion. For all that Henri Estienne and Marin Mersenne had done to stoke its reputation for atheism, and for all that Jean Fréderic Bernard had done to justify this reputation with textual proof in his paragraph-series, the *Cymbalum mundi*, which was after all only a booklet of mediocre humanist dialogues, could simply have faded from view like countless other mediocrities. This possibility was rendered permanently impossible in the nineteenth century. The *Cymbalum mundi* became immensely notorious; and, to a far greater extent than any other book, it was held up as the archetypal work of Renaissance atheism.

This was the original fault of a single madman who, in an attempt to satisfy his vanity, inadvertently produced the kernel of a new *Cymbalum*-myth. This new myth, though similar in its details to the old one, was suitable for a new generation that did not revile but sanctified the Renaissance humanists whom it took to be unbelievers.

ÉLOI JOHANNEAU[2]

Éloi Johanneau was born into a wealthy family in Contres, a sleepy town near Blois.[3] His early intellectual life was a meander through miscellaneous disciplines. After finishing his secondary education at Meung-sur-Loire and at Orleans, he studied medicine in Paris before returning to the banks of the Loire to teach in Blois. There he dedicated himself to botany and founded a scientific garden in the city. After the Revolution, however, he moved permanently to Paris and married the divorcée Marie-Madeleine Malcause. There was no marriage contract, and upon her death in 1806 Johanneau staged a legal battle to wrest her

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[1] There is very little secondary literature on the *Cymbalum mundi*'s reception in the nineteenth century. Guy Bedouelle's conference paper ('Le *Cymbalum Mundi* au XIXe siècle', in *Le* Cymbalum Mundi*: Actes du Colloque de Rome*, pp. 129–137) contains too many errors for it to be relied on. Much better are Jacques-Rémi Dahan, ed., *Études sur le seizième siècle et sur quelques auteurs rares ou singuliers du dix-septième* (Bassac: Plein Chant, 2005); and Alain Mothu, 'Nodier, Johanneau et le *Cymbalum mundi* : L'éclairage d'un dossier blésois', 2018 (preprint: hal-01888517).

[2] The most detailed biographies and bibliographies of Johanneau were all written during his lifetime or shortly thereafter. See 'Johanneau (Éloi)', in *Biographie universelle et portative des contemporains, ou Dictionnaire historique des hommes vivants, et des hommes morts depuis 1788 jusqu'à nos jours*, vol. II (Paris: F. G. Levrault, 1834), pp. 2168–2171; Isidore Bourdon [Johanneau's son-in-law], 'Johanneau (Éloi)', in *Dictionnaire de la conversation et de la lecture*, vol. LXIV (Paris: Garnier Frères, 1849), pp. 252–255; Charles-François Vergnaud-Romagnési, *Notice sur la vie et les ouvrages de M. Éloi Johanneau* (Orléans: Imprimerie de Pagnerre, 1852); and 'Johanneau (Éloi)', in *Biographie Universelle (Michaud)*, Nouvelle édition, vol. XXI (Paris: Madame C. Desplaces, 1858), pp. 95–97.

[3] The owner of one hotel in Blois wrote in his guidebook for guests that the sole interesting fact about Contres was that Éloi Johanneau had been born there. Canaux, *Guide à Blois et aux châteaux des environs* (Blois: Hôtel d'Angleterre, 1852), p. 28.

estate from her former husband, which ended when the daughter of this earlier marriage renounced her claim to the succession.[4] Then, shortly after his wife's death, he had an illicit relationship with a woman called Marie-Adélaïde Roblot, who gave birth to a daughter Alexandrine and then a son Félix in the years 1809–1810.[5] Thereafter he lived a gentleman's life, settling finally in a house at 9 Place des Vosges and in a villa in the suburb of Montreuil.[6] He spent his time reading and writing, supplementing his rentier's income with a series of official sinecures.

It does not seem that Johanneau was ever possessed by any serious political convictions. (With one exception: despite having earlier been supported by the Imperial family, upon the fall of Napoleon he wrote an ode celebrating the downfall of the 'tyrant'.)[7] He almost never mentioned politics in his publications or his letters, and he even boasted once that he never read any newspapers, but only specialist journals in philology, archaeology, and numismatics.[8] Nevertheless, his heterodox philosophical views associated him with many friends who belonged to the liberal, monarchist faction. After the July Revolution of 1830, his friend and patron the Baron de Schonen won him a post as royal conservator of monuments to King Louis-Philippe. (He was stripped of this post after the monarchy fell in 1848.)

In the early period of his Parisian life, his studies were focused on Celtic antiquities. In 1800 he inherited the entire Celtic library of a prominent scholar,[9] and soon won enough renown in the field of etymology to become the permanent secretary of the Celtic Academy, which he helped to found in 1804.[10] This was a group of intellectuals who, under imperial patronage, attempted to reconstruct the culture of ancient Gaul from what they took to be the

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[4] See the collection of notarial documents in Archives Nationales, folder MC/ET/LXXIII/1195, beginning with 'Inventaire après le décès de Mme Eloi Johanneau', 26 September 1806.
[5] There is a helpful family tree in Viera Rebolledo-Dhuin, 'La librairie et le crédit. Réseaux et métiers du livre à Paris (1830–1870)' (Université de Versailles–Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines, 2011) ⟨tel-00768969⟩, vol. III, p. 1239.
[6] The square was renamed several times in the nineteenth century. It became the Place des Vosges in 1800, the Place Royale in 1814, the Place de la République in 1830, and the Place des Vosges again in 1848. Under Napoleon III it was renamed the Place Royale once more, only to revert in 1870 to the Place des Vosges, which has remained its name ever since.
[7] BnF NAF 6863, foll. 5–6.
[8] Johanneau to Paul Lacroix, 10 mars 1842 [Arsenal MS-9623 (2570)].
[9] Théophile-Malo de La Tour d'Auvergne, killed in battle in Bavaria. See Jacques Cambray, *Monumens celtiques, ou recherches sur le culte des pierres, précédées d'une Notice sur les Celtes et sur les Druides, et suivies d'Étymologies celtiques* (Paris: Mad. Johanneau, 1805), pp. xxvii–xxviii.
[10] See his inaugural speech for the Academy: Éloi Johanneau, 'Discours d'ouverture sur l'établissement de l'Académie Celtique, les objets de ses recherches et le plan de ses travaux; Lu à la première assemblée générale de cette Académie, le 9 germinal an XII, par le Secrétaire perpetuel', *Mémoires de l'Académie Celtique* I (1807): pp. 28–64.

surviving evidence.[11] They had no knowledge of Gaulish, which they considered to be a lost language. (Perhaps centuries of ingenious forgeries had put the whole field of Celtic archaeology and epigraphy into disrepute.)[12] They rather found survivals of Celtic life in rural traditions, in classical literary sources, and in the derivations of French words. In this they shared both method and goals with better-known men like James Macpherson and Elias Lönnrot. As in many other European countries, France's literary past was not to be found in any written document, but in the oral traditions of its illiterate *Volk*. Johanneau's own emphasis was on classical philology, which he claimed for a specialism. In 1836, he published a commentary on Caesar's *Gallic War* that consisted of philological remarks on Caesar's description of the Gauls.[13] Scorning the Hebrew, Latin, and modern-Celtic etymologies of rival scholars, he assigned a Greek origin to nearly all of the Gaulish names which Caesar mentioned. *Lemonum* came from λειμών 'meadow', *Lutetia* from λυκοτόκος 'wolf-mother' (i.e. *lupipara*, whence *lupara*; the Latin name for the Louvre), and *Alesia* from ἀλέξια, 'she who helps', which was the Gaulish epithet of the mother-goddess Cybele, still worshipped in the same region under the guise of Notre Dame de Bon Secours.

Celtic studies were only the start. In his fifty years of amateur scholarship, Johanneau wrote dozens of articles and books on grammar, archaeology, religion, epigraphy, numismatics, and art. He wrote stacks of letters on all kinds of grammatical topics to friends and famous philologists, and published as many of these as he could.[14] Unfortunately Johanneau was less learned than imaginative, and yet less imaginative than grandiose. The following entry appears in the posthumous sale catalogue of his autograph manuscripts:[15]

> *Glossotomy*, or, A Practical Method for Translating Languages by Decomposition and Grammatical Analysis, without Knowing their Grammar, and for learning them by Translating them. Folio notebooks and around two million [*sic*!] notecards.[16]

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[11] See Harry Senn, 'Folklore Beginnings in France, the Académie Celtique: 1804–1813', *Journal of the Folklore Institute* XVIII, no. 1 (1981): pp. 22–44.
[12] Richard Cooper, 'Inventing Gallic Antiquities in Renaissance France', in *Literary Forgery in Early Modern Europe, 1450-1800*, ed. Walter Stephens and Earle Havens (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2018), pp. 191–214.
[13] Éloi Johanneau, 'Notæ in C. J. Cæsaris opera. In librum I: De bello gallico commentariorum', in *C. J. Cæsaris opera cum lectissimis variorum notis, quibus suas adjecit Eligius Johanneau*, vol. I, Scriptorum Latinorum Bibliotheca (Leipzig: Johannes Ambrosius Barth, 1836), pp. 273–276.
[14] A handy collection of such letters is Éloi Johanneau, *Mélanges d'origines étymologiques et de questions grammaticales* (Paris: Alexandre Johanneau; Bechet; Pilet; Éloi Johanneau, 1818). For another typical example, see Éloi Johanneau, 'Lettres sur la géographie numismatique', *Revue Numismatique*, no. 3 (1839): pp. 185–190.
[15] *Catalogue des livres et des manuscrits de feu M. Éloi Johanneau*, op. cit.
[16] '*Glossotomie*, ou Méthode pratique pour traduire les langues par la décomposition et l'analyse grammaticale, sans en savoir la grammaire, et les apprendre en les traduisant. Cahiers in-fol. et environ deux millions de cartes.' Ibid., p. 79.

This manuscript does not to my knowledge survive. But we can take its title as a starting point for understanding its author's intellectual character. Johanneau claimed to be a linguistic miracle-worker. In fact, he only ever wrote in French and cramped Latin, and there is no evidence of his ever having read running text in any language besides these two. Still he claimed to be a savant on *all* languages, because he had discovered an shortcut to universal knowledge of them that dispensed with the need to learn them.

This drive to make astonishing discoveries was nothing out of the ordinary for the period. Right before Johanneau began writing his systematic works on philology, Champollion the Younger had deciphered the Egyptian hieroglyphs, giving Frenchmen a spectacular example of what could be accomplished by a linguistic discovery. Work out the languages of the past, and the very earliest wisdom of mankind is salvaged from oblivion. Just as Johanneau would do on many later occasions, Champollion announced his discovery in a triumphant letter to an authoritative savant; in this case the president of the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres.[17] Now, Champollion had only made his discovery after tireless linguistic training. In his years of study at the Collège de France, he had learnt Coptic and then Demotic, and was one of the most knowledgeable orientalists in Europe by 1820. This preparation was invisible to the non-specialist. His decipherment of the hieroglyphs gave the illusion that intellectual discovery could be done by a flash of inspiration, that anyone favoured enough of Minerva could look at any tablet and interpret its characters.

As one of his biographers correctly pointed out, one of Johanneau's major intellectual influences was a book that was published in the middle of the Revolution when he was twenty-five years old.[18] This was Charles Dupuis' *Origine de tous les cultes*, which argued in nine volumes that all human religions were only refractions of a single cult of nature-worship.[19] In 1803, when he was thirty-eight years old, Johanneau wrote a poem for the winter solstice—in imitation, he claimed later, of an ancient Eleusinian hymn—that betrayed Dupuis' strong influence.[20] It contained the stanza:

> Jadis prédit par la Sibylle,
> Tu nous souris, divin enfant,
> Chanté, méconnu par Virgile,
> Par nous-mêmes, en t'adorant.

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[17] Jean-François Champollion, *Lettre à M. Dacier, secrétaire perpétuel de l'Académie Royale des inscriptions et belles-lettres, relative à l'alphabet des hiéroglyphes phonétiques employés par les égyptiens pour inscrire sur leurs monuments les titres, les noms et les surnoms de souverains grecs et romains* (Paris: Firmin Didot, 1822).
[18] *Biographie Universelle*, op. cit.
[19] Charles Dupuis, *L'origine de tous les cultes, ou la réligion universelle*, IX vols (Paris: H. Agasse, 1795).
[20] Éloi Johanneau, 'Hymne au soleil: Pour la fête de sa naissance au solstice d'hiver', *Mercure de France* 34, no. CCCLXXXIX (31 December 1803): p. 627. Reprinted with notes in id., *Le retour de l'âge d'or* (infra cit.), pp. 10–16.

> Partout on fête ta naissance,
> Sous mille et mille noms divers,
> Partout on chante ta puissance;
> Ton culte remplit l'Univers.[21]

Christmas and the festival of Invictus Sol were only so many disguises for the birthday of the Sun, which itself belonged to an ancient and universal cult of nature-worship. This idea was drawn directly from Dupuis.[22] Its content is not of direct interest to Johanneau's work on the *Cymbalum mundi*, but his attachment to it betrays an important general feature of his mind, which was his refusal to take any phenomenon at face value. No cultural element, whether a poem, a holiday, or an inscription, could be understood before the deceptive veil of its immediate setting was removed. No monument was ever interesting in itself, but only as a cipher for something deeper and nobler.

It is for this reason that Johanneau's favourite method of literary analysis was the *clef* —the explanation of the allegory through which a given work's author had covered his secret meaning. He wrote half a dozen of these over his lifetime. In 1819, for instance, he produced a *clef* to the fourth Eclogue of Virgil, in which he asserted that the child it described was Marcus Claudius Marcellus, the nephew of Augustus.[23] (In a footnote, he announced his plans to publish a full *clef historique de Virgile*, in which he would prove this identification 'invincibly'.)[24] Ten years later, he wrote elatedly in a letter:[25]

> As soon as I find a publisher, I plan to publish a *clef* of Rabelais, a *clef* of Voltaire, a clef of J. J. Rousseau, a *clef* of pseudonymous or cryptonymous authors that completely reveals their secrets, and so on. And what shall I *not* publish if I am encouraged?[26]

Alas, he never was encouraged. Apart from the *clef*s of Rabelais and the *Cymbalum mundi* which he published in his lifetime, when he died he left behind his *clefs* of Fénelon, Voltaire

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[21] Foretold once by the Sibyl,
You smile at us, divine child,
Who were sung of but unknown by Virgil
and by us, as we adored you.
Your birth is celebrated everywhere,
Under thousands and thousands of different names
Your power is sung of everywhere;
Your worship fills the world.

[22] See in particular *L'origine de tous les cultes*, vol. III, pp. 37–91.

[23] Éloi Johanneau, *Le retour de l'âge d'or, ou l'horoscrope de Marcellus; églogue de Virgile, traduite en vers français; suivie d'un Hymne au soleil, imité d'un Hymne antique; avec des Notes pour l'explication des Allégories* (Paris: Alexandre Johanneau; Ladvocat; Mongie; Foulon, 1819).

[24] Ibid., p. 3n.

[25] Johanneau to François-Joseph Grille, 5 August 1828, BnF, ms. NAF 6841, foll. 143 r.–v., 144r.

[26] 'Je me propose de publier, quand j'aurai trouvé un éditeur, une clef de Rabelais, une clef de Voltaire, une clef de J. J. Rousseau, une clef des auteurs pseudonymes et cryptonymes ou leur secret entierement devoilé, &c. Et que ne publierai je pas, si j'étois encouragé?'

and Rousseau in long-abandoned manuscripts.[27] (By the 1840s, the only works of his that ever saw print were the ones he undertook to publish himself, like his translation of Antigone.)[28]

The *clef* of Rabelais seems to have been Johanneau's introduction to the genre. It was not apparently original to Johanneau, but allegedly communicated to him by his friend 'Esmangart', a jurist of Saint-Quentin. The circumstances of this collaboration are bizarre and obscure. In August 1813, Johanneau wrote in a letter to the editor of the *Journal de l'Empire* that this Esmangart had prepared a *clef* of Rabelais that made certain historical identifications of the characters.[29] Gargantua was King Francis I, his mare was his mistress Diane of Poitiers, Pantagruel was Henri II, and Grandgousier was Louis XII. Esmangart, on the basis of these identifications, had then decided that in the passage which in the received text of Rabelais reads

> Les premiers jours ainsi passez, et les cloches remises en leur lieu, les citoyens de Paris, par recongnoissance de cette honnesteté, s'offrirent d'entretenir et nourrir sa jument tant qu'il lui plairoyt. Ce que Gargantua print bien à gré. Et l'envoyarent vivre en la forest de Biere—[30]

—the last word must be emended to *Bièvre*. This, Esmangart believed, was because the mare in question was Diane de Poitiers, and because to fit the wider analogy, Rabelais must have made her dwell along the Bièvre, a river which flows into the Seine in Paris; not in some 'beer-wood'.

Unfortunately there was no trace of a castle along the meagre Bièvre. But if the emendation was right, there must once have been. For several years, Johanneau wrote, Esmangart had travelled repeatedly from Saint-Quentin to Paris, where he scoured the banks of the Bièvre for clues.[31] In August 1813, as he was walking alone along the banks of the Bièvre

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[27] *Catalogue des livres et des manuscrits de feu M. Éloi Johanneau*, p. 79.

[28] Éloi Johanneau, *Antigone, tragédie de Sophocle, en cinq actes. Avec des chœurs lyriques, traduite fidèlement en vers français* (Paris: Chez l'auteur, Place Royale, 9, 1844).

[29] Éloi Johanneau, 'Au Rédacteur', *Journal de l'Empire*, 9 August 1813, pp. 3–4.

[30] 'After the first few days had gone by in this manner, and the bells were put back in their place, the burghers of Paris, in thanks for his fair dealing, offered to support and feed [Gargantua's] mare to its heart's content. This was very satisfying to Gargantua, so they sent it to live in the forest of Biere.' I.21, cited from [François Jean-Baptiste?] Esmangart and Éloi Johanneau, eds., *Œuvres de Rabelais. Édition variorum, augmentée de pièces inédites, des songes drolatiques de Pantagruel, ouvrage posthume, avec l'explication en regard; des remarques de Le Duchat, de Bernier, de Le Motteux, de l'Abbé de Marsy, de Voltaire, de Ginguené, etc.; et d'un nouveau commentaire historique et philologique, par Esmangart et Éloi Johanneau*, vol. I (Paris: Dalibon, Libraire, 1823), p. 375.

[31] Johanneau wrote: 'Convaincu moi-même par son commentaire, que j'ai lu, et que j'ai eu un an entre les mains, que M. Esmangart avoit prouvé ce que d'autres, avant lui, n'avoient fait qu'entrevoir, je l'ai accompagné, l'an passé, dans cette recherche, la seule qui lui restoit à faire: mais nous n'en avons recueilli d'autre fruit, que d'apprendre d'un paysan de Gentilly que c'étoit une tradition dans ce village qu'il avoit existé un château sur les bords de la Bièvre, et la certitude qu'il n'en subsistoit plus de vestiges. Cette année, M. Esmangart est venu renouveler ses recherches, et dès le lendemain de son arrivée à Paris (le mardi 3 août), conduit par son bon génie, il est allé, pour la douzième fois, se promener sur les bords de cette rivière. Arrivé auprès de Gentilly, dans un pré situé entre ce village, la maison dite la Manufacture et le Moulin des Prés, sur la rive gauche, et à six ou

in Gentilly, he tripped over a cubit-long copper cylinder that was lodged into the ground. He paid a passing farmer (one Gilles Trouillard) to dig it out, and then returned with it to Paris, where he had it unrolled and cleaned.[32] It was found to be inscribed with four verses:

> Dans Ce pourPris Le grAnd FraN̄çois preMier
> TreVue tovsJovrs Jovi∫sance noŪele
> QVil e∫t hevRevx Ce liEv soVef reCele
> FlEvr De beaVlte DiAne De PoicTier^{s}.
> 1527.[33]

These lines proved incontrovertibly what Esmangart had hypothesized in his emendation of *Bière* to *Bièvre*: that Diane de Poitiers had indeed been maintained by Francis I in a house on the bank of the Bièvre, and that Rabelais' final sentence about Gargantua's mare had been a coy allusion to this arrangement.

Esmangart left the copper sheet in the office of Éloi Johanneau for safekeeping, where it was shown to curious callers.[34] Though Johanneau had not been present at the actual discovery, he had taken by Esmangart a few days later to the site of the find, where he saw shown the impression in the ground where the cylinder had been dislodged. Soon its fame grew. Two different composers collaborated to set the inscription to music, one providing a guitar accompaniment, and the other an arrangement for piano or harp.[35] Later, in his magisterial history of France, Jules Michelet quoted it and commented that it was 'entirely likely' authentic.[36]

The inscription was almost certainly a fraud. In 1869 the very same lines were seen by a contributor to the *Intermédiaire des chercheurs et curieux* on the wall of the Château d'Anet,

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sept pas de la Bièvre, il heurta du pied contre un morceau de metal enfoncé en terre obliquement, et sortant d'un pouce ou deux: il veut l'arracher, mais en vain; il ne lui reste dans les mains qu'un fragment déjà éclaté. Un faucheur vient à son secours avec une bêche, fait une tranchée, et tire un rouleau de cuivre d'environ 18 pouces de long sur 8 de large, couvert de boue et de vert-de-gris, qu'il remet à celui qui l'avoit découvert. M. Esmangart prend le rouleau, et s'en retourne bien vite à Paris, ne connoissant pas encore tout le prix de la découverte qu'il avoit faite. Il entre chez le premier chaudronnier du faubourg Saint-Jacques, lui fait dérouler et nétoyer le rouleau; qu'y voit-il? une inscription en quatre vers français, qui prouve que Diane de Poitiers avoit en effet une maison de plaisance sur les bords de la Bièvre en 1527, et que François Ier y alloit souvent la voir.'

[32] This name was not mentioned in Johanneau's original letter, but only in Johanneau's later published edition of Rabelais: *Œuvres de Rabelais*, vol. I (Paris: Dalibon, Libraire, 1823), p. 377, n.

[33] 'In this precinct the great Francis I always finds new delight. Happy is he! This lovely place harbours the flower of beauty, Diane de Poitiers. 1527.'

[34] One of these was Pierre-Joseph-Spiridion Dufey; see his *Nouveau dictionnaire historique des environs de Paris* (Paris: Charles Perrotin, 1825), p. 161.

[35] *Guitare, œuvre 3me. Contenant l'inscription sur François 1er et Diane de Poitiers, trouvée en 1813 à Gentilly et mise en Musique pour être chantée seule ou en Duo; un air villageois; un Andante en Variation avec Accompagnement de Violon, par M^{r}. Lebas de Courmont, amateur* (Paris: Lebas de Courmont / Frères, 1814); *Inscription sur François 1er et Diane de Poitiers, trouvée en 1813 à Gentilly, dédiée à Mme Félicité Kretschmer; musique de M. Lebas de Courmont, amateur, accompagnement de piano ou harpe, par M. F. Petrini* (Paris: Lebas de Courmont / Frères, 1814). I have found only two surviving copies of the guitar arrangement, in the BnF under the joint shelfmark VM7-71584.

[36] *Histoire de France au seizième siecle. Réforme*, Histoire de France, VIII (Paris: Chamerot, 1855), p. 504.

Diane of Poitiers' castle in the western Île-de-France.[37] Another reader pointed out helpfully that Johanneau's roll had borne the same inscription.[38] These letters moved Paul Lacroix to write in to denounce the inscription as apocryphal.[39] He pledged to publish a full exposé of Johanneau and Esmangart's forgery, but to the frustration of some readers it never appeared.[40]

Actually, it even seems likely that more than just the inscription was a forgery. The whole story of Esmangart's archaeological expeditions to Paris is filled with odd details. Why, in the first place, did Esmangart go to such pains, over years, to verify an historical detail that depended on such a banal and uncertain conjecture? Why did he leave the inscription with Éloi Johanneau instead of taking it home? And why did Johanneau never mention Esmangart's given name, whether in his original letter of 1813 or in his later published edition of Rabelais? A chance archaeological discovery that confirms a previously formulated literary theory, inaccessible original documents, a conveniently uncontactable discoverer: these are the classic elements of a tale that has been told again and again for millennia.[41] It is hard to avoid the conclusion that Éloi Johanneau made the whole thing up.

There really was a judge of Saint-Quentin called François Jean-Baptiste Esmangart,[42] and he was still living at least as late as 1822.[43] But he was almost as obscure in his lifetime as he is now, and not a single reviewer of Johanneau's edition of Rabelais was able to supply more than his surname. Charles Nodier, in a letter to Johanneau, seems even to have implied that Johanneau's 'supposed collaborator' Esmangart was merely a figment of Johanneau's

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[37] S. D., 'Un quatrain du château d'Anet', *L'Intermédiaire des chercheurs et curieux* V, no. 112 (25 August 1869): coll. 465–466. This man had Another reader, writing decades later, reported its presence at the château in Loury: De Merret, 'Diane de Poitiers; le quatrain du château de Loury', *L'Intermédiaire des chercheurs et curieux* LVIII, no. 1199 (20 October 1908): coll. 553. The inscription is not noticed in Rodolphe Pfnor, *Monographie du Château d'Anet, construit par Philibert de l'Orme en MDXLVIII*, Châteaux de la Renaissance (Paris: Chez l'auteur, 1867).

[38] O. D., 'Un quatrain du château d'Anet', *L'Intermédiaire des chercheurs et curieux* V, no. 114 (25 September 1869): coll. 543–544.

[39] Paul Lacroix, 'Un quatrain du château d'Anet', *L'Intermédiaire des chercheurs et curieux* V, no. 114 (25 September 1869): coll. 543–548.

[40] He was reminded of his promise by at least two impatient letter-writers: A. E., 'Un quatrain du château d'Anet', *L'Intermédiaire des chercheurs et curieux* VI, no. 134–135 (10 August 1870–25 December 1874): col. 460; and "Tiro Rudis", 'La maison de Diane de Poitiers, à Gentilly', *L'Intermédiaire des chercheurs et curieux* XII, no. 264 (10 May 1879): coll. 263–264.

[41] See Anthony Grafton, *Forgers and Critics: Creativity and Duplicity in Western Scholarship* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990). The inscription and the circumstances of its discovery bear an especially close resemblance to an episode in *Discours non plus melancoliques que divers, de choses mesmement, qui appartiennent a notre France: & a la fin La maniere de bien & iustement entoucher les Lucs & Guiternes* (Poitiers: Enguilbert de Marnef, 1556), pp. 90–94.

[42] He was a judge during the Revolution. See *Almanach national de France, l'an deuxième de la République Françoise, une et indivisible* (Paris: Testu, 1793), p. 228; and for his given names, Victor Jeanvrot, 'Les juges de paix élus sous la Révolution (suite)', *La Révolution Française: Revue Historique* V (1883): pp. 137–146 [138].

[43] In that year he was listed as a subscriber to a book on butterflies: Jean-Baptiste Godart, *Histoire naturelle des lépidoptères ou papillons de France*, vol. I: Diurnes (Paris: Crevot, 1821), p. 299.

imagination.[44] No matter what, his cooperation with Johanneau was at best heavily exaggerated. No matter what, by 1820 or so the men's association had surely ceased, and Johanneau had full responsibility for editing the edition.

Johanneau prefigured his edition with a song that he submitted to the journal *l'Album in* 1821.[45] He described Rabelais in it as a malicious blasphemer who had hidden his subversion under a mask of gaiety. The edition of Rabelais which Johanneau eventually published two years later reiterated this thesis, and loaded it with an incredible mass of historical speculation, far exceeding the original key which Esmangart had supposedly written up.[46] In the nine volumes of commentary, every element of Rabelais' riotous fables was interpreted as either a subtle caricature of the Christian religion, or else of some historical event in the reign of Francis I. For decades after its publication, the edition won the admiration of amateurs, and the horrified condemnation of anyone who knew anything about Rabelais.[47] As most of these hostile critics pointed out, Johanneau had drawn spectacular

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[44] 'Votre prétendu collaborateur m'avoit paru ce qu'il est, *ingenium raræ texturæ et infimæ complexionis*, mais j'approuve parfaitement votre reticence. C'est un bon homme qu'il faut laisser mourir en joie.' Nodier to Johanneau, 6 February 1830, printed in Charles Nodier, *Études sur le seizième siècle et sur quelques auteurs rares ou singuliers du dix-septième*, ed. Jacques-Rémi Dahan (Bassac: Plein Chant, 2005), pp. 413–415 [414].

[45] Éloi Johanneau, 'Chanson sur Rabelais, adressée aux Chinonois', *L'Album. Journal des arts, des modes et des théâtres* II, no. 16 (20 October 1821): pp. 52–53. It was to be sung to the tune of the popular air *Aussitôt que la lumière*. Here are the first two stanzas:

Tant on verra dans l'histoire
Des Français briller le nom,
Rabelais fera la gloire,
Le juste orgueil de Chinon.
En lui, je vois Épicure,
Lucien ressuscité:
La sottise, l'imposture,
N'excitant que sa gaîté.

Du masque de la folie
Couvrant sa malignité,
Il sut, par allégorie,
Dire aussi la vérité.
Sous un apparent délire,
Plein de sens, de profondeur,
Son livre, pour qui sait lire,
Est le fléau de l'erreur.

[46] [François Jean-Baptiste] Esmangart and Éloi Johanneau, eds., *Œuvres de Rabelais. Édition variorum, augmentée de pièces inédites, des songes drolatiques de Pantagruel, ouvrage posthume, avec l'explication en regard; des remarques de Le Duchat, de Bernier, de Le Motteux, de l'Abbé de Marsy, de Voltaire, de Ginguené, etc.; et d'un nouveau commentaire historique et philologique, par Esmangart et Éloi Johanneau*, IX vols (Paris: Dalibon, Libraire, 1823). At the head of the ninth volume (pp. i–vii), there is an *Avertissement* signed 'Esmangart' in which Johanneau is thanked for contributing some notes.

[47] See the critical comments of Louis de Guizard, 'Du sens de Rabelais', *Revue Française* I, no. 3 (May 1828): pp. 67–95; Jean Marie Guichard, 'L'Abbaye de Thélème (1)', *Bulletin du bibliophile* Quatrième série, no. 14 (June 1841): pp. 615–621; G[ustave] B[runet], 'Revue littéraire. *Œuvres de Bonaventure Desperriers*; un vol in-12, chez Gosselin.', *La Quotidienne*, 4 March 1842; id., 'Bulletin littéraire', *Bibliothèque universelle de Genève* XIX, no. 75 (March 1852): pp. 353–358 [355]; Arsène Darmesteter and Adolphe Hatzfeld, *Le seizième siècle en France: Tableau de la littérature et de la langue* (Paris: Librairie Ch. Delagrave, 1878), pp. 59–60; Charles Marty-Laveaux, ed., *Les oeuvres de Maistre François Rabelais : accompagnées d'une notice sur sa vie et ses ouvrages, d'une étude bibliographique, de variantes, d'un commentaire, d'une*

conclusions from the thinnest evidence, with bizarre chains of reasoning between words and their supposed senses. For example, confronted with the anagrammatic pseudonym *Alcofribas* which Rabelais had adopted for *Pantagruel* and *Gargantua*, Johanneau reasoned that *Alcofribas* could be decomposed as a charade into Spanish *algo*—'something'—and *bribar*, which apparently meant 'to beg' and by extension [!] to 'lap up'; thus someone who laps something up; i.e. a gourmand. Or else *al* was the Arabic article ال, *co* was the prefix *con-*, and *fribas* meant 'gourmand' as before, so that the whole name meant 'table companion'.[48] This method of spectacular but essentially unlearned decomposition, which recalls the etymological alchemy of Annius of Viterbo,[49] was the prototype for later *clef* of the *Cymbalum mundi* which Johanneau would write about ten years later.

In the last decade of Johanneau's life, he turned from literary research to epigraphical speculations. In this field, his profuse erudition met a much harsher reception from other experts, which led him repeatedly into intellectual humiliations. Let us review three examples from the end of his life.

The first ordeal was the mildest: in 1847, he read Prosper Mérimée's *La Vénus d'Ille*, a story which describes a bronze sculpture of Venus unearthed by a country antiquarian in Occitania.[50] In the beginning of the tale, an antiquarian 'Peyrehorade' deciphers the inscription on the statue in a quaint and outlandish way, to the great amusement of the narrator.[51] Now, it appears from a letter sent to Johanneau by Mérimée that Johanneau actually believed that the statue in the story was real, and had very probably proposed his

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table des noms propres et d'un glossaire, vol. IV (Paris: Alphonse Lemerre, 1881), p. 71; Anatole de Montaiglon, *Five Books of the Lives, Heroic Deeds and Sayings of Gargantua and His Son Pantagruel. Translated into English by Sir Thomas Urquhart of Cromary and Peter Antony Motteux*, vol. I (London: Lawrence and Bullen, 1892), pp. xliv–xlv; and Jacques Boulenger, *Rabelais à travers les âges : compilation suivie d'une bibliographie sommaire de l'oeuvre de maître François, comprenant les éditions qu'on en a données depuis le XVIe siècle jusqu'à nos jours, d'une étude sur ses portraits et d'un examen de ses autographes*, Collection Saint-Germain-des-Prés 2 (Paris: Le Divan, 1925), pp. 87–88. Prosper Mérimée called him an 'Œdipus' of the Sphinx of Rabelais (a description which Johanneau had already applied to himself in his *Clef*), but in a rather ironic tone. See Prosper Mérimée, 'La littérature en Russie. Nicolas Gogol', *Revue des Deux Mondes* XI (15 November 1851): pp. 627–650 [628].

[48] *Œuvres de Rabelais*, pp. 8–9, n. 3.

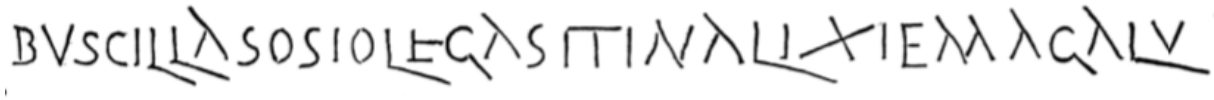
[49] See Walter Stephens, 'Berosus Chaldaeus: Counterfeit and Fictive Editors of the Early Sixteenth Century' (Doctoral Dissertation, Ithaca, NY, Cornell University, 1979), pp. 184–189.

[50] Prosper Mérimée, 'La Vénus d'Ille', *Revue des Deux Mondes* X, no. 4 (15 May 1837): pp. 425–452.

[51] The true source for Peyrehorade seems to have been a certain Piere Puiggari (1768–1854) of Perpignan, who shared Johanneau's gift for finding outlandish ancient etymologies. With the fictional Peyrehorade he shared a fondness for Phoenician derivations. See Maurice Parturier, 'Sur les sources de « La Vénus d'Ille »', *Le Divan* XXXVII, no. 254 (June 1945): pp. 73–81; Olivier Poisson, 'L'Enquête pour la recherche des antiquités dans les Pyrénées-Orientales, 1810–1824: territoire, patrimoine, mentalités', in *Le Roussillon dans la première moitié du XIXe siècle*, Ouvrage collectif publié par la Société agricole, scientifique et littéraire des Pyrénées orientales, XCIII (Perpignan, 1985), pp. 165–221 [212–221].

own alternative interpretation of the inscription.[52] It could be that Johanneau had not seen the printed story in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, but only a manuscript copy: the title of one such manuscript presented the story as an actual archaeological discovery.[53] (In this manuscript, the relevant inscription is reproduced in mock-facsimile, as if it were a sketch of a real inscription.)[54] Still, the story in both print and manuscript contained the plainly supernatural element of a living statue, and was obviously a work of fiction. Johanneau had fallen for a ten-year-old hoax, his imagination having overgrown the last remnants of his critical sensibility. It did not boot him anything to have once perpetrated an even more elaborate hoax himself.

In the autumn of 1849, the epigrapher Adrien de Longpérier published a learned article in the nascent *Revue Archéologique*.[55] His subject was an inscription on a fourth-century vase that had been dug up in Bourges in 1848.[56] He traced and transcribed it like this:



B V S C I L L A S O S I O L E G A S I T I N A L I X I E M A G A L V

This was very strange Latin, but Longpérier was able to decipher it all the same. He proposed that it should be read as a piece of table-chatter:

BVCELLA[M] SOCIO LEGAS VT INALESCAM MEGALV

[52] Prosper Mérimée to Éloi Johanneau, 11 November 1847. 'Monsieur, Je suis bien fier que ma petite drôlerie ait été prise un instant au sérieux par un savant tel que vous. La Vénus d'Ille n'a jamais existé et les inscriptions ont été fabriquées secundum artem avec Muratori et Orelli. L'idée de ce conte m'est venue en lisant une légende du moyen-âge rapportée par Freher. J'ai pris aussi quelques traits à Lucien qui dans son *φιλοψευδής* nous parle d'une statue qui rossait les gens. J'ai enlardé mon plagiat de petites allusions à des amis à moi, et de plaisanteries intelligibles dans une coterie où je vivais lorsque cette nouvelle a été écrite. J'ai vu dans les Pyrénées une grande quantité d'inscriptions consacrées à des dieux topiques, mais je n'en connais aucune où Vénus soit mentionée, du moins sous son nom.' Maurice Parturier, ed., *Correspondance générale de Prosper Mérimée*, vol. V: 1847–1849 (Paris: Le Divan, 1946), pp. 200–201.

[53] Its handwritten corrections correspond exactly to the readings of the printed story, and it is dated one month earlier than its publication in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*. It thus seems to be the very copy which Mérimée sent to the editor François Buloz, who in turn might have shown it to Éloi Johanneau. It is now in the BnF: Prosper Mérimée, 'Relation de la découverte faite a Ille, en 1834, d'une statue antique et d'inscriptions curieuses expliquées par Mr de Peyrehorade, membre du conseil general du Dep^t des Pyrénees Orientales, rédigée par Mr Merimee de l'Académie de Bourges, section de l'Archéologie' (Paris, 10 April 1837), NAF 25740.

[54] Ibid., fol. 22v.

[55] Adrien Prévost de Longpérier, 'Inscription gallo-latine tracée à la pointe sur un vase de terre', *Revue Archéologique* VI, no. 2 (1850): pp. 554–556.

[56] For a modern facsimile of this inscription, see Wolfgang Meid, *Gaulish Inscriptions: Their Interpretation in the Light of Archaeological Evidence and Their Value as a Source of Linguistic and Sociological Information* (Budapest: Archaeolingua Alapítvány, 1992), p. 18.

Thus, 'pass a roll to your friend that I may grow with you greatly'. The word *magalu* was of special interest: Longpérier derived it from *μεγάλως* and described it as a remarkable example of Greek influence on Gallo-Roman speech.[57]

Longpérier's article was read upon its publication by Éloi Johanneau, who was nearly blind and in the last year of his life. It proved an irresistible target. Johanneau set to work immediately on a rival theory, and drafted an article of his own within a month. He wrote in it that Longpérier had got ahead of himself by calling the inscription 'Gallo-Latin'. The inscription was simply Latin, with a little influence from Doric Greek. It was best read:

BVCELLAS OTIO LEGAS, ET INALESCE MAGALV

Johanneau translated this: 'gather mouthfuls at your leisure, and feed yourself amply on them'.[58] This was an instruction to a Roman soldier, for whom enough biscuits to last twenty days had been stored in the vase. *Magalu* was not to be treated as a reflex of *μεγάλως*, but as an adverb *μαγαλύ*, in a class with *εὐθύ*, *πολύ*, and *ταχύ*. The substitution of *α* for *ε*, meanwhile, meant that it was a Doric form.

Johanneau finished his article on 15 February 1850 and submitted it to the *Revue Archéologique*. Because of his great age, he entrusted it to a friend for delivery. It was promptly turned down by the editor.[59] Johanneau, undeterred, had it published on his own as a pamphlet of sixteen pages.[60] To the pamphlet he appended a screed against Leleux, who had unjustly refused it. True, Johanneau protested, he had changed seven letters, but he had mangled the inscription less than Longpérier. In any case, he had made further scientific progress since his original submission, if only the learned would hear him out. Even though all of his queries to the *Revue* had been ignored, he had learnt from independent sources that the Bourges vase had been found in a necropolis. Moreover, it was far smaller than he had originally supposed—too small to contain enough biscuits for twenty days. Therefore the vase was not for victuals at all. It was a funerary vessel, and contained the ashes of the dead person to whom the inscription was addressed. The food it referred to was a *viaticum*, a portion of bread for the underworld.

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[57] Unbeknownst to any of these scholars, the Bourges inscription was not Latin at all, but Gaulish. Since the beginning of last century, it has been read as a straightforward votive text: *Buscilla sosio legasit in Alixie Magalu*; 'Buscilla devoted this in Alesia to Magalos'. See John Rhys, 'The Celtic Inscriptions of France and Italy', *Proceedings of the British Academy* II (June 1905): pp. 273–373 [no. xxxii, p. 327]; and, for a modern discussion, Joseph Eska, 'On Valency and Related Matters at Séraucourt à Bourges (Cher)', *Studia Celtica* XXXVII (2003): pp. 1–15.
[58] 'Recueille, à loisir, des bouchées, et nourris t'en abondamment.'
[59] The man who published and edited the *Revue Archéologique* from 1844 until 1860 consistently signed his name 'A. Leleux'. I have found no biographical information about him at all.
[60] Éloi Johanneau, *Nouvelle restitution et explication d'une inscription gréco-latine du IVe siècle, tracée sur un vase de terre cuite trouvé près de Bourges, en 1848* (Paris: Techener | Dumoulin, 1850).

Leleux replied personally to this pamphlet in the next issue of his journal. First, he congratulated Johanneau on admitting that his original speculation had been fatuous. He had been done a favour in not having his error printed and diffused. Then he condemned Johanneau for insinuating that his article had been rejected as the result of a prejudiced conspiracy. Any fool, he wrote, could have weighed Johanneau's contribution and found it wanting.[61]

Shortly before, a perforated stone had been dug up in Saint-Révérien, a city some fifty miles north-northeast of Bourges, that was inscribed with the letters:

MONIGNATHAGABI
BVÐÐVTTONIMON

It is known now that the stone is a spindle-whorl, and that the inscription is in Gaulish, with the reading *moni gnatha gabi buðduton imon* and the approximate meaning 'come, girl, take my [?]'.[62] As with the Bourges inscription, its true nature was not known to its earliest discoverers.[63] In a letter of 26 January 1850 to the director of the local museum in which the stone had been stored, Johanneau proposed that the inscription should be read as Greek.[64] First he changed some of the letters:

MONI GNAT. HAGABI
BOVTHVTIO NIMMON

and then translated it *Monius Gnatus Hagabus' lustral water for the sacrifice of bulls*. (He apparently took BOVTHVTIO as a rendition of *βȣθυσίῳ*, the dative form of 'bull-sacrifice'; and NIMMON as *νιμμόν*, which he thought meant 'lustral water'.) From its inscription, Johanneau concluded that the stone was probably the plug of a fountain. A month later, he changed his mind, and wrote a new interpretation, which he communicated in a second letter.[65] No dictionary contained such a word as *νιμμόν* after all (the correct term for 'lustral water' being *νίμμα*), and therefore *νιμμόν* must be an otherwise-unattested but related form. Johanneau decided that it meant 'water-sprinkler', and that the stone was the socket for a pagan aspergillum made of some now-lost flexible material. As before, both his liberties with letter-substitutions and his

[61] See the first notice in 'Découvertes et nouvelles', *Révue Archéologique* VII, no. 1 (1850): p. 387.
[62] For the earliest reliable interpretation, see Joseph Loth, 'Remarques aux inscriptions latines sur pesons de fuseau trouvés en territoire gaulois et, en particulier, à l'inscription celtique de Saint-Révérien (Nièvre)', *Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* LX, no. 2 (1916): pp. 168–186; and, for a modern treatment with photographs, Pierre-Yves Lambert, *Recueil des Inscriptions Gauloises*, vol. II, fascicule 2: Textes gallo-latins sur *instrumentum*, *Gallia*, XLVe Supplément (Paris: CNRS Editions, 2002), L-119, pp. 330–331.
[63] See Étienne Héron de Villefosse, 'Notice sur une pierre antique trouvée dans les ruines de Saint-Révérien', *Bulletin de la Société Nivernaise* I (1854): pp. 336–351.
[64] Johanneau to Jacques Gallois, printed in ibid., pp. 338–343.
[65] Johanneau to Jacques Gallois, summarized in ibid., p. 344.

insistence that the inscription must be Greek earned Johanneau the bitter scorn of the experts who read his work.[66] The truth is that Johanneau never had any of the linguistic or technical training to make even the smallest contribution to archaeology. But for knowledge he substituted his unchecked fantasy, to the dazzlement of some and the disgust of more. One later commenter on the Saint-Révérien inscription ridiculed the

> fanciful interpretations of M. Éloi Johanneau, who seems to have set himself the task of taking on the hardest questions of interpretation, in order to add to their natural difficulty the confusion of an erudition devoid of criticism.[67]

This was a fitting epitaph for the elderly scholar.

Johanneau died a year later on 24 July 1851, at the age of eighty. His two surviving wills tell the story of how he manipulated his family to ensure the survival of his intellectual legacy.[68] In the first, dated 1 September 1836, he left only the obligatory *part légale* to his recognized son Félix, and promised the rest of his estate to the yet-unmarried Alexandrine. But there were conditions: if she remained unmarried, she would only enjoy a life interest in his property. There was only one method for Alexandrine to secure ownership of her father's estate. First, she had to marry and have a son. This son would then have to take the name *Johanneau*, and attend one of the royal colleges in Paris, where he would have to win a prize in both Greek and Latin. He would then have to undertake to transmit his grandfather's entire collection of manuscripts and annotated books to his own male son—to whom the same conditions would of course apply—but not before ensuring that all of Johanneau's finished works were revised and published, and deposited in the Bibliothèque Royale. Then he could inherit the estate. And if Alexandrine failed to have male offspring, the estate was to pass to a potential male child of Johanneau's niece in Blois. If this niece failed herself to produce a male heir, then it would be acceptable for her male grandson (or great-grandson!) to inherit the estate.[69] Motivating this extraordinarily elaborate set of conditions was a very simple

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[66] See ibid., passim, for Héron de Villefosse's various snide comments on Johanneau's speculations.

[67] '[…] les interprétations fantaisistes de M. Eloi Johanneau, qui semble s'être donné la tâche à cette époque d'aborder les questions les plus difficiles d'interprétation, pour ajouter à leur difficulté naturelle la confusion d'une érudition dénuée de critique.' Alphonse Buhot de Kersers, 'Recueil des inscription gallo-romaines, de la 7e division archéologique : Cher, Indre, Indre-et-Loire, Loir-et-Cher, Nièvre', *Congrès Archéologique de France* XL (1874): pp. 183–264 [263].

[68] 'Testament d'Eloi Johanneau, ancien conservateur des monuments d'art des résidences royales, demeurant place des Vosges, n°9' (Paris, 21 August 1851), Minutes et répertoires du notaire Marcel CHANDRU, Archives Nationales, MC/ET/III/1573.

[69] The will must be read to be believed:
Montreuil sous Bois 1er septembre 1836

Je sousigné jouissant de toutes mes facultés intellectuelles et voulant, avant de payer à la nature le tribut que tous les hommes lui doivent, pour faire place aux autres,

Déclare que, n'ayant point d'autres que les deux enfants naturels que j'ai reconnus, je donne tout ce dont je puis disposer, en meubles et immeubles, la part légale de Pierre Félix Roblot, mon fils naturel reconnu,

desire. Johanneau could not bear the thought of dying and allowing the work of his teeming brain to be scattered. *Someone* must be found to preserve his intellectual legacy, and to this end he was willing to tyrannize his descendants from the grave.

On 8 December 1847, however, he revoked this will, and scrawled a new one onto a single sheet of paper as he rushed to catch a train.[70] He disinherited both of his legitimized children altogether, and bequeathed his entire estate, with no conditions attached, to a certain M. Fromage, a bureaucrat in the Ministry of Finance who lived around the corner from him.[71] The reasons for this rash decision are not clear. After Johanneau died, his relatives summoned M. Fromage to a court, where he immediately renounced his claim and allowed the estate to pass to them.[72] In the end, they sold all the books and manuscripts off in two successive auctions, thwarting Johanneau's deepest wishes.[73]

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prelevée, à Adele Félicie Alexandrine Roblot, ma fille naturelle reconnue, pour en jouir en toute propriété, si elle se marie, et si elle laisse des enfants; aux conditions ci-après, et l'usufruit seulement pendant sa vie, si elle ne se marie pas, ou si elle n'a pas d'enfants. Dans ce cas, je veux que ma propriété mobilière et immobilière passe, à sa mort, a celui des enfants mâles de ma niece de Blois, ou faute d'enfants mâles, à l'enfant mâle d'une de ses filles, ou petites filles; qui aura fait toutes ses études à un college royal de Paris, et y aura remporté un prix en grec et un prix en Latin dans l'une des trois domaines classés, à la charge par lui 1º d'ajouter mon nom au sien, 2º de conserver et de transmettre a ses descendants, aux mêmes conditions, mes manuscrits et mes livres annotés en marge par moi, 3º de publier tout ou partie des ouvrages que je laisserai au net, ou dont j'aurai rassemblé les matériaux sur du papier de divers formats ou sur des cartes classées ou non classées, 4º de déposer ces manuscrits et ces matériaux, papier ou sur carte, aussitôt après leur publication, à la bibliothèque royale de Paris, afin que d'autres savants puissent faire aussi usage pour leurs travaux particuliers, et surtout contrôler celui que mon légataire aura fait; d'offrir à cette même bibliothèque mes imprimées, annotées de ma main, pour le prix qu'elle en donnera; en foi de quoi, j'ai fait écrit ce testament de ma main. à Montreuil sous Bois, ce premier septembre mil huit cent trente six.
Éloi Johanneau.
* Dans le cas où ma fille Alexandrine laisseroit des enfants, ou petits enfants, j'entends qu'ils se soumettent aux mêmes conditions que j'impose à ceux de ma niece sans quoi pour les uns ou pour les autres ma donation seroit nulle, et tous mes biens meubles et immeubles, mes livres annotés et mes manuscrits passeroient en toute propriété à la bibliothèque publique delà, à la charge par elle seulement de ne communiquer ces livres et ces manuscrits, tant qu'ils ne seront pas publiés, qu'à ceux qui voudront les publier et non les piller, et de faire servir l'argent qui reviendra de la vente des premières, et de celle de ma maison, de mon atelier et de ma bibliothèque, à la publication des autres. [fades into illegibility]

[70] It is pinned to the first will, and reads as follows:

Ceci est mon testament.

Partant pour Versailles par le chemin de fer, je n'ai que le temps de faire en peu de lignes mon testament. Je soussigné Eloi Johanneau, conservateur des monuments d'art des Résidences royales, institue Monsieur Fromage, chef de bureaux aux finances, demeurant à Paris, Rue des Francs Bourgeois no. 4, mon ami, mon légataire universel. Je lui donne et legue tous les biens meubles et immeubles qui se trouveront m'appartenir au jour de mon décès, pour en jouir et en disposer comme il voudra, ~~sans être tenu de faire aucun ***, ni de donner caution. J'entends même qu'il puisse recevoir tous Remboursements sans le c****** et la présence de mes héritiers.~~ Fait à Paris le huit decembre mil huit cents quarante sept. Eloi Johanneau.

[71] Johanneau had named M. Fromage as one of his executors in his will of 1836. I do not know how the two men knew each other.

[72] 'Succession; inventaire apres décès d'Eloi Johanneau, ancien conservateur des monuments d'art des résidences royales, demeurant place des Vosges, n°9' (Paris, 11 November 1851), Minutes et répertoires du notaire Marcel CHANDRU, Archives Nationales, MC/ET/III/1574.

[73] *Catalogue des livres et des manuscrits de feu M. Éloi Johanneau, Homme de lettres, l'un des fondateurs de l'Académie celtique, membre de plusieurs sociétés savantes et ancien conservateur des monuments d'art des résidences royales, Dont la vente se fera le Lundi 5 juillet 1852, et jours suivants, à 7 heures précises de relevée, Rue des Bons-Enfants, 28, Par le ministère de Me Seigneur,*

There is nothing to suggest that Johanneau knew of the *Cymbalum mundi* before late 1828.[74] Soon after this date, however, he acquired and read a copy of CM 1732.[75] Flush with the fame which his edition of Rabelais had won him, Johanneau probably realized immediately that there was a *clef* to be written on the *Cymbalum mundi* too. This possibility was all the more irresistible for the presence of the paragraph-series in CM 1732, which gave the lineaments of a hidden impious message that was lurking under the surface of the four dialogues.

His first discovery—and, it must be said, the only correct one among many dozens that he made in the *Cymbalum mundi*—was the pair of anagrams *Du Cle[n]ier* = *Incredule* and *Tryocan* = *Croyant*. Everything else that he devised afterwards was built on the foundation of these anagrams, which he took for proof that the *Cymbalum mundi* was a book that concealed a secret atheist message. It is clear that he had worked them out by March 1829, but the rest of the details of the *clef* at this stage cannot be exactly reconstructed. This is because, to Johanneau's later sorrow, he did not write down any datable copy of the *clef*, or any datable evidence that he had discovered any particular element of it.

Instead, he began distributing it to his learned friends. The first of these was his patron the Baron de Schonen. In late March 1823, Schonen thanked him for informing him about the *clef*, and mentioned that he had passed it on to his own friend Eusèbe Salverte.[76] Around the same time, Johanneau also told the famous author Charles Nodier about it: a decision he would later come to regret very sorely. Nodier expressed interest in it, and when Johanneau realised that he owned a copy of CM 1538, he wrote to him asking for some orthographical clarifications on the basis of his text.[77] Johanneau also asked both Nodier and Schonen to find him a publisher. Nodier seems to have ignored the request, but Schonen seems to have searched earnestly for a publisher, but in vain.[78] Johanneau then tried to get Schonen to read

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Commissaire-priseur rue Favart, 6 (Paris: J.-F. Delion, 1852); *Catalogue d'une collection de livres, de lettres autographes et de Manuscrits, renfermant sur la Linguistique, l'Archéologie & l'Histoire littéraire, etc., une série de documents curieux, provenant de plusieurs Cabinets, dont la vente aura lieu chez M. Jannet, Maison Silvestre, Rue des Bons Enfants, N° 28, le mercredi 20 et jeudi 21 juillet 1853, à sept heures du soir. Par le ministère de M° Ridel, Commissaire-Priseur, rue Saint-Honoré, 335, assisté de M. Charavay* (Paris: Charavay, 1853).

[74] In his letter to Grille dated 8 August 1828, cited above, he made no mention of the *Cymbalum mundi* among the other keys which he had composed.

[75] This heavily annotated copy—which I have not been able to track down—is listed in *Catalogue des livres et des manuscrits de feu M. Éloi Johanneau*, p. 37.

[76] Schonen to Johanneau, 23 March 1829, Archives départementales de Loir-et-Cher [AdLC], 1 J 321/9.

[77] A draft of this letter, dated 27 March 1829, is stored in AdLC, 1 J 321/10.

[78] See Schonen to Johanneau, 2 April 1829, AdLC, 1 J 321/9.

his *clef du Cymbalum* to various members of the Martignac and then the Polignac ministry, but here Schonen dragged his feet, in part because he thought it would be a mistake to associate oneself too closely with Des Periers' impiety.[79] By August, Schonen had begun to despair of ever having the *Cymbalum mundi* printed.[80] (The tone of his letters suggests that he felt this as a personal frustration, and that he really admired his learned friend Johanneau.) A year passed and Schonen was himself swept into government by the July Revolution, whereupon he admitted to Johanneau that he had no time anymore to concern himself with literature.[81] Nor did Eusèbe Salverte, to whom Johanneau had also applied, offer any help with the *clef*'s publication.[82] In 1832, Adrien Beuchot, who was preparing to edit CM 1770 for his complete edition of Voltaire, wrote to Johanneau in 1832 for advice about Voltaire's interpretations of Venus' letter in the third dialogue.[83] Johanneau responded predictably by asking him too to find him a publisher:[84]

> I will profit from [your interpretations] and cite you too, if you ever find me a publisher for my *clef*. Charles Nodier, Eusèbe Salverte, Schonen, and others will tell you how satisfied they have been with it. But this will not prevent it from rusting in my drawer—like many other *clefs* which I could offer to the curious—because nobody comes to ask me for them, and because I don't have the courage to sell them door to door. I have buried treasures in my house, and I will die on top of them like a miser, regretting that I never let anyone else enjoy it.[85]

Finally, Johanneau despaired of having his work on the *Cymbalum mundi* published on its own. He wrote to Francisque Michel as a possible scientific collaborator, and the two worked together in the spring and summer of 1832.[86] In the meantime, he wrote directly to a potential publisher, who began making preparations for the edition and even supplied a manuscript

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[79] See Schonen to Johanneau, 11, 12, 18 May, AdLC, 1 J 321/9.
[80] Schonen to Johanneau, 19 August 1829; 27 November 1830, AdLC, 1 J 321/9.
[81] 'Les tems son bien mauvais pour faire de la philologie', he wrote. Schonen to Johanneau, 25 October 1830, AdLC, 1 J 321/9
[82] Salverte to Johanneau, 8 August 1829, AdLC, 1 J 321/9.
[83] See Beuchot to Johanneau, 12 January and 29 April 1832, AdLC, 1 J 321/9; also Beuchot, ed., *Œuvres de Voltaire*, vol. XLIV (Mélanges, X) (Paris: Lefèvre, 1832), p. 466, n. 1.
[84] Johanneau to Beuchot, 13 January 1832, BnF NAF 25136.
[85] 'Je n'en désire pas moins que vous cherchiez à expliquer le perroquet, le corbeau, la pie, le singe et la guenon; j'en profiterai en vous citant, si jamais vous me trouvez un éditeur de ma clef. Charles Nodier, Eusebe Salverte, Schonen &c. vous diront combien ils ont été satisfaits. Ce qui n'empêchera pas qu'elle ne se rouille dans mon tiroir, comme bien d'autres clefs que je pouvois offrir aux curieux, parcequ'on ne vient pas me les demander, et que je n'ai pas le temps ni le courage d'aller les offrir de porte en porte, ainsi que mes autres écrits. J'ai des trésors enfouis chez moi, et je mourrai dessus, comme l'avare en regrettant de n'en avoir pas faict jouir les autres.'
[86] See Michel to Johanneau, 28 March 1832, AdLC, 1 J 321/9; and Johanneau to Michel, 18 July 1832, BnF, MS NAF 6841, fol. 147.

copy of CM 1538_i to Johanneau.[87] But for one reason or another the plan was abandoned by the end of 1832, and Johanneau gave up his quest to publish his *clef* of the *Cymbalum mundi*.

THE MAGPIE

One of the first people to whom Johanneau revealed his *clef* of the *Cymbalum mundi* had been his friend Charles Nodier. Nodier was excited by it, and wrote both to Éloi Johanneau and also to several of his friends to expressing his admiration.[88] In the early 1830s, he admitted freely and frequently that Johanneau had been its author.

Nodier had already been interested in the *Cymbalum mundi* in his own right. As early as 1821, he had named a horse in his novella *Smarra* 'Phlégon', which he had probably borrowed from name of the horse in the third dialogue. Nodier also described *Smarra* as the translation of a discovered Slavonic manuscript, and gave its supposed translator the anagrammatic pseudonym *Maxime Odin* (a near-anagram of *Nodier*). Both of these devices were borrowed from the letter of Du Clevier to Tryocan.[89] Later, in an essay of 1830, Nodier referred explicitly to the second dialogue of the *Cymbalum mundi* as a polemic against the existence of any absolute truth.[90] This observation came straight from the paragraph-series, and owed nothing to Johanneau's *clef*. Nodier's interest in the *Cymbalum mundi* can generally be characterized as literary and bibliophilic rather than philosophical or historical. He owned a sumptuous manuscript copy of CM 1538_i, and at some point acquired CM 1538_{ii} itself, which was then the only copy of an early edition still in private hands.

Beginning in 1834, however, Nodier began to publish Johanneau's discoveries. First, in a little booklet on *livres-à-clef*, he referred to the malicious allegory of the *Cymbalum mundi* that had been hidden by a simple anagram, which Éloi Johanneau had been clever enough to discover.[91] He did not, however, say what this anagram was. A short time later, he dismissed the *Cymbalum mundi* as a rather boring text, and also the editors of CM 1753 for annotating it too heavily.[92] But then, in 1836, he published Johanneau's anagrams for the first time, without attribution, in a short *clef* in his *Bulletin des Bibliophiles*.[93] The rest of the *clef* was derived entirely from the notes in CM 1753, like the equation of Curtalius with Benoît Court (from the

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[87] See Silvestre to Johanneau, 21 Mai 1832, AdLC, 1 J 321/9.

[88] One of these was Louis-Aimé Martin, who told Johanneau that Nodier had praised his *clef* to him; see Martin to Johanneau, 17 March 1832, AdLC, 1 J 321/9. See also Nodier's direct statements to Johanneau in his letter dated 6 February 1830; printed in Charles Nodier, *Études*, ed. Jacques-Rémi Dahan, pp. 413–415.

[89] Charles Nodier, *Smarra, ou les Démons de la nuit, songes romantiques, traduits de l'esclavon du comte Maxime Odin* (Paris: Ponthieu, 1821).

[90] Charles Nodier, 'Miscellanées, variétés de philosophie, d'histoire et de littérature, extraites d'un livre qui ne paraîtra point', *Revue de Paris* 21 (December 1830): pp. 141–163 [151–153].

[91] Charles Nodier, *De quelques livres satyriques et de leur clef*, vol. II (Paris: Techener, October 1834), pp. 4–5.

[92] Charles Nodier, *Des auteurs du seizième siècle qu'il convient de réimprimer* (Paris: Techener, February 1835), pp. 2–3.

[93] "X", 'Clef du *Cymbalum mundi*', *Bulletin du bibliophile, petite revue d'anciens livres*, 2e série, no. 1 (January 1836).

alphabet-series) and of 'Erus' with the Resurrection (which had been insinuated by the paragraph-series).[94] Fearing perhaps an accusation of plagiarism from Johanneau, he signed it only *X*. He need not have taken this precaution, as does not seem that Johanneau was ever aware of this little note's existence. (If he had been, it would surely have figured in his later polemic against Nodier.) In any case, by this point Johanneau seems himself to have lost interest in the *Cymbalum mundi*, having lost the last hope of getting his *clef* published.

In the summer of 1839, Nodier was in a pickle. In the first place, he was in trouble with François Buloz, the editor of the *Revue des Deux Mondes*: three years earlier, he had published an article in the rival *Chronique de Paris* which broke his contract of exclusivity, to Buloz's great wrath.[95] Now he had just had to refuse Buloz's request for him to furnish an article. He was embarrassed for a replacement. Also, he needed money. He was keen to buy a new book for his collection, and was on the point of pawning his watch for the purpose. So on 31 July 1839, he wrote to Buloz with an offer: he would soon offer him an article on Bonaventure Des Periers. All he asked was an advance of one hundred francs to rescue him from his financial straits.[96] Buloz conceded, and it was left to Nodier to find something to write. Thus in a hurry

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[94] Here is Nodier's clef:

> Thomas du Clévier, pour du Clénier, par la substitution du *v* consonne (*u*) à l'*n*, qui lui est presque identique dans l'alphabet gothique. — *Thomas l'incrédule*.
> Pierre-Troycan — Pierre-Croyant.
> Byrphanes — le Roux, ou Rousselet?
> Cartalius [*sic*] — Benoit Court?
> Il est difficile de déterminer le motif de l'auteur, dans l'application de ces noms aux voleurs du livre des Destinées. A-t-il en vue les gens de Robe?
> Vestales, — religieuses.
> Druydes, — prêtres catholiques.
> Rhethulus, [sic] — Lutherus, réformateur.
> Cubercus, —Bucerus, réformateur.
> Drarig, *Girard*, Alchimiste, traducteur de Roger-Bacon.
> Trigabus, *celui qui gabe tous les trois.*
> Vertus de la pierre, — *les miracles*.
> La transformation promise par Mercure me paraît une allusion au mystère de la Résurrection.
> Le dernier paragraphe du dialogue est très remarquable.
> Erus, — Jésus.
> J'imagine qu'il y avait *Esus* dans le manuscrit.

[95] See Raymond Setbon, 'Un différend François Buloz – Charles Nodier d'après des documents inédits', *Bulletin du bibliophile* I (1979): pp. 54–62.

[96] Nodier to Buloz, 31 July 1839, Arsenal MS 15050/24. 'Mon cher ami, ¶ C'est avec un grand regret que je me suis vu oblige de renoncer à la rédaction de l'article que vous désiriez, mais il est fort urgent, et je suis dans le feu de mes travaux académiques qui ne me laissent que bien peu d'heures de liberté chaque mois. Cependant, M. [Charles] Labitte vous dira que je vous prépare un long morceau de littérature curieuse que je crois fort intéressant, et que vous pouviez annoncer sous le titre de: *Bonaventure Desperiers*. Cela prouvera que vous n'êtes pas à l'interdit de tous les *gens de lettres*, ou se disant tels. Il y a déjà une feuille et plus de composition, mais il me faut quelque temps pour finir. Si vous avez égard à ma bonne volonté, vous me le procurez bien sensiblement en me faisant avancer *cent francs* par M. Dupuis. J'en ai grand besoin pour acheter à côté de chez vous un petit livre qui me fait envie, et je répugne à mettre ma montre en gage. Faites moi un *seul mot* de réponse.

Je suis bien sincèrement à vous
Charles Nodier'

he decided to send Buloz the most interesting thing he knew about Des Periers: the *clef* that Johanneau had given him a decade before.

Nodier's article 'Bonaventure Desperiers' appeared in the October issue of the *Revue des Deux Mondes*.[97] He began by ranking Des Periers with Rabelais and Marot as one of the great literary lights of the sixteenth century. The rest of the article was a review of Des Periers' literary brilliances as they could be discerned in the *Cymbalum mundi* and the *Nouvelles recreations*. At the beginning of his discussion of the *Cymbalum mundi*, Nodier endorsed the supposed view of La Monnoye (whom he believed to be the author of the paragraph-series in CM 1753) that the book was a Lucianic satire against the Christian religion. In support of this view, he revealed the anagrams *Thomas Incrédule* and *Pierre Croyant*—not for the first time, but this time with Johanneau's name attached to them. Together, they proved that the *Cymbalum mundi* was a basically impious text, addressed by the unbelieving Thomas to the gullible Pierre. As for the problem that *Incredule* was not a perfect anagram for *Cleuier*, this discrepancy could be accounted for by positing that *Cleuier* in CM 1538 was a misreading of *Clenier* in CM 1537: a minim-confusion that was all too easy to make for someone reading gothic letters.

Now there was the matter of the discovery's rightful ownership. Nodier wrote:

> I am the publisher of the little discovery that I have just spoken of […] but I am not its owner. Though it filled my mind with sweet satisfaction when I was fifteen years old, I did not avail myself of a patent to exploit it at my leisure; and I have no wish to rob the honour of the discovery from M. Éloi Johanneau, who made it on his own account. M. Éloi Johanneau is doubtless rich enough in his own stores that he will gladly grant me this bibliographic pittance, which is not worth much more than the explanation of a charade or a rebus; for my part, I do not think that I need fear the least claim against me.[98]

The first thing to say about this statement is that it almost certainly contained a lie. Nodier cannot have discovered the anagrams when he was fifteen years old in 1795. But he was not wholly unfair to Johanneau either, as he acknowledged his independent authorship—and even his ownership—of the *clef*. Nodier had not meant any malice by his publication of the

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[97] Charles Nodier, 'Bonaventure Desperiers', *Revue des Deux Mondes*, Quatrième Série, XX (1 October 1839): pp. 329–351.

[98] 'Je suis éditeur de la petite découverte dont je viens de parler, et qui s'est refusée, je ne sais comment, au secrètes investigations de La Monnoye, si patient et si subtil à débrouiller des anagrammes, mais je n'en suis pas propriétaire. Bien qu'elle ait comblé mon esprit d'une douce satisfaction à l'âge de quinze ans, je ne me suis pas précautionné d'un brevet d'invention pour l'exploiter à mon aise, et je n'ai aucune envie d'en dérober l'honneur à M. Éloi Johanneau, qui l'a faite de son côté. M. Éloi Johanneau est sans doute assez riche de son propre fonds pour me faire avec plaisir l'aumône de cette obole bibliographique, qui ne représente guère plus de valeur que l'explication d'une charade ou d'un rébus, et je ne crois pas avoir à redouter de sa part la moindre réclamation.' Ibid., p. 337.

anagrams. He only needed information for an article that he needed to draft in a hurry, and seized on the nearest material to hand.

This was not how it seemed to Johanneau. He was not a subscriber to the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, but he caught wind of the article regardless, and asked the Baron de Schonen in February 1840 to send him a copy of it. Schonen obliged, and advised Johanneau to draft a short and pithy reply.[99] Johanneau did not follow this advice. His ducats had been taken, and his pride was too badly wounded to allow for moderation. He launched a campaign of bitter revenge against Nodier.

The first stage of his plan was to vindicate his intellectual property by finally publishing his *clef*. Having heard that the young publisher Paul Lacroix was preparing an edition of the complete works of Bonaventure Des Periers, he wrote to Lacroix in 1841 and offered him the *clef* for insertion into the edition in the form of a letter to the Baron de Schonen. Lacroix responded favourably on 5 June.[100] Johanneau was thrilled, and immediately wrote back to Lacroix with an invitation to his country house in Montreuil. In addition to the *clef*, he wrote, he could also furnish Lacroix with solid proof that Nodier had stolen it from him for his article in the *Revue des deux mondes*.[101] This was only the first of Johanneau's many attempts to establish this point before the learned world.

Lacroix did not come to dinner in Montreuil, and was in fact somewhat annoyed that Johanneau was not to be found in Paris.[102] Nevertheless he reiterated his willingness to include Johanneau's *clef* in his edition, and Johanneau offered him terms by which it could appear. First, Johanneau's name had to be announced on the title page of the edition. Second, Johanneau reserved the right to see as many rounds of proofs as he wanted, and Lacroix was forbidden from letting the edition be printed without his written approval. Third, Lacroix had to print five to six copies of the whole edition for Johanneau, plus one hundred offprints of the *clef*, so that he could distribute them to his friends. Finally, Lacroix was forbidden from having the *clef* reprinted in the future without Johanneau's consent. In a postscript, Johanneau proposed that Lacroix should in fact restrict his edition to the *Cymbalum mundi* alone, with Johanneau's notes and *clef*. Johanneau's intention with of all of these proposals was to maximise his prominence in the edition, and thus to assert his title to his discovery while also making a nice show of his erudition to the reading public.[103]

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[99] Schonen to Johanneau, 14 February 1840, AdLC, 1 J 321/9.
[100] Lacroix to Johanneau, 5 June 1841, AdLC, 1 J 321/9.
[101] Johanneau to Lacroix, 9 June 1841, Arsenal MS-9623 (2570).
[102] Lacroix to Johanneau, 22 June 1841, AdLC, 1 J 321/9.
[103] Johanneau to Lacroix, 24 June 1841, Arsenal MS-9623 (2570).

Lacroix ignored Johanneau's last proposal, but accepted the terms he had offered.[104] This was a horrible mistake. Johanneau sent him the text of his *clef* to be printed, and it went to the publisher and his printer at the beginning of July.[105] Problems began almost immediately. First, Lacroix decided to move Johanneau's letter from the beginning of the volume to after the text of Prosper Marchand's own *lettre* (which he was reprinting from CM 1753), something that caused Johanneau great irritation.[106] Then came delay: Johanneau tarried for a week on the first proofs, and when he finally sent them to Lacroix they were accompanied with an enormous number of corrections and insertions, and advice to completely abandon the original proofs and start over.[107] The *clef*, Johanneau insisted, was worth so much that Lacroix must understand the importance of printing it in its perfect state.

Lacroix was incensed, but this was only the beginning of his troubles. He had been trapped by his hasty contractual promise not to allow the edition to be printed without Johanneau's *bon-à-tirer*. First he wrote angrily to Johanneau, reminding him that the clef was only a small part of the whole edition.[108] Then he wrote ruefully, asking Johanneau why he had been treating him so harshly.[109] Still Johanneau refused to give his approval, but returned the next proofs with yet another series of corrections.[110] By September Lacroix was in despair. He had undergone a tremendous financial loss from the delay that Johanneau had imposed on him, and from the waste of all of the pages that had already been printed. He begged Johanneau '*per fas et nefas*' to give him permission to print.[111] But another few days passed, and yet again Johanneau sent corrections with his proofs. By now, Lacroix was himself being hounded by the representative of his publisher, Charles Gosselin,[112] and enlisted the printer Hennuyer to make his own appeal to Johanneau.[113] By the time the ordeal was over, Lacroix had suffered a loss of hundreds of francs.[114]

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[104] Lacroix to Johanneau, 25 June 1841, AdLC, 1 J 321/9
[105] Lacroix to Johanneau, 7 July 1841, AdLC, 1 J 321/9
[106] Johanneau to Lacroix, 17 July 1841, Arsenal MS-9623 (2570); Lacroix to Johanneau *eodem die*, AdLC, 1 J 321/9. Johanneau eventually won a compromise from Lacroix, and his letter to Schonen was printed immediately after the text of the *Cymbalum mundi*.
[107] Lacroix to Johanneau, 20 July 1841, AdLC, 1 J 321/9; Johanneau to Lacroix, 22 July 1841, Arsenal MS-9623 (2570).
[108] Lacroix to Johanneau, 24 July 1841, AdLC, 1 J 321/9.
[109] Lacroix to Johanneau, 27 July 1841, AdLC, 1 J 321/9.
[110] Johanneau to Lacroix, 27 August 1841, Arsenal MS-9623 (2570).
[111] Lacroix to Johanneau, 7 September 1841, AdLC, 1 J 321/9.
[112] Charlieu to Lacroix, 17 September [though apparently written: 9re] 1841, Arsenal MS-9668 (26), fol. 54: 'Mon cher Monsieur le cymbalum est fini vous seul en arretez la publication par les epreuves veuillez donc les rendre car j'ai hate de faire paraitre ce volume et un plus long Retard par vous me contrarirait beaucoup, je compte sur votre obligeance.'
[113] Hennuyer to Johanneau, 17 September 1841, AdLC, 1 J 321/9.
[114] Lacroix to Johanneau, 14 September 1841; AdLC, 1 J 321/9.

When it was finally published, CM 1841 looked like this:

1913–1977
Professor of French
Nottingham.
Lewis Thorpe

LE

CYMBALUM MUNDI

ET AUTRES ŒUVRES

DE

BONAVENTURE DES PERIERS,

Jonathan Nathan
Cambridge
(bought at
G. Gavid)

RÉUNIS POUR LA PREMIÈRE FOIS, ET ACCOMPAGNÉS DE NOTICE
ET DE NOTES,

PAR PAUL L. JACOB,
BIBLIOPHILE.

Avec une Lettre à M. de Schonen, contenant une Clef du Cymbalum

PAR M. ÉLOI JOHANNEAU.

i. e. Paul Lacroix
(1806–1884)
bibliothécaire de
l'Arsenal

PARIS.

LIBRAIRIE DE CHARLES GOSSELIN,
Éditeur de la Bibliothèque d'élite,
9, RUE SAINT-GERMAIN-DES-PRÉS.

1841

It contained Lacroix's modernized transcription of CM 1538_i, footnoted by Lacroix's commentary on the text and preceded by Prosper Marchand's *lettre critique*. Johanneau's *clef*, which spanned seventy-seven pages, appeared after the *Cymbalum mundi*. In his introduction to it, he claimed with enormous pride to have made a discovery that had eluded all of his dimmer predecessors:

> Needless to say I am nothing but the Oedipus—the interpreter—of this riddle of a new Sphinx; that is, of a new Rabelais. I am very far from adopting all of his beliefs; I am only revealing them, demonstrating their existence in his book, and tearing away the veil of allegory under which he has hidden them with great skill.[115]

He then explained that the *Cymbalum mundi* was an impious denial of the Christian religion. This was plain from the anagrams of *Du Clevier* and *Tryocan*, which Nodier had stolen:

> *Doubting Thomas* is thus the fictitious name under which Bonaventure hid himself in this anonymous work. This alone opens our eyes, and gives up the spirit of the work, if not the key to it. It is enough to justify the reproach of unbelief which has been applied to this little book, and also the opinion of those who see in it a satirical allegory against Christianity, despite everything that Prosper Marchand alleges to establish the contrary opinion.[116]

Johanneau now took the opportunity to point out a mistake in Nodier's analysis of the anagrams: as anyone could read in De Bure's catalogue, the first edition of *Cymbalum mundi* had been printed in roman, not gothic letters.[117] Therefore it was implausible that the compositor of CM 1538 had made a mistake in his transcription of the name *Clevier*.[118] The validity of the anagram must instead rest on the principle that sixteenth-century anagrammists took liberties with single letters. (As we have seen with his interpretations of Gaulish inscriptions, Johanneau was always happy to swap out one or a dozen letters in service of his interpretation.) In this case, Des Periers had purposely made his anagram

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[115] Il est inutile de vous faire observer que je ne suis ici que l'Œdipe de cette énigme d'un nouveau sphinx, c'est-à-dire d'un nouveau Rabelais, et que son interprète ; que je suis bien éloigné d'adopter toutes ses opinions ; que je ne fais que les exposer, les démontrer par le contexte de son livre, que déchirer le voile de l'allégorie sous lequel il les a cachées avec beaucoup d'art.' CM 1841, p. 80.

[116] '*Thomas incrédule* est donc le nom supposé sous lequel Bonaventure des Periers se cache dans cet ouvrage anonyme. Cela seul ouvre les yeux, en donne sinon la clef, au moins l'esprit, et justifie déjà le reproche d'incrédulité qu'on a fait à ce petit livre, ainsi que l'opinion de ceux qui y voient une allégorie satirique contre le christianisme, malgré tout ce que Prosper Marchand allègue pour établir le contraire.' CM 1841, p. 82.

[117] Guillaume-François De Bure le Jeune, *Bibliographie instrucive: ou Traité de la connoissance des livres rares et singuliers*, vol. II (Paris: Guillaume-François De Bure le Jeune, 1765), p. 295.

[118] Johanneau was correct: *Du Cleuier* is the reading of the Roman-type CM 1537 as well as the bastard-type CM 1538. But he did not consider the very likely possibility that the compositor of CM 1537 had himself misread the word *Clenier* in his handwritten copy. See Yves Giraud, 'La lettre et l'esprit: problèmes textuels et éditoriaux autour du *Cymbalum Mundi*', in *ACR2000*, pp. 23–39 [25].

imperfect in order to throw readers off his trail.[119] In fact, Des Periers had perfectly calibrated his whole allegory to be understandable to a chosen few:

> Judge now if he did not have a powerful motive for disguising his name, for pretending that his book was only the translation of an ancient work, and for covering himself in the veil of allegory by writing *Beaune wine* for *Falernian wine*, and adding *maître Gonin* to *Proteus*; in order to disguise and at the same time make known his thoughts.[120]

To disguise and at the same time make known—this would seem to be an asinine contradiction. How can Des Periers have aimed at both at the same time? The paradox can only be resolved if we suppose that Johanneau had two sets of readers in mind. First were vulgar laymen, who read the *Cymbalum mundi* without any of the required erudition. Des Periers had hidden his thoughts behind a veil from bumpkins like these. But he had revealed his attack on Christianity to anyone learned enough to understand the allegory—among whom Johanneau himself was fortunate enough to be numbered.

The *clef* itself now followed. Just like Johanneau's earlier edition of Rabelais, it was a welter of uninhibited pattern-matching. Every single character and motif in the dialogues was matched up to an historical or religious figure that Johanneau believed Des Periers to have been satirizing. Johanneau did not allow for any limits on Des Periers' ingenuity, however, and often assigned two or even three or more secret allusions to a single character. It would be impossible to describe the *clef* in its detail. But here is an illustrative sample of it:

> *Phlégon* is a horse who talks and complains about his rider. His Greek name, which belongs to one of the four horses of the Sun, is the present participle of φλέγω, 'to burn; to kindle; to set alight; to set on fire; to be burning'. It thus denotes a burnt sorrel, and must have meant the *people*, who—like this horse who kicks and talks—revolted, in Saxony first and then in all of northern Germany, against Charles V, in order to support the doctrine of Luther, and made their grievances (or rather, Remonstrances) known at the Diet of Speyer in 1529, when the Lutherans acquired the name of *Protestants*, for having *protested* against the proceedings of this assembly and that of Regensburg; and at the Diet of Augsburg in 1530, where they presented their confession of faith, and at which it was ordered by an edict of the Emperor that the religion of the Roman Church must be followed; which was followed by the offensive and defensive Schmalkaldic League among the Protestant princes, to whom Francis I associated himself. What confirms my conjectures on the meaning of this allegory is the fact that Charles V said, as you know, that he would speak Spanish to God, French to men, Italian to his mistress, English to the birds,

[119] CM 1841, pp. 81–82.
[120] 'Jugez maintenant s'il n'avait pas un puissant motif de déguiser son nom, de supposer que son livre n'était qu'une traduction d'un ouvrage ancien, et de se couvrir du voile de l'allégorie, en mettant vin de Beaune pour vin de Falerne, et en ajoutant maître Gonin à Protée, pour déguiser et en même temps faire comprendre sa pensée.' CM 1841, p. 87.

> and German to horses, or to his horse—and that this famous saying must have been known to Des Periers.
> *Statius* is the groom who rides on this horse, who directs it and abuses his power over it. His name, which denotes someone who holds himself upright and unmoving, and who desires the *status quo*, must consequently refer to Charles V or Francis I.[121]

This is all typical of Éloi Johanneau's work: the boundless accumulation of historical irrelevancies that succeed each other in almost free association, all finally declared to have been signified in the text by a tenuous allusion. Did Johanneau really think that Des Periers had based a complicated allegory on an apocryphal and fatuous saying of Charles V, which the reader was meant to recall upon reading the word *Phlegon*? Or that *Statius* meant the religious *status quo* of the Holy Roman Empire? Strange to say, there is nothing to suggest that Johanneau was anything less than fully persuaded by his own fantasies. Like all the best forgers, he could spin the flax of imagination into golden truth, and never doubt its genuineness or his own honesty thereafter.

The following table gives only an outline of the labyrinthine allegory that Johanneau detected in the *Cymbalum mundi*.

Character/Motif	**Identification**	**Explanation**
Thomas du Clevier	Thomas Incrédule	Anagram
Pierre Tryocan	Pierre Croyant	Anagram
Dabas	Lyon	downriver (*d'à bas*) of the Île-Barbe
Vin de Beaune	Sacramental wine	
Proteus/Maître Gonin	Catholic priest	Transformation (of bread and wine)
Mercury	Jesus Christ	Suggested by *Contra Celsum*
Jupiter	God the Father	
The Book of Fate	Old Testament	It is crumbling with age and needs replacing.
Chronica Rerum Memorabilium	The Pentateuch	
Fatorum præscriptum	Books of the Prophets	

[121] '*Phlégon* est un cheval qui parle et se plaint de celui qui est monté dessus. Son nom grec, qui est celui d'un des quatre chevaux du Soleil, est le participe présent de φλέγω, brûler, enflammer, embraser, mettre en feu, être ardent. Il signifie donc un alezan brûlé, ardent, et doit désigner le peuple, qui, comme ce cheval qui rue et parle, se révolta, en Saxe d'abord, puis dans presque toute l'Allemagne septentrionale, contre Charles-Quint, pour soutenir la doctrine de Luther, et fit entendre ses doléances ou plutôt ses remontrances à la diète de Spire en 1529, où les luthériens acquirent le nom de *protestants*, pour avoir *protesté* contre les actes de cette assemblée et de celle de Ratisbonne; et à celle d'Augsbourg en 1530, où ils présentèrent leur confession de foi, et dans laquelle il fut ordonné encore, par un édit de l'empereur, de suivre la religion de l'Eglise romaine, lequel fut suivi de la ligue offensive et défensive de Smalkalde entre les princes protestants, à laquelle s'associa François Ier. Ce qui confirme mes conjectures sur le sens de cette allégorie, c'est que Charles-Quint disait, comme vous savez, qu'il parlerait espagnol à Dieu, français aux hommes, italien à sa maîtresse, anglais aux oiseaux, allemand aux chevaux ou à son cheval, et que ce mot célèbre devait être connu de des Periers.
'*Statius* est le palefrenier qui monte ce cheval, qui le gouverne, et abuse de son pouvoir sur lui. Son nom, qui signifie qui se tient debout, dessus ou auprès, sans bouger, qui veut le STATU QUO, doit par conséquent désigner Charles-Quint ou François Ier.' CM 1841, pp. 116–117.

Catalogus heroum immortalium	Book of Kings + other historical books	
Byrphanes & Curtalius (considered together)	St. Peter and St. Paul	They found a new religion, equally specious, by swapping the Old Testament with a new book
Byrphanes	Claude Rousselet	*πυῤῥός* = *roux* = Rousselet
Curtalius	Benoît-Symphorien Le Court	
Curtalius (II)	Zacchaeus the tax collector	Recognizes Mercury/Christ as a god
Curtalius (III)	Judas Iscariot	Attempts to apprehend Mercury/Christ
Landlady	St Martha	Biblical hostess of Christ
Landlady (II)	Samaritan woman at the well	Unwilling to believe Mercury/Christ's promises of life
Vestal virgins	Nuns	
Druids	Doctors of the Sorbonne; monks	
Ardelio	Calvin, or King Francis I	Potential usurper of the new Gospel
Rhetulus	Martin Luther	Anagram
Cubercus	Martin Bucer (a crypto-Jew)	Anagram
Drarig	Generic alchemist	
Trigabus	Mocker of all religions (Christianity, Protestantism, Judaism, Evangelism)	*Tri* (3) - *gaber* ('to mock')
Philosopher's Stone	Tablets of the Law	Smashed into pieces
Venulus	Calvin	
Celia	Marguerite de Valois	In love with Clement Marot
Phlegon the horse	German protestants in general	
Statius	Charles V or Francis I	Statius = *status quo*
Replacement book	New Testament	Describes God's amorous sports among men
Minerva	Marguerite de Valois	
Gargabanado, Phorbantas, Sarmotoragos	Garbled nonsense; akin to the nonsense of the Mass	But J. immediately proceeds to give them individual meanings.
Gargabanado	Pack animals; i.e. the oppressed laity	'Carga ganado' (Spanish)
Phorbantas	Phorbas, son of Priam	
Sarmotoragos	The priest at the end of the procession	The Sarmatians are the rear-guard of the Cossacks [?]
Phlegon	The German people	[Vide supra]
The mare that Ardelio promises to Phlegon	Diana of Poitiers	Borrowed from Esmangart's key of Rabelais
Cerdonius	Jean Bouchet / Jean Bourdigné	
Hylactor	Clement Marot	
Pamphagus	Des Periers	
Acteon	Francis I or Henry II	
Gargilius	Louis de Brézé, royal hunter	
Diana	Diana of Poitiers	
Melanchœtes [*sic*]	Melanchthon	
Theridamas	Zwingli	

Oresitrophus	Osiander	
Prometheus	Adam	
Hercules of Libya	Jesus Christ	12 labours = 12 Apostles
Judgement of Paris	The Last Judgement	
Psaphon	Jesus Christ	
Erus	The Resurrection	

One of these identifications was particularly important in the later interpretation of the *Cymbalum mundi*: the equation of Mercury with Jesus Christ, which Johanneau traced to Origen's *Contra Celsum*:

> *Mercury*, the messenger of the gods, who descends from heaven to *Athens* to have the *Book of Destinies* rebound by order of *Jupiter*, is Jesus Christ, the messiah sent by God, who descends to earth and goes to Jerusalem to bring to it the new law, the law of life eternal, and to publish the Gospel. 'The comic poet', Celsus says to Origen (*in Orig.*, book VI, n. LXXVIII) 'wrote that Jupiter sent Mercury to the Athenians and the Spartans: and you, Christian, do you not think you are all the more ridiculous when you assure me that the son of God was sent to the Jews?'[122]

The identification of Christ and Mercury had already been proposed by the paragraph-series, but Johanneau now added a much firmer reason for believing in it. A century later, Lucien Febvre announced sententiously that Des Periers had become a convinced atheist after reading Origen's *Contra Celsum* at Estienne Dolet's prompting. It is impossible to think that he could have come to this involved hypothesis if Johanneau's *clef* had not suggested it to him. Also, by discovering the *Du Clenier-Tryocan* anagrams, Johanneau seemed to give irrefragable proof to the paragraph-series' basic hypothesis that the *Cymbalum mundi* was a secret attack on revealed religion. In so doing he revived it for a new generation, and it is still believed by some today.

Apart from these important exceptions, the actual identifications that Johanneau made were endorsed by almost no one after him. But the interpretative method that he had introduced to the book's study, the arbitrarily detailed *clef*, was imitated again and again by the *Cymbalum mundi*'s later commentators, who squabbled over the details of the correct identifications but were all agreed that allegorical scrutiny was the right method to apply to this text. Johanneau's example has been matched and even exceeded in complexity; many

[122] *Mercure*, le messager des dieux, qui descend du ciel à *Athènes* pour y faire relier tout à neuf, de la part de *Jupiter*, le *Livre des Destinées*, est Jésus-Christ, le messie, l'envoyé de Dieu, qui descend sur la terre et va à Jérusalem porter la nouvelle loi, la loi de la vie éternelle, y publier l'Évangile. « Le poëte comique, dit Celse à Origène (*in Orig.*, liv. VI, n. LXXVIII), a écrit que Jupiter envoya Mercure aux Athéniens et aux Lacédémoniens: toi, chrétien, ne penses-tu pas être plus ridicule, quand tu assures que le fils de Dieu a été envoyé au Juifs ? »' CM 1841, p. 89.

times over but most outlandishly by Henri Just, who published an interpretation of the *Cymbalum mundi* that proved Des Periers to have been a crypto-Jew who had buried the secrets of his life and thought in numerological clues.[123]

Paul Lacroix was himself convinced that the *Cymbalum mundi*'s nature was basically allegorical. This was not the result of any reflection on his own part, but was a passive endorsement of the various *clef*s of the book that he had seen. His gloss in CM 1841 consisted of a sampling of various notes which he had read in CM 1753, to which he added some of his own. It is clear from his own notes that he supported the theory of the paragraph-series, but made no major innovations on it. Lacroix, just like Charles Nodier, had no great interest in the *Cymbalum mundi*. He had been convinced by the paragraph-series, and to a lesser extent by Johanneau's anagrams, that the *Cymbalum mundi* contained a secret attack on Christianity. But this was interesting largely as a quirk that had made the *Cymbalum mundi* into a bibliographical curiosity. Both Lacroix and Nodier had freely admitted that the *Cymbalum mundi* was anti-Christian, but neither one of them was particularly interested in the philosophical or historical implications of this fact.

Therefore Lacroix stopped short of approving of Johanneau's *clef*, and even took care to play down the importance of Johanneau's discoveries in his editor's preface. He wrote: 'The discovery of the anagram that exists in the names *Pierre Tryocan* and *Thomas du Clevier* (or rather *du Clenier*) has served as the foundation of this *clef*, which is certainly ingenious, even though it aims at the elaboration of a philosophical system which belongs in its entirety to M. Éloi Johanneau.'[124] In other words, Johanneau's discovery was almost entirely limited to these two anagrams. Everything else had been a private fantasy, useless for clarifying the *Cymbalum mundi*'s real meaning. This was Lacroix's revenge on Johanneau for causing such vexing delays. His resentment lasted long, and seems only to have deepened with time. As late as 1869, Lacroix insulted the long-dead Johanneau as a mystifying quack.[125]

Johanneau's contemporaries reacted to his *clef* according to a familiar pattern. His friends to whom he had sent offprints were generally congratulatory and appreciative. One of his old colleagues from the Académie Celtique congratulated him on having struck a blow for

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[123] Henri Just, *La pensée secrète de Bonaventure des Périers et le sens du* Cymbalum mundi*: essai* (Casablanca: Imprimerie Fontana, 1948).

[124] 'La découverte de l'anagramme qui existe dans les noms de *Pierre Tryocan* et de *Thomas du Clevier* ou plutôt *du Clenier*, a servi de base à cette clef, qui est certainement ingénieuse, lors même qu'elle touche à l'exagération d'un système philosophique qui appartient tout entier à M. Éloi Johanneau.' CM 1841, p. vii.

[125] Cf. Paul Lacroix, 'Un quatrain du château d'Anet', *L'Intermédiaire des chercheurs et curieux* V, no. 114 (25 September 1869): coll. 543–548.

reason and enlightenment against scholasticism and oppression.[126] Occasionally some of them reprehended his bolder guesses. For example, the author Louis Aimé-Martin complained that Johanneau had often given several interpretations to a single motif in the *Cymbalum mundi*. Why hadn't he been able to settle on one? Furthermore, some of his proposals had been plainly ridiculous, like his suggestion that Estienne Dolet had been the illegitimate son of King Francis I. If this were true, Aimé-Martin wrote, then Francis became a father at eleven.[127] When another friend failed to respond to his gift of an offprint, a wounded Johanneau demanded an explanation for his silence. 'My *clef* of the *Cymbalum mundi*', he wrote, '[is] one of the most provocative and shocking discoveries in three centuries of vain searching—and still no response at all. What shall I do?'[128]

Meanwhile, the wider world held the *clef* in contempt. The most dismissive review was published in the *Quotidienne* by Gustave Brunet (under the initials G. B.), who took the appearance of the clef as an opportunity to comment on Johanneau's life's work.[129] Just as with his edition of Rabelais, Brunet wrote, Johanneau had proven himself to be an incorrigible fantasist who had spent his career heaping up allegories that had never existed.[130] Upon reading the review, Johanneau wrote to Paul Lacroix, the editor of the *Quotidienne*, to ask who 'G. B.' was, and why Lacroix had allowed such a hostile article to appear in his newspaper. Ten days later, a satirical review appeared in *Le Charivari* that derided Johanneau's habit of stacking up allegorical interpretations of the same phrase.[131] For neither the first nor the last time, Johanneau's wild imagination had made him a laughingstock.

The publication of his *clef* was only the first stage of Johanneau's revenge on Charles Nodier. In one of his last letters to Johanneau during their quarrel over the proofs, Lacroix wrote with annoyance that he had heard that Johanneau had been preparing a polemic against Nodier, who was his own friend and collaborator.[132] This was true. Johanneau had

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[126] Elzéar de Sabran to Johanneau, 15 November 1841, AdLC, 1 J 321/9.
[127] Aimé Martin to Johanneau, 24 November 1841, AdLC, 1 J 321/9.
[128] Johanneau to one of the Julien brothers, BnF, MS NAF 6841, fol. 22.
[129] G[ustave] B[runet], 'Revue littéraire. *Œuvres de Bonaventure Desperriers*; un vol in-12, chez Gosselin.', *La Quotidienne*, 4 March 1842.
[130] 'M. Eloi Johanneau […] donne à ce sujet une lettre de 77 pages ; M. Johanneau, philologue laborieux a, comme tous les commentateurs, le sort de croire faire de petites découvertes dont il devient passionnément épris ; il consacre toute sa carrière a *calefreter des allégories qui ne furent onques songées* ; on se souvient de son immense commentaire sur Rabelais, commentaire qui a la prétention de ne rien laisser sans une explication étendu, que sur une centaine de vers, il y a 48 pages de notes en petit-texte.'
[131] 'Le *Cymbalum mundi*—volume rempli d'esprit, mais qui a le seul défaut d'être à peu près inintelligible. Il est vrai que l'édition-Gosselin donne la clef de chaque phrase, qui est interprétée de trois ou quatre manières différentes, ce qui fait qu'on ne comprend plus rien du tout. ' 'Comment se font les livres nouveaux', *Le Charivari* XI, no. 73 (14 March 1842): pp. 1–2 [2].
[132] Lacroix to Johanneau, 14 September 1841, AdLC, 1 J 321/9.

already begun writing to his friends to collect epistolary evidence of his original discovery of the anagrams *Du Clevier* and *Tryocan* in early 1829.[133] By early 1842, a few months after CM 1841 had been published, he assembled the evidence into a satirical placard that exposed Nodier's plagiarism. (Nodier had just been caricatured in *Le Charivari* in April 1842, and Johanneau intended his satire as a supplementary commentary on the sketch.)[134] It contained the excerpt of Nodier's 'Bonaventure Desperiers' of 1839 in which Nodier had boasted of discovering the *clef* at the tender age of fifteen. Underneath, in clear contradiction to that statement, were extracts from Nodier's letters of 1829 that proved that he had then acknowledged Johanneau's discovery of the *clef*.[135] Johanneau had it printed privately on a single sheet, and distributed it to his friends.[136]

Johanneau also offered a modified text of the placard for publication to Jean Luthereau, the editor of the *Revue de la Province et de Paris*.[137] In response, Luthereau wrote an article on the dispute between Johanneau and Nodier,[138] and even advertised Johanneau's forthcoming lampoon in an issue of the *Revue*;[139] but it never appeared. Feeling himself trapped between the feuding men, he was apparently reluctant to print anything that openly attacked Nodier on Johanneau's behalf, and temporised by continually asking Johanneau for more epistolary documentation.[140] Eventually the attentions of both men were absorbed by a new controversy over a medieval inscription, during which Luthereau mediated a quarrel between Johanneau and several other scholars in the pages of the *Revue*.[141] Only after Nodier

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[133] Most of Johanneau's enquiries do not survive, see the reply from Schonen (10 November 1841, AdLC, 1 J 321/9).
[134] '[Charles Nodier]', *Le Charivari* XI, no. 115 (25 April 1842): p. 3.
[135] 'Panthéon charivarique', AdLC, 1 J 321/10 (annotated in Johanneau's hand). There is also a copy in the Bibliothèque Sainte-Geneviève.
[136] One of these friends showed it to Louis Lacour, who was convinced by it that Nodier had stolen the *clef* from Johanneau. See CM 1856, vol. I, p. lxviii, n. 1.
[137] The beginning of their correspondence does not survive, but see Johanneau to Luthereau, 18 May 1842, BnF, MS NAF 6863, foll. 12–13.
[138] J[ean] G[uillaume] A[ntoine] L[uthereau], 'Clé du Cymbalum mundi, de Bonaventure des Périers', *Panthéon de la Jeune France [Revue de la Province et de Paris]* 2, no. 11 (15 January 1842): pp. 239–242.
[139] See Jean Guillaume Antoine Luthereau, 'Encore le *Cymbalum mundi*', *Panthéon de la Jeune France [Revue de la Province et de Paris]* 2, no. 12 (15 February 1842): p. 294.
[140] This is evident from Johanneau's letters to him of 3 February 1844 (BnF, MS NAF 6863, fol. 29) and 12 May 1844 (BnF, MS NAF 6841, fol. 53).
[141] See Éloi Johanneau, 'Lecture et explication de l'inscription gravée sur la cloche de Beaune-la-Rollande en Gâtinais', *Revue de la Province et de Paris* VI (1843): pp. 40–45; Anatole Dufaur, vicomte de Pibrac and Jean Guillaume Antoine Luthereau, 'Correspondance de la Revue de la Province', ibid.: pp. 189–196; Paulus Reinrag [Paul-Aimé Garnier], 'Lettre à M. le directeur de la *Revue de la Province* au sujet de la cloche de Beaune-la-Rollande en Gatinais', ibid.: pp. 320–333; Jean Guillaume Antoine Luthereau, Anatole Dufaur, vicomte de Pibrac, and Chauliagon, Curé de Beaune-la-Rolande, 'Encore la cloche de Beaune-la-Rolande', *Revue de la Province et de Paris* VII (1844): pp. 59–69. For a final summary of the conflict, see Anatole Dufaur, vicomte de Pibrac, 'Mémoire sur quelques antiquités de Beaune-la-Rolande en Gatinais / Réponse à une lettre de M. Paul Garnier adressée au directeur de la *Revue de Paris et de la province* et publiée dans ce journal au mois de décembre 1843 [Séance du 19 janvier 1844]', *Mémoires de la Société Royale des sciences, belles-lettres et arts d'Orléans* VI (1845): pp.

died in 1844 did Luthereau finally print Johanneau's attack on him, and not without a preface in which he distanced himself as far as possible from the polemic, even implying that Johanneau had only written his satire in jest.[142]

THE RADICAL EDITIONS

Éloi Johanneau had written his *clef* to no political purpose. He did most of his life's work in dreamlike intellectual detachment, and though the content of this particular *clef* was plainly radical, it would never have crossed his mind that Des Periers could be enlisted into any present cause. Such literary freedom was one of the privileges of the post-Napoleonic lull of European passions. Johanneau could see the past as a fairy-palace with winding staircases and secret rooms; as an enchanted refuge from the unappreciative present. He did not consider that his lore could or should be applied to any present program, or even to any thoroughgoing intellectual theory. Johanneau denied any agreement with Des Periers' impieties, and there is no reason to suspect him of insincerity here: the satisfaction of his own vanity had been reason enough to work out and disclose the *clef du Cymbalum*.[143]

This was not true of the men who edited the *Cymbalum mundi* after the watershed year 1848. Louis de La Cour de La Pijardière, *alias* Louis Lacour, was the first of these. Born in 1832, he was a lifelong bachelor who made his career as a bibliographer; first as a librarian in Paris and then, frustrated in his career, as a departmental archivist in far-away Montpellier.[144] On 28 August 1891, he deposited a will with a notary, by which he left his literary estate to his niece in Paris. And on 7 September, a few days before his fifty-ninth birthday, he locked himself in his bedroom and suffocated himself to death with some coal burners.[145] According to one of the newspapers that reported his suicide, '[Lacour] was severely manic, and loved to make people talk about him.'[146]

233–252; Léon de Buzonnière, 'Rapport, au nom de la section des belles-lettres, sur le mémoire précédent [Séance du 16 février 1844]', ibid., pp. 253–259.

[142] Luthereau wrote: 'En insérant la pièce suivante, quelque peu hostile à un homme dont nous conservons religieusement la mémoire, nous croyons donner à la fois une satisfaction tardive à M. E. Johanneau et à la curiosité de nos lecteurs, sans nous mettre en contradiction avec les sentiments que nous avons toujours manifestés pour tout ce qui touche à l'honorable écrivain. L'attaque était d'ailleurs si peu sérieuse, que la loyauté de M. Johanneau ne lui a pas permis d'omettre, dans l'exposé de ses griefs, un passage auquel nous n'avons rien à ajouter pour la justification de Ch. Nodier.' 'Charles Nodier mis au Panthéon Charivarique, avec un commentaire variorum', *Bulletin du bibliophile, petite revue d'anciens livres* 8e série, no. 8 (August 1847): pp. 359–361.

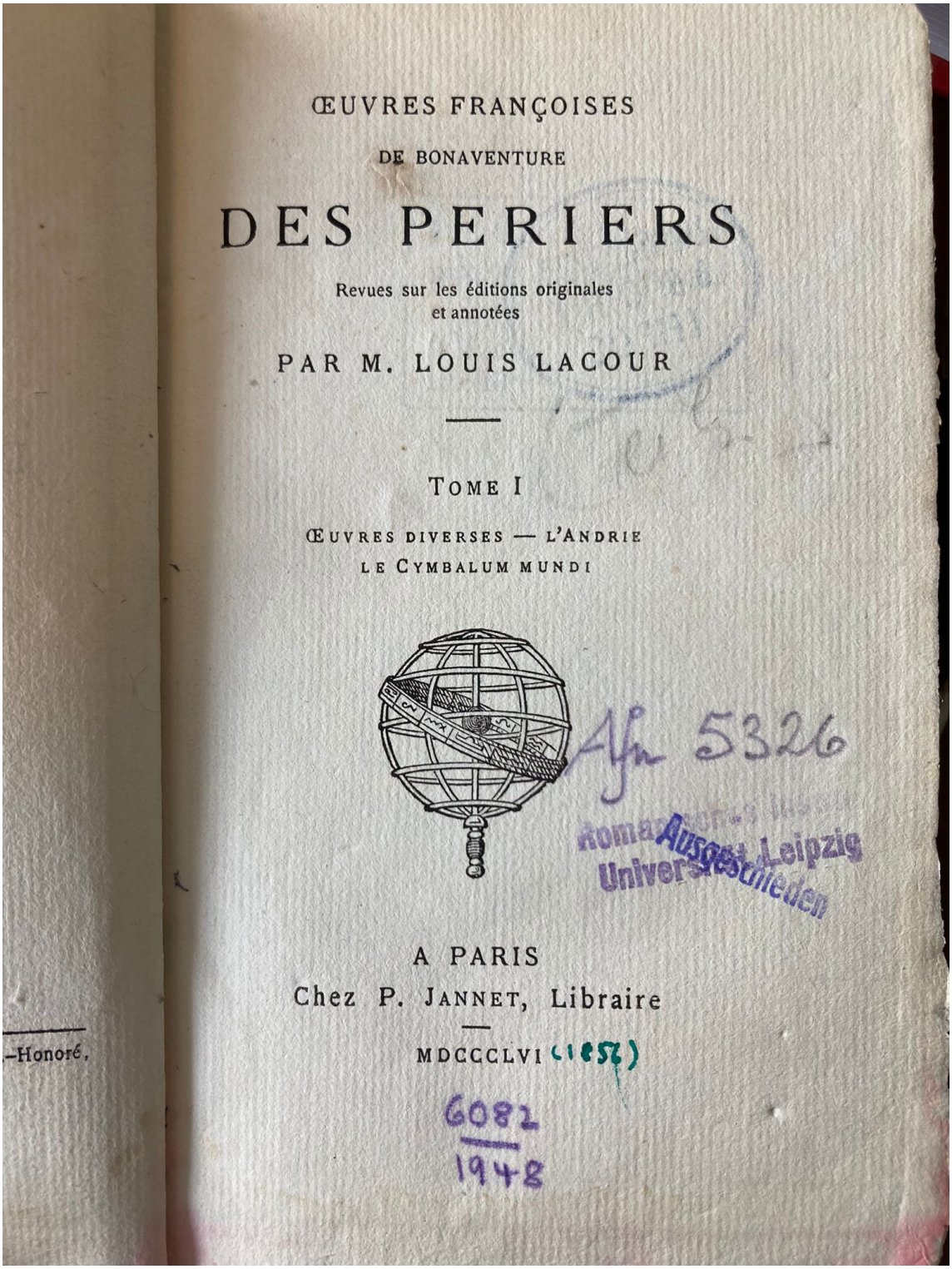
[143] See CM 1841, p. 80.

[144] For obituaries of Lacour, see Victor Fournel, 'Les œuvres et les hommes: courrier du théatre de la littérature et des arts', *Le Correspondant* CLXIV, no. 6 (25 September 1891): pp. 1145–1168 [1155–1156]; 'Nécrologie – M. Louis Lacour de la Pijardière', *Polybiblion: revue bibliographique universelle* LXII, no. 30 (November 1891): pp. 467–68.

[145] Part of the will is excerpted in 'Un document inédit sur Molière', *Le Temps*, 8 October 1893, pp. 2–3.

[146] 'Suicide d'un archiviste', *Le Matin*, 10 September 1891, p. 2. For more details, see 'Suicide d'un architecte [*sic*]', *La Justice*, 12 September 1891.

In 1856, at the age of twenty-four, he edited the complete works of Bonaventure Des Periers.[147] His edition was divided into two volumes: the first containing Du Moulin's *Recueil des œuvres*, the (possibly spurious) *Andrie*, and the *Cymbalum mundi*; and the second containing the (spurious) *Nouvelles recreations*.



ŒUVRES FRANÇOISES

DE BONAVENTURE

DES PERIERS

Revues sur les éditions originales
et annotées

PAR M. LOUIS LACOUR

TOME I

ŒUVRES DIVERSES — L'ANDRIE
LE CYMBALUM MUNDI

A PARIS
Chez P. JANNET, Libraire

MDCCCLVI (1856)

Afn 5326
Romanisches Institut
Universitätsbibliothek
Ausgest. Leipzig
6082
1948

[147] Louis de La Cour de la Pijardière, ed., *Œuvres françoises de Bonaventure Des Periers*, II vols, Bibliothèque Elzevirienne (Paris: P. Jannet, 1856).

As for the *Cymbalum mundi*, Lacour was the first man since the editor of CM 1732 to discover and collate CM 1537. (Nodier had owned CM 1538_{ii}, and Johanneau had worked from a transcription of CM 1538_{i}). But as can be gathered from my edition's critical apparatus, Lacour made almost no use of his collation, and in fact seems to have been largely uninterested in making a correct text, or even a sincere transcription of either early edition of the *Cymbalum mundi*. This was partly because he had much more to edit than only the *Cymbalum mundi*, and could not afford to waste time on painstaking textual criticism. More importantly, however, Lacour's real interests were not textual or philological, but philosophical. The first ninety pages of the first volume were filled by an elegant literary treatment of Des Periers. At its climax, he gave a complete allegorical interpretation of the *Cymbalum mundi*:

> Now the *Cymbalum* says to Christ: 'You are the prince of robbers. You had found among the Greeks and Romans, amid the superstitions of paganism, teachings of the most pure morality and the soundest reason, and you had formed them into a doctrine that could have been good: but you accompanied it with a practice so bizarre and with so many mummeries, that for fifteen hundred years we are still searching for the right way to act according to your false rules, without any hope of finding it. You are not the son of God, you have not brought the truth, and if you are indeed the son of God, then your father is a besotted old man who has never foreseen a single thing in his infinite foresight, for we have stolen his eternal book, falling into rags, which you have come to beg the earth to restore, just like you robbed the sages of ancient Greece—and neither you nor he knows what it contains. If you had brought the truth to earth, would these beggars all be disputing about which one of them possessed it? Would it have not rather been so evident that it would have blinded us unless we had bowed down before it? You have succeeded because you were sure of your speech, just as Luther with his wagging tongue succeeds today. Both of you have made use of the same means, and the Philosopher's Stone, which you said you had dispersed in the arena, was nothing but fieldstone. If the truth were known, what use would we have for lawyers or doctors? Would there be slaves who could not speak, searching in vain to regain their freedom, and masters to enjoy it all? I grant that your religion is good for some, but the truth is for everyone's advantage. There is great utility in keeping the truth hidden, but it will end up being discovered, and already it is coming to us from the antipodes, and try the interested parties as they might to hide it, stopping up the fissures in the earth, they will have to yield when she prevails everywhere.' This is the quintessence of the *Cymbalum*, all details aside.[148]

[148] 'Or le *Cymbalum* dit à Christ: « Tu es le prince des robeurs, tu avois trouvé chez les Grecs et chez les Romains, au milieu des superstitions du paganisme, des préceptes de la plus pure morale et de la plus saine raison, tu en avois fait un corps de doctrine qui pouvoit être bon ; mais tu l'as accompagné d'une pratique si bizarre et de tant de momeries, que depuis quinze cents ans nous cherchons encore, et sans espérance de pouvoir jamais nous accorder, le moyen de nous conduire d'après tes prétendues règles. Tu n'es pas fils de Dieu, tu n'a [*sic*] pas apporté la vérité, et si tu es fils de Dieu, ton père est un vieux rassotté qui n'a jamais rien prévu dans sa prescience infinie, car son livre éternel, tombant en loques, que tu viens prier la terre de remettre à neuf, nous te

Johanneau, Lacour claimed, had gone wrong on two points. First, he had been far too prodigal with his *clef*, and by discovering obscure historical references in the *Cymbalum mundi*, he had distracted from its basic message.[149] Second, Johanneau (and his editor Lacroix) had characterized the book as impious. But nothing could be more pious than the *Cymbalum mundi*:

> Would an impious book speak like this? And just because it denies the divinity of Christ, does it mean by this that there is no God, no religion at all? Far from Bonaventure Des Periers the thought of denying the presence of a creator God. His works are full of him; but he wanted God to be unencumbered from the swaddling bands in which men had wrapped him in their own image. He wanted God to be great and just, and for us to aim all of our efforts at reaching knowledge of him by the search for the truth.[150]

In support of this contention, Lacour also remarked that Des Periers had concluded his poem *Du voyage à Nostre Dame de l'Isle*[151] with the formula TOVT À VN, which he took for an expression of anti-Trinitarianism.[152] True, Des Periers had denied Christianity, but only for the greater glory of God. To serve the Creator was no impiety. Lacour's proofs of Des Periers' heterodoxy were not particularly original: in fact, he advanced almost nothing new that had not already been found in the paragraph-series and in CM 1841. Only instead of atheism as Calvin and Johanneau had thought, Lacour hypothesized that a kind of Robespierrean deism had been Des Periers' ideal replacement for Christian belief.[153]

To this Lacour added a biographical reflection on Des Periers. Educated in the Catholic church, he had been imbued at first with Catholic beliefs: but later, under the spell

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le volons comme tu as volé les sages de l'ancienne Grèce, et ni toi ni lui n'avez su ni saurez ce qu'il contient. Si tu avois apporté la vérité sur la terre, seroient-ils, ces bélîtres, à se disputer tous à qui la possède ? N'eût-elle pas été si évidente qu'elle nous eût aveuglés si nous ne fussions prosternés devant elle ? Tu as réussi parce que tu avois la parole sûre, comme Luther réussit aujourd'hui, qui a la langue bien pendue. Tous deux vous vous êtes servis des mêmes moyens, et la pierre philosophale, que tu dis avoir semée dans l'arène, n'étoit que pierre des champs. Si la vérité étoit connue, qu'aurions-nous besoin d'avocats ni de médecins ? Y auroit-il des esclaves à ne pouvoir parler, cherchant en vain à reconquérir leur liberté, et des maîtres à jouir de tout ? Je le conçois, ta religion est bonne pour le profit de quelques-uns; mais la vérité est à l'avantage de tous. Il y a utilité pour beaucoup à ce que la vérité reste cachée ; mais on finira par la découvrir, et déjà des antipodes elle nous arrive, et les intéressés ont beau masquer, estouper les fissures, il faudra céder lorsqu'elle se fera jour de toutes partes. » 'Telle est la quintessence du *Cymbalum*, tous détails écartés.' Ibid., pp. lxviii–lxix.

[149] Ibid., vol. I., p. lxvii, n. 3.

[150] Est-ce un livre impie qui parleroit de la sorte ? Et parce qu'il nie la divinité de Christ, veut-il dire par cela qu'il n'y a point de Dieu, qu'il n'y a point de religion ? Loin de Bonaventure Des Periers la pensée de nier la présence d'un Dieu créateur, son œuvre est pleine de lui ; mais il le veut débarrasé des langes dont les hommes enfants l'ont enveloppé à leur image ; il le veut grand et juste, et que tous nos efforts soient d'arriver à sa connoissance par la recherche de la vérité.' Ibid., pp. lxix–lxx.

[151] Du Moulin, *Œuvres* (1544), pp. 52–58.

[152] CM 1856, p. lxx, n. 1.

[153] An American M.A. thesis seems to have revived this theory in the twentieth century. Unfortunately, the only copy of it seems to have gone missing, so we have only a title to judge its contents by: Mary Elizabeth Klingner, 'Deism in Bonaventure Desperiers and Jean Bodin' (M.A., University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1936).

of Greek literature, he had come to doubt their worth. Eventually his speculations led him to reject the Roman Church, and then the reformers too, who were equally fatuous pretenders to the truth. [154] Alone in his generation, Des Periers had discovered the barrenness of the Christian faith. He had found in its place the holy truth of the eternal God, but hidden it under a screen of playfulness from the 'intellectual eunuchs' who surrounded him.[155] Perhaps Lacour was influenced in his portrait of Des Periers by his own troubled loneliness. And though his own suicide lay many years in the future, perhaps he already felt a secret sympathy with the man who had killed himself after failing to find hearth or fellow in the world.

Lacour's introduction to CM 1856 was reprinted the following year in the very last issue of the *Revue philosophique et religieuse*, which was published in January 1858.[156] According to Lacour himself, the article was so scandalous that it caused the *Revue* to be permanently banned, and all copies of its last issue to be destroyed.[157] In a romantic flourish, Lacour likened its fate explicitly to the very earliest editions of the *Cymbalum mundi*, which had been so thoroughly eradicated that only three copies survived. This was based on a misconception. First, there is nothing to suggest that the authorities caused any issues of the *Revue* to be destroyed; and in fact there are many copies of both the December and January issues still surviving.[158] Second, Wolfgang Boerner has shown that the authorities' suspicion of the *Revue* had nothing at all to do with Lacour's article on the *Cymbalum mundi*.[159] The editor of the *Revue* was indeed investigated by a public prosecutor; not, however, concerning the issue containing Lacour's contribution, but rather the foregoing issue of December 1857, which contained some unrelated blasphemous material. Lacour, it seems, had been so enthralled by the possibility of his own writings' being forbidden that he allowed himself to see censorship when it was not really there. We have already seen many such cases.

Lacour's interpretation of the *Cymbalum mundi* had an afterlife outside of CM 1856 itself and its second edition CM 1874. In 1858, Paul Lacroix published a second edition of the *Cymbalum mundi*. According to the terms of his summer-1841 contract with Johanneau, Lacroix

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[154] CM 1856, pp. lix–lxii.
[155] Ibid., p. lxxi.
[156] Louis Lacour, 'Bonaventure Des Periers et le *Cymbalum Mundi* d'après de récentes recherches', *La Revue philosophique et religieuse* IX, no. [2] (January 1858): pp. 233–267.
[157] CM 1874, vol. I, p. XVI, n. 1.
[158] WorldCat lists copies in several major university libraries, including the Universidad Complutense, Penn State, Princeton, McGill, and the University of Manitoba.
[159] Wolfgang Boerner, *Das "Cymbalum mundi"* (1980), pp. 35–36. Boerner did not observe the fact that Lacour's article was merely a reprint of the introduction to CM 1856. Perhaps unaware of Boerner's demonstration, Guy Bedouelle reproduced it twenty years later in 'Le *Cymbalum Mundi* au XIXe siècle', op. cit., pp. 132–134. Bedouelle cited three modern repetitions of the error, but neither he nor Boerner seems to have noticed that Lacour himself was the first to assert it.

had been forbidden from reprinting the *clef* without Johanneau's express permission, and since Johanneau died in 1851 it was now impossible to do so. (Lacroix probably also resented Johanneau so much that he might not have printed the *clef* in his later edition of 1858 even if he had been allowed to.) Despite the debacle of CM 1841, however, Lacroix had preserved his longstanding interest in Bonaventure Des Periers. He included a biography of him in the album of historical dress which he published in 1852, and to accompany it he even commissioned a (probably fanciful) lithograph portrait of Des Periers from the artist Léopold Massard.[160]

CM 1858 was the first edition to unite the *Cymbalum mundi* and the *Nouvelles recreations* in a single volume. In its introduction, Lacroix endorsed Lacour's basic interpretation of the *Cymbalum mundi* without any reservations.[161] (Lacour cited this endorsement triumphantly in the 1874 revision edition of his edition.)[162] CM 1858 (to be precise, the variant CM 1858b) then became and remains the most widely reprinted edition of the *Cymbalum mundi*. Garnier Frères republished it almost unmodified in 1872, and then again several times in the twentieth century. This ensured that the views of Éloi Johanneau, Charles Nodier, Louis Lacour and Paul Lacroix himself were distributed to a wide readership, with Lacour's interpretation endorsed explicitly as the most authoritative. Until the publication of Peter Nurse's CM 1958 exactly one hundred years later, it remained the most popular and widely cited text of the *Cymbalum mundi*, especially by literary laymen.[163]

Specialist scholarship, however, soon took a new direction. Though there was a hint of social criticism in it, Lacour's description of Des Periers' message had been mostly philosophical, and rather vague at that.[164] The last stage in the *Cymbalum mundi*'s radical interpretation was only reached by Félix Frank (1837–1895), a man whose mind was far more

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[160] See *Costumes historiques de la France*, vol. IV (Paris: Administration de Librairie, 1852), pl. 68, p. 71. According to Lacroix, the hand-coloured lithograph was 'drawn from the portfolios of [François-Roger de] Gaignières' (p. 71). I have not been able to find the exact model in Gaignières' collection of portraits from the court of Francis I. Possibly the lithograph represents a composite of several figures in the volumes covering the courts of Charles VIII, Louis XII, and Francis I.

[161] 'M. Lacour, dans sa Notice sur Bonaventure Des Periers (p. LXIII et suiv.), expose et compare avec infiniment d'esprit et de raison les opinions contradictoires de tous les critiques qui ont formulé un jugement sur la valeur philosophique du *Cymbalum*. M. Lacour nous donne à son tour la quintessence de ce livre (p. lxviii) et nous n'hésitons pas à reconnoître qu'il a vu clair dans ces ténèbres d'allégorie, où les plus grands esprits étaient restés aveugles ; il résume ainsi ce morceau remarquable de discussion littéraire : « loin de Bonaventure Des Periers la pensée d'un Dieu créateur : son œuvre est plein de lui… »' CM 1858, pp. XXXIX–XL, n. 2.

[162] CM 1874, vol. I, pp. XXIX–XXX, n. 2.

[163] Thus the translators of CM 1910, CM 1930, CM 1936, and CM 1954 all took Lacroix's text for its basis, and also followed his example of printing the *Cymbalum mundi* and the *Nouvelles recreations* together.

[164] The same can be said of the rambling account of Charles Lenient, *La satire en France ou la littérature militante au XVIe siècle* (Paris: L. Hachette, 1866), pp. 39–47. Des Periers, he claimed, was an esoteric satirist and a scoffer: but he had the hypos, and could never have worked himself up to expounding or defending a coherent system.

zealous and collected than either Lacour's or Johanneau's.[165] His political and religious convictions do not need to be guessed, because he stated them explicitly and forcefully on many occasions. In the first place, he was a fervent anti-Christian, and an aesthete who wrote savagely against religious suppression of love and beauty.[166] He also hated the Emperor. Though during the war of 1870 he heaped scorn on the Germans out of his love for France, the first object of his wrath was Napoleon, who had wrecked the Second Republic and brought the war about in the first place.[167] There is, however, no evidence to suggest that Frank had any sympathy for the Paris Commune, any more than did his intellectual ally Émile Zola.[168] He did not see it as the avant-garde of the liberal cause, but rather as one more destructive plague which the Franco-Prussian war had unleashed.[169] Frank's convictions were basically republican and anti-clerical, and extremely patriotic.

This is all evident in his edition of the *Cymbalum mundi*, which he had published immediately after the establishment of the Third Republic. His introduction was a fierce attack on Lacour for seeing a god-fearing man in Bonaventure Des Periers. No, the *Cymbalum mundi* was atheist, and bitter in its disdain for the worshippers of a false God. It was no accident that it consisted of four dialogues. These were mirrors of the four Gospels, of which the *Cymbalum mundi* was a parody:

> The *Cymbalum mundi* is an *Anti-Gospel*: Bonaventure's four Dialogues are the *Four Gospels* which he offers to the world; the *creed* of the future is contained in them; the satire is pregnant with a *revelation*.[170]

In support of this interpretation, Frank paid extremely scrupulous attention to the text of CM 1537, which he had attempted to reproduce so exactly that he even observed the distinction between **ſ** and **s**. He also consciously adopted many of CM 1537's apparent typographical errors, for such misprints, Frank believed, were usually quasi-kabbalistic clues

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[165] For an (admiring) literary portrait of Frank, see Auguste Dietrich, 'Les Hommes de la *Jeune France* : Félix Frank', *La Jeune France* VIII, no. 85 (August 1885): pp. 3–24.
[166] See Félix Frank, *La Chanson d'amour: poésies* (Paris: G. Charpentier et Cie, 1885).
[167] See his books *La Horde allemande* (Paris: Alphonse Lemerre, 1870); and *Chants de colère* (Paris: Alphonse Lemerre, 1871).
[168] In 1885, Zola dedicated a copy of *Germinal* to Frank; see the auction lot: Hôtel des Ventes de Monte-Carlo, 'Lot 303—ZOLA (Émile). *Germinal.* Autre exemplaire du même ouvrage. In-12, demi-chagrin vert bronze à coins, dos à nerfs orné, couverture jaune conservée (reliure mi-XXe s.).', Library of an Amateur: Manuscripts, Ancient Books, Literature XIXth & XXth centuries, 22 February 2020, https://web.archive.org/web/20210312205553/https://hvmc.auction.fr/_en/lot/zola-emile-germinal-autre-exemplaire-du-meme-ouvrage-in-12-demi-chagrin-16336003.
[169] For an explanation of this point of view, see Henry H. Weinberg, 'Zola and the Paris Commune: The *La Cloche* Chronicles', *Nineteenth-Century French Studies* VIII, no. 1/2 (1980): pp. 79–86.
[170] 'Oui, je le répète, le *Cymbalum* est un *Contre-Evangile*; les quatre Dialogues de Bonaventure sont les *Quatre Evangiles* qu'il offre au monde ; le *symbole* de l'avenir y est contenu ; la satire est grosse d'une *révélation*.' CM 1873, p. LXI.

to the Des Periers' hidden meaning. For instance, the magic words *Gargabanado Phorbantas Sarmotoragos* which Mercury utters at F_{ii} v. 24–25 were to be analysed as *Πάντα γὰρ ἀδῶ φόρβαντας Σαρκομοραγός*, which could be translated as Des Periers' declaration to his readers: 'yea I, the leader of human fate, give succour to them who feed all things!'[171] Meanwhile, the apparent error PHLEGON, IE CHEVAL at F_{iii} r. 3 was an intentional substitution for PHLEGON, LE CHEVAL, because it could thus be taken as an anagram for the revolutionary slogan HAINE, LEVE COL or else PAINE, LEVE COL, leaving only two letters unused.[172] Hated and suffering work-horses of the world, throw off the collars on your necks! And as for Lacour's vain attempt to prove the deism of the *Cymbalum mundi* by adducing the formula TOVT À VN, clearly this phrase was only the anagram of TOVT À NV, and signified Des Periers' devotion to the *naked* truth that there was no God.[173] Lest it be thought that these cryptogrammatic discoveries made him just as laughable as Johanneau, Frank took care to distinguish his method from his eccentric predecessors. Johanneau, he wrote, had larded his *clef* with an endless series of discoveries, making the *Cymbalum mundi* into a formless batter of historical allusions. But Frank had been far more parsimonious: he had only uncovered a *few* secret codes in the text, and these had sufficed to reveal its overall design. Here he played the part of a religious reformer who scoffs at frivolous tales saints and miracles, which can only subtract from the central mysteries of the faith. The *Cymbalum mundi* was not an argosy laden with banalities, but a severe and focused programme for subversion.[174] It was the Gospel of a new religion of free thought, and as scripture it must be understood in its purity.

Frank was also convinced that Bonaventure Des Periers, together with his similarly enlightened brethren, was one of the founders of French culture. 'They are our fathers and our masters', he wrote in CM 1873, 'and we owe everything to them: our ideas, our language and the very force that drives us forward.'[175] (He elaborated the linguistic element of this statement when, ten years later, he collaborated on a lexicon to the works of Des Periers.)[176] This literary truth had great political importance. Frank's political enemies—the party of church and monarchy—claimed themselves to be the heirs to France's thousand-year tradition. But in fact, the true Frenchmen of old were the free-thinkers; the subversive

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171 CM 1873, pp. 106–107.
172 CM 1873, pp. LXVII, 108.
173 CM 1873, p. XLIII.
174 CM 1873, p. 109.
175 'Ce sont nos pères & nos maîtres, & nous leur devons tout : nos idées, notre langue & la force même qui nous pousse en avant'. CM 1873, p. LXXVII.
176 Félix Frank and Adolphe Chenevière, *Lexique de la Langue de Bonaventure des Periers* (Paris: Librairie Léopold Cerf, 1888).

opponents of religious oppression. The reactionaries had a spurious claim to tradition, because the spiritual fathers of France had been underground liberals.

Frank's edition of the *Cymbalum mundi* was a specialist contribution to the picture of the Renaissance which had been drawn by Jules Michelet.[177] According to this view, the Middle Ages had been a period of idiocy and intellectual enslavement, from which the Renaissance had been a sudden liberation. 'The sixteenth century was a hero', Michelet wrote, by which he meant that Rabelais, Luther and Copernicus had been godlike warriors against the lies and oppressions of the Church.[178] Frank went further than Michelet, however, in marking the Reformation off sharply from the Renaissance. To his mind, the two movements had had nothing whatsoever to do with each other. Nor, as not only Michelet but also Engels had argued, did the Reformation represent any forward progress in mankind's liberation. It was a reactionary lurch from one religious tyranny into another; a 'lateral revolution'.[179] Only Frenchmen of the true Renaissance, men like Bonaventure Des Periers, had done anything to rescue mankind from the 'Gehenna of the Middle Ages'.[180]

Félix Frank had made the *Cymbalum mundi* into a revolutionary document. His conclusions on the book were extraordinarily influential, and decisively fixed its reputation for the rest of the nineteenth century. Only one reviewer dared to point out the absurdities in Frank's anagrammatical interpretations, but he praised his edition nevertheless, and his cautions had no dampening effect on Frank's influence.[181] Indeed, though CM 1873 was only the third-most distributed edition of the *Cymbalum mundi* of its time and always rather scarce,[182] the experts on Bonaventure Des Periers generally endorsed Frank over Lacour and Lacroix as having given the last word on the *Cymbalum mundi*. Thus Alfred Cartier, in his seminal study on Jehan Morin's trial, referred his readers to Félix Frank as a scholar who had decisively solved the book's riddles.[183] So did Arsène Darmesteter and Adolphe Hatzfeld in their anthology of sixteenth-century French authors,[184] Gustave Lanson in his general history

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[177] Jules Michelet, *Histoire de France au seizième siecle. Renaissance*, Histoire de France, VII (Paris: Chamerot, 1855).
[178] Ibid., p. X. If we can forgive the strange comparison of times to men, Michelet was entirely right that the sixteenth century was a hero to the romantic generations of the nineteenth. Only it was a hero like Dietrich von Bern or Alexander, in that its legend was a bardic tale only loosely determined by underlying fact.
[179] CM 1873, p. LXXIV.
[180] Ibid.
[181] See *Revue critique d'histoire et de littérature* IX, no. 25 (19 June 1875): pp. 398–399.
[182] Today, whereas it is very easy to find a cheap copy online of CM 1856, and a reasonably priced one of CM 1858, copies of CM 1873 are put up for sale only sporadically, and for about €110 each.
[183] Alfred Cartier, 'Le libraire Jean Morin et le *Cymbalum Mundi* de Bonaventure des Periers devant le Parlement de Paris et la Sorbonne', *Bulletin de la Société de l'Histoire du Protestantisme Français* XXXVIII (1889): pp. 575–588 [576].
[184] Arsène Darmesteter and Adolphe Hatzfeld, *Le seizième siècle en France: Tableau de la littérature et de la langue* (Paris: Librairie Ch. Delagrave, 1878), pp. 119–120.

of French literature,[185] Henri Hauser in an article on the Renaissance and the Reformation,[186] and Pierre-Paul Plan in his facsimile edition of the *Cymbalum mundi*.[187] Back in 1853, the Haag brothers' article on Des Periers in their encyclopaedia *La France Protestante* had given only a trifling summary of the *Cymbalum mundi* and of Johanneau's commentary on it in CM 1841.[188] But in CM 1873, Félix Frank criticised them for their dismissal of the possibility that the *Cymbalum mundi* was atheist,[189] and as a result, when the Haags' encyclopaedia was revised and republished in the 1880s, its new editor revised the article on Des Periers to include a description of the *Cymbalum mundi* as a radically anti-religious text, in line with Frank's position.[190] (Louis Lacour, for his part, completely ignored CM 1873, and it seems that he never saw a copy of it before CM 1874 went to press.) As the decades passed, and as summaries of CM 1873 became more accessible than actual copies of it, Frank's exposition of the *Cymbalum mundi*'s radical program became common wisdom. Meanwhile, Frank's bizarre and quasi-kabbalistic methods ebbed from public view, freeing their results from the ridicule and scandal that might justly have attended them.

The *Cymbalum mundi* had been feared as a subversive and atheist text in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The nineteenth century also judged it atheist: but in the eyes of Frank and the scholars whom he persuaded, its atheism was no longer frightening but comforting and enlivening. Bonaventure Des Periers had been a rebel against Christian oppression, and though he had never been able to state his views in the open, his lonely struggle against error could now be a moral example for the liberated present.

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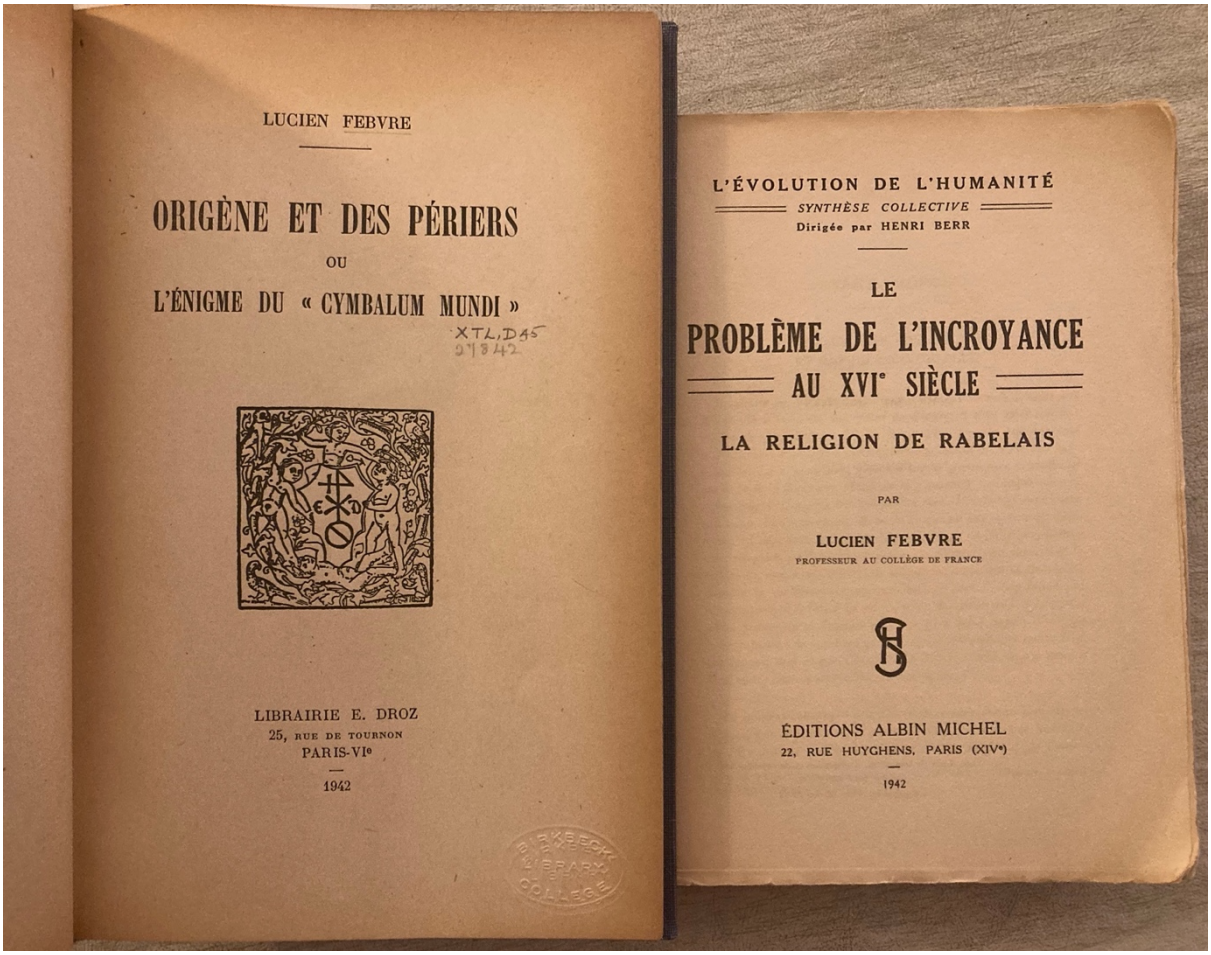
185 Gustave Lanson, *Histoire de la littérature française* (Paris: Librairie Hachette, 1894), pp. 251–252.
186 Henri Hauser, 'De l'humanisme et de la Réforme en France, 1512–1552', *Revue Historique* LXIV, no. 4 (1897): pp. 258–297 [291, n. 2].
187 Pierre-Paul Plan, CM 1914, preface, p. [4].
188 Eugène Haag and Émile Haag, 'Des Périers (Jean-Bonaventure)', in *La France Protestante*, vol. IV (Paris: Joël Cherbuliez, 1853), pp. 267–273.
189 CM 1873, p. XLI.
190 Henri Bordier, ed., 'Des Périers (Jean-Bonaventure)', in *La France Protestante*, by Eugène Haag (†) and Émile Haag (†), vol. V (Paris: Librairie Fischbacher, 1886), coll. 357–363. This change has been noticed before, but by a scholar who omitted to mention either that there were two brothers Haag, or that they had both died before the publication of CM 1873: Verdun-Louis Saulnier, 'Le sens du *Cymbalum Mundi* de Bonaventure Des Périers', *BHR* XIII (1951): pp. 43–69, 137–171 [45, n. 2].

THE RIDDLE OF LUCIEN FEBVRE

I have two books open on my desk:



They were published in the same year, 1942, and they were written by the same historian, Lucien Febvre. Both deal directly with the question of atheism in the Renaissance. In one, *Le problème de l'incroyance au XVIe siècle*, Febvre argues that there was no such thing as unbelief in the sixteenth century.[1] Not only was François Rabelais a believing Christian, but it was in fact impossible to be an atheist in his day, for both psychological and intellectual reasons.

The other book, *Origène et Des Périers ou l'énigme du « Cymbalum Mundi »*, is an offprint of a long journal article.[2] It makes a very different argument: Bonaventure Des Periers, just like

[1] Lucien Febvre, *Le problème de l'incroyance au XVIe siècle. La religion de Rabelais*, l'Évolution de l'Humanité, LIII (Paris: Albin Michel, 1942).
[2] Lucien Febvre, *Origène et Des Périers ou l'énigme du « Cymbalum Mundi »* (Paris: Libraire E. Droz, 1942); Lucien Febvre, 'Origène et Des Périers ou l'énigme du *Cymbalum Mundi*', *BHR* II (1942): pp. 7–131. The book and the article have identical pagination and can be cited interchangeably, but as the book additionally includes a bibliography and an index, I have preferred it as my reference.

his master Estienne Dolet, was a convinced atheist, and hid his attack on Christianity under the allegorical veil of the *Cymbalum mundi*'s four dialogues.

Des Periers is mentioned in *Le problème de l'incroyance* several times, but at most as an 'enigmatic' author, never as an atheist.[3] (*Origène et Des Périers* itself is even mentioned, but in connection with a minor and accessory point.)[4] Conversely *Origène et Des Périers* does not contain any discussion at all of the mental impossibility of atheism.

But the books do not only ignore each other's broad conclusions; on many points of detail they contradict each other outright. In *Le problème de l'incroyance*, for instance, Febvre had dismissed Abel Lefranc's (supposed) interpretation of Grandgousier's cry *Sitio* as a scandalous pastiche of the Gospel of John.[5] It was not an atheist blasphemy, but merely a common joke that even a pious person of the sixteenth could have told. And in *Origène et Des Périers*, he took Mercury's exclamation '*iay grand soif*' to be strong evidence of the very parallel with Jesus Christ that he had elsewhere dismissed.[6] If he had had any consistency, the Febvre of *Le problème de l'incroyance* should have deemed the Febvre of *Origène et Des Périers* a credulous fabulist. Indeed, if these books did not display the same unmistakable flamboyant idiom, their reader could be forgiven for thinking that two different men had written them.

In its opening pages of *Le problème de l'incroyance*, Febvre referred to the 'problem of the precursor', which Frédéric Rauh had already posed in the field of moral philosophy.[7] According to Rauh, it was not only practically but conceptually impossible for a person, however insightful, to make a moral discovery ahead of his time. Such an innovation would not obey the 'moral truth' that could only emerge from a given social setting. In his book, Febvre now set out to apply Rauh's principle from the realm of moral philosophy to the realm of historical belief. Someone like Rabelais could not have been an atheist, because such a belief would have no conceptual support from the thought-world of the early sixteenth century. An epistemic precursor was just as impossible as a moral precursor, for even if such a person or book could be shown to have existed, the very fact of his singularity would mean

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[3] Passing mentions aside (for which see the index, p. 537), see pp. 4–5, 15–17, 97, 177–178, 452.
[4] On p. 97.
[5] *Le problème de l'incroyance*, p. 162. Contrary to Febvre's statement both here and in *Origène et Des Périers* (p. 61), Abel Lefranc had not considered *Sitio* to be 'la pire des parodies', but had in fact written explicitly that this particular piece of ribaldry was not unusually scandalous by the standards of its time. See 'La pensée secrète de Rabelais' (cited below), p. LI, n. 2. Febvre apparently mixed Lefranc up with Éloi Johanneau, who had first brought up the passage in *Gargantua* in his *clef* to the first dialogue (CM 1841, pp. 93–94).
[6] *Origène et Des Périers*, p. 61; referring to A_{iv} r. 17.
[7] Frédéric Rauh, 'Questions de philosophie morale. Cours professé à la Sorbonne en 1906–1907', in *Études de morale*, ed. Henri Daudin et al., Bibliothèque de philosophie contemporaine (Paris: Félix Alcan, 1911), pp. 373–496 [472]; cited (defectively) in *Le problème de l'incroyance*, p. 7.

that he was an unimportant aberration in history. He would have been a dolphin in the woods; a seagoing boar.[8]

And now, if we turn to the very last words of *Origène et Des Périers*, we read:

> The *Cymbalum:* in the full force of the term, and with all its consequences for it and for its author: a precursor. The book of a precursor.[9]

'With all its consequences'—if we took Febvre at his word in his endorsement of Rauh's principles, we would have to conclude that he secretly judged Bonaventure Des Periers and his book to have been monstrous anachronisms, utterly irrelevant to the time in which they were written.[10] Are we to read *Origène et Des Périers* as a shaggy-dog yarn about an inconsequential bookworm? That would relieve the contradiction, but it would be an irresponsible inference. Febvre did not think that the *Cymbalum mundi* was pointless, but wrote portentously, even reverently and gratefully of this precursor to modern unbelief. Never mind that he had separately declared such a thing to be a monstrous anachronism and an historical impossibility.

The contradiction is even sharper than it seems at first. These two books were not only published in the same year: they were both based on lectures that Febvre had given concurrently. In the academic year 1936–1937, Lucien Febvre had given two courses at the Collège de France; one on Rabelais, and the other on Des Periers.[11] The outlines in Febvre's prospectuses for the two courses correspond closely to what he published in the books of 1942. The description of the course on Rabelais introduced all of the themes that later appeared in *Le problème de l'incroyance*, phrased in such a way as to exclude any doubt that there was no

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[8] Febvre wrote a provocative discussion of the extent to which Martin Luther was a precursor of modern Germany, in *Un destin: Martin Luther*, (Paris: Éditions Rieder, 1928), pp. 299–300. In his opinion, Luther did prefigure something of the earnest spiritual ferment to come in later centuries, never mind that he never intended any of it, or that the social and religious complexion of 'Lutheran Germany' had little in common with the world of the early sixteenth century. In the same book (pp. 53–55), he in turn dismissed the possibility that Johann von Staupitz was the precursor of Luther; a John-the-Baptist who had given the original formulation of the younger master's doctrines.

[9] 'Le *Cymbalum* : dans toute la force du terme, avec toutes les conséquences du fait et pour lui et pour son auteur : un livre précurseur. Le livre d'un précurseur.' *Origène et Des Périers*, p. 131.

[10] Something of the kind was hinted at after Febvre's death by his friend Augustin Renaudet, who explained the contradiction between Febvre's two books like this: 'Il avait affirmé l'incompatibilité de certaines formes de civilisation avec certaines formes de pensée. L'œuvre inattendue de Bonaventure des Périers, manifestement et volontairement détachée de toute croyance chrétienne, catholique ou réformée, semblait lui proposer une objection qu'il était nécessaire de résoudre. Il publia donc presqu'aussitôt Origène et Des Périers, L'énigme du « Cymbalum Mundi » ; le rationalisme théologique d'un ouvrage publié en 1537 s'accorde de façon surprenante avec des négations qui ne furent guère formulées avant le dernier tiers du siècle. Mais Bonaventure, jeune helléniste séduit par la culture païenne, venait de reconstruire à l'aide de l'apologétique et des réfutations d'Origène, les thèses antichrétiennes de Celse, et seul un « siècle qui voulait croire », les avait adoptées.' 'L'œuvre historique de Lucien Febvre', *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine* III, no. 4 (1956): pp. 257–261 [260].

[11] See 'Histoire de la Civilisation moderne', *Annuaire du Collège de France* XXXVII (1937): pp. 137–140.

possibility for unbelief in the sixteenth century.[12] And of his course on the *Cymbalum mundi*, he wrote:

> He [Febvre] has managed to definitively identify the characters in the Dialogues, to connect the book to its true sources of inspiration, and to determine precisely which ancient work had led Bonaventure Despériers to compose one of the most original and modern books of the sixteenth century.[13]

Thus already in 1936–1937, the two theses on Rabelais and Des Periers stood in contradiction to each other. Febvre never did anything to reconcile them. Five years later, when the two books were finally published, he mentioned them both in a letter to Henri Berr, but wrote of them separately, as if they had no bearing on each other.[14]

We can pose the problem another way. Febvre wrote explicitly that his occasion for writing *Le problème de l'incroyance* had been the scandal of Abel Lefranc's introduction to his edition of *Pantagruel* of 1922.[15] There, Lefranc had detected a sharp attack on Christianity in the seemingly innocuous books of Rabelais. As early as 1925, Febvre wrote to Henri Berr to explain his annoyance at such irresponsible conclusions. Lefranc's interpretation posed grave problems of method, and Febvre wanted to expose his errors in a future book.[16] The difficulty, however, is that Abel Lefranc's introduction also devoted several pages to a detailed exposition of a parallel case to Rabelais: the atheist *Cymbalum mundi* of Bonaventure Des Periers. Why didn't *that* annoy Febvre? Why did Abel Lefranc's interpretation of the *Cymbalum mundi* not only fail to infuriate him, as his views on Rabelais had done, but spur him to write a mannered and enthusiastic decryption of Des Periers' unbelief? That is the *énigme du « Cymbalum Mundi »* if there ever was one.

The problem has been noticed by many scholars but answered satisfactorily by none. Marcel Bataillon noticed the contradiction as early as 1944, and reckoned the omission of Des Periers in *Le problème de l'incroyance* to be a defect in its overall argument.[17] A month before his arrest by the Gestapo, Marc Bloch communicated a similar complaint in a private letter to

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[12] Ibid., pp. 136–138.
[13] 'Il est arrivé, il le pense du moins, à identifier avec sûreté les personnages des Dialogues, à relier le livre à ses véritables sources d'inspiration, et à déterminer avec précision quel était l'ouvrage ancien dont la lecture conduisit évidemment Bonaventure Despériers à composer un des livres les plus originaux et les plus modernes du XVIe siècle.' Ibid., p. 139.
[14] Febvre to Berr, early June 1942. Printed in *De la* Revue de synthèse *aux* Annales*: Lettres à Henri Berr, 1911–1954*, ed. Gilles Candar and Jacqueline Pluet-Despatin (Paris: Librairie Arthème Fayard, 1997), no. 555, p. 184.
[15] Abel Lefranc, 'La pensée secrète de Rabelais', in *Œuvres de François Rabelais*, vol. III: Pantagruel. Prologue—Chapitres I–XI (Paris: Édouard Champion, 1922), pp. XL–LXIX.
[16] Febvre to Berr, 27 September 1925. Printed in *Lettres à Henri Berr*, no. 105, p. 227.
[17] Marcel Bataillon, 'Le problème de l'incroyance au XVIe siècle d'après Lucien Febvre', *Mélanges d'histoire sociale* [*Annales d'histoire sociale*] V (1944): pp. 5–26.

Febvre.[18] Both of these scholars had been convinced by Febvre's exposé of the *Cymbalum mundi*'s atheism, and for that very reason they were troubled by the omission in *Le problème de l'incroyance* of any substantive reference to Des Periers. We have seen by now that the problem that bothered Bloch and Bataillon was predicated on a fiction. The *Cymbalum mundi* was simply not an atheist book, and it did not represent a legitimate counterexample to Febvre's general thesis on sixteenth-century atheism. Still, these two men were right in pointing out the contradiction within Febvre's own picture of the sixteenth century.[19] Either the thesis of *Le problème de l'incroyance* was right, or the thesis of *Origène et Des Periers* was right. To take them at their face value, they could not both be right.

Not much progress on this problem has been made since the comments of Bataillon and Bloch. Still, the contradiction they noticed has been pointed out repeatedly by other scholars for decades.[20] David Wootton mentioned it in passing in a pair of tendentious articles, in which he identified Renaissance unbelief as the heroic forerunner of the modern workers' movement.[21] But he, like Bataillon and Bloch, was concerned with the object-level question of whether there was, after all, atheism in the sixteenth century. Strangely for a scholar who purported to study the history of secret unbelief, Wootton did not give any sign of even having read the *Cymbalum mundi*—which he called a 'play'—let alone Febvre's article about it. He was content to cite Febvre's own work on the *Cymbalum mundi* as evidence against the thesis in *Le problème de l'incroyance*.

Max Gauna, for his part, argued that Lucien Febvre was fully aware of the contradiction, and wrote his book on the *Cymbalum mundi* as a sort of '*amende honorable*' for the sins against the historical tradition of unbelief that he had committed in *Le problème de l'incroyance*.[22] Needless to say, this interpretation took no account of the timeline of Febvre's work.

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[18] Bloch to Febvre, 13 February 1943. Printed in Lucien Febvre, 'Marc Bloch. Témoignages sur la période 1939–1940 : extraits d'une correspondance intime', *Annales d'histoire sociale* VIII, no. 1 (1945): pp. 15–32 [28–29].
[19] Thus they did better than one reviewer who merely remarked that Febvre's two works 'completed' each other. Henri Drouot, 'Bonaventure des Périers et l'Incroyance au XVIe siècle', *Annales de Bourgogne* XVI, no. 63 (September 1944): pp. 184–186.
[20] See Henri Busson, *Le rationalisme dans la littérature française de la Renaissance (1533–1601)*, Nouvelle édition, revue et augmentée, De Pétrarque à Descartes, I (Paris: J. Vrin, 1957), p. 11; Jean Wirth, '«Libertins» et «epicuriens»: aspects de l'irréligion au XVIe siècle', *BHR* XXXIX, no. 3 (1977): pp. 601–627 [601–602]. See also an insightful article by a crocodile on the shores of Lake Victoria: Lutembi, 'Le Problème de la Croyance au XXe siècle et la religion de M. Lucien Febvre (I)', *Cahiers du Collège de 'Pataphysique* 13–14. Rabelais Pataphysicien (1953): pp. 39–53; id., 'Suite', *Cahiers du Collège de 'Pataphysique* 15. Jarry Pantagruéliste (1953): pp. 49–57.
[21] David Wootton, 'Unbelief in Early Modern Europe', *History Workshop: A Journal of Socialist and Feminist Historians* 20 (Autumn 1985): pp. 82–100 [84]; id., 'Febvre and the Problem of Unbelief in the Early Modern Period', *The Journal of Modern History* LX, no. 4 (December 1988): pp. 695–730 [702–703].
[22] CM 2000, p. 14.

Even less successful was Natalie Zemon Davis's treatment of the problem.[23] In her article about Febvre's wartime scholarship on Rabelais, she argued that whereas *Origène et Des Periers* had been finished before the German invasion of France, Febvre had written the bulk of *Le problème de l'incroyance* during and indeed in subversive response to the Occupation. Moreover, she implied, Febvre had omitted the *Cymbalum mundi* from his discussion lest a mention of 'the impact of Sorbonnic and Parlementary censorship on contemporary writing practice' draw unwanted attention from the Nazi authorities.[24] This argument stands or falls on whether Febvre substantially remodelled the contents of his book in light of the Occupation. But Davis offered no hard evidence of this, only some circumstantial speculation. She even presented strong evidence against her own claim by citing a letter in which Febvre complained that his progress on *Le problème de l'incroyance* had been 'vexingly interrupted by events', a phrase which Davis took to be allusive subversion but was only an offhand banality.[25] Another letter undercuts her thesis even more. In September 1939, Febvre wrote to Henri Berr that he was hard at work on his Rabelais book, and that he hoped to have it finished by the first bombardment of Paris; at any rate by the start of the next term.[26] At least with respect to this book, Febvre's attitude to the war was not one of calculated resistance but of annoyance. It got in the way of his work.

Davis also made much of the fact that *Le problème de l'incroyance* bore an authorization number from the German censors, which suggested that Febvre might have avoided mentioning sixteenth-century subversion in it.[27] In contrast, *Origène et Des Periers*, which contained Febvre's discussion of oppressive censorship and Des Periers' means of thwarting it, was printed slightly before the censorship regime was installed, and did not need such a number.[28] But Davis did not show that these numbers were anything more than an administrative formality, or that Febvre had any reason to suspect that a censor would look askance at his books.[29] Verdun-Louis Saulnier's textbook on French literature, also published

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[23] Natalie Zemon Davis, 'Rabelais Among the Censors (1940s, 1540s)', *Representations* XXXII (Fall 1990): pp. 1–32.
[24] Ibid., p. 13.
[25] 'Fâcheusement interrompue par les événements.' Davis translated this as 'unhappily interrupted by the events.' Ibid., p. 23, n. 11.
[26] 'Pour moi, je travaille comme un nègre à Rabelais. Et je pense l'avoir terminé le jour du premier bombardement de Paris. Vous l'aurez en tout cas tout prêt à la rentrée.' Printed in *Lettres à Henri Berr*, no. 282, p. 551.
[27] Ibid., p. 1.
[28] Ibid., p. 13.
[29] There are many other errors in Davis' article which together render it a questionable treatment of her topic. For example, in addition to various difficulties in her analysis of Rabelais' attitude to Hebrew,* Davis made the claim that the statement *reveu, et corrigé par l'Autheur, sus la censure antique* on the cover of Michel Fezandat's 1552 *Tiers livre* (NRB 36; cf. also NRB 37) was 'an ambiguous reference to the unacceptable "censure moderne" of the Sorbonne' (pp. 16, 21). In reality, it was only the publisher's workaday statement that the author (Rabelais) had

in 1942, contains an explicit and favourable summary of Febvre's *Origène et Des Periers*, together with its account of how Des Periers duped the authorities by means of hidden allegories. The Nazi censors approved Saulnier's book and duly issued it an authorization number.[30]

We would need to look elsewhere for a serious discussion of Febvre's attitude to the Occupation.[31] Nevertheless, even that line of inquiry would be irrelevant to the question at hand, because Febvre seems in any case to have arrived at all of his basic conclusions before the war. This is apparent from his letter to Henri Berr of 1925, and even more so from the descriptions of his earlier lectures at the Collège de France, which suggest nothing that did not later appear in the two books of 1942. The war came before he could publish written versions of these lectures, and in spite of this great inconvenience he managed to do so by 1942.[32] The problem we have to solve here has nothing whatsoever to do with the Second World War, because it was already there in 1937. Why did Febvre say one thing about the works of Rabelais, and another about the *Cymbalum mundi*?

That is only one question. There is still a graver contradiction to solve, though perhaps it cannot be stated with the same logical neatness. Febvre's life's work was an attempt to understand the minds of people in the past. Through Lucien Lévy-Bruhl, who developed the ethnographic concept of the *mentalité*, he was an intellectual descendant of Émile Durkheim, and he understood to a rare degree how deeply a person in the sixteenth century could differ from a creature of industrialized modernity. In his book on Marguerite of Navarre, he drew a sensitive and well-founded portrait of her inner religious life.[33] In *Le problème de l'incroyance*, he made a similar insistence on the strangeness of the past; and though

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made some original corrections for the new edition. It seems that Davis, following on an earlier misinterpretation,† took *sus* to mean *sous*, *censure* to mean 'official censorship', and *antique* to mean 'ancient'; rather than 'beyond', 'revision', and 'former' respectively. The subsequent discussion of Roman censorship was very learned, but of no clear relevance to the *Tiers livre*.

* See Jonathan Nathan, 'The Nature and Sources of Rabelais' Hebrew Learning', forthcoming in the *Sixteenth-Century Journal*.

† Mireille Huchon, *Rabelais Grammairien. De l'histoire du texte aux problèmes d'authenticité*, Études Rabelaisiennes, XVI (THR CLXXXIII) (Geneva: Droz, 1981), pp. 18–19.

[30] 'Autorisation N° 12.453'. Printed on the back page of Verdun-Louis Saulnier, *La littérature française de la Renaissance (1500–1610)*, Que sais-je ? 85 (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1942).

[31] For example, to Peter Schöttler, 'Marc Bloch et Lucien Febvre Face à l'Allemagne Nazie', *Genèses* XXI: Le nazime et les savants (December 1995): pp. 75–95; id, 'Eine »elegante Lösung«? Zur Kontroverse um die Fortführung der »Annales« während der deutschen Besatzungszeit', in *Die »Annales«-Historiker und die deutsche Geschichtswissenschaft* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2015), pp. 108–122. These are Schöttler's defences of Febvre's conduct after 1940 that nevertheless admit his limited accommodation with the Germans for the purposes of carrying on his work. Schöttler wrote to combat what he saw as the baseless accusations made by Alain Guerreau in 'Les *Annales E.S.C.* vues par un médiéviste', *Lendemains: Zeitschrift für Frankreichforschung und Französischstudium* XXIV (November 1981): pp. 43–51. See also the supplementary discussion of Bertrand Müller, *Lucien Febvre, lecteur et critique* (Paris: Albin Michel, 2003), pp. 371–376.

[32] See the brief timeline in Bertrand Müller, *Lucien Febvre, lecteur et critique* (Paris: Albin Michel, 2003), pp. 443–444.

[33] Lucien Febvre, *Autour de l'*Heptaméron*: Amour sacré, amour profane* (Paris: Gallimard, 1944).

his method of deriving a particular *historical* conclusion from a general *anthropological* principle was dubious indeed, he did right to see the world of the sixteenth century as one that needed to be conjured up in all its aesthetic and social detail before even a single intellectual aspect of it could be understood. He gave a rightful warning against 'the sin of sins—the only unpardonable sin of all: anachronism.'[34] To Febvre, the suggestion that Rabelais was a rationalist freethinker was the equivalent in intellectual history to 'furnishing Diogenes with an umbrella and Mars with a machine gun'.[35] Why, then, did he betray his firmest historiographical convictions in *Origène et Des Périers*? What about the *Cymbalum mundi* made the incantations of Éloi Johanneau and Abel Lefranc prevail over his usual keenness to understand the minds of the dead?

Before we address the problem, we need to pick our story up where we left it off.

THE RADICAL EDITIONS

After 1874, it was taken for granted by almost anyone who had heard of it that the *Cymbalum mundi* was a subversive atheist book. All editions in wide circulation reproduced this view: CM 1856 and its reprint CM 1874 diffused Lacour's proofs that Des Periers had been a secret deist; and in CM 1858, Lacroix had endorsed the paragraph-series. (In CM 1872 he endorsed Lacour's overall judgement as well.) Finally, in CM 1873 Félix Frank uncoded enough anagrams to prove that the *Cymbalum mundi* was a vitriolic cry for social liberation from religion. Only an independent reader with great patience and a good library could have overcome this three-headed specialist consensus, which, despite all of its internal divisions, advanced two points that were almost never challenged: first, that the *Cymbalum mundi* was to be interpreted allegorically; second, that the allegory it contained was directed against Christian orthodoxy, whether in part or whole.

Derived from these canonical academic treatments were four popular foreign editions, each one prepared by an anti-clerical radical who saw an intellectual ancestor and ally in Bonaventure Des Periers.

The first of these was German. The modern interpretation of the *Cymbalum mundi* had first been introduced to German scholarship by Ferdinand Lotheißen, who agreed with the

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[34] '[…] le péché des péchés — le péché entre tous irrémissible : l'anachronisme.' *Le problème de l'incroyance*, p. 6.
[35] 'Parler de rationalisme et de libre pensée, s'agissant d'une époque où, contre une religion aux prises universelles, les hommes les plus intelligents, les plus savants et les plus audacieux étaient incapables vraiment de trouver un appui soit dans la philosophie, soit dans la science : c'est parler d'une chimère. Plus exactement, sous le couvert de mots sonores et de vocables impressionnants, c'est commettre de tous les anachronismes le plus grave et le plus ridicule ; c'est, dans le domaine des idées, munir Diogène d'une parapluie et Mars d'une mitrailleuse.' Ibid., p. 382.

theory of Lacroix, Lacour and Frank that the book was a satire against religion, intended only for initiates and hidden from the profane masses.[36] When the Austrian Fritz Mauthner wrote the section on the *Cymbalum mundi* in his history of Western atheism, he had read more sources than just Lotheißen's book, but had come to exactly the same conclusion. Des Periers had written a book that could be understood in its time only by 'Queen Marguerite and a few initiates'.[37]

In 1910, the art historian Hanns Floerke adopted this interpretation for his two-volume edition of the *Cymbalum mundi* and the *Nouvelles recreations*, both of which he translated into German.[38] Combining Lotheißen's conclusions with information he found in the exactly contemporary biography of Adolphe Chenevière, and by excerpting extensively from CM 1855 and CM 1858, Floerke put a handy summary of the dominant scholarly view on the *Cymbalum* into the hands of German-speaking readers. (His edition's appeal was only heightened by the pornographic illustrations by Franz von Bayros that were interleaved into the *Nouvelles recreations*.)

An atheist book like the *Cymbalum mundi* was more than just a curiosity to Floerke. One year before CM 1910, he had published *Das Kirchentum*, a book-length polemic against all organized religion; and it is clear that he was sympathetic to the efforts of Des Periers to overcome the religious oppression of his age.[39] Unlike previous editors of the *Cymbalum mundi*, however, Floerke was a reactionary opponent of modern society, and took Nietzsche's *Antichrist* as his basic reference for anti-Christianity. To Floerke, revealed religion was a mortal enemy of all human perfection, as it smothered strong and independent minds in a cloud of inane folktales. But in ages of its dominion, there could always be caustic wits to lash the superstition and frivolity of the masses. This was the role of Lucian in his own time, and then of Bonaventure Des Periers: the 'Lucian of the Reformation'.[40]

Later on, Floerke made his ideological commitments even clearer. He published anti-British propaganda during World War I, and seems to have joined the Nazi Party in the 1930s.[41] In 1933, Wladimir von Hartlieb, a firebrand Austrian sympathizer with the Nazis,

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[36] Ferdinand Lotheißen, *Königin Margarethe von Navarra. Ein Cultur- und Literaturbild aus der Zeit der französischen Reformation* (Berlin: Allgemeiner Verein für Deutsche Literatur, 1885), pp. 241–244.
[37] Fritz Mauthner, *Der Atheismus und seine Geschichte im Abendlande*, vol. II (Stuttgart, Berlin: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1921), pp. 175–180.
[38] CM 1910 [Hanns Floerke, trans., *Die neuen Schwänke und lustigen Unterhaltungen gefolgt von der Weltbimmel*, II vols, Perlen älterer romanischer Prosa, XVII (Munich and Leipzig: Georg Müller, 1910)].
[39] Hanns Floerke, *Das Kirchentum* (Vienna: Rudolf Cerny, 1909).
[40] Hanns Floerke, ed., *Lukian. Sämtliche Werke*, trans. Christoph Martin Wieland, vol. I, Klassiker des Altertums. Erste Reihe 7 (München and Leipzig: Georg Müller, 1911), p. 25n.
[41] I have not seen any direct proof of this, but it can be inferred from the fact that he took over the editorial leadership of the Georg-Müller Verlag in 1934, shortly after one of his predecessors had been dismissed for *non-*

dedicated his dithyrambic manifesto against liberalism (and freedom itself) to him.[42] After the Anschluß in 1938, Hartlieb wrote a history of the Nazi triumph over the Austrian dictatorship, in which in anti-clerical language that recalled Floerke's *Das Kirchentum*, he denounced Dollfuß and Schuschnigg's Catholic romanticism as nostalgia for the oppressive Holy Roman Empire.[43] These were men who hated mass democracy and its superstitions with nervous disgust; and were prepared to admire those iconoclasts of the past who had felt the same depth of spite as them. Lest we think that liberals and leftists had a monopoly on the *Cymbalum*-myth, Hanns Floerke had very different strain of enthusiasm for its subversive message!

Meanwhile in Spain, the atheist *Cymbalum mundi* came to the attention of the radical jurist Eduardo Barriobero y Herrán.[44] He was an extraordinarily prolific scholar who spent as much time as he could—often in prison—editing and translating historical books that seemed to him to bear against traditional authority: among many others *Don Quixote*, *Gargantua*, the works of Lucian, and a collection of oppressive Spanish sexual legislation.[45] The Civil War and the anarchist government of Barcelona were the stage for the climax of his life. In the autumn of 1936, he presided over the Oficina Jurídica, a court that handed down summary judgement in thousands of civil cases.[46] In November, the Oficina was dissolved by the anarchist government, and Barriobero himself was tried for sending monies from the fines his court had imposed to personal bank accounts in France. He was imprisoned, and when the Nationalists captured Barcelona in 1939, his trial was immediately resumed by them. He was shot on 14 February.

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membership in the party. The publishing house was controlled in this period by the Deutsche Arbeiterfront. See Eva von Freeden and Rainer Schmitz, eds., *Sein Dämon war das Buch. Der Münchner Verleger Georg Müller* (Munich: Allitera Verlag, 2003), pp. 214–215.

[42] 'DR. HANNS FLOERKE in verehrungsvoller Freundschaft gewidmet'. Wladimir von Hartlieb, *Ich habe gelacht: Satiren gegen die Linke Europas* (Berlin: Paul Neff, 1933).

[43] Wladimir von Hartlieb, *Parole: Das Reich. Eine historische Darstellung der politischen Entwicklung in Österreich von März 1933 bis März 1939* (Vienna: Adolf Luser, 1939), pp. 176–177.

[44] Barriobero published his memoirs as *Un tribunal revolucionario. Cuenta rendida por el que fué su Presidente* (Barcelona: Ariñó, 1937). For hagiographic biographies of him, see Jacinto Toryho, 'Nada menos que todo un hombre', in *No éramos tan malos* (Madrid: G. del Toro, 1975) [later reprinted in *El tribunal revolucionario de Barcelona, 1936–1937*; España en armas 8 (Sevilla: Espuela de Plata, 2007), pp. 221–278]; Eduard Masjuan, 'Introducción', in ibid., pp. 9–41; and José Luis Carretero Miramar, *Eduardo Barriobero: las luchas de un jabalí* (Madrid: Queimada Ediciones, 2017).

[45] *Gargantua: primera versión castellana, con un estudio critico-biográfico del autor, notas y un vocabulario explicativo de algunas palabras ambiguas y nombres emblemáticos*, Biblioteca Clásica Filosófica, I (Madrid: López del Arco, Editor, 1905); *Luciano de Samosata: Los amores / El banquete / Subasta de filósofos / La Danza*, Colección Quevedo, anécdotas y decires, XVIII (Madrid: Mundo Latino, 1931); *Los delitos sexuales en las viejas leyes españolas*, Colección Quevedo, anécdotas y decires, XIII (Madrid: Mundo Latino, 1930).

[46] This was later recounted with horror by a Francoist historian: Francisco Lacruz, *El Alzamiento, la Revolución y el Terror en Barcelona* (Barcelona: Librería Arysel, 1943), pp. 153–158.

Barribero's edition of the *Cymbalum mundi*, published in 1930, was in line with the rest of his life's work.[47] His translation was careless and bad, and his introduction did not contain any original insights into the text beyond what had been advanced in the nineteenth century. But he was excited all the same by the Lacroix-Lacour-Frank thesis, and declared Des Periers to have been a sixteenth-century ally of the modern struggle for social liberation in Spain.

The atheist *Cymbalum mundi* was also noticed in this period by Communist scholars in the Soviet Union. In a speech he gave in Moscow in February 1927, the philosopher Abram Deborin described Des Periers as a materialist atheist whose works had undoubtedly influenced Spinoza.[48] In 1931, the article on Des Periers in the *Great Soviet Encyclopaedia* depicted him as an important forerunner of Marxist materialism.[49]

Soon after, Deborin brought the *Cymbalum mundi* to the attention of his student Ivan Luppol.[50] Luppol, who had retrained as a Communist philosopher after returning from the Civil War, had been preparing a series of books for the Academia Press called *Предшественники и классики атеизма*—'forerunners and classics of atheism'. The first of these was an edition of the works of Uriel Dacosta, a Jew who had written a denial of the immortality of the soul and an embittered polemic against the haughty Portuguese Jews of Amsterdam.[51] In the series-introduction that appeared in this volume, Luppol described Lenin's encouragement to publish anti-religious works from the past in order to aid the elimination of religious doctrines from the minds of the masses. Furthermore, though pre-Communist atheist works were hampered by their ignorance of dialectical materialism, there was still much to be gained from reprinting them; both because they contained partial refutations of Christianity and also because they were historical witnesses to the eternal fight against class oppression.

The second book in the series was a translation of the works of Bonaventure Des Periers.[52] Luppol entrusted the translation itself and the commentary (a compendium of the

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[47] CM 1930 [Eduardo Barriobero y Herrán, ed., *Cymbalum Mundi: Novelas y alegres pláticas de Buenaventura Des Periers, favorito de la Reina Margarita*, Colección Quevedo, anécdotas y decires, VI (Madrid: Mundo Latino, 1930)].
[48] As we saw in chapter IV, this line of intellectual descent was first asserted by Voltaire. Abram Moiseevič Deborin, 'Die Weltanschauung Spinozas', in *Spinozas Stellung in der Vorgeschichte des dialektischen Materialismus: Reden und Aufsätze zur Wiederkehr seines 250. Todestages*, by August Thalheimer and Abram Moiseevič Deborin (Verlag für Literatur und Politik, 1928), pp. 40–74.
[49] Г. П., 'Деперье (Despériers), Бонавантюр', in *Большая Советская Энциклопедия*, vol. 21 (Moscow, 1931), p. 369.
[50] For a biography of Luppol with a bibliography of his works, see S. N. Korsakov, *Иван Капитонович Луппол, 1896–1943*, ed. L. A. Kalashnikova, Философия 14 (Moscow: Наука, 2014).
[51] Iván Kapitónovič Lúppol, ed., *Уриэль Дакоста [1585(?)-1640]. О смертности души / Пример человеческой жизни*, trans. S. Ignatov and A. Denisov, Предшественники и классики атеизма (Moscow / Leningrad: Academia, 1934).
[52] CM 1936 [Ivan Kapitonovič Luppol, ed., *Бонавентур Деперье. Кимвал мира / новые забавы*, trans. Vasiliy Pikov, Предшественники и классики атеизма (Moscow / Leningrad: Academia, 1936)].

nineteenth-century glosses) to his student Vasiliy Pikov. In his own introduction, he explained the atheist *Cymbalum mundi* against the background of the sixteenth-century class struggle.[53] A work of Friedrich Engels, the *German Peasants' War* of 1851, served as his analytical starting point.[54] In that essay, Engels had described three principal social classes that existed in the first decade of the Protestant Reformation. First were the aristocratic and the reactionary 'Patricians'; second, the Bourgeoisie, with whom various monarchs had allied themselves; third, the 'Plebeians', a mass of farmers and urban workers who represented the prototype of the industrial proletariat. In Engels' telling, Luther's reformation represented a successful revolt of the royal-bourgeois power against the patricians. But it was only a partial heresy, and a partial revolt: the truly revolutionary movement was Thomas Müntzer's plebeian rebellion, whose criticisms of reactionary religion went far deeper than Luther and Calvin's.

According to Luppol, the *Cymbalum mundi* was a clandestine plebeian document. In this it was distinct from most of the new vernacular literature, which was bourgeois propaganda that tended to endorse the moderate Reformation.[55] By writing what seemed to be French literature of this kind, Bonaventure Des Periers gained admission to the royal-bourgeois circle of Marguerite of Navarre. But he was not actually her ally. In fact, he was not a Christian at all, but an atheist, and thereby a supporter of the plebeians, the only class that actually wanted to do away with religious exploitation. When for political reasons the king annulled his toleration of Evangelism, his sister abandoned her support for her radical protégés, and Des Periers was forced to commit suicide.[56] Thus the greatest of the radical humanists was finally offered up by the moderates as a sacrifice to the reactionary Catholic faction. The *Cymbalum mundi*, Luppol concluded, was therefore a good case study in the fickleness of the moderate bourgeoisie. The royal-bourgeois power played an important historical role in mankind's liberation, but only an intermediate and functionary one. It was not interested in or even conscious of progress or equality in themselves, but concerned only

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[53] Ibid., pp. VII–L.

[54] Friedrich Engels, 'Der deutsche Bauernkrieg', *Neue Rheinische Zeitung. Politisch-ökonomische Revue* V–VI (May–October 1850): pp. 1–99. Cited by Luppol in CM 1936, p. XXXVI.

[55] On the topic of vernacular literature, Luppol cited the *Dialektik der Natur*, a manuscript work of the 1880s that had only recently been published. He cited it (ibid, pp. VII, IX) in Russian translation: 'Старое введение к «Диалектике природы» (1880)', in *К. Маркс и Ф. Энгельс. Сочинелия*, vol. XIV: Ф. Энгельс. Философские Работы, 1877–1888 (Moscow / Leningrad: Государственное социально-экономическое издательство, 1931), pp. 475–492 [pp. 475–6]. For the most recent scientific edition, see 'Einleitung [98]', in the *Karl-Marx-Friedrich-Engels Gesamtausgabe* [MEGA²], vol. I/26 E: *Dialektik der Natur* (1873–1882), ed. Anneliese Griese et al. (East Berlin: Dietz Verlag, 1985), pp. 298–316.

[56] Luppol cited Fritz Mauthner to establish this fanciful chain of events: CM 1936, pp. XXV–XXVI; *Der Atheismus*, vol. II, pp. 179–80.

for its own self-preservation. Radical thinkers like Des Periers could find only illusory support from its leaders. True supporters of their cause came only later, in the eighteenth century.[57]

Shortly after his edition was published, Luppol was denounced amid Stalin's purges by his academic rival Pavel Yudin. He was sentenced at first to death; after this sentence was commuted, he died in a slave-labour camp in 1943. He was also proscribed, and his works were banned. This did not mean the destruction of all copies of CM 1936: only that Luppol's introduction was removed from almost all of them.[58] There was, after all, nothing wrong with Pikov's translation, which meant that an owner could keep himself safe by simply cutting out the part which Luppol had written. (I have also seen a copy for sale of Luppol's edition of Dacosta in which his name on the title page has been blacked out, and his introduction on pp. 11–90 has been excised.)[59] Accordingly, the article on Des Periers in the second edition of the *Great Soviet Encyclopedia* cited Luppol's edition, but omitted his name.[60] (After his rehabilitation in 1956, he could safely be cited again.)[61] It bears reflection now that CM 1537 and CM 1936 are the only two editions of the *Cymbalum mundi* that were ever subjected to censorship by sacred or secular authorities. In five centuries of excited whispers about its dangerous transgressiveness, the only regimes to condemn its editors did so for reasons that were completely unrelated to atheism.

After the war, the Czech scholar Radovan Krátký wrote an edition of the *Cymbalum mundi* and the *Nouvelles recreations*, which he had translated from CM 1872 (that is, Garnier's stereotype reprint of CM 1858b).[62] Like Luppol, he drew on Engels' *Deutsche Bauernkrieg* in the preface, but to make a simpler point. In the passage Krátký cited, Engels explained that by the end of the Middle Ages, the Church with its doctrinal monopoly was the principal instrument of feudal control over society. Therefore, any truly revolutionary act in the period

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[57] See CM 1936, pp. XLVIII–L.

[58] After a long search I have discovered of only two copies of CM 1936 that have remained intact. One belongs to an anonymous private seller who was contacted on my behalf by the Somerville, MA bookstore 'Land of Magazines'. The other is my own, which I found on avito.ru. (I am grateful to Dafydd Foster Evans for buying it as a present for me, and then collecting it from 'Nina' on 4 June 2020 in the middle of a coronavirus-lockdown in Moscow.) The copy was once in a public library and perhaps protected for that very reason, inasmuch as a private owner would have had more reason than an official librarian to fear being caught with contraband.

[59] 'Дакоста У. *О смертности души. Пример человеческой жизни.* 1934 г.', oldbook.su, https://web.archive.org/web/20210420032913/http://oldbook.su/knigi-izdatelstva-academia-1922-1938/476-dakosta-u-o-smertnosti-dushi-primer-chelovecheskoj-zhizni-1934-g.html.

[60] 'Деперье́, Бонавантюр', in *Большая Советская Энциклопедия*, vol. 14 (Moscow, 1952), p. 43.

[61] As in Veniamin Moiseevič Boguslavskij, *У истоков французского атеизма и материализма (Скептицизм французского Возрождения и его буржуазные фальсификаторы)* (Moscow: Мысль, 1964), p. 247. This work restated the views of Deborin and Luppol on Des Periers and the *Cymbalum mundi*.

[62] CM 1954 [Bonaventura Des Periers, *Veselé rozprávky*, ed. Radovan Krátký, Světová četba 85 (Prague: Státní nakladatelství krásné literatury, hudby a umění, 1954).]

was necessarily an heretical assault on Roman dogma.[63] On the basis of this, Krátký concluded that the *Cymbalum mundi*, an heretical book if there ever was one, was a forerunner of the Communist revolution. In the 1530s, Bonaventure Des Periers was just as much a revolutionary as Marx and Lenin were in their own lifetimes.

By now, it was a standard trope of Communist scholarship to claim that certain great monuments of literature were actually proto-materialist manifestoes in disguise. In the same year as Krátký's edition, Paulette Lenoir wrote a book on Rabelais to this effect for *Éditions Sociales*, a publishing arm of the Communist Party of France.[64] She criticized Lucien Febvre for denying in his *Problème de l'incroyance* that Rabelais had repudiated revealed religion. In doing so, he had refused to recognize the intellectual forerunners of modern reason and liberty, who had fulfilled their historical destiny by fighting the Church. (Here Lenoir cited the very same passage from Engels' *Bauernkrieg* as Krátký had.)[65] Febvre's attitude was typical of bourgeois and reactionary scholarship in Western Europe. The French government, Lenoir pointed out, had recently turned down the Parti Communiste's budgetary request for a commemoration of the quatercentenary of Rabelais' death. Only the Soviet Union, which was now at the vanguard of mankind as Rabelais was in the sixteenth, was qualified and willing to do justice to his revolutionary legacy.[66] A revealing statement: in the school of thought that produced both Luppol's and Krátký's treatments of the *Cymbalum mundi*, and Lenoir's of Rabelais, the secret intellectual heroes of the sixteenth century were saints of Marxism-Leninism, and any non-Communist portrayal of these people amounted to a distortion.

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[63] 'Das Mittelalter hatte sich ganz aus dem Rohen entwickelt. Ueber die alte Civilisation, die alte Philosophie, Politik und Jurisprudenz hatte es *tabula rasa* gemacht und in Allem wieder von vorn angefangen. Das Einzige, was es aus der untergegangnen alten Welt übernommen hatte, war das Christenthum und eine Anzahl halbzerstörter, ihrer ganzen Civilisation entkleideten Städte. Die Folge davon war, daß, wie auf allen ursprünglichen Entwicklungsstufen, die Pfaffen das Monopol der intellektuellen Bildung erhielten, und damit die Bildung selbst einen wesentlich theologischen Charakter bekam. Unter den Händen der Pfaffen blieben Politik und Jurisprudenz, wie allen übrigen Wissenschaften, bloße Zweige der Theologie, und wurden nach denselben Prinzipien behandelt die in dieser Geltung hatten. Die Dogmen der Kirche waren zu gleicher Zeit politische Axiome, und Bibelstellen hatten in jedem Gerichtshof Gesetzeskraft. Selbst als ein eigner Juristenstand sich bildete, blieb die Jurisprudenz noch lange unter der Vormundschaft der Theologie. Und diese Oberherrlichkeit der Theologie auf dem ganzen Gebiet der intellektuellen Thätigkeit war zugleich die nothwendige Folge von der Stellung der Kirche als der allgemeinsten Zusammenfassung und Sanktion der bestehenden Feudalherrschaft. 'Es ist klar, daß hiermit alle allgemein ausgesprochenen Angriffe auf den Feudalismus, vor Allem Angriffe auf die Kirche, alle revolutionären gesellschaftlichen und politischen Doktrinen zugleich und vorwiegend theologische Ketzereien sein mußten. Damit die bestehenden gesellschaftlichen Verhältnisse angetastet werden konnten, mußte ihnen der Heiligenschein abgestreift werden.' 'Der deutsche Bauernkrieg', pp. 16–17. Cited (in Czech translation) in CM 1954, pp. 7–8.

[64] Paulette Lenoir, *Quelques aspects de la pensée de Rabelais*, Problèmes (Paris: Éditions Sociales, 1954).

[65] Ibid., pp. 26–27.

[66] 'C'est l'Union soviétique, à l'avant-garde de l'humanité progressive, qui rend un hommage à sa mesure au plus national, au plus intraduisible de nos écrivains.' Ibid., p. 94.

This was all derivative. None of these scholars, whether German-nationalist, anarchist, or Marxist-Leninist, made any new interpretations of the *Cymbalum mundi*, let alone any archival discoveries related to its publication or reception. Nor, apart from Luppol and Krátký's introduction of standard Communist historiographical tropes, did they make any original comment on its place in intellectual history. These authors saw no reason to contribute to or modify the nineteenth-century demonstrations that the *Cymbalum mundi* was a coded attack on Christianity, because their real goal was not to understand the book in itself, but to use it to prop up their respective radical causes.

Frank to Lefranc

Meanwhile, specialist research continued on the *Cymbalum mundi*. As we saw at the end of the last chapter, Félix Frank's conclusions as presented in CM 1873 had been thoroughly persuasive to most literary historians. This widespread agreement was never overthrown. In 1922, the Swiss historian Ernst Walser agreed with Frank that the *Cymbalum mundi* was atheist, and on the basis of some new anagrams that he had uncovered, declared it to be a satire against Calvinism in particular.[67] In 1929, the historian Augustin Renaudet, in a chapter on intellectual currents which he wrote for a general survey of the early sixteenth century, mentioned the atheist *Cymbalum mundi* as a matter of course.[68] In May of the same year, Renaudet's collaborator Henri Hauser stated in a lecture in London that the *Cymbalum mundi* constituted an attack on Christianity and religion that had surpassed Rabelais' mere deism.[69] The atheism of Des Periers had become a received opinion, and the *Cymbalum mundi*'s unbelieving satire an intellectual object that could not be omitted from any portrait of the French Renaissance that pretended to completeness.

The consensus crossed the channel and the ocean. The first extended English treatment of the *Cymbalum mundi* was contained in a remarkable article by the novelist and scholar Walter Besant. By way of explaining why the French Reformation had failed where the English Reformation had succeeded, he proposed that whereas the English were 'terribly, deeply in earnest', the French Evangelicals' religious spirit had been enervated by incredulity

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[67] Ernst Walser, 'Der Sinn des *Cymbalum Mundi* von Bonaventure des Periers: eine Spottschrift gegen Calvin', *Zwingliana: Beiträge zur Geschichte des Protestantismus in der Schweiz und seiner Ausstrahlung* IV, no. 3 (1922): pp. 65–82. The anagrams that he proposed were self-evidently illusory: Byrphanes = Fabrinus = *Lefebvre*; Curtalius = *Caluinus*; Ardelio= Farelio = *Farel*.

[68] Augustin Renaudet, 'La culture occidentale au temps de la Réforme', in *Les débuts de l'âge moderne. La Renaissance et la Réforme*, by Henri Hauser and Augustin Renaudet, Peuples et Civilisations, VIII (Paris: Félix Alcan, 1929), pp. 268–304 [292n, 294–296].

[69] Printed as Henri Hauser, *La modernité du XVIe siècle*, Bibliothèque de la Revue Historique (Paris: Félix Alcan, 1930); see p. 41.

and mockery from its very beginning. Des Periers was emblematic of this sickness, as one who had joined the Reform in a fit of enthusiasm, and then was led astray into atheism and despair by the impious gaiety of Rabelais.[70]

In 1904, an influential English survey of French literature singled out Des Periers as 'one of the few men of letters in France at this period whose scepticism was directed against the whole scheme of Christianity'.[71] In the eleventh edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, we read at the unsigned entry 'Des Périers, Bonaventure' that 'free inquiry became scepticism in Bonaventure's *Cymbalum Mundi*…(1537), and the queen of Navarre thought it prudent to disavow the author.'[72] At Columbia University, two masters students in the interwar period wrote essays on the topic Des Periers' secret heterodoxy. One confined herself to an elegant restatement of the views of Louis Lacour, and the other incorporated (and endorsed) the harder doctrines of Félix Frank.[73] If we may take derivative dissertations and encyclopedia articles as indices of academic fashion, we can appreciate the international influence of CM 1856, CM 1858, and CM 1873.

There was also some sane dissent. Adolphe Chenevière, in his 1885 biography of Des Periers, denied Frank's assertion of the *Cymbalum mundi*'s atheism, and held instead that Bonaventure Des Periers had only intended a satire of human foibles.[74] (Notwithdstanding he was a friend of Félix Frank: Chenevière even dedicated his book to Frank, and in 1888, the two men collaborated on a lexicon to the works of Des Periers.)[75] In 1924, Philipp August Becker went even further, wrote a book denying that there were any coherent allegories at all in the four dialogues.[76] Perhaps, he wrote, Des Periers had intended some isolated mockery of

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[70] 'The Failure of the French Reformation', *The British Quarterly Review* LVIII, no. 115 (1 July 1873): pp. 1–28. For Besant's avowal of this unsigned article, see *Autobiography of Sir Walter Besant* (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1902), p. 170.

[71] Arthur Tilley, *The Literature of the French Renaissance*, vol. I (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1904), p. 128. Tilley's chapter on Des Periers (pp. 122–135) served as a source on Bonaventure Des Periers to the young Ira Wade. See 'L'école de Lyon, précurseur de la pléiade' (Masters Essay, New York, Columbia University, 1919), esp. pp. 14, 77.

[72] 'Des Périers, Bonaventure', in *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 11th ed., vol. VIII: Demijohn to Edward (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1910), p. 102.

[73] Gladys Locke, 'Bonaventure Des Periers, a Poet of the Shadows' (Masters Essay, New York, Columbia University, 1919); Mary D. Iannone, 'Satire in the Writings of Bonaventure Des Periers. The *Cymbalum Mundi*' (Masters Essay, New York, Columbia University, 1933). Incidentally, both women made the same odd mistake of attributing the English translation in CM 1712 (a copy of which they had seen in Columbia's library) to Prosper Marchand himself.

[74] Adolphe Chenevière, *Bonaventure des Periers: Sa vie, ses poésies. Thèse présentée en Sorbonne pour le doctorat és lettres* (Paris: E. Plon, 1885), pp. 62–63.

[75] Félix Frank and Adolphe Chenevière, *Lexique de la Langue de Bonaventure des Periers* (Paris: Librairie Léopold Cerf, 1888).

[76] Philipp August Becker, *Bonaventure des Periers als Dichter und Erzähler*, Sitzungsberichte / Akademie der Wissenschaften in Wien, Philosophisch-Historische Klasse 200, 3. Abhandlung (Vienna and Leipzig: Hölder-Pichler-Tempsky A.-G., 1924), pp. 48–56.

Luther and Bucer in the second dialogue, but such satire was normal for the period, and it certainly did not amount to atheism. However, the four dialogues were frivolous in their Lucianism, and less pious than Des Periers' earlier works like the *Prognostication des prognostications*. Therefore they fell afoul of Protestants like John Calvin and Estienne Pasquier.[77] There are some reasons to doubt this judgement: Pasquier, for instance, had never read the *Cymbalum mundi*. More importantly, the *Prognostication des prognostications* was just as Lucianic as the *Cymbalum mundi*, based as it was on the *Icaromenippus*. And as both dialogues were characterized by Evangelical themes, neither can be said to be less orthodox than the other. They cannot be sorted into distinguishable phases of Des Periers' thought, and Becker's attempt to do so was overinfluenced by Calvin's statement, which he cited approvingly, that Des Periers had 'tasted the Gospel' and then fallen off from it.[78] These reservations aside, it is remarkable that Becker was able to turn away from the unfounded allegories of the *Cymbalum*-scryers. On the other hand, the *Cymbalum mundi* was only a minor concern of his, occupying only a few pages between his treatments of the poems and the *Nouvelles recreations*, and sharing a subchapter with Des Periers' translation of Plato's *Lysis*. Working from the collected works assembled in CM 1856,[79] Becker had many comments to make on (what he considered to be) Des Periers' whole literary œuvre, and the question of whether or not the *Cymbalum mundi* was atheist was only incidental to his account. He was free to answer it summarily in the negative.

Working independently, Louis Delaruelle adopted a similar perspective, and argued that whereas the *Cymbalum mundi* might have grazed a few religious targets, it did not contain any consistent theological message, let alone a subversive one.[80] He read the dialogues line by line without managing to find any of the impiety attributed to it by Lacour, Frank and Lefranc. His essential objection to his predecessors' method was this: if one interpreted a book like the *Cymbalum mundi* on allegorical lines, there was no credible method by which the allegorical elements could safely be disambiguated from the indifferent filler. Therefore, unless one was prepared to interpret everything in the *Cymbalum mundi* as an allegory—something that not even Johanneau had been able to do—there was no way of arriving at any provable interpretation of the book that departed from its plain meaning.[81] (Despite this warning, Delaruelle was not prevented from advancing a little allegorical explanation of his

[77] Ibid., p. 55.
[78] *De scandalis* (1550), pp. 54–55.
[79] My own copy of CM 1856 has Becker's ex-libris stamp on it.
[80] Louis Delaruelle, 'Étude sur le problème du « Cymbalum mundi »', *Revue d'Histoire littéraire de la France* XXXII (1925): pp. 1–23.
[81] Ibid., p. 6.

own: but one that was autobiographical rather than philosophical. According to him, Pamphagus in the fourth dialogue was the mouthpiece of Des Periers himself, and the dog's melancholy warnings against court life reflected his own disillusion, provoked perhaps by Queen Marguerite's tardiness in paying his wages.)[82]

For all the justness of their scepticism, Delaruelle and Becker were drowned out by an academic consensus that had already made up its mind about the *Cymbalum mundi*. For this reason, their studies have tended to be cited suspiciously and dismissively in the bibliographies of more credulous scholars.[83]

In the autumn of 1903, Abel Lefranc began a series of Saturday-afternoon lectures at the Collège de France, where he held the chair in '*Langue et littérature françaises modernes*'. The subject was Rabelais' *Gargantua*. Over the next decade, he made his way through *Pantagruel* and then the *Tiers livre*; lecturing the while on Wednesdays on miscellaneous literary topics, but always reserving the Saturday slot for Rabelais.[84] Then, starting in January 1912, he began a new series of fifteen Saturday lectures on the *Cymbalum mundi*.[85] In the prospectus to these, he announced that he had been able to determine its allusions and allegories with 'much fuller precision than has been achieved until now'.[86] Finally he published a cumulative summary of his lectures—on Rabelais and Des Periers together—as the introduction to his

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[82] Ibid., pp. 17–18. For the identification of Pamphagus with Des Periers, Delaruelle cited Alfred Jeanroy, 'Despériers (Bonaventure)', in *La Grande Encyclopédie* (Paris: H. Lamirault, 1892), p. 267. Delaruelle's position on the *Cymbalum mundi* may in fact be regarded as a modified derivative of Jeanroy's. According to Jeanroy, Des Periers had indeed fallen into sceptical indifference to Christianity, and his goal was certainly to explode religion. Still it was vain to search for an allegory behind each and every name.

[83] For instance: Dorothea Neidhart, *Das 'Cymbalum Mundi' des Bonaventure Des Périers: Forschungslage und Deutung*, Kölner romantische Arbeiten, Neue Folge 16 (Geneva / Paris: E. Droz / Minard, 1959), pp. 67ff.

[84] See 'Résumé des cours de l'année scolaire 1903–1904', *Annuaire du Collège de France* [*ACF*] IV (1904): pp. 57–90 [79]; 'Résumé [" " " " "] 1904–1905', *ACF* V (1905): pp. 54–110 [93–95]; 'Résumé [" " " " "] 1905–1906', *ACF* VI (1906): pp. 47–121 [99–104]; 'Résumé [" " " " "] 1906–1907', *ACF* VII (1907): pp. 42–96 [82–90]; 'Résumé [" " " " "] 1907–1908', *ACF* VIII (1908): pp. 59–102 [90–93]; 'Résumé [" " " " "] 1908–1909', *ACF* IX (1909): pp. 38–92 [77–80]; 'Résumé [" " " " "] 1909–1910', *ACF* X (1910): pp. 22–78 [67–69]; 'Résumé [" " " " "] 1910–1911 et programmes pour 1911–1912', *ACF* XI (1911): pp. 75–132 [115–119].

[85] 'Résumé des cours de l'année scolaire 1911–1912', *ACF* XII (1912): pp. 23–73 [68–71]. The foregoing issue of the *Annuaire* (vol. XI [1911], p. 119) had reported that these lectures were only to begin in January 1912. Possibly the Saturday lectures of autumn 1911 were devoted to the *Tiers Livre*, which Lefranc had not finished expounding in the academic year 1910–1911.

[86] 'Après avoir exposé les péripéties de la vie quelque peu mystérieuse de cet écrivain, il a fait une explication détaillée des quatre dialogues dont la réunion constitue le *Cymbalum*. L'enchaînement des idées, la succession logique des symboles à travers ces quatre dialogues, le sens profond des divers épisodes, les allusions et les allégories que chacun d'eux renferme ont pu être déterminés avec une précision beaucoup plus complète que celle qui avait été obtenue jusqu'à présent. Plusieurs identifications nouvelles, des plus significatives pour la compréhension de l'œuvre, ont été fixées. Des comparaisons ont été faites, au point de vue de la langue et du style, entre le *Cymbalum* et les ouvrages contemporains, notamment ceux de Rabelais. Les résultats qui ont été acquis, grâce à cette étude, touchant l'audacieuse publication de des Périers, doivent être prochainement publiés.' Ibid., p. 70.

1922 edition of *Pantagruel*. The third chapter was devoted to the 'secret thought of Rabelais', and interpreted both *Pantagruel* and the *Cymbalum mundi* as daring expositions of atheism.[87]

Though he had more taste and restraint, Abel Lefranc was just as addicted to literary codes and allegories as Éloi Johanneau had been. In 1904–1905, he had lectured on the *clef* he had discovered for the *Astrée* of Honoré d'Urfé,[88] and in 1919 he published a flamboyant and sprawling 'unmasking' of Shakespeare, in which he proved that the William Stanley had been the true author of the plays and sonnets.[89] When it came to Rabelais and the *Cymbalum mundi*, the simple thrill of discovery was seasoned by a special excitement at discovering impiety. Writing in one place of the Gargantuan Chronicles in *Pantagruel*, he described the 'audacity of making such an offensive comparison to the Holy Scriptures'.[90] Gisbert Voetius at least had really been afraid of secret subversion when he sensed its presence in the works of Des Periers: but Lefranc, who was excited at the prospect, needed to invent hypothetical sixteenth-century Christians on whose behalf he could be scandalized.

Lefranc also followed nineteenth-century precedent in dreaming up calibrated psychological stratagems by which the allegorizing writers of the Renaissance had supposedly communicated to their initiates while simultaneously hoodwinking the stolid authorities. Just like Éloi Johanneau with his paradox '*déguiser et en même temps faire comprendre sa pensée*',[91] Abel Lefranc believed that Rabelais had inserted meaningless material, like chapters XI–XIII, into *Pantagruel* in order to throw a hostile reader off his scent. But the reader could nevertheless be 'oriented' to the true, anti-religious reading if he paid attention to the right hints.[92]

According to Lefranc, both Rabelais and Des Periers had adhered to the new 'rationalist faith'. The *Cymbalum mundi* in particular was a 'bell destined to be heard by the whole world, and to call men to the truth; aiming at nothing less than the undermining of all religion founded on revelation.'[93] Though (following Félix Frank) he saw all four dialogues as an impious pastiche of the four Gospels, his published commentary was confined to the fourth dialogue. Here, he adopted the identification of Actæon with Christ that had been unanimously endorsed by Paul Lacroix, Louis Lacour and Félix Frank. But the key element of the allegory was supplied to Lefranc by Frank's unique identification of Pamphagus with

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[87] Abel Lefranc, 'La pensée secrète de Rabelais', in *Œuvres de François Rabelais*, vol. III: Pantagruel. Prologue—Chapitres I–XI (Paris: Édouard Champion, 1922), pp. XL–LXIX.
[88] 'Résumé des cours de l'année scolaire 1904–1905', *Annuaire du Collège de France* V (1905): pp. 54–110 [95].
[89] Abel Lefranc, *Sous le masque de « William Shakespeare ». William Stanley, VIe comte de Derby*, II vols (Paris: Payot & Cie, 1919).
[90] 'La pensée secrète de Rabelais', p. XLII.
[91] CM 1841, p. 87.
[92] 'La pensée secrète de Rabelais', p. XLV.
[93] Ibid., p. XLVIII.

Rabelais.[94] According to Lefranc, when at the end of the dialogue Hylactor proposes to tell the tale of Erus—that is, the tale of Christ the master, *herus*[95]—Pamphagus-Rabelais replies that he is utterly uninterested in such tales. Thus Rabelais is presented in the *Cymbalum mundi* as a wise denier of revealed religion. Apart from this point of special emphasis, there was almost nothing in Lefranc's account that was not also in Félix Frank's.

Henri Busson,[96] a student of Abel Lefranc, concurred in his master's general view on both Rabelais and Des Periers in his doctoral thesis of 1922, which he continued refining for the rest of his life.[97] He could not, however, accept the fantastical character-identifications which Lefranc had made, and he did not believe that the second two dialogues could be interpreted allegorically at all.[98] But he could not see the *first* two dialogues, with their depiction of Mercury's descent from heaven and the squabbling imposter-theologians, as anything but an 'achristic' parody of the Gospels.[99] In his final account, the *Cymbalum mundi* was a transitional specimen between the mere Christ-denial of the 1530s and the outright atheism that first flourished in the 1540s.

Unlike Lefranc, and unlike almost all modern commentators on the *Cymbalum mundi*, Busson was a faithful Christian—in fact, a priest.[100] He agreed with Lefranc that there was a strain of non-Christian rationalism in the Renaissance, but with the implicit proviso that this was a bad thing. (In the expanded edition of his thesis, he compared unbelief to a latent tubercular infection that had always lurked in the souls of European Christians.)[101] In Busson's view, the great catastrophe of Western thought had been the development—first in Northern Italy, and then in France—of a system of reasoning that had hived itself off from

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[94] See CM 1873, p. LXXI.

[95] This word is properly spelt *erus*, which might seem to strengthen Lefranc's point, but neither Lefranc nor Des Periers was likely aware of this fact.

[96] This Henri Busson (1885–1970) is not to be confused with another Henri Busson (1870–1946), given especially that both men spent parts of their professional careers in Algeria, and that the elder Busson collaborated with Henri Hauser on two geographical books. They are rarely disambiguated from each other even in good library catalogues. (I am grateful to Pierre Salvadori for helping me sort these details out.) For an obituary see 'Chronique générale', *Revue philosophique de Louvain* LXIX, no. 4 (November 1971): pp. 639–658 [640–641]; a similar notice can also be found in 'Nouvelles philosophiques', *Les études philosophiques* [XXVII], no. 2: Philosophes français, 1860–1930 (1972): pp. 267–268 [267].

[97] Henri Busson, *Les sources et le développement du rationalisme dans la littérature française de la Renaissance (1533–1601)*, Bibliotheque de la Société d'Histoire ecclésiastique de la France (Paris: Librairie Letouzey & Ané, 1922), esp. pp. 193–200. See Lefranc's prospective notice of this thesis in 'La pensée secrète de Rabelais', p. LIX, n. 1.

[98] See, for instance, his sceptical treatment of Lefranc and Febvre's identification of Pamphagus with Rabelais: Henri Busson, 'Pamphagus', *BHR* XIV, no. 2 (1952): pp. 289–293.

[99] Henri Busson, 'Les noms des incrédules au XVIe siècle', *BHR* XVI, no. 3 (1954): pp. 273–283 [283].

[100] Alongside his doctoral studies at the Sorbonne, Busson taught at the Sainte-Croix junior seminary in Châteaugiron. See the notice of his degree in 'Échos et informations', *Revue d'histoire de l'Église de France* XLV (1923): pp. 589–596 [589–590].

[101] Henri Busson, *Le rationalisme*, Nouvelle édition, p. II.

religious thought and teaching.[102] This attitude to 'rationalism' did not, however, prevent Busson from agreeing with Lefranc's particular interpretation of any given book, or even Lefranc's general characterization of the Renaissance as a period when secret atheism flourished in the minds of the most advanced thinkers.

FEBVRE FINDS UNBELIEF IN THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

As we have just seen, Lucien Febvre was scandalized by Lefranc's detection of Rabelais' atheism, but intrigued and encouraged by his detection of Des Periers'. For the four-hundredth anniversary of CM 1537's publication, Lucien Febvre gave his lectures on the *Cymbalum mundi* in which he stated views on the book that were true to the spirit (if not to every detail) of Lefranc's. I have not seen Febvre's lecture notes, which leaves the published *Origène et Des Périers* as the most detailed guide available to the conclusions he presented in 1937.[103]

Febvre began his article by trivializing the interpretations of all of his predecessors, and proposing to read the *Cymbalum mundi* in freedom from the prejudices of older scholarship. 'Let us clear the slate', he wrote. 'Let us ignore all of the commentaries and hypotheses which for centuries have obscured this text.'[104] Febvre's call for a new start was not original: Louis Delaruelle had already called for 'table rase' in his article of 1925 on the *Cymbalum mundi*.[105] But Delaruelle had written this because he believed that the allegories proposed by his predecessors were fraudulent distortions of an intrinsically non-allegorical book. Febvre, on the other hand, cleared the slate so that he could carve into it again with his own theories—many of which bore a suspicious resemblance to the ones he had rubbed off.

Furthermore, he dismissed any attempt to understand the *Cymbalum mundi* by reference to its classical sources. Of course, Febvre was not unaware that were many other Lucianic dialogues of the Renaissance in which Mercury appeared as a caustic cheater among the mortals, like the famous *Karsthans* and the *Diálogo de Mercurio y Carón* of Juan de

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[102] See in particular pp. 605–606.

[103] This is for a bad and contingent reason. Professor Philippe Joutard, the president of the Association Lucien Febvre and the person entrusted with Febvre's files, did not respond to any of the requests for access made over three years by me and M. Yann Potin of the Archives Nationales. A future researcher with better luck or better connections will have a useful finding-aid in Brigitte Mazon, 'Lucien Febvre, archiviste de lui-même. Note sur l'histoire du fonds d'archives', in *Lucien Febvre face à l'Histoire*, ed. Marie Barral-Baron and Philippe Joutard (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2019), pp. 365–375.

[104] 'Pour nous, faisons la table rase. Ignorons tout des commentaires et tout des hypothèses dont on a obscurci, des siècles durant, un texte par lui-même assez difficile—un texte clair de langage, mais obscur de propos.' *Origène et Des Périers*, p. 11.

[105] 'La meilleur moyen de comprendre, c'est de faire table rase de leurs rêveries.' 'Étude sur le problème du « Cymbalum mundi »', p. 12.

Valdés.[106] He might have cited some more.[107] Surely there should have been a strong presumption that the *Cymbalum mundi* was an ordinary humanist drama like the rest of them, each of which recombined classical motifs to fashion its own humorous satire. But Febvre threw this possibility out on the (false) grounds that there were no clear borrowings from Lucian, or any other classical author, to be found in the *Cymbalum mundi*.[108]

Now that he had closed these false paths, Febvre's first analytical move was to associate Des Periers with his master Estienne Dolet, a connection that was proven historically by Dolet's commendation of Des Periers in the second volume of his *Commentarii*. Dolet, as Febvre argued more amply in a later work, had plumbed the classical tradition so deeply that he came to see human beings as gods, and in so doing crashed out of the Christian faith.[109]

Des Periers' own works were equally full of this veneration of humanity. As proof, Febvre offered the example of *L'homme de bien*, a poem in Du Moulin's *Recueil des œuvres de feu Bonaventure Des Periers* of 1544. The titular *homme de bien*, we read,

> De soir ne lasche au doulz sommeil le cours,
> Qu'il n'ayt avant faict en soy un discours,
> En espluchant poinct par poinct à sejour,
> Tout quant qu'il ha dict & faict celuy Iour.
> Ains que dormir songeons à nostre affaire,
> I'ay faict cecy, & cela reste à faire,
> (Dict il alors à Soymesme escoutant)
> I'ay tant perdu, i'ay gaigné tant & tant.[110]

…and so on. The poem ends with a summary:

> Voyla comment l'homme Sage & discret
> Avec Soymesme, en son privé secret,
> Faict un Recueil de tous ses dicts & faicts
> Du iour passé, soient bons, ou imparfaictz,
> Se repentant des propos vicieux,
> Et contentant des actes vertueux.[111]

According to Febvre, this poem was non-Christian in its tone and content, and amounted to straightforward evidence of Des Periers' liberation from the prison of theological thought.[112]

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[106] *Origène et Des Périers*, p. 86, n. 1.
[107] For instance, Pontano's *Charon*, first published in 1491.
[108] *Origène et Des Périers*. p. 104
[109] Lucien Febvre, 'Dolet propagateur de l'Évangile', *BHR* VI (1945): pp. 98–170.
[110] He does not let sweet sleep take its course until he has conversed with himself, and gone through everything he has said and done that day. He says this to himself: 'Rather than sleeping, let us think of our business. I have done this, and this remains to be done. I have lost so much, and gained so much.'
[111] See how the wise and continent man makes a review of all the words and deeds of the past day, whether they are good or imperfect. He repents of his sins and takes pleasure in his virtues.
[112] A similar conclusion had already been reached by Lacour: see CM 1856, vol. I, p. lv.

It did not contain a word about God or religion, and presented Man as a lonely creature of great virtue, equal in virtue to the gods. Des Periers had not come up with this teaching on his own: Dolet, who had proclaimed a similarly exalted vision of humanity in his article *homo* in the *Commentarii*, must have contributed to the emancipation of Des Periers' mind.[113]

Unfortunately for this step in Febvre's argument, there is very little philosophical material in *L'homme de bien* that was original to Des Periers, or even to Dolet. In particular, the motif of self-scrutiny at bedtime was drawn from at least one of two extremely famous classical passages. The first was the 'Golden Verses' of Pythagoras, which had been printed several times in both Greek and Latin translation by the 1530s. The godly sage, that poem says, should ask himself three questions about his day before going to sleep: *wherein have I trespassed? what have I done?* and *what have I left undone?*[114] The other source, a passage in Seneca's *De ira*, was even better known in the sixteenth century:

> At the end of the day, when he betook himself to his nightly rest, Sextius would ask the following of his own soul: *What evil in yourself did you heal today? What vice did you resist? Wherein have you become better?* I take this opportunity to plead a cause to myself. When the light is removed from sight, and when my wife (who is well used to this habit of mine) falls silent, I go over my whole day and measure up my deeds and words. I hide nothing from myself; I pass over nothing. There is no need to fear any of my mistakes, when I can say to myself: *make sure you don't do that again—and now I forgive you*.[115]

If the use of a Stoic motif like this is evidence of daring unbelief, then we must conclude that many more sixteenth-century men than just Dolet and Des Periers were unbelievers. In fact, all of the emancipation and glorification-of-Man which Febvre had sensed in both men's works was nothing more than standard Renaissance Stoicism. It was indeed inspired by ancient sources, but it would have been no shock to Christians in the sixteenth century—or the tenth—to hear it argued that Seneca's precepts could have a place in a pious Christian life. When it came to Marguerite of Navarre, Febvre was able to understand that sexual

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[113] 'Dolet a pu contribuer, a dû contribuer à émanciper l'esprit de Des Périers'. *Origène et Des Périers*, p. 58.

[114] Verses 40–44:

> *Μὴ δ' ὕπνον μαλακοῖσιν ἐπ' ὄμμασι προσδέξασθαι,*
> *πρὶν τῶν ἡμερινῶν ἔργων τρὶς ἕκαστον ἐπελθεῖν·*
> *πῇ παρέβην; τί δ' ἔρεξα; τί μοι δέον οὐκ ἐτελέσθη;*
> *ἀρξάμενος δ' ἀπὸ πρώτου ἐπέξιθι καὶ μετέπειτα*
> *δειλὰ μὲν ἐκπρήξας ἐπιπλήσσεο, χρηστὰ δὲ τέρπευ.*

[115] Faciebat hoc Sextius ut consummato die cum se ad nocturnam quietem recepisset interrogaret animum suum: 'quod hodie malum tuum sanasti? cui vitio obstitisti? qua parte melior es?'[…] Utor hac potestate et cotidie apud me causam dico. Cum sublatum e conspectu lumen est et conticuit uxor moris iam mei conscia totum diem meum scrutor factaque ac dicta mea remetior; nihil mihi ipse abscondo, nihil transeo. Quare enim quicquam ex erroribus meis timeam, cum possim dicere 'vide ne istud amplius facias, nunc tibi ignosco'? *Dialogi* V.xxxvi.1–3.

desire and faith could live in a single person's mind. Strange that he saw classical learning as something which must necessarily have displaced good religion. Not even the Faculty of Theology had applied such severity against Des Periers' work; not John Calvin; not Henri Estienne.

Another point of contact between Dolet and Des Periers, according to Febvre, was their willingness to deride sectarian theologians—not on behalf of any particular sect, but because both men had realized that religion as a whole was a great imposture, and that it was sweet to watch the shipwrecks of believers from the high cliffs. Des Periers had revealed this teaching in the the second dialogue of the *Cymbalum mundi*, and the same attitude was to be seen in a letter from Dolet to Guillaume Scève after the *affaire des placards*, in which he ridiculed the obstinacy of the persecuted Lutherans.[116] Now, Febvre was quite correct that Des Periers' and Dolet's theological outlooks were closely related to each other. Only their common theological commitment was not atheism but non-schismatic Evangelism, which could jeer at Luther as well as any other Cephas or Apollos without compromising its love of the Gospel. Dolet in his letter to Scève complained of the Lutherans because of the injury they did to *Christ*. He said so explicitly, and it would be wanton distortion to take his meaning otherwise. It was because of their heresy, not their religion, that Dolet was content to see them imprisoned.[117] Likewise, the second dialogue of the *Cymbalum mundi* was aimed at sectarians who wrestled over adiaphora and forgot their loyalty to Christ.

Febvre now continued his account of Des Periers' intellectual awakening. After receiving his un-Christian education from Dolet, he came across a shocking book: the *Contra Celsum* of Origen. Written in the third century, it was a point-by-point rebuttal to a work of the pagan Celsus—the *Ἀληθὴς λόγος*, 'The True Discourse'. By concatenating the anti-Christian polemics of Celsus which Origen had cited, and by setting Origen's own rebuttals aside, Des Periers reconstructed a refutation of Christianity by which he soon found himself

[116] *Origène et Des Périers*, pp. 38–42. Dolet's letter to Scève which Febvre cited was prefixed to Estienne Dolet, *Dialogus de Imitatione Ciceroneana, adversus Desiderium Erasmum Roterodamum, pro Christophoro Longolio* (Lyon: Sebastianus Gryphius, 1535), pp. 3–8.

[117] 'In vulgi sermonibus aliud planè nihil, præter factas Christo à Lutheranis iniurias. Dissipavit enim convitiosa quædam in cultum Christianum stulta ista & gloriæ exitiosæ appetens natio, quæ invidiam, qua hactenus laboravit, vehementius commoverunt. Itaque cum ex infima plebis fece, tum ex amplissimo mercatorum ordine, erroris Lutherani suspicione perstricti multi in carcerem coniecti sunt. Istarum tragœdiarum spectatorem me præbeo, & aliorum partim vicem doleo casumque miseror, partim stultitiam rideo, qui sibi capitale periculum ridicula quadam pertinacia & intolerabili obstinatione conflant.' Ibid., p. 6.

persuaded.[118] Of course, many people in Des Periers' generation had read *Contra Celsum*.[119] But he alone had read it with the right preparation, and with the zeal required to derive an inverted *Pro Celso* from it.[120] Now that this new doctrine had been revealed to him, Des Periers did not dare expound it explicitly. Instead he wrote the *Cymbalum mundi*, and encoded his newfound atheism in a set of seemingly rambling dialogues.

Febvre interpreted most of the meaning-bearing elements in the *Cymbalum mundi* as mythologizations of Celsus' teaching. But almost all of these identifications were afterthoughts, which rested on only three points of well-developed comparison between Celsus and Des Periers. These were some of the only places where Febvre actually ventured to cite the words of Origen's *Contra Celsum*, rather than merely alluding to that book portentously.

First, that Mercury was the prince of thieves, *chef de voleurs*. In the first dialogue, Byrphanes calls him the 'author of all thefts' and the 'prince and patron of robbers'.[121] Now Celsus, Febvre wrote, had called Christ a *λῃσταρχος*, a 'prince of robbers', which was surely the secret comparison intended by Byrphanes' words.[122] This cannot be. The comparison breaks down if we examine the original text of *Contra Celsum* (II.12):

> A good general in command of tens of thousands is never betrayed: but then nor is a wicked robber-chief [*λῃσταρχος*] who rules over the wickedest of men, as he seems to his comrades to be useful. But *he* [Jesus] was betrayed by his own subordinates, having neither ruled them like a good general, nor produced good will in them like a robber-chief, in that he deceived them.[123]

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[118] Compare the following passage in Benjamin Franklin's autobiography: 'Mais à peine eus-je atteint l'âge de quinze ans, qu'après avoir douté tour-à-tour des différens points, suivant que je les trouvois combattus dans les différens livres que je lisois, je commençai à douter de la révélation même. Quelques livres contre le déisme me tombèrent entre les mains. Ils contenoient, disoit-on, la substance des sermons qui avoient été prêchés dans le laboratoire de Boyle. Il arriva qu'ils opérèrent en moi un effet entièrement contraire à celui qu'on s'étoit proposé en les écrivant; car les argumens des déistes, qui étoient cités pour être réfutés, me paroissoient beaucoup plus forts que la réfutation. En un mot, je devins bientôt un parfait déiste.' *Mémoires de la vie privée de Benjamin Franklin, écrits par lui-même, et adressés a son fils; suivis d'un Précis historique de sa Vie politique, et de plusieurs Pièces, relatives à ce Père de la Liberté.* (Paris: Buisson, 1791). Could it be that Febvre had read this passage before crafting his theory about Des Periers and Celsus?

[119] As Febvre noted, there were plentiful editions of *Contra Celsum* by 1537, both in the Greek original and in humanist Latin translation.

[120] *Origène et Des Périers*, pp. 128–129.

[121] 'Ce seroit a nous une grande vertu, & gloire, de desrober non seulement ung larron, mais lauteur de tous larrecins, tel quil est', A_{iv} v. 1–3; 'Voyla le plus heureux larcin qui fut iamais faict: car nous avons desrobé le prince & patron des robeurs.' B_{iii} v. 9–11.

[122] *Origène et Des Périers*, p. 87.

[123] *Στρατηγὸς μὲν ἀγαθὸς καὶ πολλῶν μυριάδων ἡγησάμενος ἀδεπώποτε προὐδόθη, ἀλλ' ἀδὲ λῃσταρχος πονηρὸς καὶ παμπονήρων ἄρχων, ὠφέλιμος τοῖς συνοῦσιν εἶναι δοκῶν· αὐτὸς δὲ προδοθεὶς ὑπὸ τῶν ὑπ' αὐτῷ ὅτε ὡς στρατηγὸς ἦρξεν ἀγαθός, ὅτ' ἀπατήσας τοὺς μαθητὰς κἂν τὴν ὡς πρὸς λῃσταρχον, οὕτως ὀνομάσω, εὔνοιαν ἐνεποίησε τοῖς ἀπατηθεῖσι.*

The word λῃστάρχος does not mean Byrphanes' *prince des robeurs*: it denotes the chief of a single band of robbers. Cristoforo Persona, the first Latin translator of *Contra Celsum*, rendered it appropriately as *archipyrata*—'pirate king'—which is a glorious thing to be, but not all told very kingly.[124] Celsus' bandolero had nothing to do with Mercury, *the* prince of robbers, a title rendered variously in ancient sources as ἀρχὸς φηλητέων, φηλητέων ὄρχαμος, and φηλητῶν ἄναξ.[125] This epithet was the true source of Byrphanes' words. In any case, Celsus was not even likening Jesus to a robber-chief, but distinguishing him from one. According to his argument, even a pirate-king could earn his underlings' respect; so Jesus, who was betrayed by his disciples, was a useless leader of men.

Second, Celsus had wondered if human beings were indeed as superior to animals as the Christians thought. God's providence was general, and the belief that he could have special care for individual men was predicated on a faulty assumption of man's supremacy over the beasts.[126] To this argument corresponded Phlegon's complaints against his master in the third dialogue.[127] Needless to say, Des Periers had his own learned sources for Phlegon's complaint (most importantly the episode of Balaam's ass) and did not need any inspiration for it from a fragmentary work of anti-Christian philosophy. Besides, nowhere did Celsus actually question man's actual dominion over the beasts, only his ontological priority in the order of the universe.

Third, and most revealingly of his own sources, Febvre observed that the whole Mercury-for-Christ analogy was inspired by a very specific literary comparison made by Celsus (VI.78):

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[124] *Contra Celsum* (Rome: Georgius Herolt de Bamberga, 1481), foll. [F_i]v.–[F_{ii}]r. He was probably inspired for this translation by *De officiis*, II.40, which discusses the same topic as Celsus, i.e. honour among thieves: 'Nam qui eorum cuipiam qui una latrocinantur furatur aliquid aut eripit, is sibi ne in latrocinio quidem relinquit locum, ille autem qui archipirata dicitur, nisi æquabiliter prædam dispertiat, aut interficiatur a sociis aut relinquatur. Quin etiam leges latronum esse dicuntur quibus pareant quas observent.'

[125] *H.H.* IV.175: δύναμαι φηλητέων ὄρχαμος εἶναι; ibid., 292: ἀρχὸς φιλητέων κεκλήσεαι ἤματα πάντα; Euripides, *Rhesus* v. 217: πέμψειεν Ἑρμῆς, ὅς γε φιλητῶν ἄναξ.

[126] IV.23. *Μετὰ ταῦτα συνήθως ἑαυτῷ γελῶν τὸ Ἰουδαίων καὶ Χριστιανῶν γένος πάντας παραβέβληκε νυκτερίδων ὁρμαθῷ ἢ μύρμηξιν ἐκ καλιᾶς προελθοῦσιν ἢ βατράχοις περὶ τέλμα συνεδρεύουσιν ἢ σκώληξιν ἐν βορβόρου γωνίᾳ ἐκκλησιάζουσι καὶ πρὸς ἀλλήλους διαφερομένοις, τίνες αὐτῶν εἶεν ἁμαρτωλότεροι, καὶ φάσκουσιν ὅτι πάντα ἡμῖν ὁ θεὸς προδηλοῖ καὶ προκαταγγέλλει, καὶ τὸν πάντα κόσμον καὶ τὴν οὐράνιον φορὰν ἀπολιπὼν καὶ τὴν τοιαύτην γῆν παριδὼν ἡμῖν μόνοις πολιτεύεται καὶ πρὸς ἡμᾶς μόνους ἐπικηρυκεύεται καὶ πέμπων οὐ διαλείπει καὶ ζητῶν, ὅπως ἀεὶ συνῶμεν αὐτῷ. Καὶ ἐν τῷ ἀναπλάσματί γε ἑαυτοῦ παραπλησίους ἡμᾶς ποιεῖ σκώληξι, φάσκουσιν ὅτι ὁ θεός ἐστιν, εἶτα μετ' ἐκεῖνον ἡμεῖς ὑπ' αὐτοῦ γεγονότες πάντῃ ὅμοιοι τῷ θεῷ, καὶ ἡμῖν πάντα ὑποβέβληται, γῆ καὶ ὕδωρ καὶ ἀὴρ καὶ ἄστρα, καὶ ἡμῶν ἕνεκα πάντα, καὶ ἡμῖν δουλεύειν τέτακται. Λέγουσι δ' ἔτι παρ' αὐτῷ οἱ σκώληκες, ἡμεῖς δηλαδή, ὅτι νῦν, ἐπειδή τινες ἐν ἡμῖν πλημμελοῦσιν, ἀφίξεται θεὸς ἢ πέμψει τὸν υἱόν, ἵνα καταφλέξῃ τοὺς ἀδίκους, καὶ οἱ λοιποὶ σὺν αὐτῷ ζωὴν αἰώνιον ἔχωμεν. Καὶ ἐπιφέρει γε πᾶσιν ὅτι ταῦτα μᾶλλον ἀνεκτά, σκωλήκων καὶ βατράχων, ἢ Ἰουδαίων καὶ Χριστιανῶν πρὸς ἀλλήλους διαφερομένων.*

[127] *Origène et Des Périers*, pp. 95–98.

> Now the comic poet was raising a laugh in the theatre when he wrote of Jupiter's waking up and sending Mercury to the Athenians and the Spartans. But do you not suppose it even more laughable for the son of God to have been sent to the Jews?[128]

To Febvre, this was all Des Periers had needed for the plot of his first dialogue. Mercury was a stand-in for Christ, and Jupiter for his Father: and all of it was a subject of laughter.[129]

The first thing to observe about Febvre's citation of this passage, and indeed of his Celsus-theory in general, is that he derived it from a note in Éloi Johanneau's *clef* of 1841.[130] Johanneau had written:

> *Mercury*, the messenger of the gods, who descends from heaven to *Athens* to have the *Book of Destinies* rebound by order of *Jupiter*, is Jesus Christ, the messiah sent by God, who descends to earth and goes to Jerusalem to bring to it the new law, the law of life eternal, and to publish the Gospel. 'The comic poet', Celsus says to Origen (*in Orig.*, book VI, n. LXXVIII) 'wrote that Jupiter sent Mercury to the Athenians and the Spartans: and you, Christian, do you not think you are all the more ridiculous when you assure me that the son of God was sent to the Jews?'[131]

(This passage had already been cited in full by Félix Frank, and it may well be that Febvre found it in CM 1873 rather than in 1841.)[132] Johanneau had himself been inspired to compare Mercury with Christ by a note on the second dialogue that he had found in the paragraph-series.[133] All told, neither Febvre's comparison of Mercury to Jesus Christ nor his speculation that Des Periers had read Celsus was original: these discoveries dated to 1711 and 1841, respectively.

This was only the most important of the interpretations that Febvre borrowed from previous scholars. In fact, his entire detailed account of the dialogues was assembled from the allegorical identifications that had been made before him, whether he cited them or not. He referred casually, and without a footnote, to the fact that Celia in the third dialogue stood for

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[128] *Ἀλλ' ὁ μὲν κωμῳδὸς ἐν τῷ θεάτρῳ γελωτοποιῶν συνέγραψεν ὅτι Ζεὺς ἐξυπνιδεὶς Ἀθηναίοις καὶ Λακεδαιμονίοις τὸν Ἑρμῆν ἔπεμψε· σὺ δὲ ὀκ οἴει καταγελαστότερον πεποιηκέναι Ἰȣδαίοις πεμπόμενον τȣ̃ θεȣ̃ τὸν υἱόν;*

[129] *Origène et Des Périers*, p. 84.

[130] CM 1841, p. 89.

[131] *Mercure*, le messager des dieux, qui descend du ciel à *Athènes* pour y faire relier tout a neuf, de la part de *Jupiter*, le *Livre des Destinées*, est Jésus-Christ, le messie, l'envoyé de Dieu, qui descend sur la terre et va à Jérusalem porter la nouvelle loi, la loi de la vie éternelle, y publier l'Évangile. « Le poëte comique, dit Celse à Origène (*in Orig.*, liv. VI, n. LXXVIII), a écrit que Jupiter envoya Mercure aux Athéniens et aux Lacédémoniens: toi, chrétien, ne penses-tu pas être plus ridicule, quand tu assures que le fils de Dieu a été envoyé au Juifs ? »'

[132] CM 1873, p. 61.

[133] 'Si j'osois debiter ici mes soupçons, je dirois que Mercure joüe dans ces Dialoges un rolle bien odieux pour le Christianisme. Je dirois, par exemple, qu'on pretend ici ridiculiser celui qui nous apporta, descendant des Cieux, la Verité éternelle.' | CM 1711b, II, p. 281.

Claude de Bectoz: but this had been proposed in 1902 by René Harmand.[134] He identified the sand-gatherer Girard in the second dialogue with Erasmus, as Lacour had done (though he did additionally explain Girard's vanishingly small role in the dialogue by the fact that Erasmus had died in 1536, and that Des Periers was reluctant to satirize the dead).[135] He adopted not only Éloi Johanneau's unscramblings of *Du Clenier* and *Tryocan*, but also his influential (and erroneous) explanation of them, according to which unbelieving Thomas pulls the wool over credulous Peter's eyes.[136] (He was sure, however, to note that Celsus had mentioned Doubting Thomas' finger; and also in another place credulous people in general, which was no doubt Des Periers' inspiration for *Pierre Croyant*.)[137] He identified the fables that Hylactor promises to tell Pamphagus as allusions to sacred events in the Gospel.[138] But then Bernard, Johanneau, Lacroix, Lacour, Frank, and Lefranc had already done that—Febvre's only intervention now was to point to some passages in *Contra Celsum* that Hylactor's fables reminded him of. Only the myth of *Erus qui revesquit* (H_{iv} r. 1–2) had actually been mentioned by Origen, and indeed it is the only passage in the whole of the *Cymbalum mundi* whose actual subject matter had also appeared in *Contra Celsum*.[139] Still, Febvre's statement to the contrary notwithstanding, Celsus had not mentioned, let alone ridiculed, the story of Er the Armenian. The fable was brought up by Origen himself, with a due citation of Plato's *Republic*, as a refutation of the unbelievers who doubted that resurrection was possible.[140] In any case, Hylactor's mention of 'Erus' was certainly unrelated to Origen's: there are other places, many of them much more famous, where Des Periers could have come across the myth.

In fact, the spectacular discovery of Bonaventure Des Periers' inspiration by Origen was a smokescreen for Febvre's true method of interpretation. This was simply to repeat earlier work under a new name. Febvre admitted himself that very few of his comparisons to *Contra Celsum* could have been discovered *prima facie* in the *Cymbalum mundi*, but were mostly only visible after the connection to Celsus had been established.[141] We can say more, however: not even the comparison to *Contra Celsum* itself was visible *prima facie*, but had itself

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[134] *Origène et Des Périers*, p. 26; René Harmand, 'Note sur un passage du 3e dialogue du « Cymbalum Mundi »', *Revue d'Histoire littéraire de la France* IX, no. 1 (1902): pp. 100–101.
[135] *Origène et Des Périers*, p. 38, n. 1. Henri Busson mistakenly attributed this identification to Louis Lacour as well as Febvre: *Le rationalisme,* Nouvelle édition, p. 186, n. 1.
[136] *Origène et Des Périers*, p. 84. See my discussion of the anagrams in chapter I.
[137] Loc. cit., n. 1.
[138] *Origène et Des Périers*, pp. 102–104.
[139] *Origène et Des Périers*, p. 103, n. 1.
[140] *Contra Celsum* II.16: *Ἐπεὶ δὲ τὸ περὶ τῆς ἀναστάσεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ χλευάζουσιν οἱ ἄπιστοι, παραθησόμεθα μὲν καὶ Πλάτωνα λέγοντα Ἤρα τὸν Ἀρμένιόν μετὰ δώδεκα ἡμέρας ἐκ τῆς πυρᾶς ἐγηγέρθαι καὶ ἀπηγγελκέναι τὰ περὶ τῶν ἐν ᾅδου.*
[141] *Origène et Des Périers*, p. 104.

only been suggested to Febvre by Éloi Johanneau. The very act of reading the *Cymbalum mundi* as a gospel of unbelief is something that Febvre could have performed only under the influence, direct and indirect, of a long tradition of scholarship; from which only those men were free who had encountered the *Cymbalum mundi* on its own, and with no instructions to interpret it allegorically. (As we saw in chapter III, these naïve readers were Antoine Du Verdier and the seventeenth-century owner of Émile Henriot's copybook; and almost nobody else.) Like many scholars before him, Febvre had read several commentaries on the *Cymbalum mundi* that had all glossed it as an atheist text. He adopted their conclusion, but justified it on a new basis—inspiration by *Contra Celsum*—with as many proofs as he could find.

Why, however, had Des Periers written such a book? Febvre rejected out of hand the possibility that Des Periers had merely intended to write a dramatic vulgarization of *Contra Celsum*. He could not be sure of Des Periers' motivations, but he did allow himself an imaginative speculation. Just like Phlegon, the horse who gains the ability to speak and pours out his protest against mankind, so had Des Periers made a desperate cry to anyone who would understand him:

> It is just as if, having read *Contra Celsum* and; more than struck by his reading, drawn by it into a series of reflections and readings, and driven by the sort of fever that he felt to be climbing in him—a man, a gifted writer, Des Periers, conceived the plan of freeing himself in public—of communicating (with caution, naturally, and in hidden words) his doubts and thoughts to readers, doubting surely from the start that the great number of them would read anything between the lines. But all the same, his thoughts would secretly reach some clear-sighted strangers, led by their own reflections to a state of mind and a sensibility akin to his own—and also (why not?) some initiates too, known to him already: for such sects were not unknown to the sixteenth century. Far from it.[142]

So there were atheists in the sixteenth century after all. And their lives were every bit as mysterious and cultic as Félix Frank had thought. They communicated with each other by complicated systems of signs, intelligible to the initiate but meaningless to the profane. Des Periers was a 'master of libertinism', who had written his fable of Mercury's descent to earth to be foolishness to the persecuting authorities, and wisdom to his fellow libertines. At one

[142] Tout se passe comme si ayant lu le *Contra Celsum* et plus que frappé par cette lecture, engagé par elle dans une série de réflexions et de lectures, poussé par l'espèce de fièvre qu'il sentait monter en lui—un homme, un écrivain doué, Des Périers, avait conçu le dessein de se libérer en public—de communiquer, avec prudence naturellement et à mots couverts, ses doutes et ses pensées à des lecteurs dont il se doutait bien, d'avance, que le grand nombre ne lirait rien entre les lignes—mais qu'elles toucheraient en tout cas, secrètement, et quelques clairvoyants anonymes, conduits par leurs réflexions propres à un état d'esprit et de sensibilité analogue au sien—et (pourquoi pas ?) quelques initiés aussi, de lui déjà connus : car le XVIe siècle n'a point ignoré la secte, loin de là.' Ibid., p. 98. Note the approving citation of this passage in Philippe Guiberteau, *L'énigme de Dante* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1973), p. 183.

point, Febvre even indulged in a prosopopoetic fantasy and imagined Bonaventure Des Periers' defence of his work before some dimwitted interrogators:

> We can hear Bonaventure, seized by some lackey, interrogated by pettifoggers; and easily purging himself of all suspicion: 'Gentlemen, who set you up to this? what fly has bitten you? Is the descent of Mercury to earth a suspect allusion?—and to what, gentlemen, I ask you? Mercury is Mercury. He comes down to earth in my first dialogue just as he comes down to earth in all the dialogues in which, since the immortal Lucian, this pagan god is introduced as a regular fellow… And with me, in my *Cymbalum*, he is so much the ancient Mercury, the God of Trade though also of thieves, that I have him craftily stealing a little silver statue from the good landlady. In truth, gentlemen, what is suspect in my innocent little drama?' Surely nothing—and Des Periers' skill is proven by his exculpation in 1538. But we will not let him have the pleasure of stuffing us like he stuffed Lizet. Des Periers read Celsus.[143]

This little monologue might as well have been invented by Gisbert Voetius or Abel Lefranc. Febvre was no less convinced than the old Shakespeare-sceptic that the Renaissance was a world of secret atheism and cryptic literary codes. And this brings us back to our original problem. For someone who was ready to indulge such a wild fantasy about the atheist *Cymbalum mundi*, what profit to have written *Le problème de l'incroyance*?

Perhaps in publishing *Origène et Des Périers*, the sometime socialist Febvre[144] was paying his intellectual vows to the tradition of seeing heroic freethought in the Renaissance, inaugurated by Michelet and carried on in Febvre's day by Henri Hauser and Augustin Renaudet.[145] By posthumously inducting Des Periers into the cult of secularism and free-thought, he may have cleared his conscience for having excluded Rabelais from that same cult in *Le problème de l'incroyance*.[146] Or else it may be that Febvre's personal and scholarly scorn for Louis Delaruelle, which dated to 1907 when he savagely reviewed Delaruelle's doctoral theses, prompted him to drag his enemy one more time around the walls by trashing his anti-

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[143] 'Car on entend d'ici Bonaventure happé par les estaffiers, interrogé par les Chats Fourrés et se lavant sans peine de tout soupçon : « qui vous meut, Messieurs, qui vous point ? La descente de Mercure sur terre, une allusion suspecte ? Et à quoi, Messieurs, je vous le demande ? Mercure, c'est Mercure. Il descend sur terre dans mon premier dialogue comme il descend sur terre dans tous les dialogues où, depuis l'immortel Lucien, on ne cesse d'utiliser comme compère ce dieu du paganisme… Et chez moi, dans mon *Cymbalum*, il est si bien le Mercure antique, le Dieu du Commerce mais aussi des voleurs, que je le mets en scène dérobant subtilement une statuette d'argent à la bonne hôtesse… En vérité, Messieurs, quoi de suspect dans mon innocente scénette ? » Rien sans doute—et l'habilité de Des Périers est démontrée par sa mise hors de cause de 1538. Mais ne lui laissons pa[s] la joie de nous truffer, comme il truffa Lizet. Des Périers a lu Celse.' Ibid., p. 86.

[144] See José Antonio Ereño Altuna, *Lucien Febvre. Combates por el socialismo*, Serie Historia 14 (Bilbao: Universidad de Deusto, 1994).

[145] The separately published offprint of *Origène et Des Périers* was dedicated to Renaudet, 'en témoignage de vieille affection'.

[146] This was the sage suggestion of Lutembi, 'Le Problème de la Croyance au XXe siècle (I)', pp. 44–46.

allegorical interpretation of the *Cymbalum mundi*.[147] Or else we may consider Denis Crouzet's opinion, which runs as follows: Febvre saw Rabelais as a 'sounding-box' of the sixteenth century, and as a man who could not be seen clearly without painting the whole intellectual word in which he lived. To do so was to liberate him from the tyrannical anachronism of Abel Lefranc. Meanwhile, he projected his own brilliant historian's character onto the figure of Bonaventure Des Periers. He saw Des Periers' excited joy at discovering Christ's imposture as akin to his own moments of lighting-strike insight into the real nature of men and ideas from the past. Discoveries like these singled Febvre out from his own generation: so why not Des Periers from his?[148]

I have not seen enough of Febvre's private documents to support one of these or any such hypotheses. As it is, there is another question to ask of considerably more historical importance, and which one Febvre himself might have appreciated. The peculiarities of Febvre's psychology aside, what historical and intellectual conditions allowed for such contradictory judgements on Rabelais and Des Periers to coexist in *any* documentary historian's mind?

One plausible answer has to do with the character of each book. There was a special attraction in the *Cymbalum mundi*'s apparent harmlessness. Rabelais himself announced in the prologue of *Gargantua* that his fictions were to be taken as allegories, and his works were littered with constant winking references to allegorical encryption. Therefore everyone was in on the supposed secret. But the *Cymbalum mundi* was naïve on the surface: all the more deliciously shocking that it concealed a venomous secret doctrine. The paradox worked its attraction on scholars for hundreds of years, and Febvre was not immune to it.

Another explanation has nothing to do with the content of the works themselves. It consists in the path-dependence that resulted from an accidental divergence in their historical receptions. Both Rabelais and Des Periers had been accused of atheism under the cover of secret allegory by Henri Estienne in 1566, and both authors were still suspected of it in the eighteenth century. But it was only the *Cymbalum mundi* for which a detailed atheist allegory was ever proposed. Moreover, whereas the *clef*s of Rabelais had attributed all kinds of secret

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[147] See Lucien Febvre, 'Guillaume Budé et les origines de l'humanisme français, à propos d'ouvrages récents', *Revue de synthèse historique* XV/3, no. 45 (December 1907): 255–277 [review of Louis Delaruelle, *Guillaume Budé: les origines, les débuts, les idées maîtresses*, Études sur l'humanisme français (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1907); id., *Répertoire analytique et chronologique de la correspondance de Guillaume Budé* (Toulouse: Edouard Privat / Paris: Edouard Cornély, 1907)]; Jean Lecuir, 'La bande du Père Ubu au temps de Clemenceau (1906–1909)', in *Lucien Febvre face à l'Histoire*, ed. Marie Barral-Baron and Philippe Joutard (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2019), pp. 221–258 [237].
[148] Denis Crouzet, 'Postface. Rabelais et son double: l'historien en synergie', in *Le problème de l'incroyance au XVIe siècle. La religion de Rabelais*, by Lucien Febvre, Nouvelle édition (Paris: Albin Michel, 2003), pp. 479–514 [494–495].

and subversive codes to his works, irreligion was only one among many messages that he was purported to have conveyed. Even Johanneau and Esmangart's *clef* asserted that Rabelais had satirized the Roman church and the public figures of his own age, not religion itself. But at the time of Febvre's writing, the extant *clef*s of the *Cymbalum mundi*, written over more than two hundred years, had been devoted almost exclusively to the single theme of atheism. According to the paragraph-series and its successors, the target of the dialogues was not this or that figure in court, or even abuses in religion, but Jesus Christ and the Truth.

Abel Lefranc himself had pointed this out. Asserting the originality of his theories on Rabelais, he observed that earlier scholars had already discovered the specifically anti-clerical and anti-universitarian satires in *Gargantua* and *Pantagruel*. Indeed, throughout the seventeenth century, learned Frenchmen had amused themselves by finding hidden political and literary allegories in the text of Rabelais,[149] culminating in 1694 when the Huguenot Pierre-Antoine Le Motteux wrote a *clef* of Rabelais' works that exposed their anti-papist message.[150] But none of these scholars, Lefranc wrote proudly, had realized that the allegory was *atheist*.[151] Whether or not this was true, that Lefranc was able to assert it at all is evidence of how little support from tradition he had for his pronouncements on Rabelais. But when it came to the *Cymbalum mundi*, Lefranc was only the latest in a centuries-long parade of savants who had found atheism in the dialogues. You could disagree with his interpretations of this or that character or episode, as Henri Busson did—and still the atheist *Cymbalum mundi* remained.

Not even Lucien Febvre could easily dissent from the tradition that made it so. He could oppose Abel Lefranc when he stood alone in his interpretation of Rabelais, but not as readily when he represented the consensus of a dozen scholars living and dead. The paradigm of the atheist, allegorical *Cymbalum mundi* was so deeply rooted in French historiography as to overcome even his general anthropological objection to the possibility of sixteenth-century unbelief. In this respect, Febvre's interpretation of the *Cymbalum mundi* was not conceived in 1942 or in 1937, but in 1711.

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[149] See Marcel De Grève, 'Érudits du XVIIe siècle en quête de la clef de Rabelais', in *Études rabelaisiennes*, vol. V, THR, LXV (Geneva: Droz, 1964), pp. 41–63.

[150] Pierre-Antoine Le Motteux, 'Preface. Wherein is given an Account of the Design and Nature of this Work, and a Key to some of its most difficult Passages', in *The Works of F. Rabelais, M.D. or, The Lives, heroic Deeds and Sayings of Gargantua and Pantagruel. Done out of French by Sir Tho. Urchard, Kt. and others. With a large Account of the Life and Works of the Author, particularly an Explanation of the most difficult Passages in them, never before Published in any Language* (London: Richard Baldwin, 1694), pp. xli–clvi. 'Ici Rabelais sent le fagot', wrote Jacob Le Duchat in one place where he had detected a subversive religious satire: *Œuvres du Maître François Rabelais, publiées sous le titre de Faits et dits du géant Gargantua et de son fils Pantagruel*, vol. IV (Amsterdam: Henri Bordesius, 1711), p. 193 n. 7.

[151] 'On a noté à satiété les satires antimonacale et antisorbonique. Personne ne s'est risqué, semble-t-il, à aller au-delà. Nul ne s'est demandé si Rabelais, en dernière analyse, n'avait pas cessé d'être chrétien.' 'La pensée secrète de Rabelais', p. XLI.

Conclusion

There is one element in the *Cymbalum mundi*'s five-hundred-year history that deserves special emphasis. This is the fact that when modern readers wrote their heroic glorifications of the book, they typically took pre-modern denunciations of it as their model.

Recall that the tale of the *Cymbalum mundi*'s being an atheist allegory was constructed principally by four pre-modern authors. First was Henri Estienne, who insinuated that the book had been written to seduce the unwary into atheism and licence. Then Marin Mersenne gave a brief explanation of the dialogues' contents, and stated that they were only a veil for a nefarious atheist teaching. Following him Voetius, one of Mersenne's few readers, gave a detailed explanation of how the heathen tales of the *Cymbalum mundi* could plausibly have been a cover for a rejection of all religion, just as Samuel Coster's *Iphigenia* had indicated the Mass with blood-sacrifice and the Trinity with the triform goddess Hecate. Finally, Pierre Bayle laid out the whole *Cymbalum*-myth as he had received it, using it as an occasion for his own philosophical reflections on the possibility of hidden atheist allegory. All of these authors—like most of the more than two dozen scholars who cited them uncritically—were actually afraid of a secretly atheist book like the *Cymbalum mundi*. There was nothing two-hearted in their descriptions of atheism. Though there was room for disagreement among them over whether any given book was atheist—hence Voetius, for instance, declined to pass a final sentence on the *Cymbalum mundi*—it went without saying that a book, once proven to be atheist, was dangerous and damnable. The *Cymbalum*-myth, ill-informed as it was, was the paranoid creation of men who had convinced themselves that religion faced a mortal threat from secret scoffers.

This was so of every author who wrote about the *Cymbalum mundi* before the eighteenth century. Then, as we saw in chapter IV, the editor of CM 1711b devised an atheistic message for the book and published it as the paragraph-series. This man's motives were not straightforwardly pious. Perhaps they were not straightforwardly impious either, but he, like Prince Eugene and others who sought copies of the *Cymbalum mundi*, was evidently excited by the possibility of anti-Christian subversion in itself. Later, however, the speculations of the paragraph-series were imitated and expanded by men who really *did* wish for the destruction of traditional religion; who saw Bonaventure Des Periers as a harbinger of modern intellectual liberty. Anxious to find subversion in France and Europe's past, they were ready to be convinced on very slight evidence that they had come upon a secret revolutionary. They let themselves be seduced by the story which had been told to them about the *Cymbalum mundi*.

They could not have hit on this little book independently. Unless supported by a centuries-long tradition that had been clothed in a respectable guise by Bayle and the paragraph-series, it is hardly conceivable that modern scholars could have found anything like atheism amid the middling erudition of a minor Evangelical poet of the 1530s. In that respect, the errors of the present were parasitic on the errors of the past. The *Cymbalum mundi* was described by frightened Christians and then by enthusiastic freethinkers, and none of these had any use for the possibility that the book had nothing to do with atheism at all. Only Prosper Marchand, who stood at the intersection of the old paranoia and the new enthusiasm, was safe in the eye of the storm and immune to both. This feature of the *Cymbalum mundi*'s history is typical of our whole historical attitude to Renaissance unbelief—and even to historical subversion in general.

We can find a comparison in the history of werewolves. Just like underground atheism, the myth of the werewolf-cult was developed by frightened scholars in the sixteenth century, smiled at in the Enlightenment, and then resuscitated in modernity by both leftist and Nazi nostalgists for pre-modern brotherhood.[1] Unlike werewolves, however, unbelief really existed in addition to being the subject of myth, and therefore it has two histories. First is the actual process by which Christianity was brought down from its place as the dominant scientific and moral paradigm in the West. This story has not yet been told in all its detail, but it has much less to do with secrecy and subversion than with published philosophical debate, and with the results of progressively value-free research into history and nature. The *Cymbalum mundi* does not figure in this history at all.

Second is the legend of the atheist underground, which, though dreamt up in the Renaissance, remained so fascinating into modernity that it was often taken for the history of atheism itself. To the history of *this* legend, the *Cymbalum mundi* is of central importance. If nothing else, the book offers a neat lesson in how historians in our industrialized, scientific world fell with open eyes into a centuries-old delusion. What our ancestors invented out of fear, we have believed out of our itch for heroic resistance.

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[1] See Bruce Lincoln, *The Werewolf, the Shaman, and the Historian: Rethinking the Case of "Old Thiess" after Carlo Ginzburg*, Hayes-Robinson Lecture (Windsor Auditorium, Royal Holloway, University of London, 2015), https://web.archive.org/web/20200411152848/https://backdoorbroadcasting.net/2015/03/bruce-lincoln-the-werewolf-the-shaman-and-the-historian-rethinking-the-case-of-old-thiess-after-carlo-ginzburg-2/; id., Bruce Lincoln, 'The Werewolf, the Shaman, and the Historian', in *Apples and Oranges: Explorations in, on, and with Comparison* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018), pp. 37–53; Carlo Ginzburg and id., *Old Thiess, a Livonian Werewolf: A Classic Case in Comparative Perspective* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2020); also Otto Höfler, *Kultische Geheimbünde der Germanen* (Frankfurt: Verlag Moritz Diesterweg, 1934).

Bibliography I: Editions of the *Cymbalum mundi*

A second bibliography just as long as this one could be made of nonexistent editions which are mentioned in the literature. Here I have only included editions that I have seen with my own eyes, on microfilm, in a photograph, or in a digital scan; or else that I have discovered in a reliable library or sale catalogue. I have omitted many editions which I could not identify through any of those methods, but are nevertheless not obviously fictitious. There are also some editions which I might have missed altogether. For these reasons, I have numbered the catalogue by publication-years and not by arbitrary serial order, in order to allow for the easy inclusion of any subsequently verified entries.

The general siglum for all editions is **CM**. Printed editions are also identified by year and, if there were more than one in a single year, by letter (e.g. CM 1711a; CM 1992). Three-letter codes refer to manuscripts (e.g. CM Eug, CM Ven).

The title pages and colophons (if extant and relevant) of all editions made on a handpress are reproduced as closely as possible.

PRINTED EDITIONS

In chronological order of appearance, as far as that could be established.

Several editions from the same year were marked **a**, **b**, etc. in order of their appearance (though it was sometimes impossible to tell which had been published first).

1537

Cymbalũ mũdi

EN FRANCOYS,
Contenant quatre Dialogues Poetiques,
fort antiques, ioyeux, & facetieux.

[Jehan Morin's bookseller's device: Probity in rags, flanked by genii crying 'EUGE' and 'ΣΟΦΟΣ' {*sic*} at her. Blackamoor heads (to signify *Mor*in) and the initials IM.]
Probitas laudatur, & alget.

M.D.XXXVII

COLOPHON:

Fin du preſent Liure intitule Cymbalum
Mũdi, en Francoys imprime nouuellement a
Paris pour Iehan morin Libraire de-
mourant audict lieu en la rue
ſainct Iacques a Lenſei-
gne du croyſſant.

M. D. XXXVII.

COLLATION: 8°, 32 foll. a4 B–H4.

Roman type.

Printed by Louis Cyaneus and published by Jehan Morin, who was persecuted by the Parlement de Paris for it from March 1538. The author's name (Bonaventure Des Periers) is not stated.

The date 1537 is probably old-style; thus there is no telling whether according to modern reckoning the book was published in late 1537 or in 1538 before Easter.

See Alfred Cartier, 'Le libraire Jean Morin et le *Cymbalum Mundi* de Bonaventure des Periers devant le Parlement de Paris et la Sorbonne', *Bulletin de la Société de l'Histoire du Protestantisme Français* XXXVIII (1889): pp. 575–588.

The woodcut with the allegory of probity was an identifying mark of Morin, and also appears on his 1538 edition of the *Roman de la Rose*. It has no intrinsic connection whatsoever with the *Cymbalum mundi*.

ONE SURVIVING COPY: Versailles, Bibliothèque Municipale, Goujet 12° 241 (old shelfmark: E 409 f), whose provenance is as follows:

– 1706: Sold at the Bigot sale [?]

– Before 1745: In the possession of Charles Abbé d'Orléans de Rothelin (1691–1744). *Not in his library's sale catalogue of 1746, by which time Gros de Boze already owned it. But as Félix Frank pointed out [*CM 1873*, p. XVIII], Jean-Pierre Imbert Châtre de Cangé corrected a copy of CM 1711a (*BnF RES-Z-2443*) against this copy, which, he wrote then, was in the possession of Rothelin.*
– 1753: Bought at the sale of the library of Charles Gros de Boze by Jean-Louis Gaignat. (It is also listed in de Boze's earlier catalogue of 1745; see Jean Boudot, *Catalogue des livres du cabinet de M. de Boze* [Paris: Gabriel Martin, 1745], p. 175.)
– 1753–1769: In the possession of Jean-Louis Gaignat.
– 10 April 1769: Bought by Louis César, duc de La Vallière at the sale of the library of Jean-Louis Gaignat, for 350 francs.
– 1784: Bought by Nicolas-Noël-Henri Tilliard at the sale of the library of Louis César, duc de La Vallière, for 120 francs.
– [?]
– Part of the private Versailles library of Louis XVI.
– Confiscated during the Revolution and deposited into the library of the École Centrale de Seine-et-Oise, later the Bibliothèque Municipale de Versailles.

It contains two title pages, of which the first is a counterfeit made in 1873 by Adam Pilinski under the direction of Félix Frank.

Prosper Marchand wrote the following in his *Avertissement* (CM 1711a):

> Je n'en connois que deux Exemplaires dans Paris: l'un à la Bibliotheque du Roy, & l'autre qui se trouva parmi les Livres de Messieurs BIGOT de Roüen, qui furent vendus publiquement à Paris en 1706. Cet Exemplaire ne se trouve point specifié en son rang dans le *Catalogue* de cette celebre Bibliotheque, que je dressai pour lors, parce qu'il étoit relié dans un Recueil de diverses Pieces où l'on ne s'apperçut point qu'il étoit. La Personne à qui il eschut témoigna tant de joye de cette découverte, & fit tant de bruit de sa bonne fortune, à laquelle elle ne s'étoit point attendue, qu'elle reveilla la curiosité de beaucoup de Monde pour cet Ouvrage; & qu'on lui en demanda plusieurs copies Manuscrites, qu'elle se fit d'autant plus de plaisir d'accorder volontiers, que cela contribuoit beaucoup à relever la rareté de son Exemplaire imprimé.

If Marchand was referring to this copy, and not to one of the copies of CM 1538, then this 'Personne' was either a young Rothelin or someone who later sold the book to Rothelin. CM Ven might be one of the manuscript copies that he describes.

On this copy, see Richard Copley Christie, *Etienne Dolet, the Martyr of the Renaissance. A Biography* (London: Macmillan, 1880), p. 229n; Trevor Peach, 'Notes sur l'exemplaire unique de la première édition du *Cymbalum Mundi* (1537)', *BHR* LIV, no. 3 (1992): pp. 715–723; Geneviève Guilleminot-Chrétien, 'Le dernier possesseur du *Cymbalum Mundi* de 1537', in *ACR2000*, pp. 565–567; and (though it contains blunders) Yves Giraud, 'La lettre et l'esprit: problèmes textuels et éditoriaux autour du *Cymbalum Mundi*', in *ibid.*, pp. 23–39.

1538

❧ CYMBALVM
MVNDI EN FRANCOYS
CONTENANT QVATRE
Dialogues Poetiques, fort antiques,
ioeux, & facetieux.
[POETA woodcut]
Probitas laudatur, & alget.
M. D. XXXVIII.

Colophon:

Fin du prefent Liure intitule Cymbalū
Mūdi, en Francoys Imprime nou-
uellement a Lyon par Benoist
Bōnyn imprimeur de-
mourāt audict lieu
en la rue de
Para-
dis.

M. D. XXXVIII.

COLLATION: 8°, 28 foll. A–C^{8} D^{4}

Bastard type.

Printed by Benoist Bonnyn in Lyon. The publisher is unknown, and cannot be identified by the woodcut (see below). Nor is the author named.

CM 1538 is based directly on CM 1537 and not on an independent manuscript. In consequence 'Probitas laudatur & alget' was mistakenly copied onto the title page, even though that motto belongs to Morin's device and not to the book itself.

The 'poëta' woodcut, made by Georges Reverdy, had appeared twice before in Lyon editions, both of which were printed by Joannes Barbous 'le Normand': once on the Παιδαγωγεῖον of Nicolas Bourbon, published by Philippus Rhomanus in 1536; and one on the *Epigrammata-Xenia* of Joannes Vulteius, published by Michel Parmentier in 1537. The very same year, Parmentier hired Barbous to print an *Oratio funebris*, also by Vulteius, but that edition does not have the device. Thus it seems that the woodcut was not meant to identify any particular publisher or printer, but was used by the printer Barbous as mere decoration. It soon passed into the hands of Bonnyn, who is known to swapped equipment with Lyonnese printers on other occasions. See Henri-Louis Baudrier, *Bibliographie lyonnaise: Recherches sur les imprimeurs, libraires, relieurs et fondeurs de lettres de Lyon au XVIe siècle*, ed. Julien Baudrier, vol. X (Lyon: Louis Brun, 1913), pp. 388–389.

TWO SURVIVING COPIES:

Paris BN Rés. Z 2442 [CM 1538_i]
Chantilly Musée Condé VI.E.36 [CM 1538_{ii}]

Known provenance of CM 1538_i:

– Owned by Pierre de L'Estoille (1546–1611)
– Owned by Jacques-Auguste De Thou (1553–1617)
– Before 1656: Bought by the brothers Dupuy
– 1656: Acquired by the Bibliothèque du Roy

The following annotations, in the hand of Pierre de L'Estoile, appear in this copy:

Title page:

[In red ink]
Delestoille

L'aucteur Bonad[uenture]
des Periers homme meschant et athee
comme il app[ert]
par ce det[esta]
ble liure

[lower down, in darker ink]
Telle vie, telle
fin: Aueré par
la mort de ce miserable
indigne de porter le nom
D'homme.

On the first page of dialogue I [In red ink]:

Dixit insipiens in Corde
Suo, Non est Deus.

Another annotation in a seventeenth-century hand, with a classmark:

Z .1203. / Il y a une Edition du meme livre en lettres rondes, faite à Paris en 1537. de sorte que celle cy est posterieure d'un an à celle de Paris

Title on spine: SIMBALVM MVNDI.

Tucked into the volume is a request for bail made on behalf of Jehan Morin, the printer of CM 1537, to Antoine Du Bourg, the chancellor of Paris. It appears to be in a humanizing gothic hand of the sixteenth century, and reads as follows:

A Monseigneur le Chancellier.

Supplie humblemant Iehan Morin, pauvre ieune garson, Libraire de Paris, que comme ainsy soit qu'il aie par ignorance, et sans aucun vouloir de mal faire, ou mesprandre, imprimé ung petit Livre

> appellé Cymbalum mundi: lequel livre seroit tumbé en scandale, et reprehension de erreur, a cause de quoi ledict suppliant pource qu'il la imprimé auroit esté mis en prison a Paris, et a presant y seroit detenu en grande pauvreté, et doumage a luy insuportable: qu'il vous plaise de vostre benigne grace luy faire ce bien de luy octroier letres, et mander a Monsieur le premier president de Paris, et a monsieur le Lieutenant criminel, que voulez bien qu'il soit relasché à caution de se represanter toutesfoys, et quantes que le commandement luy en sera faict: attendu que par sa deposition il à declaré lauteur dudict livre, et que en ce cas il est du tout innocent, et quil ny eust mis sa marque, ny son nom s'il y eust pencé aucun mal. Ce faisant ferez bien, et iustice, et l'obbligerez a iamais prier Dieu pour vostre prosperité et santé.

Unfortunately, the paper that this request is written on does not bear a watermark. Thus it is difficult to establish with only a lamp and magnifying glass whether the document is original (or at least contemporary); or else an early-modern facsimile from as late as the seventeenth century.

There is also a copy of the same document in a later hand. The text of the same document appears in a copy of CM 1711a (BnF RES-Z-2443), a note on which remarks that it was copied from the papers of Ismael Bouillard.

Known provenance of CM 1538_{ii}:

- [Before 1745] – 1753: Owned by Charles Gros de Boze. *Pencilled initials after colophon; see also* Jean Boudot, *Catalogue des livres du cabinet de M. de Boze* [Paris: Gabriel Martin, 1745], p. 175; *and also the comment by* Guillaume-François De Bure, *Bibliographie instructive: ou Traité de la connoissance des livres rares et singuliers*, Belles-Lettres, vol. II (Paris: Guillaume-François De Bure le Jeune, 1765), p. 295.
- 1753. Bought by Jules-François de Cotte (1721–1804). *Ms. note in BnF Arsenal 8-BL-32520*
- After 1753. Bought by Jean-Louis Gaignat (1697–1768). *Listed in his catalogue for sale of 10 April 1769.*
- 1769. Bought by Paul Girardot de Prefond (1722–1808). *Bookplate. Listed in undated manuscript catalogue; collection bought* in toto *by* MacCarthy.
- After 1769. Bought by the Irishman Justin MacCarthy-Reagh (1744–1811). *Listed in his sale catalogue of 1815.*
- [?]. Bought by Charles Nodier (1780–1844). *Bookplate; listed in his sale catalogue of 1844.*
- 1844. Bought (401 fr.) by a certain E. Baudelocque. *Listed in his sale catalogue of 1850.*
- 1850. Bought (415 fr.) by Maximilien de Clinchamp (1817–1857). *Bookplate, but not in sale catalogue of 1860.*
- [?]. Bought by Armand-Bernard Cigogne (1790–1859). *Listed in his catalogue of 1861 (after sale* in toto *to d'Aumale)*
- 1859. Bought by Henri d'Orléans, Duc d'Aumale, together with the whole of Cigogne's collection.
- 1897. Part of the founding collection of the Musée Condé in Chantilly, which was bequeathed to the Institut de France by the Duc d'Aumale.

See Wolfgang Boerner, *Das "Cymbalum mundi" des Bonaventure Des Périers: Eine Satire auf die Redepraxis im Zeitalter der Glaubensspaltung*, Humanistische Bibliothek, Reihe I: Abhandlungen, Band 32 (Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1980), pp. 49–51.

1711a

CYMBALUM
MUNDI,
OU
DIALOGUES SATYRIQUES
Sur differens Sujets,
PAR
BONAVENTURE DES PERRIERS
Valet de Chambre de MARGUERITE
DE VALOIS, *Reine de Navarre*.

Avec une Lettre Critique dans laquelle on fait
l'Hiſtoire, l'Analyſe, & l'Apologie
de cet Ouvrage,

Par PROSPER MARCHAND,
Libraire.

[Device: INTER OMNES. B. Picart delin. 1700.]

A AMSTERDAM.
Chez PROSPER MARCHAND, Libraire,
dans le Nes, à l'Enſeigne de l'Etoile.

M.DCC.XI.

COLLATION: 12°, 83 foll., *5 A–F12 G6

An edition based on CM 1538i.
The advertised *lettre critique* had been written in 1706, when Marchand was still in Paris, and circulated in manuscript before its publication here. Marchand collated testimonia of the *Cymbalum mundi* in the basic intention of proving that there were no grounds for suspecting the book of impiety. The letter was corrected and expanded for a second edition by Marchand (see CM Mar), but never published again by him. See Paul J. Smith, 'Prosper Marchand et sa «Lettre critique sur le livre intitulé *Cymbalum Mundi*»', in *ACR2000*, pp. 115–128. Unfortunately the information on the *Cymbalum mundi* in the standard biography of Marchand is not reliable: Christiane Berkvens-Stevelinck, *Prosper Marchand: la vie et l'œuvre (1678–1756)*, Studies over de geschiedenis van de Leidse Universiteit 4 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1987).

REVIEW: 'VI. *Cymbalum mundi* […] dat is: Ratel van de weereld', *De republyk der geleerden, of kort begryp van Europas letternieuws tot hervorminge der Weetenschappen, voor den Konst en Letterminnaars dezer dagen opgemaakt en verbeetert*, September–October 1711, pp. 298–308.

COPIES CONSULTED: my own (signed: *Sacrelaire*); BnF RES-Z-2443 [Imbert du Cangé]; BnF Arsenal 8-BL-32518; BnF Arsenal 8-BL-32519; Herzog August Bibliothek Lm 1084.

1711b

CONTES
ET
NOUVELLES,

ET JOYEUX DEVIS,
DE
BONAVENTURE DES PERIERS.

TOME PREMIER.
[TOME SECOND.]

On a joint à cette Edition des Obſervations ſur le *Cymbalum Mundi* de cet Auteur.

[Device: hanging fruit.]

A AMSTERDAM,
Chez JEAN FREDERIC BERNARD,
Dans le Kalverſtraat.

MDCCXI.

Variant, attested for both volumes:

A COLOGNE,
Chez JEAN GAILLARD.

MDCCXI.

This edition does not include the text of the *Cymbalum mundi*, but it is of great importance to the bibliographical history of the book and must therefore be included in this list.

It was printed after CM 1711a, as it refers to page-numbers in that edition.

Vol. I is decorated with an undated frontispiece signed by J[an] Lamsvelt, an Amsterdam printmaker.

Its editor, who appears to have been Jean Fréderic Bernard, discusses the *Cymbalum mundi* in vol. I, and there are notes on the book in vol. II. These notes are divided into two series which are printed together. The first (the 'alphabetical series') are marked A, B, C, etc., and the second (the 'paragraph-series') are each marked with the sign § and a sequential number. According to Prosper Marchand, the author of the paragraph-series was the same man as the editor of the *Avertissement* in vol. I. This judgement seems to be correct, as the views offered in both places are idiosyncratic, and furthermore reminiscent of the style of Bernard, their

publisher and likely author. His *Avertissement* and commentary provoked a severely critical reaction from Prosper Marchand, who thought that he was a puerile scoundrel.

The alphabetical series, for its part, was attributed by Prosper Marchand to Bernard de La Monnoye. But Marchand made the reservation that not all of it could be attributed to him (CM Mar):

> On les attribuë à une *Personne de beaucoup de merite* deja connuë depuis longtems dans la *Republique des Lettres* par une infinité de semblables *Observations* fort recherchées, qu'elle s'est faite un plaisir de communiquer à plusieurs *Auteurs* distinguez, et entre autres au celebre M^{r}. Bayle, qui en a enrichi son *Dictionaire Historique & Critique*. S'il est vrai que ses *Observations* soient de cette *Personne*, il est bien certain au moins qu'elles ne sont pas toutes de sa composition. Il y en a quelques unes, qui sont tirées mot pour mot du *Dictionaire de Furetiere*, imprimé à *Trevoux* en 1704: Et particulierement celles des pages 276, et 291, sur les mots *Jaseran*, & *Tourets de Nez*, qui ont eté copiées en ma presence au bas d'un *Manuscrit* du *Cymbalum Mundi* par un de mes Confreres, qui n'entendoit pas la plupart des vieux Termes de cet *Ouvrage*. C'est de là sans doute qu'elles se sont glissées parmi les autres.

What probably happened is this: La Monnoye (or some other learned person) annotated the manuscript that had already been glossed in Marchand's presence by his colleague. Later, Bernard printed both layers of commentary without distinguishing between them.

Writing in 1715, La Monnoye himself said that he did not know who made this edition:

> Le dernier Éditeur des Contes, vulgairement nommés de des Périers, m'est inconnu. Son édition [i.e. CM 1711b] est la plus mauvaise de toutes.
>
> —(*Œuvres choisies de Bernard de La Monnoye*, vol. II (The Hague: Charles le Vier, 1770), p. 288.)

If they were indeed his, the notes were presented in such a mangled form as to make La Monnoye spurn them. (See CM 1732, below.) Perhaps this was because of the same interpolations that were noted by Prosper Marchand.

Now, whose manuscript did Bernard in fact use for the alphabetical series? The first clue is that the Baron von Hohendorff, in a letter to Prosper Marchand (UBL MAR 2) told him that 'les remarques de Mr de La Monoye sur le Cimbalum Mundi se trouvent dans le Manuscript de Mr du Fay a Paris'.

The following footnote from a 1738 book fills in the picture:

> M. [Charles-Jérôme de Cisternay]du Fay Capitaine aux Gardes qui étoit curieux de vieux Livres, fournit en 1711. à J[ean] F[rideric] B[ernard] les Contes de Des Periers & le *Cymbalum* au sujet duquel ce Libraire se trouva en concurrence avec Prosper Marchand qui le revendiquoit comme Auteur de la Dissertation qui le précedoit & qui étoit de la façon dudit Mr Marchand. Pour s'accommoder celui-ci resta

> maître du *Cymbalum* & J. F. B. des contes de Des Periers à la fin desquels il ajouta quelques Observations qu'il avoit envoiées à M de la Monnoie sur le *Cymbalum*, & qui les aprouva après y avoir fait quelques changemens. Dans la suite le *Cymbalum* & les Observations ont été réïmprimées à Paris [CM 1732], mais on y a suprimé quelques-unes des Observations.
>
> —Jean-Henri-Samuel Formey, ed., *Ducatiana, ou Remarques de feu M. Le Duchat sur divers sujets d'histoire*, vol. I (Amsterdam: Pierre Humbert, 1738), pp. 46–47, n.1.

This story, told awkwardly and at a very late date, contradicts La Monnoye's statement that he had not known who had published CM 1711b. It also posits a negotiation between Bernard and Marchand for which there is no contemporary evidence. Probably it is a misremembered version of events of twenty-seven years earlier. On the basis of Hohendorff's comment, the most likely possibility is that Du Fay had owned a manuscript (*CM Fay) that contained some notes by La Monnoye—the very same manuscript that had earlier been annotated in Marchand's presence—which he furnished to Bernard. Marchand probably knew nothing of this until after 1711b had been published.

It may be conjectured furthermore that what Du Fay furnished to Bernard was not the manuscript itself but a *copy* of it. Such a copy might have obliterated the distinction between the two layers of notes on *CM Fay, just as occured (though not beyond detection) in *CM Eug. This would explain why the Bernard's alphabetical series conflated the two layers into one. We can call this copy (now lost) *CM Ber.

REVIEW*:* Michel de La Roche, 'Article LXIII', in *Memoirs of Literature: Containing a Large Account of Many Valuable Books, Letters and Dissertations upon Several Subjects, Miscellaneous Observations, &c.*, 2nd ed., vol. III (London: Sold by R. Knaplock and P. Vaillant, 1722), pp. 296–297.

JOINT REVIEW OF CM 1711a AND CM 1711b: Jean Le Clerc, 'Article V', *Bibliotheque choisie, pour servir de suite à la Bibliothèque universelle* XIII, no. 2 (1711): pp. 453–461. Prosper Marchand excerpted this article extensively in CM Mar as ammunition against the editor of CM 1711b.

COPIES CONSULTED: BnF Arsenal 8-BL-18758 (1–2); Herzog August Bibliothek Lm 1083 (Cologne variant)

1712

CYMBALUM
MUNDI.

OR,

SATYRICAL DIALOGUES
upon ſeveral Subjects,
BY
Bonaventure Des Perriers,
Valet-de-Chambre to
MARGARET DE VALOIS,
Queen of *Navarre*.

To which is prefix'd a
LETTER
containing the
Hiſtory, Apology, &c. of that Work.
BY
PROSPER MARCHAND.

Done into *Engliſh* from the *French*.

LONDON:
Printed for *A. Baldwin*, at the *Oxford-Arms* in
Warwick-Lane. MDCCXII.
(*Price One Shilling*.)

A close English translation; in fact, the best in existence to this day, and the best that will ever be made, as its age permitted a far closer rendering of the French than would be tasteful in modern English (for instance, *sambieu*, *corbieu*, *morbieu*, etc., are given straightforwardly as *s'blood*, *s'Buddikin*, *s'death*, etc.) The translation was based entirely on CM 1711a.

For a short discussion of both English translations, see Peter Hampshire Nurse, 'Le *Cymbalum mundi* en Angleterre', *BHR* 21, no. 1 (1959): pp. 205–209.

COPY CONSULTED: Cambridge University Library Ddd.25.98

1723

CYMBALUM *MUNDI*:

OR

SATYRICAL DIALOGUES
On Various SUBJECTS.
BY

Bonaventure des Perriers,

GENTLEMAN OF THE BED CHAMBER to

MARGUERITE de VALOIS
QUEEN of *NAVARRE*.
WITH A
CRITICAL LETTER

Containing the HISTORY and ANALYSIS of the WORK, together with an APOLOGY for it.

Done into ENGLISH from the ORIGINAL.

LONDON:
Printed by T. SHARPE, for J. NEWTON in *Little-Britain*. MDCCXXIII.

Published by one John Newton, a London bookseller.

The translation is anonymous. A much freer and worse rendition than the foregoing one. This edition was also based on CM 1711a, but independently of CM 1712.

COPY CONSULTED: Cambridge University Library 7735.d.426.

1724

CYMBALUM *MUNDI*:

Containing Four
POETICAL AND SATYRICAL
DIALOGUES,
On Various SUBJECTS.
BY
Bonaventure des Perriers,
GENTLEMAN of the BED CHAMBER to
MARGUERITE de VALOIS,
QUEEN of *NAVARRE*.
WITH A
CRITICAL LETTER

Containing the HISTORY and ANALYSIS of the WORK, together with a DEFENCE of it, from the Misrepresentations of HENRY STEPHENS, LA CROIX DU MAINE, JEAN CHASSANION, ESTIENNE PASQUIER, Father MARIN MERSENNE, THEOPHILUS SPIZELIUS, Monsieur BAYLE, and several others.

Done into *ENGLISH* from the ORIGINAL.

The Second Edition.

LONDON:
Printed for W. and J. NEWTON in *Little-Britain*, and Sold by
T. PAYNE near Stationer's-Hall. MDCCXXIV.

A second edition of CM 1723, likewise published by John Newton (now joined by his relative William). Unlike its predecessor, it includes a preface (sig. A_1r–A) by its anonymous translator and editor. This man goes farther than Marchand, who merely sought to vindicate the *Cymbalum mundi* of atheism, and characterizes it as a pious work that ridiculed a false conception of God. As this edition is rather scarce, this preface is worth reproducing:

> I think it may be said, that there is no Accusation that is fallen into greater Abuse, than that of *Atheism*. Abundance of narrow Souls, or ill-natur'd People, fix it upon all

those who affirm only the great and sublime Truths of solid Metaphysicks, and the general Doctrines of the Scriptures. They would feign oblige 'em moreover to adopt all the particular Articles which they are used to recommend over and over to the People: All that dare deviate from that Road, are Infidels and Libertines. Thus it was that *Des Perriers* first incurred this evil Imputation, which was afterwards heightned and aggravated, even by those who never saw his Book. He ridicul'd such as abus'd the Greatness of God by the Conduct which they ascrib'd to him, and by the weak Reasons they alledg'd; and he has been unjustly call'd an Atheist, though it cannot be inferr'd from any thing he wrote, but that he might have as sublime an Idea of God as ever was imagin'd: That agreeable way which he took to contradict such erring Minds, as by their Arguments weaken the Truths they would confirm, occasion'd some prejudic'd Persons, especially of the *Romish* Clergy, to take this Effect of his Openness and Candour, for an ill Liberty. Tho' he gave Testimonies of his Virtue and Piety in his other Works. I think after what has been said in the following Apology, 'tis needless to urge any thing more in Defence of this little Book, which has made so much Noise in the World; and I shall only inform the Reader, that I made it the Employment of some Leisure Hours, when I was lately at *Oxford*, to put it into an *English* Dress, and that I have as closely followed the Original, as the difference of Idiom, and the Humour of Dialogue would permit me.

COPY CONSULTED: Cambridge, Trinity College Library, L.1.46[1]. I am thankful to James Kirwan for sending me photographs.

1732

CYMBALUM MUNDI,

OU

DIALOGUES SATYRIQUES

Sur differens Sujets,
Par BONAVENTURE DES PERIERS.
Avec une Lettre Critique dans laquelle on fait
l'Hiſtoire, l'Analyſe, & l'Apologie de
cet Ouvrage.

Par PROSPER MARCHAND, Libraire.

NOUVELLE EDITION.

Revûë, corrigée & augmentée de Notes & Remarques,
communiquées par pluſieurs Sçavans.

[Device: INTER OMNES. B. Picart delin. 1711.]

A AMSTERDAM,
Chez PROSPER MARCHAND, Libraire dans
le Nes, à l'Enſeigne de l'Etoile.

M. DCC. XXXII.

COLLATION: 12°, 140 foll., ã^{12} ẽ^{4} A–K^{12} L^{4}.

Printed in Paris, likely by Jacques Clouzier.

At least one copy (BnF VELINS-1511) was printed on vellum.

Marchand himself referred to CM 1732 in as '*la N^le^ Edition faite à Paris en 1732*' (CM Mar). The imprint naming Marchand as the publisher and Amsterdam as the place of publication is therefore false. Whoever the publisher was, he was the same man who three years later edited La Monnoye's annotations on the *Nouvelles recreations et joyeux devis*, which he had found in a copy of the 1572 edition of that book. (It is now in the BnF under the shelfmark Res-Y2-1989). This 1735 edition bears the imprint 'Z. Chatelain: Amsterdam'. That the same man printed this book and CM 1732 is clear from the statement made in the 1735 edition's 'Avertissement de l'imprimeur':

> Je m'acquitte enfin de la parole à laquelle je m'étois engagé en 1732. dans l'Avertissement de la nouvelle édition du Cimbalum Mundi [sic] de Bonaventure des Periers, & je donne ses nouvelles Recreations & joyeux Devis, ou Contes avec les Notes de feu M. de la Monnoye.

This corresponds to a statement at the end of the *Avertissement* of CM 1732 (pp. xxix–xxx):

> On aura occasion de parler de ces *Recreations* ou *Contes* de Des Periers dans l'Avertissement que l'on mettra à la tête de l'Edition que l'on en fait, & qui paroîtra incessament. Elle sera augmentée de Notes très-amples & curieuses de feu Mr. de la Monnoye.

The two editions are typographically very similar, and it seems that they shared a publisher as well as an editor. Now, Claude Jordan (see his review below) wrote that CM 1732 was to be found in the shop of a M. Clouzier on the Rue Saint-Jacques in Paris. Collating this observation with the *Mercure français*' attribution of the 1735 *Nouvelles recreations* to Jacques Clouzier, we can take it as likely that CM 1732 was published by the same Jacques Clouzier (ca. 1706–1767) in Paris. Other books printed openly by Clouzier have typography that also appears in CM 1732, like an **I** initial that bears identifying damage-marks,[2] and the use of **ã** and **ẽ** to sign consecutive preliminary gatherings.

Clouzier was notoriously unscrupulous with his imprints, and was eventually condemned by the Conseil Privé in 1746 for attributing his books to false publishers. Thus it is perfectly plausible that he should have reprinted the *Cymbalum mundi* under Marchand's name. Incidentally, Clouzier was the son-in-law and business associate of Charles Osmont, the bookseller who had supplied a manuscript copy of CM 1538_i to Prosper Marchand in 1706. See 'Nouvelles litteraires des beaux arts, &c.', *Mercure de France* 108 (1735): pp. 1583–1592 [1586]; Frédéric Barbier, Sabine Juratic, and Annick Mellerio, *Dictionaire des imprimeurs, libraires et gens du livre à Paris*, 1701–1789, A–C (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 2007), pp. 472–474.

The text takes CM 1711a for a starting point, and applies many of its emendations; but it is also based on a collation of CM 1537. The edition also contains the *lettre critique* from CM 1711a, but does not incorporate Marchand's corrections and additions that constitute CM Mar, which excludes the possibility of Marchand's cooperation in this edition. Moreover there is an '*Avertissement*', probably by Clouzier, which elaborates on Marchand's scholarship in the lettre. The *Advertissement* also includes the first publication of Morin's request, which is to be found tucked into CM 1538_i, and also the text of the Parlement de Paris' condemnation of CM 1537.

Imitations of Bernard Picart's plates in CM 1711a appear in this edition. They are very similar to the originals, but display many minor differences in hatching. The title page is also decorated with an imitation of one of Marchand's old printer's devices. This vignette is certainly a copy; if the plates can be taken to be modified from the original, then it should be supposed that the editor acquired them from Picart.

The text itself is followed by a modified version of the notes in 1711b. Most of the alphabetical and paragraph-notes are still there, plus a third series marked *. This 'asterisk-series' was seemingly written *after* the book had already been printed, as it suggests numerous corrections of the typesetter's spelling. These corrections were incorporated into the errata, but not into the text itself. In one place (p. 195) the author of the asterisk series even directly criticized 'le nouvel éditeur', and in general the series is written from the perspective of someone looking at a finished and printed book. The gathering H spans the last three pages of the text and the beginning of the notes, so it may be that this portion of the text was reprinted after the asterisk series had already been delivered to the publisher. Indeed, there are no errata for this gathering (though this may simply be a coincidence).

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[2] See CM 1732, p. 69; Walter Harris, *Traité des maladies aiguës des enfans*, trans. Devaux (Paris: Jacques Clouzier, 1738), p. 1.

The asterisk series consists of investigations into many lexical problems in the *Cymbalum mundi*. Is not the posthumous work of Bernard de La Monnoye, independently of what one thinks of the attribution of the alphabetical series. On the subject of the alphabetical series, which he was in part reprinting, the publisher wrote (p. 173): '*celles qui sont marquées par des lettres, passent pour être de Mr. de la Monnoye* [emphasis mine].' (These are not the words of someone who had an exact knowledge of La Monnoye's commentary on the *Cymbalum mundi*.) He went on: '*On en a ajouté beacoup d'autres dont l'objet principal est d'expliquer les vieux mots & les tours de l'ancien langage; quand elles rectifient les premieres, on a cru devoir retrancher celles-ci, comme inutiles. Ces dernieres sont ainsi marquées* *.' The '*on*' here can hardly be identified with La Monnoye, who had died in 1728. Thus it seems that La Monnoye had no part in this edition. Besides, at the end of his *Avertissement* the publisher wrote explicitly that the notes of La Monnoye would appear in a forthcoming edition of the *Nouvelles recreations et joyeux devis*. If the asterisk series had been written by La Monnoye, surely he would have said so outright, just as he did in the case of the forthcoming notes on the *Nouvelles recreations*.

The notes in this edition are often attributed to Camille Falconet and Antoine Lancelot, usually generally, and without an attempt to distinguish among the three series. The earliest instance I can find of the notes' attribution dates to a dozen years after this edition's publication, in [Jean Boudot], *Catalogue des livres du cabinet de M. de Boze* (Paris: [Gabriel Martin] 1745), pp. 175–6; and BnF Arsenal MS 5304, foll. 294–295. I cannot, however, find any hard evidence to connect either Falconet or Lancelot to the asterisk series in this edition, let alone to any of the notes in CM 1711b.

In summary, it appears that the editor combined four documents to make CM 1732: CM 1711a, CM 1711b, CM 1537, and a set of notes by an anonymous author, whose identity he might or might not have known.

REVIEWS*:* Claude Jordan [?], 'Cymbalum Mundi, ou dialogues satyriques sur differens Sujets [review]', *Suite de la Clef, ou Journal historique sur les matières du tems [Journal de Verdun]* XXXII (November 1732): pp. 329–333; Jean-Bernard Michault, 'Notes critiques sur le Livre intitulé: *Cymbalum mundi*', in *Mêlanges historiques et philologiques*, N. Tilliard, vol. I (Paris, 1754), pp. 145–149.

COPIES CONSULTED*:* My own; BnF Arsenal 8-BL-32520; BnF Arsenal 8-BL-32521; BnF VELINS-2511; BnF Z-16608.

1753

CYMBALUM MUNDI,

OU

DIALOGUES SATYRIQUES

Sur différens Sujets,

Par BONAVENTURE DES PERIERS.

Avec une Lettre Critique dans laquelle on fait l'Hiſtoire, l'Analyſe, & l'Apologie de cet Ouvrage.

Par PROSPER MARCHAND.

Nouvelle Edition, revue, corrigée & augmentée de Notes & Remarques, communiquées par pluſieurs Savans.

[Engraving: three cherubs.]

A AMSTERDAM ET A LEIPZIG,
Chez ARKSTE´E & MERKUS.
MDCCLIII.

The same contents as CM 1732. The '*Avertissement*' is the same, and is so mindlessly reproduced that it does not even omit to announce the forthcoming publication of a book that had appeared in 1735. A note in the errata (p. 222) refers to 'une Edition faite à Amsterdam en 1732'.

The plates from CM 1732 (themselves copied from CM 1711a) appear here in copies by the Dutch engraver Frans de Bakker in 1752. Unlike the originals, they are furnished with captions that describe the contents of each depicted scene.

Hans Kasper Arkstée and Hendrick Merkus were real booksellers of the period, but 'Arkstée & Merkus' was also a pseudonym adopted by various Parisian publishers from 1753–1774. The real Arkstée and Mercus did not list this edition in their catalogue of 1767, which suggests that CM 1753 is a pseudonymous printing, whether French or Dutch. Most books printed under this name seem, like CM 1753, to have been exact reprints of previous editions. See *Catalogue des livres françois, imprimés chez Arkstée et Merkus, Imprimeurs & Libraires à Amsterdam & à Leipzig, et de ceux dont ils ont nombre d'Exemplaires* (Arkstée et Merkus, 1767); Gustave Brunet, *Imprimeurs imaginaires et libraires supposés: étude biographique, suivie de recherches sur quelques ouvrages imprimés avec des indications fictives de lieux ou avec des dates singulières* (Paris: Librairie Tross, 1866), pp. 19–20.

A reprint *CM 1755 is sometimes mentioned (for instance by Calvié, CM 2002, p. 40), but I have never seen a copy of it or seen one listed in a catalogue.

COPIES CONSULTED: BnF Z-16608; Bibliothèque Mazarine, 22858B. The latter copy, which once belonged to the Minims in Paris, bears some pencil-marks in one opening (pp. 88–89) by which certain bawdy words and phrases are crossed out (*dormir avec les femmes*, *bourdeau*, *garses*).

1770

[No dedicated title-page.]

Voltaire, ed., in *Les choses utiles et agréables*, vol. III ([Geneva]: [Gabriel and Philibert Cremer], [1770]), pp. 167–242.

Fragmentary reprint of CM 1753, with the first part of the 'Avertissement' and a few footnotes by Voltaire. It is poorly presented; consisting of a slapdash reprint of CM 1753, and with barely any attempt to distinguish Voltaire's contributions from the material he was glossing.

Voltaire had already laid out his dismissive opinion of the *Cymbalum mundi* in one of his letters to Prince Carl I von Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel, first published in 'De Bonaventure Des Périers', in his *Lettres a son Altesse Monseigneur le Prince de **** sur Rabelais & sur d'autres auteurs accusés d'avoir mal parlé de la Religion Chrêtienne* (London: s.n., 1768), pp. 52–55.

See *Nicholas Cronk*, 'The 1770 Reprinting of Des Périers's *Cymbalum Mundi*: Voltaire's Uncritical Edition', *Revue Voltaire* IV (2004): pp. 177–96.

1841

Jacob [Lacroix], Paul, ed. *Le Cymbalum mundi et autres œuvres de Bonaventure Des Periers, réunis pour la première fois, et accompagnés de notice et de notes, par Paul L. Jacob, bibliophile. Avec une lettre à M. de Schonen, contenant une Clef du Cymbalum par M. Johanneau*. Paris, Librairie de Charles Gosselin, 1841.

This edition contains, alongside *Discours non plus melancoliques que divers*, a work very dubiously attributed to Des Periers, the text of the *Cymbalum mundi* in modernized spelling (pp. 27–75). It also contains (pp. 77– 154) the *clef du Cymbalum mundi* by Éloi Johanneau, who had been offended by Charles Nodier's prior publication of what he considered to be his own discoveries on the *Cymbalum mundi*. Johanneau tortured Lacroix (and Charles Gosselin the publisher) with endless corrections to the proofs, and his *clef* was omitted from future editions. Johanneau's *clef* was also issued at the same time as an offprint.

REVIEW: Miller, Emmanuel, and Joseph-Adolphe Aubenas. *Revue de bibliographie analytique, ou compte rendu des ouvrages scientifiques et de haute littérature, publiés en France et à l'étranger* III, no. 3 (March 1842): pp. 238–242.

1856

Lacour [La Cour de la Pijardière], Louis de, ed. *Œuvres françoises de Bonaventure Des Periers*. II vols. Paris: P. Jannet, 1856.

The *Cymbalum mundi* is in the first volume, on pp. 311–379. Lacour's introduction gives an elaborate allegorical reading of the book. According to him, the book was not atheist, but alluded to a universal 'verité' that was preeminent over all human religions.

Lacour collated CM 1537, which he claimed to have seen for the first time since La Croix du Maine in the sixteenth century. This was not true, as the editor of CM 1732 and Jean-Pierre Imbert Châtre de Cangé had already seen it. See Louis Lacour, 'Première édition du *Cymbalum mundi*, lettre de M. Lacour', *L'Athenæum Français*, 8 December 1855, Quatrième année, no. 49, p. 1066.

Printer's note: 'Paris, imprimé par GUIRAUDET ET JOUAST, 338, rue S.-Honoré, avec les caractères elzeviriens de P. JANNET.'

A short episode from the third dialogue of the *Cymbalum mundi* was excerpted from this edition (pp. 358–359) and anthologized as no. 38, '*Ung cheval qui sçait parler*', in Janet E. Heseltine, *The Oxford Book of French Prose* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970), pp. 46–47.

1858a

Paul L. Jacob [Lacroix], ed., *Le Cymbalum mundi précédé des Nouvelles récréations et joyeux devis.* Bibliothèque Galoise (Paris: Adolphe Delahays, 1858).

Printer's colophon: Paris. — Imp. Simon Raçon et Comp. / Rue d'Erfurth, 1

Lacroix's second edition of the *Cymbalum mundi*. The *Discours non plus melancoliques que divers* have been replaced by the *Nouvelles récréations et joyeux devis*. The text of the *Cymbalum mundi* (pp. 297–353) is presented in a version closer to its original spelling, and glossed with notes by Lacroix himself, who criticizes the commentaries of both Lacour and Johanneau. In his *Avertissement*, Lacroix also explains that Johanneau's *Clef* cannot appear for want of permission. Indeed, the agreement between Lacroix and Johanneau had explicitly forbidden Lacroix from printing further editions of the *Clef* without Johanneau's consent. Johanneau's death in 1851 thus ruled out all future reproductions of it.

1858b

Paul L. Jacob [Lacroix], ed., *Le Cymbalum mundi précédé des Nouvelles récréations et joyeux devis.* Bibliothèque Galoise (Paris: Adolphe Delahays, 1858).

Printer's colophon: Paris. — Imp. Simon Raçon et Comp. / Rue d'Erfurth, 1

The text is identical to CM 1858a, and both publisher and printer are the same, but it is cast in stereotype with a different pagination, with more text on each page. Unless there is cause to disambiguate these editions, they can be cited collectively as CM 1858.

1872

Jacob [Lacroix], Paul, ed. *Contes ou Nouvelles récréations et joyeux devis, suivis du Cymbalum mundi.* Paris: Garnier Frères, 1872.

Printer's colophon: Typographie Lahure, rue de Fleurus, 9, à Paris.

A reprint of CM 1858b from the same plates, but with a new publisher and printer. It was itself reprinted many times, including runs in 1910, 1925, and 1937.

1873

Frank, Félix, ed. *Le Cymbalum Mundi: Texte de l'édition princeps de 1537, avec Notice, Commentaire & Index*. Bibliothèque d'un curieux. Paris: Alphonse Lemerre, 1873.

Frank was a Comtean liberal, an atheist, and an ardent opponent of Napoleon III. He saw Des Periers among the heroic forerunners of his own cause.

The text of CM 1537 was (at least ostensibly) exactly reproduced, even in some places where there was an obvious misprint.

REVIEW: *Revue critique d'histoire et de littérature* 9, no. 25 (19 June 1875): pp. 398–399. The anonymous reviewer agreed with Frank that there were mysterious anagrams in the *Cymbalum mundi*, and that Des Périers was an atheist, but warned that '*on finit, en ayant toujours devant les yeux des pensées et des expressions à double sens, par voir une intention là où il n'y a que hasard pur*'.

1874

Lacour [La Cour de la Pijardière], Louis de, ed., *Nouvelles récréations et joyeux devis de B. Des Périers, suivis du* Cymbalum mundi, *réimprimés par les soins de D[amase] Jouaust. Avec une notice, des notes et un glossaire par Louis Lacour*. II vols. Paris: Librairie des Bibliophiles, 1874.

A revision of CM 1856, with some light modifications to the text and introduction. Notes on the *Cymbalum mundi* appear in vol. II, pp. 295–301.

1910

Floerke, Hanns, ed. and trans. *Die neuen Schwänke und lustigen Unterhaltungen gefolgt von der Weltbimmel*. II vols. Perlen älterer romanischer Prosa, 16–17. Munich and Leipzig: Georg Müller, 1910.

The *Weltbimmel*— 'world-bell'—is the earliest, and to this date the only German translation of the *Cymbalum mundi*. The volume that it appears in is decorated with illustrations by the Austrian pornographer Franz von Bayros (1866–1924), but all of these belong to the *Nouvelles recreations*.

Hanns Floerke (1875–1944) was an art historian and German propagandist. In 1909, he already had published an anti-religious and anti-clerical screed, entitled *Das Kirchentum*. He was later apparently a member of the Nazi Party.

1914

Plan, Pierre-Paul, ed. *Cymbalum Mundi de Bonaventure des Periers: Réimpression de l'édition 1537 facsimilé de l'exemplaire unique conservé à la Bibliothèque de Versailles*. Paris: Société des Anciens Livres, 1914.

An exact facsimile of CM 1537. (Unlike CM 1537 itself, a scan of it is available for free on the internet; both on Gallica and on Google Books.) In his editorial introduction, Plan endorsed Félix Frank's interpretation.

1923

Cymbalum Mundi | *Contes*. Série Bleue 25. Paris: Éditions Nilsson, s.d.

A flimsy 16° in carboard covers and on bad paper, sold in train stations for 1 Fr 95. There is no editorial matter.

The text represents the first attempt at modernizing the *Cymbalum mundi* for the benefit of the wider public. Archaic words are replaced by modern French equivalents, like *méchanceté* for *maulvaistié*, *jamais* for *oncques*, the bowdlerized *rencontre* for *couvre*, and so on.

The exact date of this edition is uncertain. The earliest mention I have seen of it is an advertisement dating to 1923, but it may well be a little older than that. (See 'Romans à bon marché: 0 fr. à 2 fr.', *Le Populaire de Paris. Journal Socialiste*, 26 September 1923, p. 7.) Laurent Calvié (CM 2002, p. 42) dated it erroneously to 1958.

1930

Barriobero y Herrán, Eduardo, ed. *Cymbalum Mundi: Novelas y alegres pláticas de Buenaventura Des Periers, favorito de la Reina Margarita*. Colección Quevedo, anécdotas y decires, VI. Madrid: Mundo Latino, 1930.

Barriobero (1875–1939) was a leftist jurist who ended up imprisoned in the Spanish Civil War (by the Republicans, for embezzlement) and then shot by the Fascists after the capture of Barcelona. To judge from his translations his French was very bad and his Latin worse. See Francisco Lacruz, *El Alzamiento, la Revolución y el Terror en Barcelona* (Barcelona: Librería Arysel, 1943), pp. 153–158; Eduardo Barriobero y Herrán, *El tribunal revolucionario de Barcelona, 1936–1937*, España en armas 8 (Sevilla: Espuela de Plata, 2007).

1936

Деперье, Бонавентур. *Кимвал мира / новые забавы*. Edited with an introduction by Iván Kapitónovič Lúppol, translated by Vasíliy Ivánovič Píkov. Предшественники и классики атеизма 2[?]. Moscow – Leningrad: Academia, 1936.

Pikov's translation of the *Cymbalum mundi* appears on pp. 1–52, with commentary (compiled by Pikov) on pp. 351–398.

Luppol, a student of the philosopher Abram Deborin, was later denounced as a reactionary traitor by an acadmic rival. He was sentenced to death, but his sentence was eventually commuted to life imprisonment. He finally starved to death in a Mordovian gulag in 1943. The series *Предшественники и классики атеизма*, which he edited, was a collection of historical

atheist books whose authors were presented as forerunners to Marxist materialism. The only other book in the series I know for certain to have been published is Luppol's edition of the works of Uriel da Costa: *Уриэль Дакоста [1585(?)-1640]. О смертности души / Пример человеческой жизни,* trans. S. Ignatov and A. Denisov (Moscow – Leningrad: Academia, 1934).

Most surviving copies of CM 1936 have Luppol's introduction cut out as a result of Stalinist censorshop; not by any censors themselves, but by owners who were fearful of being discovered with literature by a proscribed author. My own copy is the only one I know of not to have been mutilated in this way.

Pikov, the translator, was Luppol's student. He later served in an infantry division and went missing at Stalingrad in 1942.

Both this and the edition of Dacosta had dust-cover illustrations by Khiger Jefim Jakovlevič, but I have never seen a surviving example.

On Luppol, see the editor's introduction to *Diderot. Ses idées philosophiques,* trans. Valentin and Yanne Feldman, Socialisme et Culture (Paris: Éditions Sociales Internationales, 1936), pp. 7–13; and Sergey Nikolaevič Korsakov, 'Иван Капитонович Луппол: Ренессансный человек в тисках сталинского режима'. *Философский журнал* I, no. 10 (2013), pp. 135–163; id., *Иван Капитонович Луппол, 1896–1943*, ed. L. A. Kalashnikova (Moscow: Наука, 2014).

1954

Des Periers, Bonaventura. *Veselé rozprávky*. Edited by Radovan Krátký. Světová četba 85. Prague: Státní nakladatelství krásné literatury, hudby a umění, 1954.

A translation into Czech made from CM 1858b or one of its reprints. Radovan Krátký's introduction explains that the *Cymbalum mundi* was a fundamentally radical and anti-clerical book, and cites Friedrich Engels' *Bauernkrieg* to give it historical context.

The names of the characters are etymologically translated: for example, Phlegon is *Hořavka* ('fiery'), and Pamphagus is *Hlt* ('gulp').

Krátký (1921–1973) was a generalist translator of foreign literature into Czech.

1958

Nurse, Peter Hampshire, ed. *Cymbalum Mundi*. Les ouvrages de l'esprit. Manchester: University of Manchester Press, 1958.

This is the best (or least bad) of all the modern critical editions. It reproduces the text of CM 1537, and notes some variants found in CM 1538, in addition to some philological and onomastic points. The text is largely modernized as far as orthography is concerned. Nurse regularized majuscules, I & V, and punctuation; and added some accent marks.

1963

Ninomiya, Takashi, and Kenichi Yamamoto, trans. キュンバルム・ムンディ [*kyunbarumu mundi*] 古き昔の楽しくもおどけたる四篇の詩的対話. 世界短篇文学全集 5. Tokyo: Sueisha, 1963.

The first of two Japanese translations.

1965

Knapp, Bettina Leibowitz, trans. *Cymbalum Mundi: Four Very Ancient Joyous and Facetious Poetic Dialogues*. New York: Bookman Associates, 1965.

Leibowitz's English translation bears some likeness to the original from afar.

1967

Nurse, Peter Hampshire, ed. *Cymbalum Mundi*. Les ouvrages de l'esprit. Second edition. Manchester: Éditions de l'Université de Manchester, 1967.

A photographic reprint of CM 1958, with the exception of a short '*Avertissement*'.

1973

Lacour [La Cour de la Pijardière], Louis de, ed. *Œuvres françoises de Bonaventure Des Periers*. Vol. I. Nendeln, Liechtenstein: Kraus Reprint, 1973.

An exact reprint of CM 1856.

1983

Bonaventure des Périers [?]. *Cymbalum Mundi*. Third edition. Edited by Peter Hampshire Nurse, with an introduction by M. A. Screech. Textes Littéraires Français CCCXVIII. Geneva: Libraire Droz, 1983.

This third edition of Nurse's text includes a preface by M. A. Screech, who thanked Nurse for allowing him to disagree openly with Nurse's views. Screech claimed that the scandal of the *Cymbalum mundi* consisted in its satire on Girard Roussel, i.e. 'Drarig' in the second dialogue. According to his theory, Marguerite of Navarre, offended on Roussel's behalf, had specially requested that her brother the king cause the book to be suppressed.

This edition with its description of Des Periers as a life-long Evangelical formed the basis of the article Deborah N. Losse, 'Des Périers, Bonaventure (c. 1510–1544)', in *Encyclopedia of the Renaissance*, ed. Paul F. Grendler, vol. 2 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1999), pp. 145–146.

1992

Újfalusi Németh, Jenő, ed. and trans. '*Cymbalum mundi*, avagy a nagy csinadratta'. In *Pompeji*, vol. III, no. 4 (1992), pp. 94–109; vol. IV, no. 1–2. (1993), pp. 164–183.

An Hungarian translation from CM 1983, glossed with footnotes.

1995a

Delègue, Yves, ed. *Le* Cymbalum Mundi *de Bonaventure Des Périers, avec un dossier et des textes d'accompagnement*. Textes de la Renaissance 4. Paris: Honoré Champion Éditeur, 1995.

A regression from CM 1983. The text of this edition is inconsistent and marred by errors; and by an involuted literary introduction that attributes abstract views on language to Des Periers.

The edition was reviewed harshly (but justly) by Max Engammare, *BHR* LVII, no. 3 (1995): pp. 791–795. A wounded Delègue responded in a later issue: 'Lettre à la rédaction', *BHR* LVIII, no. 2 (1996): pp. 567–569, to which Engammare responded in turn in *ibid.,* pp. 569–570.

1995b

Деперье, Банавантюр. *Новые забавы и веселые разговоры; Кимвал мира*. Новелла Возрождения. Edited with commentary by Andrey D. Mikhaylov and Vasiliy Ivanovič Píkov, translated by Vasiliy Ivanovič Píkov and Mark Samuïlovič Grinberg. Moscow: Республика, 1995.

An edtition of the *Nouvelles recreations* and the *Cymbalum mundi*; the latter in Pikov's translation from CM 1936. Luppol's commentary does not appear in it.

1998

Bonaventure Des Periers. *Cymbalum mundi*. Texte établi à partir des éditions originales et précédé d'une notice sur l'auteur par P. L. Jacob. Cœuvres-et-Valsery: Ressouvenances, 1998.

A repaginated facsimile of the portion of 1858b (or else one of its reprints) that contains the 'Notice sur Bonaventure Des Periers' and the *Cymbalum mundi*.

1999

Bonaventure des Périers [?]. *Cymbalum Mundi*. Fourth edition. Textes Littéraires Français CCCXVIII. Edited by Peter Hampshire Nurse. Geneva: Libraire Droz, 1999.

This is in all respects identical to CM 1983, and thus a reprint rather than a new edition.

2000a

Gauna, Max, ed. *Cymbalum Mundi: Edition critique*. Libre pensée et littérature clandestine 3. Paris: Honoré Champion Éditeur, 2000.

This edition is marred by textual faults and a tendentious introduction.

For a discussion of the textual problems that beset all the critical editions, see Yves Giraud, 'La lettre et l'esprit: problèmes textuels et éditoriaux autour du *Cymbalum Mundi*', in *ACR2000*,

pp. 23–39. Giraud was very exercised over the countless faults in the critical editions, and with just cause. But his own editorial suggestions were not always reliable.

2000b

Paredes, Rogelio Claudio, ed. and trans. *Cymbalum mundi*. Colección de libros raros olvidados y curiosos. Buenos Aires: Universidad de Buenos Aires, Facultad de Filosofía y Letras, 2000.

A text in French, drawn from CM 1983 and CM 1995a, with a facing-page Spanish translation. There is an introduction (pp. VII–XXXVII) by José Emilio Burucúa.

2002

Calvié, Laurent, ed. *Cymbalum mundi, suivi de* Bonaventure Desperiers *par Charles Nodier*. Toulouse: Anacharsis, 2002.

The second of three adaptations into modern French; much more heavily modernized however, than CM 1923. According to Calvié (p. 36–37), recent editions of the *Cymbalum mundi* had failed so badly because there were too few readers anymore who could read it in its original French. Therefore he had taken it upon himself to update the text. (For example, he changed *par le corbieu* at F_i r. 12 to the apparently more current *palcorbleu*.)

There is a profuse and unreliable bibliography on pp. 39–42.

2007

Delègue, Yves, ed. *Le Cymbalum Mundi*. Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2007.

A second printing of Delègue's critical text.

2010

Sozzi, Lionello, ed. *I cembali del mondo*. Translated by Silvia Persetti. Naples: La scuola di Pitagora editrice, 2010.

The first and only Italian translation.

2014a

Arzoumanian de Kalayci, Ana, ed. and trans. *Cymbalum Mundi*. Biblioteca del renacimento 2. Córdoba, Argentina: Alción editora, 2014.

Yet another translation into Spanish.

2014b

Jacob [Lacroix], Paul, ed. *Contes ou Nouvelles récréations et joyeux devis, suivis du Cymbalum mundi.* Classiques jaunes no. 226. Paris: Garnier Frères, 2014. [Online only]

Garnier has continued to profit from Paul Lacroix's scholarship by 'republishing' a reprint of CM 1872 (this one from 1925). Each chapter of this reprint-of-a-reprint-of-a-reprint can now be bought online as a pdf for the low price of €2; never mind that CM 1858b and CM 1872 themselves, to which it is completely identical, are both widely available online for free.

2015

Shirō, Miyashita, trans. 'キュンバルム・ムンディ [*kyunbarumu mundi*]'. In 学問と信仰と, pp. 7–68. フランス・ルネサンス文学集 1. Tokyo: Hakusuisha, 2015.

The second translation of the *Cymbalum mundi* into Japanese.

2019

Vallée, Jean-François. 'Anonyme, *Cymbalum mundi*, Paris, 1537'. Les Bibliothèques Virtuelles Humanistes, 2019. http://xtf.bvh.univ-tours.fr/xtf/view?docId=tei/B786466101_Goujet_in-12_241/B786466101_Goujet_in-12_241_tei.xml&doc.view=notice.

An online transcription (with toggleable corrections and modernizations) of CM 1537. Made by Jean-François Vallée, who has presented allegorical interpretations of the book in numerous places. His government-funded website, https://cymbalum-mundi.com/, features a modern French 'translation'—the third, alongside CM 1923 and CM 2002—and promises to be ready with a new English version soon.

MANUSCRIPTS

Arranged in appoximate order of copying.

If a manuscript can be presumed to have existed, but apparently no longer survives, I have marked its siglum with an asterisk.

*Mor

This is the manuscript, presumably Des Periers' autograph, that Jehan Morin used as copy for CM 1537. No one after Morin can be supposed ever to have seen it; perhaps it was burnt after Morin's trial.

Ven

Venice, Biblioteca Marciana. MS Lat. XIV 251 (4685) no. VII.

CYMBALVM MVNDI
en francoys, contenant quatre
Dialogues Poetiques fort antiques
Ioyeux et facetieux

[bottom of the first page: 'copiato dalla stampa']

Copied punctiliously from CM 1537. The scribe reproduced peculiarities (like *dect* for *dict* on fol. 5v.) which appear in that edition only.

*Com

In Marchand's own list of manuscripts, which Marchand prepared right before leaving Paris in 1709, there is an entry with the title:

> *Cymbalum Mundi*, ou quatre Dialogues de *Bonaventure des Perriers*, avec une Lettre Critique dans laquelle on justifie cet ouvrage d'Athéisme et d'impieté, par *Felix de Commerci*, (i.e. *Prosper Marchand*,) Manuscrit in 8°. c.

See Prosper Marchand, 'Catalogus librorum musæi Prosperi Marchand, Bibliopolæ Parisiensis, via Jacobea, sub Phœnice' (Paris, 1709), UBL MAR 12, Universiteitsbibliotheek Leiden. Philosophia, cap. IV (Dialogi, Colloquia, &c.), art. 2, p. 16.

As the title indicates, *CM Com contained an early redaction of the *Lettre critique* as a preface to the text of the *Cymbalum mundi*. Today our best witness to it is CM Buc, which contains many readings in common with it and was probably copied directly from it.

It seems to be Prosper Marchand's working manuscript, copied from CM 1538_i, which had been supplied to him by Charles Osmont. Marchand used *CM Com later as copy for 1711a, and also to make some corrections to CM Gen.

*Fay

This manuscript may no longer exist; at any rate it has not been seen since the early eighteenth century.

It once belonged to the captain Charles-Jérôme de Cisternay Du Fay (1662–1723), who had a large collection of books, including a great many of dubious reputation. It was likely the ultimate exemplar of CM Gen, CM Eug, and *CM Ber, and hence its contents can be reconstructed reasonably well. It contained an early, pseudonymous version of Marchand's *lettre critique*, and then the text of *Cymbalum mundi* (derived from CM 1538). This text was glossed with two layers of notes. First, some strictly lexical notes that had been made by an associate of Prosper Marchand, including some extracts from various dictionaries. Underneath those (in a different hand) were some more expansive notes, possibly by Bernard de La Monnoye. In some places these latter notes contradicted the former flatly.

The manuscript was in Marchand's print shop at some point when he was still in Paris, where it was annotated in Marchand's sight by one of his colleagues, but he seems not to have taken it with him when he fled to the Netherlands in 1709. Eventually it found its way into the hands of Du Fay. At some stage, Bernard de La Monnoye (or someone else) added some annotations below the lexical notes that were already on it. Perhaps Du Fay had lent it to him to be annotated, or else La Monnoye owned it before Du Fay. After all the notes had been added, Du Fay likely had it copied for the Baron von Hohendorff (whence CM Eug). Finally, Du Fay supplied a copy of it to Jean Fréderic Bernard in Amsterdam, who in turn printed the notes it contained as the alphabetical series at the end of vol. II of CM 1711b. It is not listed in the *Bibliotheca Fayana*, the 1725 sale catalogue of Du Fay's library.

*Ber

This was the presumed copy of *CM Fay that Jean Fréderic Bernard used to make *CM 1711b. It contained the two series of notes that had been written on *CM Fay, but probably in the same hand so as to disguise their different provenances.

*CM Ber was also the likely exemplar of CM Eug, as many of CM 1711b§'s readings are also to be found in CM Eug but nowhere else.

It may be that Bernard wrote the paragraph-series onto it directly before it was printed, but this cannot be proven. Even if so, CM Eug was copied from *CM Ber before these notes were made.

Buc

Stockholm, Kungliga Bibliotek. Engestr. Osign. nr 90.[Old shelfmark: Engeströmska bibliotheket, Bokhylla B, no. 63].

I have supplied the title page here (from the scan supplied to me by Patrik Granholm, librarian at the National Library of Sweden).

CYMBALVM MVNDI,

OV

Quatre Dialogues de Bonaventure des Periers, Valet de Chambre de Marguerite de Valois, Reyne de Navarre.

Ex libri B.on DC

Auec vne Lettre Critique, dans laquelle on justifie cet ouvrage d'Atheisme et d'Impieté.

3 non
129

CYMBALVM
MVNDI;

OV

Quatre Dialogues de Bonaventure des
Perriers, Valet de Chambre de Mar-
guerite de Valois, Reyne de
Navarre.

Ex libri [*sic*] B^{on}. DC
Avec une Lettre Critique, dans laquelle
on justifie cet ouvrage d'Atheisme et
d'Impieté.

Signature of the lettre critique*:*

Je suis avec respect
Monsieur
à Paris ce 10^{e}
Octobre 1706
Votre tres humble et
tres obeissant Serviteur
FELIX
DE
COMMERCI.

On p. 43, between the *lettre critique* and the text:

CYMBALVM
MUNDI.
En François, contenant
Quatre Dialogues Poetiques fort
Antiques,
Joieux, et Facetieux.

Probitas Laudatur, et Alget.
sur la copie imprimée en
M.D.XXXVIII.

Bookplate of Gustaf von Engeström, with device: 'speravit infestis'.
Inscription: 'Ex libris Joannis Baptistæ Bucarelli 1793'.

It is described as follows in the 1865 catalogue of the Engeström library (Sten Engelbert Hallencreutz, *Handlingar ur F. D. Grefliga von Engeströmska bibliotheket*, vol. V [Stockholm: Johann Beckman, 1865], p. 51):

> Cymbalum Mundi, ou quatre Dialogues de *Bonaventure des Perrieres*; Valet de Chambre de Marguerite de Valois, Reyne de Navarre. Auec une Lettre

Critique (Par Prosper Marchand) dans la quelle on justifie cet ouvrage d'Athéisme et d'Impieté. Mscr. 125 Pages. Vide *Vogt* Pag. 229.
Annot.: ex libris Joannis Buccarelli. 1793.

It had already been listed a decade earlier in Mathieu Auguste Geffroy, 'Suite des notices et extraits des manuscrits concernant l'histoire ou la littérature de la France qui sont conservés dans les bibliothèques ou archives de Suède, Danemark et Norvége', *Archives des missions scientifiques et littéraires* IV (1856): pp. 253–401 [304–305]. There it was also specified (correctly) that the manuscript was an octavo.

The manuscript does not have the notes that appear in CM Eug and in the alphabetical series, and is therefore not to be identified with CM *Fay. It was probably copied straight from CM *Com, many of whose scribal errors it reproduces.

CM Buc claims on its title page to be drawn from a book in the possession of a baron 'DC', but I have not identified this person.

Bar

Versailles, Bibliothèque Municipale MS P. 136

CYMBALUM
MUNDI.
EN FRANÇOIS
contenant
quatre dialogues poëtiques
fort anciens,
Joyeux, et facetieux.

probitas laudatur, et alget.

M. D. XXXVIII.

Inscription on frontpapers:

C'est icy la Copie de la 2.e Edition de ce Livre. La 1ere est de Paris chez Jehan Morin en 1537. 8o, si lon en peut croire La Croix du Maine et l'*Exemplaire* que possede Mr. de Boze qui a, dit on, le talent de se procurer des livres rares.

Inscription on endpapers:

Ce Livre est Ecrit de la main de Mr. Barré auditeur des Comptes
Je l'ay acheté a la vente de ses livres en 1744

This manuscript belonged to a M. de Barré and was copied in his hand, apparently directly from CM 1538i. It is listed in *Catalogue des livres de feu M. Barré, auditeur des comptes: Dont la Vente se fera en détail le Lundy 13. Janvier 1744. & jours suivans, en la maison où il est décedé, ruë des Bernadins*, vol. II (Paris: Gabriel Martin, 1743), p. 816.

Eug

Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek. Cod. 10182 HAN MAG | [Eugen. Q. 34]

Cymbalum Mundi.
En françois.
Contenant quatre Dialogues
Poëtiques, fort antiques, Joyeux,
et facétieux.

Probitas laudatur, et alget,
Sur la copie imprimée en
M.D. xxxviii.

The manuscript belongs to the collection of Prince Eugene of Savoy, who corresponded with Prosper Marchand. It was probably acquired for him by his agent in the Austrian Netherlands, the Baron von Hohendorff.

This manuscript contains an early, anonymous redaction of Marchand's *lettre critique*, and also some of the annotations which eventually became the alphabetical series of CM 1711b, like the extracts from dictionaries that Marchand saw copied. But it is missing some of what became the alphabetical series: there are even certain annotations that were copied with a gaps left for missing words. One of them (on fol. 61r.) reads *Lycisca, Lyce, chienne de chasse,* […] *petite Louve* but is given in full (*Lycisca, Lyce, Chienne de Chasse; mot Greq, qui signifie petite Louve*) in CM 1711b^{ABC} (p. 298). In another place (fol. 63r), the Greek name *Ἥρος* was simply skipped by the scribe, though it appears correctly in CM 1711b^{ABC} (p. 299). Thus CM Eug can neither have been the copy used by Bernard nor the copy on which the notes it contains were originally written.

Moreover, as it can be shown to include three variants in common with *CM Ber, it can be supposed to have been copied from that manuscript.

The scribe made a clear distinction between the two layers of annotations in CM *Fay. Though he copied them all in the same hand, he confined the earlier lexical notes to a narrower margin, giving some indication of the actual mis-en-page of his exemplar.

Gen

Paris, Bibliothèque Sainte-Geneviève. MS 2543.

CYMBALUM
MUNDI
En Francois. Contenant
Quatre Dialogues Poetiques,
Fort Antiques,
Joieux, et Facetieux

Probitas Laudatur et Alget
Sur la Copie imprimée en

M.D.XXXVIII.

This manuscript was copied from *CM Fay, probably directly. It was copied hastily and messily, with frequent mistakes. Some of *CM Fay's notes are included in it, but very sporadically.

Remarkably, Prosper Marchand himself (whose hand is unmistakable) filled up the scribe's frequent lacunæ and corrected other mistakes. (Probably he relied on *CM Com to do so.) The manuscript remained in Paris when he left for Holland.

The *lettre critique* is not included; it is not certain whether it was once included and then removed.

Mar

Leiden, Universiteitsbibliotheek. MAR 30.

This consists of a copy of CM 1711a, annotated in Prosper Marchand's own hand and amplified with long supplementary passages. (It is also bound with a copy of the notes in CM 1711b.) The principal part of Marchand's work was done by August 1712, but he continued making additions until at least as late as the 1730s.

*Sou

The following description appears in *Catalogue des livres, imprimés et manuscrits, de la bibliotheque de feu Monseigneur le Prince de Soubise, Maréchal de France, dont la Vente sera indiquée par Affiches au mois de Janvier 1789* (Paris: Leclerc, 1788), p. 389:

> Cymbalum mundi, de Bonaventure Despériers, manuscrit sur l'imprimé de 1538, *in*-4.

This might be identifiable with one of the manuscripts listed above, excluding the ones that were already in their current libraries before the sale of Soubise's library in January 1789. In the same lot was also sold a copy of CM 1711a.

*Riv

The following description appears in *Catalogue of a very important collection of rare, curious and valuable books & manuscripts, in the choicest condition, consigned from Paris* […] *which will be sold by auction, by Messrs. Sotheby, Wilkinson & Hodge, Auctioneers of Literary Property & Works illustrative of the Fine Arts, at their House, No. 13, Wellington Street, Strand, W.C. On Thursday, 13th of July, 1871, and Four following Days, at one o'clock precisely* (London: Dryden Press, 1871), p. 34:

397 Des Periers (B.) Cymbalum Mundi en Francoys contenant quatre Dialogues poetiques, fort antiques, jœux et facetieux,
MANUSCRIPT, *transcribed from the excessively rare edition of Lyon,* 1538, *(of which only* 2 *copies are known), apparently in the handwriting of L'Abbé Rive*. SÆC. xviii

Perhaps this manuscript remained in England after the auction, but I have not been able to track it down.

*Nod

Before he acquired CM 1538ii, Charles Nodier owned a manuscript copy of CM 1538i, written on vellum by the calligrapher Fyot. It included a facsimile copy of Morin's supplication to Antoine Du Bourg.

Catalogue d'une partie de livres rares singuliers et précieux dépendant de la bibliothèque de M. Charles Nodier, homme de lettres, dont la vente se fera le Mercredi 6 Juin 1827, et Jours suivans, 6 heures de relevée, Maison Silvestre, Rue des Bons-Enfans, n° 30, Salle du premier (Paris: J.-S. Merlin, 1827), p. 36, no. 257:

> Cymbalum mundi en francoys, contenant quatre dialogues poétiques, fort antiques, joeux et facéteux. Lyon, Ben. Bonyn, 1538, pet. in-8, mar. viol. dent., d. de mar. r. tr. dor. *Simier*.
> Belle copie figuré sur peau de vélin, un des chefs-d'œuvre de Fyot: on y a joint la copie figurée très-exacte et très-belle, aussi sur peau de vélin, de la requête de Morin, imprimeur de la première édition, d'après l'original de la Bibliothèque du Roi. On ne pense pas qu'il en existe une autre, du moins de la main de Fyot. Ch. N.

Joh

Blois, Archives Départementales de Loir-et-Cher, MS 1 J 321/4.

Copie du Cymbalum Mundi, sur l'édition de 1538, faite par Mr. Sylvestre libraire, en Mai 1832. ||1er Dialogue || auquel j'ai ajouté des notes que Mr. Sylvestre a copiées également sur deux cahiers.

Copied from CM 1538 by the publisher Sylvestre in stages, with the first dialogue done by May 1832. Sylvestre sent it to Éloi Johanneau, who annotated it in the abortive intention of preparing a new edition.

The relationships among the early manuscripts and editions can be summarized as follows.

CM Ven was copied directly from CM 1537.

CM 1538 was published with CM 1537 as its sole exemplar.

CM Bar was copied directly from CM 1538.

At the beginning of the eighteenth century, Charles Osmont showed CM 1538_i to Prosper Marchand, who made a copy of it (or had one made.)

This was *CM Com, which he probably retained and continued using as a reference until he published CM 1711a from it. It contained the first draft of the *lettre critique* and the text of the *Cymbalum mundi*. It had certain errors (like *croiez* for *cuydez* at B_{ii} r. 10, or *par bonne foy* for *Pardonne moy* at G_{iv} r. 1) that were shared by all manuscripts and editions that had it for an archetype. It is now lost.

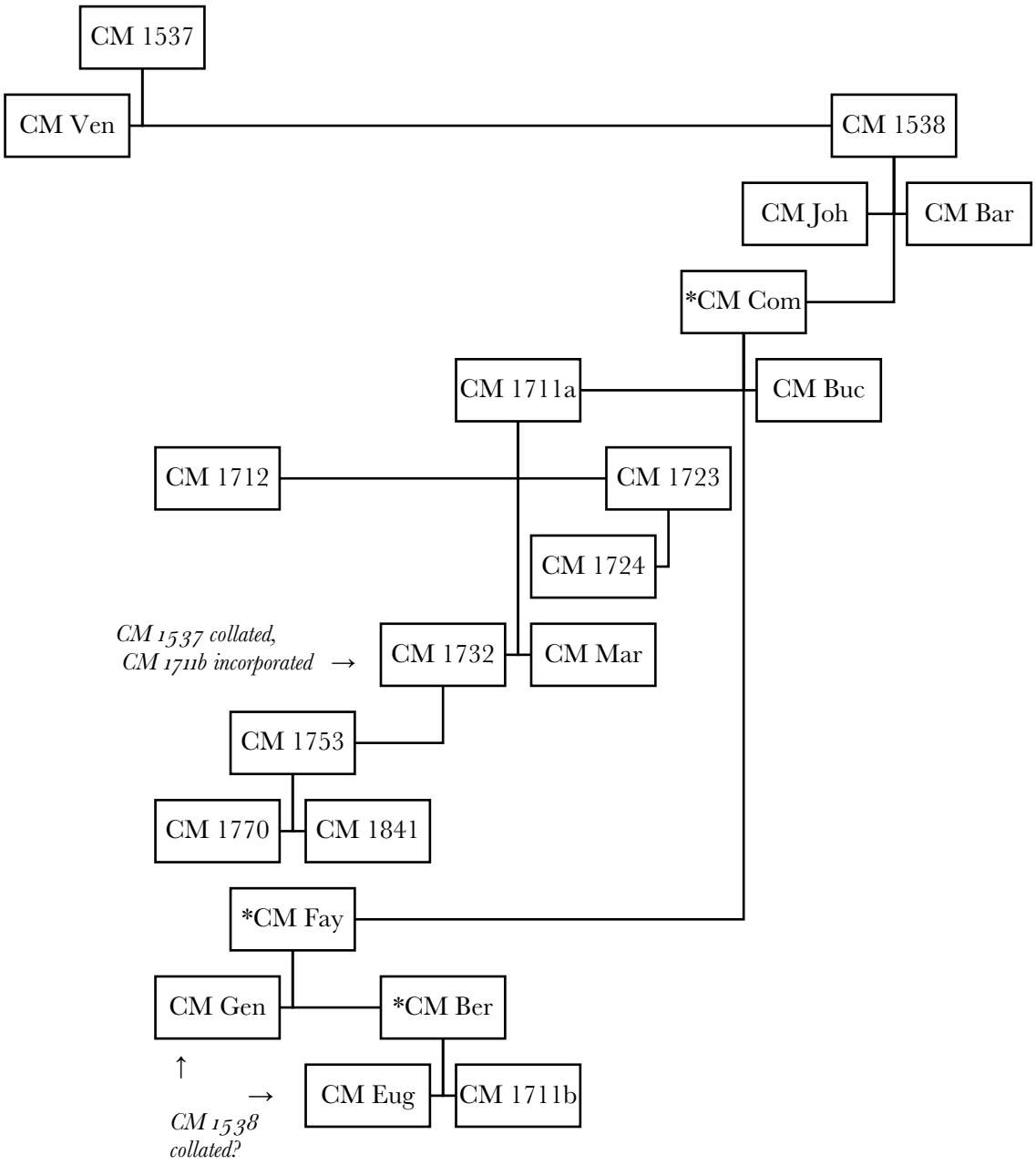
CM Buc was copied from *CM Com. It contains all of *CM Com's errors, but not others that are shared by CM Eug and CM Gen. Importantly, it also does not contain any of the notes that appear on those two manuscripts.

*CM Fay was also copied from *CM Com. It was annotated in two stages: first, while still in Prosper Marchand's shop by one of his associates, and then by someone else (likely Bernard de La Monnoye). It introduced a new set of innovations, like *scelerats* for *hommes* in the argument of Dialogue I. It is now lost.

CM Eug and CM Gen were copied (directly or indirectly) from *CM Fay, though there might have been intermediate manuscripts for either or both. Both of them also show some signs of independent collation from CM 1538, some of whose readings they restore here and there. This indicates strongly that they were copied in Paris.

*CM Ber was copied for Jean-Fréderic Bernard from *CM Fay. He used it as the basis for his commentary, the paragraph-series, which he printed in the second volume of CM 1711b. Many of *CM Ber's readings are preserved in the headwords of that commentary. There is some indication that CM Eug was copied directly from *CM Ber, as they share three innovative and unique readings: *ce* for *ce le* at B_i r. 19, *voit* for *le voit* at B_{iii} v. 18, and (remarkably) *renasquit* for *revesquit* at H_{iv} r.

The following stemma should not be relied on in all places. It is only a schematic representation of the statements made just above, and does not exclude the possibility of additional intermediary manuscripts (especially among the family derived from *CM Fay.)



Bibliography II: Manuscripts and archival sources.

[Unpublished dissertations have been alphabetized by author's name in Bibliography IV.]

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Basel

Universitätsbibliothek

O III 52. פתיחת או מאירת עינים. *Apertio sive illuminatio oculorum.*

Blois

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These papers were bought for the departmental archives at an auction in 2005. See item 301 in 'Collection Chavaillon & à divers', Sale catalogue, bibliorare.com, December 2005, https://web.archive.org/web/20060303220550/http://www.bibliorare.com:80/cat-vent_chatel2-3-12-05-cat.pdf, pp. 52–53.

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Leiden

Universiteitsbibliotheek[1]

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Vienna

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[1] For a full catalogue of the Marchand collection in Leiden, see (but do not rely on) Christiane Berkvens-Stevelinck, *Catalogue des manuscrits de la collection Prosper Marchand*, Codices Manuscripti 26 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1988).

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Cymbalum mundi
by Bonaventure Des Periers
Critical Edition

I.

The justification for a new edition of the *Cymbalum mundi* is straightforward. Although there have been over three dozen editions of the book since 1537, there is not one that can be relied on. The *Cymbalum mundi* is one of the most famous and thoroughly studied texts of the whole French Renaissance, and deserves a more careful editorial presentation than it has so far received.

What follows is not a 'modernized' text; nor is it an exact reproduction of any edition of the *Cymbalum mundi* now existing. It is an attempt to reconstruct the text as Bonaventure Des Periers originally composed it. The first printed edition, CM 1537, is the archetype of all existing manuscripts and printed editions of the *Cymbalum mundi*. A scrupulous transcription of it has therefore been the basis of this edition. I have only changed its readings in places where I had both a good reason to doubt the text and also a credible alternative to put in its place.

I have also included an extensive apparatus of collated variants from later manuscripts and editions. As CM 1537 is the only real witness to the task, this may seem an idle accumulation of irrelevant material, but I have deemed it valuable for three reasons. First, to present the evolution of textual work on the *Cymbalum mundi*, interesting in its own right. Second, to provide a selection of plausible emendations in places where the text may be corrupt. Third, to identify the real authors of certain emendations, and to expose as false the claims to originality of many editors. Fourth, to determine the cladistic relationships among the surviving manuscripts and editions of the early eighteenth century.

Since CM 1537's publication, there have been thirteen major contributions to the study of the *Cymbalum mundi*'s text. They are as follows:

1. CM 1538. Like all its successors, this edition was completely dependent on CM 1537, and its printer Benoist Bonnyn did not have access to any manuscript, autograph or otherwise. Its printer is therefore cited in the present edition not as an independent witness to Des Periers' text, but as an early critical editor whose conjectures might perhaps be weighed with special consideration as coming from a man whose sensibilities were contemporary with those of the author and the printer of CM 1537. In many places Bonnyn's compositor corrected the spelling of words in CM 1537, which I have treated as a strong (but not decisive) reason for changing the spelling in my own text. In other places he reproduced CM 1537's errors and idiosyncrasies as he had read them, and here only informed judgement can distinguish misprints from genuine readings. In still other cases he introduced misprints and eccentricities of his own. I have ignored most such instances, except where they were important to the subsequent editorial history of the text.

2. CM 1711a. This represents Prosper Marchand's revision of CM 1538. Marchand was hampered by his ignorance of CM 1537, but he nevertheless made several corrections which must be admitted, many of which were taken up by subsequent editions.

3. CM 1711b^{ABC}. The alphabetical series in CM 1711b, a composite of several men's work, made certain corrections to Marchand's text. Not all of them are admissible, but I have collated the most important ones here.

4. CM 1732. This edition's text was largely based on CM 1711a's, but its editor also made use of an independent collation of CM 1537. He did not make many critical emendations of his own, and his text generally differed from CM 1711a only in that it restored some readings from CM 1537.

5. CM 1732*. The author of what I have called the 'asterisk-series' in CM 1732, a different man to the publisher, made a set of his own conjectures. The publisher of CM 1732

did not incorporate these into his text, but noted them in the errata printed at the end of his volume. (There are also some corrections in the errata which are probably attributable to the author of the asterisk-series even though they were not mentioned explicitly in his commentary.)

6. CM 1856. The text of Louis Lacour. It was the first edition to be based entirely on CM 1537, and not (as with CM 1732) on a mere collation thereof.

7. CM 1858. This, the second version of Paul Lacroix's text, represents his final and most considered presentation of the text. It has been widely reproduced, and was the basis for most twentieth-century translations and non-scholarly editions of the *Cymbalum mundi*.

8. CM 1873. Prepared by Félix Frank, this edition was ostensibly an exact reproduction of CM 1537. In reality, Frank did not bind himself to CM 1537 with any strictness, and chose among the several conjectures of his predecessors in the capacity of an active critical editor.

9. CM 1914. Pierre Paul-Plan's facsimile of CM 1537 has all but replaced the original. An editor's reliance on CM 1914 rather than CM 1537 can be easily detected by his signalling of a small set of characteristic errors which only appear in the facsimile. For example, CM 1914 gives the apparent reading *yie* at C_{iii} r. 22. In fact, CM 1537 has *vie* after all, though there is a small inkblot just below the *v* which is nevertheless clearly distinguishable from the letter itself. In CM 1914 the inkblot and the letter were bled together, producing the apparent reading *yie*. Since then, many editors have flagged this error in CM 1537, even though anyone who had actually seen the book would have been able to observe that it does not actually exist.

10. CM 1958. This, the first modern critical edition, was made by Peter Nurse. It will be apparent from my apparatus that almost none of his corrections were original to him. In particular, he almost never departed from the readings of CM 1858, the most frequently reprinted edition.

11, 12. CM 1995, CM 2000a. Two critical editions have appeared since Nurse's; by Yves Delègue and Max Gauna, respectively. The reasons that these editions are unreliable are laid out in detail in the reviews of them which I have cited in the bibliography. In general, their editors were prone to misprints, reckless with punctuation, and ignorant of descriptive bibliography. Both editions are also marred by tendentious and critical-theoretical introductions. As they do not represent an advance on Nurse's scholarship, I have mostly ignored them here.

13. Yves Giraud, 'La lettre et l'esprit : problèmes textuels et éditoriaux autour du Cymbalum Mundi', in *ACR2000*, pp. 23–39.

This essay on the critical history of the book is the only serious scholarship on the *Cymbalum mundi*'s text that has been done since 1958. Its author, Yves Giraud (1937–2008), made many observations for the use of future editors. In addition to offering several conjectures, he collated the emendations in CM 1958, CM 1995a, and CM 2000; and exposed many of those editions' errors. With less justice, Giraud also alleged that previous editions had paid too much attention to the details of punctuation in the original edition. According to him, the text of CM 1537 was so carelessly spelt and punctuated that there was no profit to be had from reproducing its orthography. He wrote:

> Le constat est simple : ce système est parfaitement arbitraire, désinvolte, sans cohérence et ne livre aucune indication de scansion ou de sens. La « revendication d'authenticité » dans le strict respect de la ponctuation originale ne peut être que rejetée parce qu'elle ne repose sur rien (p. 33).

Sur rien? Here Giraud went too far. It is true that punctuation and capitalization were not systematized with the same iron rigidity in the Renaissance as they are today. But it is another thing to say that their use was completely unregulated. For example, if it were really so that spelling and punctuation had no importance whatsoever, then the typesetter of CM 1538 would not have bothered to reproduce the details of CM 1537 so closely as he in fact did. One can, to be sure, find many examples of seemingly haphazard punctuation in CM 1537, like at E_i v. 5–8:

> […] quand il se transmua en pluye dor, pour iouyr de danae: quand il se transforma en Diane, en Pasteur, en Feu, en aigle, en Serpent, & plusieurs aultres menues follies […]

…of which one might ask with justice: why *aigle* and *danae*, but *Serpent* and *Diane*? Here it is easy to cry in mock despair that there was no rule being followed at all. But then, why not *AIgLe* or *dIAnE*? Of course, we are not faced with complete anarchy after all, but a general tendency—though not a universal one—to capitalize the first letter of important nouns. It is immaterial that this that rule differs from the one that we are used to in modern books, or even in more formal books of the 1530s.

Along the same lines, Giraud argued (p. 33) that 'de la vraye. & plusieurs autres belles choses' at D_I v. 9 was 'indiscutablement une coquille', reasoning that an abbreviation could never follow a full stop. But this was simply not so; there were other books of the 1530s from all over France in which just such a practice was observed, and indeed it occurs a second time in CM 1537 itself, at D_i r. 5. Consider also '(il ny a rien si vray) Ie ne scay' at B_{ii} r. 13, which, Giraud complained, was missing a comma after the closing bracket. But as we can also observe at B_i r. 20, the presence of parentheses rendered other punctuation optionally dispensable. Giraud called such examples 'coquilles de ponctuation tout à fait caractérisées'. If they were indeed characteristic, perhaps they were not misprints after all, but regularities in a flexible system which he had failed to recognize as such.

Giraud charged as well that previous critical editors had failed to obey their own purported principles of exact transcription. This is certainly true, but it does not follow that those principles were bad; only that the editors failed in the task they had set themselves. The scrupulous transcription of punctuation is not an Old Law that necessarily damns all who try to obey it. It should neither be spurned nor frivolously revered, but executed correctly. There are after all many good reasons, beyond merely preserving the flavour of the period, why an editor should touch punctuation and spelling as little as he can in a case like the *Cymbalum mundi*.[1] Most importantly, the reconstruction of the author's text requires all the evidence available. When several manuscripts or printed editions of a given text survive, each bearing some independent authority, then the editor may gain a sense of the author's intended parsing and intonation that is not necessarily dependent on any single witness's typographical characteristics. But when, as here, there is only one possible copy-text, there can be no clue to the proper spelling and parsing of the text apart from the orthography of the compositor. These 'accidentals' must as a rule be *even more* scrupulously reproduced than the words themselves, and even where they must be modified, they must at least be preserved and recorded before judgement can be passed on them in the first place.[2]

II. Editorial Conventions

[1] See Philip Gaskell, *From Writer to Reader: Studies in Editorial Method* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), pp. 7–8.
[2] See Walter Wilson Greg, 'The Rationale of Copy-Text', *Studies in Bibliography* III (1950–1951): pp. 19–36.

This edition is based on a semi-diplomatic transcription of CM 1537. Its peculiarities have had to be represented as closely as possible, for it was often impossible to tell whether a given eccentricity belonged to the author or to the compositor, and furthermore whether it was deliberate on either man's part. I have, however, omitted the colophon and other matter that obviously did not belong to Des Periers' original manuscript. Only in a few cases have I changed the reading of CM 1537, and especially resisted the temptation to do so where it was by no means apparent that contemporary readers would have sensed an error. (For instance, *leurs* appears legitimately three times for *leur* as a dative plural pronoun, and *serf* twice for *cerf*.)

All deviations from CM 1537 have been marked in the apparatus, except for the following changes (not necessarily modernizations), which have been made silently:

> *V* has been resolved into *u* and *v* according as it represents a vowel or a consonant.
>
> Nasal bars and other abbreviations (saving *&*) have been expanded. The compositor usually used *q* to represent *qui*, but twice (in place of the usual *q̄*) to represent *que*. I have noted both of these instances. He also used an occasional *ꝑ* to represent *par* (a usage that was misinterpreted in one place by CM 1538).
>
> Long *ſ* has been replaced by *s*. Irregular instances of short *s* have been noted.
>
> Spacing has been regularized, except where the typsetter plainly intended to leave a gap at a break in the sense. Word-division, however, was often difficult to establish, especially in crammed lines, and thus my distinctions between e.g. 'voy la' and 'voyla' should not be over-relied on.
>
> So-called masculine *e*, when word-final or followed by final *s*, has been marked with an acute accent. The single place where such an accent occurs natively is noted in the apparatus.
>
> Lettrines have been replaced by ordinary letters in italics.
>
> Lozenges (⧫) at the end of a line have been rendered by double-hyphens (⸗).

The following punctuation was used by the compositor:

> . [followed by majuscule]
> . [followed by minuscule]
> ,
> · [Greek colon]
> :
> ?
> ⧫ [used to break a word at the end of a line]
> ( )

None of these signs were employed exactly according to modern convention. For example, the compositor made no distinction between question and exclamation marks, but printed *?* for both. I have preserved this sign, even though in some places it offends the modern eye in obvious exclamations. Giraud's bungled conjecture at G_{iii} v. 28 is an instructive example of the danger involved in attempting to disambiguate its two uses.

For the sake of justification, the compositor occasionally omitted lozenges, full stops, commas, and other punctuation marks at the end of a line. I have restored these in italics. It is

admittedly very difficult to distinguish Roman from italic punctuation with the naked eye, so in the occasional instances where the presence or absence of such punctuation is really critical to the sense, I have noted it in the apparatus.

There is no foliation or pagination in CM 1537, but following Giraud's practice I have numbered pages according to its signatures.

I have annotated this edition with some textual and lexical notes, separated from the critical apparatus by a single asterisk. In addition to my own lexicographical research, I have made use of the following nine dictionaries:

[RS]: Robert Estienne, *Dictionaire Francoislatin, autrement dict Les mots Francois, avec les manieres duser diceulx, tournez en Latin. Corrigé & augmenté* (Paris: Robert Estienne, 1549). I have consulted this in preference to the first, smaller edition of a decade earlier: Robert Estienne, *Dictionaire Francoislatin, contenant les motz & manieres de parler Francois, tournez en Latin* (Paris: Robert Estienne, 1539).

[RC] Randle Cotgrave, *A Dictionarie of the French and English Tongues* (London: Adam Islip, 1611).

[LC] Jean-Baptiste de La Curne de Sainte-Palaye, *Dictionnaire historique de l'ancien langage françois ou glossaire de la langue françoise depuis son origine jusqu'au siècle de Louis XIV*, X vols (Niort / Paris: L. Favre / H. Champion, 1875–1882). La Curne (1697–1781) used the *Cymbalum mundi* as a source in many of his entries. He gave the pagination of CM 1711a.

[Lit]: Émile Littré, *Dictionnaire de la langue française*, IV vols (Paris, L. Hachette, 1873–1874). Littré also cited many passages in the *Cymbalum mundi*, keeping the pagination of CM 1711a, and though he did not always give credit to La Curne, most or even all of these citations seem to have been derived from the manuscripts of La Curne's dictionary. Sometimes I have not been careful to make sure that I have not mistakenly attributed a statement by La Curne to Littré.

[ChFr]: Adolphe Chenevière and Félix Frank, *Lexique de la Langue de Bonaventure des Periers* (Paris: Librairie Léopold Cerf, 1888). This work's title must be treated as a misnomer, as most of its entries were drawn from a book that was not actually written by Bonaventure Des Periers.

[FEW]: Walther von Wartburg, *Französisches Etymologisches Wörterbuch*, XXIV vols (Bonn: Kurt Schroeder Verlag / Fritz Klopp Verlag / et al., 1922–).

[Hu]: Edmond Huguet, *Dictionnaire de la langue française du seizeième siècle*, VII vols (Paris: Librairie Ancienne Édouard Champion, 1925–1967).

[DMF]: *Dictionnaire du Moyen Français*, version 2015 (ATILF – CNRS & Université de Lorraine, http://www.atilf.fr/dmf).

[OED]: Oxford English Dictionary, 3rd Edition (online).

I have also referred several times to Pierre-Robert Olivetan's translation of the Bible, to which Des Periers made substantial contributions:

> *La Bible qui est toute la Saincte escripture. En laquelle sont contenus / le Vieil Testament & le Nouveau / translatez en Francoys. Le Vieil / de Lebrieu: & le Nouveau / du Grec.* (Neufchâtel: Pierre de Vingle, 1535).

If nothing else, this Bible can be taken as a copious sample of the usage and orthography with which Des Periers was familiar.

One of the two English translations, CM 1712, was often invaluable in supplying the nearest English equivalent of a given French expression. CM 1723, an independent translation of CM 1711a, was too flamboyantly and rapidly composed to represent a real attempt at rendering the text's meaning. I have only cited its readings here and there.

Finally, I have reproduced the paragraph-series of CM 1732 under double asterisks. As these notes represent the very beginning of the treatment of the *Cymbalum mundi* as an *ouvrage à clef*, they have an historical importance nearly equal to that of the *Cymbalum mundi* itself, and merit inclusion in a critical edition of it. I have placed each note on the page to which it refers, but preserved the numbering as it appears in CM 1711b. Because the editor of CM 1711b did not arrange his notes in order of their headwords' appearances in the text, but rather jotted them down as they came to mind, some of his notes will appear here out of their numerical sequence.

< [A$_{i}$ r.] >

Cymbalum mundi
EN FRANCOYS,
Contenant quatre Dialogues Poetiques,
fort antiques, ioyeux, & facetieux.

] Probitas laudatur, & alget. *CM 1537, CM 1538*

*

Cymbalum mundi. 'World-cymbal'. This phrase occurs exactly once in classical literature. In the dedication to his *Naturalis historia*, Pliny justified his sober title to his patron Titus by listing the comparatively flamboyant titles of insubstantial books. He closed his catalogue as follows:

> Apud Græcos desiit nugari Diodorus et Βιβλιοθήκης historiam suam inscripsit. Apion quidem grammaticus, hic quem Tiberius Cæsar cymbalum mundi vocabat, cum propriæ famæ tympanum potius videri posset, immortalitate donari a se scripsit ad quos aliqua componebat.[3]

The text here, as in the entire dedicatory epistle, is confusing and corrupt. (The opening epistle is extremely obscure and studded with variants, and the most reliable uncial mss. of Pliny do not cover it.) For example, the context seems to demand that the title of Apion the Grammarian's book be stated, but the text as we have it leaves it out. (Maybe we should even read *Apion quidem Γραμματικῆς. Hic, quem*…) The important ambiguity for our purposes, however, is whether Pliny meant to characterize Tiberius' epithet *cymbalum mundi* as a sarcastic insult. Erasmus' text, which differs in important ways from the modern critical consensus, implies that he did not:

> Apud Græcos desiit nugari Diodorus, & βιβλιοθήκας historiam suam inscripsit. Appion quidam grammaticus, hic quem Tiberius Cæsar cymbalum mundi vocabat, quum publicæ famæ tympanum potius videri posset, immortalitate donari à se scripsit, ad quos aliqua componebat. Me vero non pænitet nullum festiviorem excogitasse titulum.[4]
>
> Among the Greeks, Diodorus ceased to play games, and called his history 'libraries'. One Appion, a grammarian, wrote that those of whom he wrote were granted immortality. He was the one whom Tiberius Caesar called 'cymbalum mundi', though he had been better called 'the drum of public rumour'. As for me, I am not ashamed not to have come up with a wittier title.

Although the manuscripts have *quoniam … posset*, Erasmus emended it to a concessive *quum*, implying that Tiberius meant *cymbalum mundi* as a neutral or positive appellation, which Pliny had then corrected to the harsher *publicæ famæ tympanum*. Erasmus was probably led to do so by the word 'potius', which seems to imply a contrast between the two

[3] There is still no reliable critical edition of Pliny, but this is the text as it appears in the most recent one: Jean Beaujeu, ed., *Histoire naturelle*, vol. I, Collection des Universités de France (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1950), Plinius Vespasiano, §24.
[4] From the edition published in Basel by Froben in 1525.

phrases. He elaborated on the implied grounds for his emendation in the entry 'Cymbalum mundi' in the *Adagiorum chiliades*:

> Plinius maior in præfatione ad imperatorem Vespasianum refert, Apionem grammaticum à Tyberio Cæsare Cymbalum mundi consuesse vocari, ob nominis ut opinor, celebritatem: quum publicæ, inquit, famæ tympanum potius videri possit. Is Apion aiebat eos ab se donari immortalitate ad quos aliqua componebat. Huc Tyberius alludens appellabat illum cymbalum mundi: quod hominem honesta fama donaret, quæ per universum mundum amabiliter resonaret. Plinius autem ob arrogantiam mavult illum appellari tympanum publicæ famæ, quod famam daret potius quam honestam famam. Nam resonat & tympanum, sed inamœno strepitu. Allusisse videtur huc, quod tympana fiunt è pelle asinina.[5]
>
> In his preface to Emperor Vespasian, Pliny the Elder refers to one Apion the Grammarian, who used to be called Cymbalum mundi by Tiberius Caesar. I believe this was because of the renown of his name. But, Pliny said, he had been better called 'the drum of fame'. This Apion had said that the people to whom he addressed his writings were granted immortality by him. Alluding to this, Tiberius would call him the *cymbal of the world*, as one conferring such renown on a man as should resound pleasantly throughout the world. But Pliny prefers him on account of his arrogance to be called the *drum of public fame*, as one who conferred notoriety rather than renown. For a drum resounds too, but with an unpleasant noise. He seems also to have alluded to the fact that drums are made with ass-hide.

To Erasmus, *cymbalum mundi* was clearly not a synonym of *famæ tympanum*, but a metaphor that implied a pleasant literary jangle.

Nevertheless, though the usage is unusual, *quoniam* is indeed attested (in Pliny and elsewhere) with the subjunctive, and I do not think there is good reason to question it here, as Erasmus did. Furthermore, *potius* need not imply a logical contrast; it means 'yea rather' just as often as 'nay rather'.[6] Therefore it seems that Pliny wrote *tympanum famæ* as a gloss on *cymbalum mundi*, not as a correction of it. He meant the two phrases to be synonymous. There are other grounds for believing this. Catullus, describing the orgiastic house of Cybele, wrote *ubi cymbalûm sonat vox, ubi tympana reboant*; and Ovid, telling of Bacchus' merry band on Naxos, wrote *sonuerunt cymbala toto / litore et attonitâ tympana pulsa manu*.[7] Most pertinently, we can refer to Pliny's own nephew, who remarked on the subject of self-indulgent forensic orations that *plausus tantum ac potius sola cymbala et tympana illis canticis desunt*.[8] Examples of the same pairing can be multiplied at will.[9] There is also artistic evidence on this point, like this Pompeian mosaic of riotous buskers:

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[5] X.iv.82.
[6] Cf. Plautus' *Rudens*, 1266: 'mi liberte, mi patrone potius, immo mi pater'.
[7] Catullus LXIII.21; Ovid, *Ars amatoria* I.537–8.
[8] Ep. II.xiv.13. Note also the use of *potius* to mean 'yea'.
[9] Of the Corybantes: Lucretius II.18: *tympana tenta tonant palmis et cymbala circum*. Ovid, *Fasti* IV.213: cymbala pro galeis, pro scutis tympana pulsant'. Sextus Propertius, III.xvii.33–6: *mollia Dircææ pulsabunt tympana Thebæ, / capripedes calamo Panes hiante canent, / vertice turrigero iuxta dea magna Cybebe / tundet ad Idæos cymbala rauca choros.*
Claudian, *In Eutropium* 278–80: *rauca Celænæos ad tympana disce furores; / cymbala ferre licet pectusque inlidere pinu / inguinis et reliquum Phrygiis abscidere cultris.* Ausonius, Ep. XXIX.20–21: *cymbala dant flictu sonitum, dant pulpita saltu / icta pedum, tentis reboant cava tympana tergis.* Apuleius, *Metamorphoses*

Naples, Museo Archeologico Nazionale. Wikipedia commons.

Pace Erasmi, it is hard to defend a tropical difference in ancient Latin usage between *cymbala* and *tympana*. Besides their orgiastic sense, *cymbala* and *tympana* are each also attested outside Pliny in connection with a babbling self-celebrator. Horace (C. I.18) described *tympana quæ subsequitur cæcus amor sui*, and Catalepton V railed against the *inanis cymbalon iuventutis*. *Tympana* and *cymbala*, it seems, were interchangeable symbols in in the ancient mind for chaos and vainglory. Cymbals in particular were the essence of Bacchic noise; of festive and chaotic music. Cicero, for his part, introduced cymbals as a revolting detail in his description of a hideously debauched feast.[10] Pliny's *cymbalum mundi* was nothing more than an application of this trope.

Of course, the relevant question is not what Pliny the Elder intended by the phrase, but what Bonaventure Des Periers understood it to mean. The answer must be that he borrowed the milder sense from Erasmus. It is more likely, to begin with, that Des Periers came across the phrase in Erasmus' *Adagiorum chiliades* than in the *Naturalis historia* itself, whose preface is so corrupt as to be very difficult to follow. At one place in the *Cymbalum*, moreover, Des Periers mentioned the story of Psapho's birds, which he can hardly have found but in Erasmus' entry Ψαφῶνος ὄρνιθες.[11] And Erasmus, as we have seen, treated *cymbalum mundi* as a sympathetic characterization of Apion's loquacity.

VIII.xxx: *Inibi vir principalis, et alias religiosus et eximie deam reverens, tinnitu cymbalorum et sonu tympanorum cantusque Phrygii mulcentibus modulis excitus, procurrit obviam*. Of Bacchic initiates: Livy XXXIX.x.7: … *eos deducere in locum qui circumsonet ululatibus cantuque symphoniæ et cymbalorum et tympanorum pulsu, ne vox quiritantis, cum per vim stuprum inferatur, exaudiri possit.*

[10] In Pisonem 22: 'Quid ego illorum dierum epulas, quid lætitiam et gratulationem tuam, quid cum tuis sordidissimis gregibus intemperantissimas perpotationes prædicem? quis te illis diebus sobrium, quis agentem aliquid quod esset libero dignum, quis denique in publico vidit? cum conlegæ tui [that is, Galbinus'] domus cantu et cymbalis personaret, cumque ipse nudus in convivio saltaret […] quod quidem istius in illis rei publicae luctibus quasi aliquod Lapitharum aut Centaurorum convivium ferebatur; in quo nemo potest dicere utrum iste plus biberit an vomuerit an effuderit.'

[11] I.ii.100.

There is another relevant entry in the *Adagia*. At Δωδωναῖον χαλκεῖον, Erasmus wrote the gloss: 'Dodonæum cymbalum aut tintinnabulum. In hominem dici consuevit improbæ atque importunæ loquacitatis.'[12] Read together with the entry *Cymbalum mundi*, this statement gives us insight into Erasmus', and thus Des Periers', idea of the *cymbalum*. It was decoupled from the raucous tympana with which the ancients associated it, and now made equivalent to tintinnabula; little bells. The Erasmian message of the *Cymbalum mundi* was certainly a criticism of loquacity, but it was delivered in a gentle and amused spirit, and with none of the rancour that Pliny had originally attached to it.

[12] I.i.7.

< Aii r. >

Thomas du Clenier a
son amy Pierre Tryocan S.

*I*L y a huyct ans ou environ, cher
amy, que ie te promis de te ren⸗
dre en langaige francoys le petit
traicté que ie te monstray, intitu⸗
lé Cymbalum mundi, contenant 5
quatre dialogues poetiques, lequel iavoys trou⸗
vé en une vielle Librairie dung Monastere
qui est auprés de la cité de dabas. de laquelle
promesse iay tant faict par mes iournees,
que ie men suis acquité au moins mal que iay 10
peu. Que si ie ne te lay rendu de mot a mot
selon le latin, tu doibs entendre que cela a esté
faict tout exprés, affin de suyvre le plus quil
me seroit possible, les facons de parler qui
sont en nostre langue Francoise: laquelle chose 15
cognoistras facilement aux formes de iuremens
qui y sont, quand pour Me Hercule, Per Iovem,
Dispeream, Aedepol, Per Styga, Proh Iupiter,
& aultres semblables, iay mis ceulx la dont
noz bons gallandz usent, asscavoir: Morbieu, Sam⸗ 20
bieu, Ie puisse mourir. comme voulant plus tost
translater & interpreter laffection de celuy
qui parle, que ces propres parolles. Sembla⸗
blement, pour vin de Phalerne, iay mis vin de

Thomas du Clenier a] THOMAS DV CLEVIER A *CM 1537*
Clenier] *Johanneau;* CLEVIER *CM 1537*, *CM 1538, CM 1711a, CM 1712, CM 1732, CM 1841, CM 1856, CM 1858, CM 1958, CM 2019*
8 dabas] *CM 1537*; Dabas *CM 1538; fort.* Thebes *aut* Tabas
17 Me] *CM 1537, CM 1538, CM 1732; om. CM Buc, CM Eug, CM Gen, CM 1711a*
18 Dispeream, Aedepol, Per Styga, Proh] *CM 1537, CM 1538, CM 1732;* &c..... *CM Buc, CM Eug, CM Gen, CM 1711a*
20–21 Sambieu] *CM 1537, CM 1538, CM 1732;* Ventrebieu *CM Buc, CM Eug, CM Gen, CM 1711a*
23 ces] *CM 1537, CM 1538, CM Gen;* ses *CM Buc, CM Eug, CM 1711a, CM 1732*

*

Clenier. The mistake of CM 1537's typesetter here indicates that the name was written in minuscule letters.[13]

S. Short for *salut* or *salutem*, as in *Seneca Lucilio suo salutem*.

[13] As observed by Louis Delaruelle, 'Étude sur le problème du « Cymbalum mundi »', *Revue d'Histoire littéraire de la France* XXXII, no. 1 (1925): pp. 1–23 [5 n. 3]; Giraud, 'La lettre et l'esprit', p. 25.

lequel iavoys trouvé en une vielle Librairie. This literary conceit was also employed twice by Rabelais in *Gargantua*. First, in chapter I, he explained that the crumbling manuscript of the *Fanfreluches antidotees* had been found by a certain Jean Audeau, who dug up a tomb in a meadow on the banks of the Vienne.[14] Inside was a rotten book that contained the text. Second, he described a riddle discovered on a great sheet of bronze in the foundations of the Abbey of Theleme. In both of these places, Rabelais himself was likely relying on the famous episode related by Livy, in which Lucius Petilius the scribe digs up the tomb of Numa Pompilius in a meadow at the foot of the Janiculum. Buried alongside it is a library of books, which the Senate eventually orders burnt because of the danger they pose to the established Roman religion:

> Eodem anno in agro L. Petili scribæ sub Ianiculo, dum cultores agri altius moliuntur terram, duæ lapideæ arcæ, octonos ferme pedes longæ quaternos latæ, inventæ sunt operculis plumbo devinctis. Litteris Latinis Græcisque utraque arca inscripta erat: in altera Numam Pompilium Pomponis filium, regem Romanorum, sepultum esse, in altera libros Numæ Pompili inesse. Eas areas cum ex amicorum sententia dominus aperuisset, quæ titulum sepulti regis habuerat inanis inventa, sine vestigio ullo corporis humani aut ullius rei, per tabem tot annorum omnibus absumptis. In altera duo fasces candelis involuti septenos habuere libros, non integros modo sed recentissima specie. Septem Latini de iure pontificio erant, septem Græci de disciplina sapientiæ quae illius ætatis esse potuit. Adicit Antias Valerius Pythagoricos fuisse, volgatae opinioni, qua creditur Pythagoræ auditorem fuisse Numam, mendacio probabili accommodata fide. Primo ab amicis qui in re præsenti fuerunt libri lecti; mox pluribus legentibus cum volgarentur, Q. Petilius prætor urbanus studiosus legendi eos libros a L. Petilio sumpsit; et erat familiaris usus, quod scribam eum quaestor Q. Petilius in decuriam legerat. Lectis rerum summis cum animum advertisset pleraque dissolvendarum religionum esse, L. Petilio dixit sese libros eos in ignem coniecturum esse. Priusquam id faceret, se ei permittere uti si quod seu ius seu auxilium se habere ad eos libros repetendos existimaret, experiretur; integra sua gratia eum facturum. Scriba tribunos plebis adit; ab tribunis ad senatum res est reiecta. Prætor se iusiurandum dare paratum esse aiebat libros eos legi servarique non oportere. Senatus censuit satis habendum quod prætor iusiurandum polliceretur; libros primo quoque tempore in comitio cremandos esse; pretium pro libris, quantum Q. Petilio prætori maiorique parti tribunorum plebis videretur, domino solvendum esse. Id scriba non accepit. Libri in comitio, igne a victimariis facto, in conspectu populi cremati sunt.[15]

It is also possible that Des Periers borrowed the device from Garci Rodríguez de Montalvo, who edited the chivalric romance *Amadís de Gaula*, and claimed in the preface that one of his manuscripts had been discovered in a mysterious hermitage outside Constantinople. He wrote of

> … el libro quarto con las sergas de Esplandian su hijo: que hasta aqui no es en memoria de ninguno ser visto: que por gran dicha parescio en una tumba de piedra: que debaxo dela tierra en una hermita: cerca de Constantinopla fue hallada: y traydo por un ungaro mercadero: a estas partes de España: en letra y

[14] NRB 19, sig. [A$_{v}$]v.
[15] 40.29.

> pargamino tan antiguo: que con mucho trabajo se pudo leer: por aquellos que la lengua sabian: enlos quales cinco libros: comoquiera que hasta aqui: mas por patrañas: que por cronicas eran tenidos.[16]

dabas. Unless Des Periers invented city at random, its name was probably misread by the compositor, just like 'Melanchetes' at H_i r. 1 below. Some variant of 'Thebes' may have been in CM Mor. A Carian city *Tabæ* is also mentioned by Livy (*a.U.C.* XXXVIII.xiii.11, and by Quintus Curtius (*Hist. Alex.* V.xiii.2). It appears both times in the accusative form *Tabas*, which may have been treated as indeclinable by Des Periers.

par mes iournees. Something like 'pro virili'. *Journée* itself means a day's work (FEW-DIURNUM). CM 1712: 'As well as my other Occupations will allow me'.

interpreter laffection. This philosophy of translation is essentially the same as what Dolet, Des Periers' erstwhile collaborator, formulated shortly afterwards:

> En traduisant il ne se fault pas asservir iusques à la, que lon rende mot pour mot. Et si aulcun le faict, cela luy procede de pauvreté, & deffault d'esprit. […] Ie ne veulx taire icy la follie d'aulcuns traducteurs: lesquelz au lieu de liberté se submettent à servitude. C'est asscavoir, qu'ilz sont si sots, qu'ilz s'efforcent de rendre ligne pour ligne, ou vers pour vers. Par laquelle erreur ilz depravent souvent le sens de l'autheur, qu'ilz traduisent, & n'expriment la grace, & parfection de l'une & l'aultre langue.[17]

The precept was original neither to Dolet nor Des Periers. It was formulated thus by Horace:

> Nec verbo verbum curabis reddere fidus
> Interpres nec desilies imitator in artum
> Unde pedem proferre pudor vetet aut operis lex.[18]

And thus by Cicero:

> Nec converti ut interpres, sed ut orator, sententiis isdem et earum formis tamquam figuris, verbis ad nostram consuetudinem aptis. In quibus non verbum pro verbo necesse habui reddere, sed genus omne verborum vimque servavi.[19]

Jerome cited both of these passages in a letter (LVII; *De optimo genere interpretandi*), which itself was widely printed and quoted in the sixteenth century.

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[16] '*Los quatro libros del esforçado y muy virtuoso cavallero Amadis de Gaula* (Saragossa: George Coci, 1508), fol. IIr.
[17] *La manière de bien traduire d'une langue en aultre: d'advantage de la punctuation de la langue françoyse, plus des accents d'ycelle* (Lyon: Estienne Dolet, 1540), p. 13.
[18] *De arte poetica*, vv. 133–135.
[19] *De optimo genere oratorum*, 15.

< A_{ii} v. >

Beaulne: a icelle fin quil te fust plus familier &
intelligible. Iay aussi voulu adiouster a Pro⸗
teus, maistre Gonin, pour myeulx te declairer
que cest que Proteus. Quant aux chansons
que Cupido chante au troysiesme dialogue, 5
il y avoit au texte certains vers lyriques da⸗
mourettes, au lieu desquelz iay mieulx aymé
mettre des chansons de nostre temps, voyant
quelles serviront autant a propos, que lesdictz
vers lyriques, lesquelz (selon mon iugement) 10
si ie les eusse translatez, neussent point eu tant
de grace. Or ie te lenvoye tel quil est, mais cest
soubz condition que tu te garderas den bailler
aulcune copie, a celle fin que de main en main
il ne vienne a tomber en celles de ceulx qui se 15
meslent du faict de limprimerie, lequel art (ou
il souloit apporter iadis plusieurs commodi⸗
tez aux lettres) par ce quil est maintenant trop
commun, faict que ce qui est imprimé, na point
tant de grace, & est moins estimé, que sil de⸗ 20
mouroit encore en sa simple escripture, si ce
nestoit que limpression fust nette, & bien cor⸗
recte. Ie tenvoiray plusieurs autres bonnes cho⸗
ses, si ie cognoy que tu nayes point trouvé
cecy maulvais. Et a Dieu mon cher amy, au⸗ 25
quel ie prie quil te tienne en sa grace, & te
doint ce que ton petit cueur desire.

9 lesdictz] *CM 1537, CM 1538, CM 1732;* les d. *CM Buc, CM Gen;* les dits *CM Eug, CM 1711a*

*

intelligible. Giraud (p. 30) flagged this as worth an editor's explanation. But had no meaning in the Renaissance that differed from the modern one; see FEW-INTELLIGIBILIS.

adiouster a Proteus. See Erasmus' entry '*Proteo mutabilior* / Πρωτέως ποικιλώτερος' in the *Adagia*. Gloucester in *3 Henry VI*: 'I can adde Colours to the Camelion, / Change shapes with *Proteus*, for advantages, / And set the murtherous *Machevill* to Schoole'.[20]

chansons de nostre temps. Such substitutions were far from unusual in the literature of the 1530s. Des Periers himself pulled a similar trick in his translation of the *Lysis*, where for the single hexameter αἰεί τοι τὸν ὁμοῖον ἄγει θεὸς ὡς τὸν ὁμοῖον (214a) he composed an entire French stanza that closed with a reference to the union of Robin Hood and Maid Marion (*Recueil*, p. 22). Nor was the trope unique to Des Periers. In his translation of Horace's Ode IV.vii, Mellin de Saint-Gellais translated

[20] As printed in the First Folio (Bodleian Arch. G c.7., p. 160).

Nos ubi decidimus
Quò pius Æneas quò Tullus dives et Ancus
Pulvis et umbra sumus (vv.14–16)

as

Mais aussi tost que sommes ruez jus
Là ou Roland, & Lancelot sont cheuz
Rien que pouldre ne sommes.[21]

The *Cymbalum*'s anachronisms were thus a typical example of contemporary *interpretatio gallica*.

auquel ie prie. Footnote in CM Eug: 'Ce souhait n'est pas d'un athée tel qu'on veut qu'ait esté l'auteur.'

[21] See *Saingelais: Oeuvres de luy tant en composition, que transcription, ou allusion aux Auteurs Grecs, & Latins* (Lyon, Pierre de Tours, 1547), p. 22.

< A_{iii} r. >

Dialogue pre⸗
MIER.

Les Personnages.

Mercure. Byrphanes. Curtalius. Lhotesse.

MERCVRE.

*I*L est bien vray quil ma commandé
que ie luy feisse relier ce livre tout
a neuf: mais ie ne scay sil le de⸗
mande en aix de boys, ou en aix
de papier. Il ne ma point dict, sil le veult en ve⸗ 5
au, ou couvert de veloux. Ie doubte aussi sil en⸗
tend que ie le face dorer, & changer la facon des
fers & des cloux, pour le faire a la mode qui
court. Iay grand peur quil ne soit pas bien a
son gré. Il me haste si fort, & me donne tant de 10
choses a faire a ung coup, que ioublie lune pour
lautre. Davantage Venus ma dict ie ne scay
quoy que ie disse aux Iouvencelles de Cypre
touchant leur beau tainct. Iuno ma donné
charge en passant que ie luy apporte quelque 15
dorure, quelque iaseran, ou quelque ceincture
a la nouvelle facon, sil en ya point ca bas. Ie

6 veloux] *CM 1537, CM 1538, CM Buc, CM 1711a, CM 1732;* velours *CM Eug;* velour *CM Gen*

Argumentum ex CM 1711a:

DIALOGUE PREMIER. / MERCURE VOLE'. / ARGUMENT. / MERCURE, *chargé de plusieurs commissions pour les* Dieux*, descend à Athenes, pour y faire relier, de la part de* JUPITER*, le* Livre des Destinées*. Il est rencontré dans un Cabaret par deux hommes, qui ouvrent son sac, lui volent le Livre, & luy en mettent un autre à la place, & enfin lui cherchent querelle.*

hommes] *CM Buc,* scelerats *CM Eug, CM Gen (corr a Marchand.*)

*

Mercure. Éloi Johanneau (CM 1841, p. 89):

> *Mercure*, le messager des dieux, qui descend du ciel à *Athènes* pour y faire relier tout a neuf, de la part de *Jupiter*, le *Livre des Destinées*, est Jésus-Christ, le messie, l'envoyé de Dieu, qui descend sur la terre et va à Jérusalem porter la nouvelle loi, la loi de la vie éternelle, y publier l'Évangile. « Le poëte comique, dit Celse à Origène (*in Orig*., liv. VI, n. LXXVIII), a écrit que Jupiter envoya Mercure aux Athéniens et aux Lacédémoniens: toi, chrétien, ne

> penses-tu pas être plus ridicule, quand tu assures que le fils de Dieu a été envoyé au Juifs ? »

Lucien Febvre's whole analysis of the *Cymbalum mundi* was derived from this paragraph. He wrote of the passage in *Contra Celsum* which Johanneau had pointed out: 'Tout est dit. Tout est là. Des Périers tient son scénario. Jupiter enverra son fils Mercure aux Athéniens. Et ce sera, pour eux, un beau sujet de risée.' —*Origène et Des Périers*, p. 84.

Il est bien vray etc. This speech is imitated from the dialogue of Mercury and Maja in Lucian's *Dialogi deorum*, in which Mercury complains:'Τί μὴ λέγω, ὃς τοσαῦτα πράγματα ἔχω μόνος κάμνων καὶ πρὸς τοσαύτας ὑπηρεσίας διασπώμενος;'
aix de boys, ou en aix de papier. 'Wooden boards or pasteboards'. From the turn of the sixteenth century, pasteboards had been steadily increasing in use, and it is interesting that Mercury sees both as plausible options for this book. This passage was cited by a nineteenth-century historian of binding as an example of the late persistence of binding in wood: Octave Uzanne, *La reliure moderne artistique et fantaisiste* (Paris: Édouard Rouveyre, 1887), p. 61.

a ung coup. 'All at once' (1732*); 'at once' (CM 1712).

iaseran. A decorative collar or chain (Hu). RC: 'A flagon chaine; also, a bracelet, or neckelace of that chain fashion; also, a coat, or shirt of great, and close-woven, maile; also, the hoope of a shackle.' CM 1712: 'bracelets'. | CM 1711b^{ABC}:

> Vieux mot qui signifioit autrefois jaque de maille, cotte de maille. On disoit un homme armé de noble jaseran: un cheval couvert de jaserans. Il signifioit aussi une chaine d'or tissue de mailles plattes & entrelassées,comme une cotte de mailles. On le disoit aussi d'un bracelet d'or, ou d'un collier de femme, & c'est en ce sens qu'il est ici emploié.

The same note is in CM Eug, but there it is signed 'Furétiére'. Indeed the note is adapted from Antoine Furetière, *Dictionaire universel, contenant generalement tous les Mots françois tant vieux que modernes, & les Termes de toutes les Sciences et des Arts*, vol. II (The Hague and Rotterdam: Arnout & Reinier Leers, 1690), sig. Hh$_i$ v. This confirms the statement of Prosper Marchand (CM Mar) that he saw his colleague copy definitions from Furetière onto a copy of the *Cymbalum mundi*.

< Aiii v. >

scay bien que Pallas me demandera si ses Poe⸗
tes auront rien faict de nouveau. Puis il me
fault aller mener a Charon xxvij. ames de co⸗
quins, qui sont mors de langueur ce iourdhuy
par les rues, & treze qui se sont entretuez aux 5
cabaretz, & dixhuict au bordeau, huict petitz
enfans que les Vestales ont suffocquez, & cinq
Druydes qui se sont laissez mourir de manie &
male rage. Quant auray ie faict toutes ces com⸗
missions? Ou est ce que lon relie le myeulx? a A⸗ 10
thenes, en Germanie, a Venise, ou a Romme? Il
me semble que cest a Athenes. Il vault mieulx que
ie y descende. ie passeray la par la rue des orfevres
& par la rue des merciers, ou ie verray sil ya rien
pour ma dame Iuno. Et puis dela men iray aux 15
libraires pour chercher quelque chose de nou⸗
veau a Pallas. Or me convient il garder sur tout
que lon ne sache de quelle maison ie suis: Car
ou les Atheniens ne surfont la chose aux aul⸗
tres que deux foys autant quelle vault, ils me 20
la vouldroyent vendre quatre foys au double.
BYRPHANES. Que regardes tu la mon com⸗
pagnon? CVRTAL. Que ie regarde? ie voy
maintenant ce que iay tant de foys trouvé en
escript, & que ie ne pouvois croire. BYRPH. 25
Et que Dyable est ce? CVRTA. Cest Mer⸗
cure le messagier des Dieux, que iay veu de⸗

7 suffocquez] suffoqué *CM 1711b*§
9 auray ie] auray au vray je *CM Gen (corr.)*
9 ces] *CM 1537, CM 1538, CM Buc, CM Eug, CM 1711a, CM 1732;* ses *CM Gen (corr.)*
13 la par] *CM 1537, CM 1538, CM 1732;* par *CM Buc, CM Eug, CM Gen, CM 1711a*
15 men] *CM 1537, CM 1538, CM Eug, CM 1732;* je m'en *CM Buc, CM Gen, CM 1711a*

*

Byrphanes, Curtalius. These names have no obvious source, though Terence's *Byrria* might be mentioned in connection with the former. They might be references to clothing: *birrum*, an academic hat, and a [*tunica*] *curta*. Most likely they have no special meaning at all.

xxvij. ames etc. This catalogue is imitated from an exchange between Clotho and Mercury in Lucian's *Cataplus*:

> ΚΛΩΘΩ. πολεμοῦντας ἀποθανεῖν ἔδει χθὲς ἐν Μηδίᾳ τέτταρας ἐπὶ τοῖς ὀγδοήκοντα καὶ τὸν Ὀξυάρτου υἱὸν μετ᾽ αὐτῶν Γωβάρην. ΕΡΜΗΣ. Πάρεισι. ΚΛ. Δι᾽ ἔρωτα αὐτοὺς ἀπέσφαξαν ἑπτά, καὶ ὁ φιλόσοφος Θεαγένης διὰ τὴν ἑταίραν τὴν Μεγαρόθεν. ΕΡ. Οὐτοιὶ πλησίον. ΚΛ. Ποῦ δ᾽ οἱ περὶ τῆς βασιλείας ὑπ᾽ ἀλλήλων ἀποθανόντες; ΕΡ. Παρεστᾶσιν. ΚΛ. Ὁ δ᾽ ὑπὸ τοῦ

> μοιχοῦ καὶ τῆς γυναικὸς φονευθείς; ΕΡ. Ἰδού σοι πλησίον. ΚΛ. Τοὺς ἐκ δικαστηρίων δῆτα παράγαγε, λέγω δὲ τοὺς ἐκ τυμπάνου καὶ τοὺς ἀνεσκολοπισμένους. οἱ δ᾽ ὑπὸ λῃστῶν ἀποθανόντες ἑκκαίδεκα ποῦ εἰσιν, ὦ Ἑρμῆ; ΕΡ. Πάρεισιν οἵδε οἱ τραυματίαι οὓς ὁρᾷς. τὰς δὲ γυναῖκας ἅμα βούλει παραγάγω; ΚΛ. Μάλιστα, καὶ τοὺς ἀπὸ ναυαγίων γε ἅμα· καὶ γὰρ τεθνᾶσιι τὸν ὅμοιον τρόπον. καὶ τοὺς ἀπὸ τοῦ πυρετοῦ δέ, καὶ τούτους ἅμα, καὶ τὸν ἰατρὸν μετ᾽ αὐτῶν Ἀγαθοκλέα. ποῦ δ᾽ ὁ φιλόσοφος Κυνίσκος, ὃν ἔδει τῆς Ἑκάτης τὸ δεῖπνον φαγόντα καὶ τὰ ἐκ τῶν καθαρσίων ᾠὰ καὶ πρὸς τούτοις γε σηπιαν ὠμὴν ἀποθανεῖν; ΚΥΝΙΣΚΟΣ. Πάλαι σοι παρέστηκα, ὦ βελτίστη Κλωθοῖ.

Vestales. It is perfectly plausible, as the paragraph-series suggested, that Vestals and Druids are stand-ins for infanticidal nuns and irritable monks or friars, which would make this an ordinary piece of satire in the tradition of Erasmus and Rabelais.

Druydes qui se sont laissez mourir. Jacob Le Duchat, commenting on Rabelais' *Quart Livre*:

> *Quand voyrons ces fols lunaticques, aucuns ladres, autres bougres &c.*] Il désigne quelques Docteurs de Sorbonne accusez, les uns de Sodomie, comme Nicolas Maillard, les autres, comme le Cordelier Pierre de Cornibus, d'être morts de la vérole; plusieurs de s'estre pendus, ou noiez, comme le donne assez clairement à entendre Bonaventure Des Périers dans son *Cymbalum mundi*, au commencement du premier dialogue, où Mercure, qui fait fort l'empêché, dit avoir à conduire à la barque de Charon cinq Druides qui s'étoient *laissez mourir de manie & male rage*.[22]

male rage. A stock expression; one of the only ones to conserve the OF feminine form *male*. It means 'terrible rage'; a mental affliction conceived of as working its own ill effects in addition to those of the external evil that had provoked it. It was apparently influenced by if not derived altogether from Vergil's *improba ventris rabies*. One can die, go mad, etc. with *male rage de faim*, *male rage de peur*, *male rage de cholere*, or *male rage* tout-court. Or else one may promise to do any of these things in an oath. See FEW-RABIES for examples.

**

§.1. (Huit petits enfans que les Vestales ont suffoqué.) C'est ici un trait satyrique contre les Religieuses, que l'Auteur appelle Vestales par ironie. Il taxe en passant ces bien-heureuses recluses d'un crime sans doute assez commun dans les Cloitres, du tems de l'Auteur.

[22] *Œuvres du Maître François Rabelais, publiées sous le titre de Faits et dits du géant Gargantua et de son fils Pantagruel*, vol. IV (Amsterdam: Henri Bordesius, 1711), p. XXV, n. 70.

< A_{iv} r. >

scendre du ciel en terre. BYRPHANES. O,
quelle resverie. il le te semble, povre homme,
tu as cela songé en veillant. Sus sus allons boi=
re, & ne pense plus a telle vaine illusion. CVR=
TALIVS. Par le corbieu, il nya rien plus 5
vray, ce nest pas mocquerie: il sest la posé, &
croy quil passera tantost par icy, attendons ung
petit. Tien, le voys tu la? BYRPHANES.
Il ne sen fault gueres que ie ne croye ce que
tu me diz, veu aussi que ie voy la chose a loeil. 10
Pardieu voyla ung homme acoustré de la sorte
que les Poetes nous descripvent Mercure. Ie
ne scay que faire de croyre que ce le soit.
CVRTALIVS. Tay toy: voyons ung pe=
tit qui deviendra, il vient droit a nous. MERCV= 15
RE. Dieu gard les compaignons. vend on bon
vin ceans? Corbieu iay grand soif. CVRTA=
LIVS. Monsieur, ie pense quil nen ya point
de meilleur dedans Athenes. Et puis monsieur
quelles nouvelles? MERCVR. Par mon ame 20
ie nen scay nulles, ie viens icy pour en appren=
dre. Hostesse, faictes venir du vin, sil vous plait.
CVRTALIVS. Ie tasseure que cest Mercu=
re sans aultre, ie le cognoys a son maintien: &
voyla quelque cas quil apporte des cieulx. Si 25
nous vallons rien, nous scaurons que cest, &
luy desroberons, si tu men veulx croire. BYR=

11 Pardieu] *CM 1537, CM 1538, CM Buc, CM 1711a;* Parbieu *CM Eug, CM Gen*
15 qui deviendra] *CM 1537, CM 1538, CM Gen, CM 1873;* qu'il deviendra *CM Buc*, *CM Eug*, *CM 1711a, CM 1732, CM 1841, CM 1856, CM 1858, CM 1958*

*

il le te semble etc. 'It only seems so to you.' Neither this phrase as a whole nor its absolute usage of *sembler* is listed in FEW-SIMILARE, DMF-SEMBLER, Hu., or any other dictionary I have seen. (Latin *similare*, however, does carry a connotation of deception). Its meaning is illuminated by an attestation of the exact same phrase in Guillaume de Machaut's *Livre dou voir dit* (vv. 5271–3):

Biaus amis / cest grant niceté
Dou penser / car il le te samble
Tu dors / et paroles ensemble.

(Dear friend, this is a great mental folly: for it [only] appears so to thee. Thou dost sleep while thou speakest.)

songé en veillant. A classical concept and turn of phrase. Lucretius, *De rerum natura* III.1048: '*et vigilans stertis nec somnia cernere cessas*'.

faire de croyre. That is, *croire* (CM 1732*).

ung petit. In modern French one says 'un peu', which, as CM 1732* pointed out, appears itself in the dialogue in two places (C_i v. 18 and G_{iii} r. 10).

voyons ung petit qui deviendra. 'Now, let's see who [in fact] shows up.' The thought is: 'although we have good reason to think it's Mercury, there is no need to speculate about the matter, for here he comes after all'. Even in modern French, one may say things like 'voyons un peu qui___'. Indeed, 'voyons' with an indirect question appears on the other side of this very leaf (A_{iv} v. 24). Prosper Marchand's *qu'il* was thus an unwarranted correction. CM 1712, following Marchand but misunderstanding him, translated 'let us wait a little, and see what will become of him'.

Dieu gard. In English, *God save you* was once a common greeting (OED-SAVE).

iay grand soif. Éloi Johanneau (CM 1841, pp. 93–94):

> Ne reconnaissez-vous pas encore là Jésus-Christ qui dit en entrant au cénacle : « La paix soit avec vous ! N'avez-vous point quelque chose ici à manger ? … »; qui donne des ordres semblables aux noces de Cana : « Emplissez les cruches d'eau ; puisez-en, et portez-en au maître de l'hôtel ; … »; et qui enfin dit sur la croix : « *Sitio* ! J'ai soif ! » mot que Rabelais a ausi parodié (liv. I, ch. V), quand il fait dire à Grand-Gousier : « J'ai la parole de Dieu en bouche : *Sitio*. »

< A_{iv} v. >

PHANES. Ce seroit a nous une grande vertu,
& gloire, de desrober non seulement ung larron,
mais lauteur de tous larrecins, tel quil est.
CVRTALIVS. Il laissera son pacquet sur ce
lict, & sen ira tantost veoir par toute la mai⸗ 5
son de ceans sil trouvera rien mal mis apoint
pour le happer, & mettre en sa pouche. ce pen⸗
dant nous verrons que cest quil porte la. BYR⸗
PHANES. Cest tresbien dict a toy. MERCV⸗
RE. Le vin est il venu? Ca compagnons pas⸗ 10
sons dela en ceste chambre, & allons taster du
vin. CVRTALIVS. Nous ne faisons que
partir de boire, toutesfoys monsieur nous som⸗
mes contens de vous tenir compagnie, & de
boire encor avec vous. MERCVRE. Or mes⸗ 15
sieurs tandis que le vin viendra, ie men voys
ung petit a lesbat, faictes reinsser des verres ce
pendant, & apporter quelque chose a manger.
CVRTALIVS. Le voys tu la le galland? Ie
cognois ses facons de faire: ie veulx quon me 20
pende sil retourne quil nayt fouillé par tous
les coings de ceans, & quil nayt faict sa main,
comment que ce soit, & tasseure bien quil ne
retournera pas si tost. Pource voyons ce pen⸗
dant que cest quil a icy, & le desrobons aussi si 25
nous pouvons. BYRPHANES. Despeschons
nous donc, quil ne nous surprenne sur le faict.

4 apoint] a point *CM 2019*
22 faict sa main,] *om. virg. CM 1732**

*

rien. ‘Anything’. An archaism, like *aulcun* for ‘someone’ (FEW-RES).

partir de boire. CM 1732* glosses *partir* as *cesser*; ‘leave off’. But that blurs the sense unnecessarily; better to render it as *venir*, as FEW-PARTIRE, I.2 does; thus, as CM 1712 has it, ‘We are just come from drinking’.

faict sa main, comment que ce soit. ‘Helped himself one way or another’. (Cf. FEW-MANUS, p. 186b). CM 1712, translating loosely: ‘And pilfer’d something or other’.

< B_i r. >

CVRTALIVS. Voy cy ung livre. BYR⸗
PHANES. Quel livre est ce? CVRTAL.

Quæ in hoc libro continentur:

Chronica rerum memorabilium quas Iupiter gessit antequam esset ipse.

Fatorum præscriptum: sive, eorum quæ futura sunt, certæ dispositiones.

Catalogus Heroum immortalium, qui cum Iove vitam victuri sunt sempiternam.

Vertubieu, voicy ung beau livre mon com⸗ pagnon, ie croy quil ne sen vend point de tel dedans Athenes. Scays tu que nous ferons? nous en avons ung dela, qui est bien de ce volume, & aussi grand, va le querir, & le mettons en son sac, en lieu de cestuy cy, & le refermons com⸗ me il estoit, il ne sen doubtera ia. BYRPHA⸗ NES. Par le corbieu nous sommes riches, nous trouverons tel libraire qui nous baillera dix mil escuz de la copie. Cest le livre de Iupiter lequel Mercure vient faire relier (comme ie pense) Car il tombe tout en pieces de vieil⸗ lesse. tien voyla celuy que tu diz, lequel ne vault de gueres mieulx, & te prometz que a les veoir il nya pas grand difference de lung a laultre. CVRTALIVS. Voyla qui va bien, le pacquet est tout ainsi quil estoit, il ny scauroit rien co⸗

2 CVRTAL.] *CM 1537, CM 1538;* CURTALIUS, lit. *CM Buc, CM Eug, CM Gen, CM 1711a, CM 1732*
19 Cest le] *CM 1537, CM 1711a;* ce le *CM 1538, CM Buc* (*corr. ad* c'est le*), CM Gen;* ce *CM Eug, CM 1711b§*
23 que a] *CM 1537, CM 1538, CM Buc, CM Eug, CM 1711a;* qua *CM Gen, CM 1711b§*
24 grand] *CM 1537, CM 1538, CM Buc, CM Eug, CM Gen, CM 1711a, CM 1711b§;* tant de *CM Gen*

*

Fatorum præscriptum. This table of future predictions is a satire of nothing but an almanac, which was a common object of fun and condemnation in the 1530s. Cf. F_i r. 5–9, where Cupid says that astrologers are clamouring for a copy of it in order to improve their own almanacs.

libraire. A publisher; not necessarily just a bookseller. The thieves, it seems, intend to sell the privilege of making a copy to print from.

Voyla qui va bien. CM 1712: 'All is well'. RC-VEOIR: '*Voila qui est bon*. Why this is good, well, brave.'

**

§.2. (Ce livre de Jupiter . . . . tombe tout en pieces de vieillesse, tiens voila celui que tu dis, lequel ne vaut de gueres mieulx, & te promets qu'à les voir, il n'y a pas grand' difference de l'un à l'autre.) La comparaison du livre des Destinées au livre que les deux voleurs lui supposent, & tout le discours de Byrphanes peuvent être pris en bonne & en mauvaise part. On laisse au Lecteur la liberté d'en juger.

gnoistre. MERCV. Sus beuvons compagnons. Ie
viens de visiter le logis de ceans, lequel me semble
bien beau. BYRPH. Le logis est beau, mon⸗
sieur, pour cela quil contient. MERC. Et puis
que dit on de nouveau? CVRTAL. Nous 5
nen scavons rien Monsieur, si nous nen ap⸗
prenons de vous. MERC. Or bien, ie boy a
vous Messieurs. BYRPH. Monsieur, vous
soyés le tresbien venu. nous vous allons plei⸗
ger. MERC. Quel vin est ce cy? CVRTAL. 10
Vin de Beaulne. MERC. Vin de Beaulne?
Corbieu, Iupiter ne boit point de nectar meil⸗
leur. BYRPH. Le vin est bon: mais il ne fault
pas acomparager le vin de ce monde au nectar
de Iupiter. MERCV. Ie renybieu, Iupiter 15
nest point servy de meilleur Nectar. CVR⸗
TAL. Advisez bien que cest que vous dictes,
car vous blasphemez grandement: & diz que
vous nestes pas homme de bien, si vous vou⸗
lez soustenir cela, voire par le sambieu. MER⸗ 20
CV. Mon amy, ne vous colerez pas tant. Iay
tasté des deux: & vous dys que cestuy cy
vault mieulx. CVRTAL. Monsieur, Ie ne me
colere point, ny ie nay point beu de Nectar,
comme vous dictes quavez faict: mais nous 25
croions ce quen est escript, & ce que lon en
dict. Vous ne devez point faire comparaison de

9 venu] *CM 1538 (lippivit hic Nurse), CM 1732, CM 1873, CM 1958, Giraud;* veuu *CM 1537 (neque* veeu*, ut legit CM 2000), CM 2019*
11 Beaulne] Bealne *CM 1538*
13 Le *CM 1537, CM 1538, CM 1537;* Ce *CM Buc, CM Eug, CM Gen, CM 1711a*
14 acomparager] accomparager *CM 1732**

*

Quel vin est ce cy? – Vin de Beaulne. A proverbially fancy wine in the late Middle Ages, rendered in CM 1712 by 'Champaign', and in CM 1723 by 'Burgundy'. See *Le recueil des repues franches de Maistre Francoys Villon et ses compaignons* (fol. B_i r.):

> Ie demande du vin de beaulne
> Qui soit bon & non autrement.

acomparager. 'To liken in worth'; 'æquiparare' (RS-ACCOMPARAGER).

nous croions ce quen est escript. 'Die Worte: *Wir glauben wie es geschrieben stehet* / werden […] liederlich gebraucht.' —*Unschuldige Nachrichten von Alten u. Neuen Theologischen Sachen / Zur geheiligten Ubung verfertiget* (Leipzig: Joh. Friedrich Braun, 1713), p. 379.

< B_{ii} r. >

quelque vin qui croisse en ce monde icy, au ne⸗
ctar de Iupiter: vous ne seriez pas soustenu
en ceste cause. MERC. Ie ne scay comment vous
le croyez: mais il est ainsi comme ie le vous dys.
CVRTA. Ie puisse mourir de male mort, 5
Monsieur, (& me pardonnez, sil vous plait) si
vous voulez maintenir ceste opinion, si ie ne
vous fais mettre en lieu ou vous ne verrés voz
piedz de troys moys, tant pour cela, que pour
quelque chose que vous ne cuydez pas que ie 10
sache. (Escoute mon compagnon, il a desrobé
ie scay bien quoy la hault en la chambre, par le
Corbieu, il nya rien si vray) Ie ne scay qui
vous estes: mais ce nest pas bien faict a vous de
tenir ces propos la: vous vous en pourriez bien 15
repentir, & dautres cas que vous avez faictz il
nya pas long temps: & sortez de ceans hardyment:
car, par la morbieu, si ie sors premier que vous,
ce sera a voz despens. Ie vous ameneray des
gens quil vauldroit mieulx que vous eussiez a 20
faire a tous les diables denfer, que au moin⸗
dre deulx. BYRPHANES. Monsieur, il dict
vray: vous ne devez point ainsi vilainement
blasphemer. Et ne vous fiez en mon com⸗
pagnon que bien apoint. Par le Corbieu, 25
il ne vous dict chose quil ne face, si vous luy
eschauffez gueres le poil. MERC. Cest pitié

1 icy] *CM 1537, CM 1538, CM Eug, CM 1732;* cy *CM Buc, CM 1711a; om. CM Gen*
4 le vous] *inv. CM Gen (corr.)*
10 cuydez] *CM 1732, CM 1856, CM 1858, CM 1873, CM 1958, CM 2019, Giraud*; cudyez *CM 1537, CM 1538;* croiés *CM Buc*, *CM Eug*, *CM Gen, CM 1711a, CM 1841*
26 dict] *CM 1538;* dect *CM 1537*, *CM 1732*

*

en lieu ou ne verrés vos piedz de troys moys. 'In a dungeon' (CM 1732*), where presumably it is too dark to see your feet.

premier que vous. 'Ahead of you' (CM 1732*). *Premier* is an (indeclinable) adverb, not an adjective; cf. RS-SANTÉ, where *nous avons sceu premier que toy* is given as the translation of *paulò antè, quam tu, cognovimus*'. See also DMF-PREMIER, I.d.1.

hardyment. Li.'s article on *hardiment* cites the *Cymbalum mundi* itself, in which the word appears three times. Here and at F_{iv} v. 27 it means 'post-haste', whereas at B_{iii} r. 6 it means 'surely'. These senses are apparently derived from the general sense 'without hesitation'. See DMF-HARDIMENT, B.1 and 2.

< Bii v. >

davoir affaire aux hommes, que le grand dia⸗
ble ayt part a lheure que mon pere Iupiter me
donna iamais loffice pour traficquer & conver⸗
ser entre les humains. Hostesse, tenez, payez
vous, prenez la ce quil vous fault. Et bien, estes 5
vous contente? L H O S T E S S E . Ouy monsieur.
M E R C V R E . Madame, que ie vous dye ung
mot a loreille si vous plait. Scavez vous point
comment sappellent ces deux compagnons qui
ont beu dela avec moy? L H O S T E S S E . 10
Lung sappelle Byrphanes, & lautre Curta⸗
lius. M E R C V R E . Cest assez. A Dieu ma
dame. mais pour la plaisir que mavez faict,
tant de mavoir donné de si bon vin, que de me
dire les noms de ces meschans, ie vous pro⸗ 15
mectz & asseure, que vostre vie sera allongee
de cinquante ans en bonne santé, & ioyeuse
liberté, oultre linstitution & ordonnance de
mes cousines les Destinees. L H O S T E S S E .
Vous me promettez merveilles, monsieur, 20
pour ung rien: mais ie ne le puis croire: pour⸗
ce que ie suis bien asseuree, que cela ne pour⸗
roit iamais advenir. Ie croy que vous le voul⸗
driez bien, aussi feroy ie de ma part: car ie se⸗
roye bien heureuse de vivre si longuement en 25
tel estat, que vous me dictes: Mais si ne sen
fera il rien pourtant. M E R C V R E . Dictes

5 prenez] *CM 1537, neque* pienez *ut legit Boerner, a CM 1914 deceptus, nam littera r haud infracta est apud CM 1537; quam causam attulit Giraud (p. 28), cur B. erravisset*
13 mavez] *CM 1537, CM 1538, CM Eug, CM Gen, CM 1732;* vous m'avez *CM Buc, CM 1711a*

*

tant de mavoir donné de si bon vin, que de me dire les noms de ces meschans. This recalls a moment in the *Odyssey*. The Cyclops promises Odysseus a gift in exchange for draughts of wine and for telling him his name (ι.353–6):

> …ἥσατο δ᾽ αἰνῶς / Ἡδὺ ποτὸν πίνων καὶ μ᾽ ᾔτεε δεύτερον αὖτις· / Δός μοι ἔτι πρόφρων καί μοι τεὸν οὔνομα εἰπὲ / Αὐτίκα νῦν ἵνα τοι δῶ ξείνιον ᾧ κε σὺ χαίρῃς·

In turn, Mercury's claims about the divine quality of the Hostess's wine is similar to the Cyclops' subsequent boast:

> Καὶ γὰρ Κυκλώπεσσι φέρει ζείδωρος ἄρουρα / Οἶνον ἐριστάφυλον καί σφιν Διὸς ὄμβρος ἀέξει· / Ἀλλὰ τόδ᾽ ἀμβροσίης καὶ νέκταρός ἐστιν ἀποῤῥώξ.

< B_{iii} r. >

vous? ha, vous en riez, & vous en mocquez?
Non, vous ne vivrez pas tant voirement, & si
serez tout le temps de vostre vie en servitu⸗
de, & malade toutes les lunes iusques au sang.
Or voy ie bien que la maulvaistié des femmes
surmontera celle des hommes. Hardiment il
ne sen fera rien, puis que vous ne lavez pas
voulu croire. vous naurez iamais hoste (quel⸗
que plaisir que luy ayez faict) qui vous paye
de si riches promesses. Voyla de dangereux
maraudz. Tudieu, ie neuz iamais plus belle
paour: Car ie croy quilz mont bien veu pren⸗
dre ce petit ymage dargent, qui estoit sur le
buffet en hault, que iay desrobé pour en faire
ung present a mon cousin Ganymedes, lequel
me baille tousiours ce qui reste en la coupe de
Iupiter, aprés quil a pris son nectar. Cestoit
dequoy ils parloyent ensemble. Silz meussent
une foys pris, iestoye infame, moy, & tout
mon lignage celeste. Mais si iamais ilz tum⸗
bent en mes mains, ie les recommanderay a
Charon, quil les face ung petit chommer sur
le rivage, & quil ne les passe de trois mil ans.
Et si vous ioueray encores ung bon tour, mes⸗
sieurs Byrphanes, & Curtalius: car devant que
ie rende le livre dimmortalité a Iupiter mon pe⸗
re, lequel ie vois faire relier, ien effaceray voz

1 ha] CM 1537, CM 1538 *(sed cauda litteræ* a *ita trunca apud CM 1538$_i$, ut* o *legi possit), CM 1732;* ho *CM Buc, CM Eug, CM Gen, CM 1711a*
10 promesses] Mercure, seul *ins. CM Eug, CM Gen (postea eras.), leg. CM 1711b^{ABC}*

*

Hardiment. Here, 'surely' (Hu-HARDIMENT). See B_{ii} r. 17, above.

cousin Ganymedes. Ganymede, descended from Atlas through his father Tros, was indeed Mercury's cousin. See *Aeneid* VIII.126–142.

Charon. Cf. the opening of Lucian's *Cataplus.*

chommer. 'Loiter'. See FEW-CAUMA for the full semantic range of this word.

**

§.3. (Et malade toutes les lunes jusques au sang.) On designe ici la maladie ordinaire des femmes. Bonav. des Periers par cette menace, tourne en ridicule & Mercure & ses promesses miraculeuses.

beaux noms, si ie les y trouve escriptz, & ce⸗
luy de vostre belle hostesse, qui est si desdai⸗
gneuse, quelle ne veult croire ny accepter que
lon luy face du bien. CVRTAL. Par mon a⸗
me, nous luy en avons bien baillé. Cestoit
ainsi quil failloit besongner, Byrphanes,
affin den vuyder la place, cest Mercure luy
mesme, sans faillir. BYRPHANES. Cest
luy sans autre voyrement. Voyla le plus heu⸗
reux larcin qui fut iamais faict: car nous a⸗
vons desrobé le prince & patron des robeurs:
qui est ung acte digne de memoire immor⸗
tele: & si avons recouvert ung livre dont il
nest point de semblable au monde. CVRTA⸗
LIVS. La pippee est bonne, veu que au lieu du
sien nous luy en avons mis ung qui parle bien
dautres matieres. Ie ne crains que une cho⸗
se, cest, que si Iupiter le voit, & quil trouve son
livre perdu, il nen fouldroye & abysme tout
ce povre monde icy, qui nen peult mais, pour
la punition de nostre forfaict. il ny auroit
gueres a faire: car il est assez tempestatif quand
il se y met. Mais ie te diray que nous ferons.
Pource que ie pense que tout ainsi que rien nest
contenu en ce livre, qui ne se face: ainsi rien
ne se faict, qui ny soit contenu. Nous regarde⸗
rons ce pendant si cestuy nostre larcin yest

6 besongner, Byrphanes, affin den vuyder la place, cest] *CM Buc, CM Eug, CM Gen, CM 1873;* besongner. BYRPHANES. Affin den vuyder la place, cest *CM 1537;* besongner, Byrphanes. Affin den vuyder la place, cest *CM 1538, Boerner, CM 2019;* besongner, Byrphanes, afin den vuyder la place. Cest *CM 1711a, [CM 1712], CM 1732, CM 1841, CM 1856, CM 1858, CM 1958, Giraud*
11] robeurs *CM 1537, CM 1538;* voleurs *CM Buc, CM Gen, CM 1711a;* vobeurs *[!] CM Eug*
12 immortele] *CM 1537, CM 1538, CM 1958, CM 2019;* immortelle *CM Buc, CM Eug, CM Gen, CM 1711a, CM 1732, CM 1841, CM 1856, CM 1858, CM 1873, Giraud*
17 que une] *CM 1537, CM 1538, CM Buc, CM 1711a;* qu'une *CM Eug, CM Gen, CM 1711b*[§]
18 le] *CM 1537, CM 1538, CM Buc, CM Gen, CM 1711a*; om. *CM Eug, CM 1711b*[§]
19 nen] ne *CM 1538*

*

nous luy en avons bien baillé. RS-BON: '*Il luy a baillé bonne*, Plagam homini inflixit gravem, vel Homini mulctam inflixit gravem.'

Prince & patron des robeurs. Cf. Mercury's words to his mother in the fourth Homeric Hymn, v. 175: 'δύναμαι φηλητέων ὅρχαμος εἶναι'; Apollo's words to Mercury in ibid., v. 292:

‘ἀρχὸς φηλητέων κεκλήσεαι ἤματα πάντα’; and the chorus in Euripides’ *Rhesus*, ll. 216–217: ‘ἀλλ᾽ εὖ σ᾽ ὁ Μαίας παῖς ἐκεῖσε καὶ πάλιν / πέμψειεν Ἑρμῆς ὅς γε φηλητῶν ἄναξ.’

pippee. This either means a sort of bird-hunt, or, as CM 1732* had it, a deceitful trick. FEW-PĪPIARE gives both meanings. RC-PIPÉE: ‘The peeping, or chirping of small birds counterfeited by a Bird-catcher; also, a counterfeit shew, false countenance, dissembling apparance, of sufficiencie, &c.’ Cf. also RS-PIPER, which likewise holds that the latter sense is a tropical extension of the former. If correct, this view would excuse us from the responsibility of choosing between the alternatives.

**

§.4. (Je ne crains qu’une chose, c’est que si Jupiter voit & qu’il trouve son livre perdu, il ne foudroye … le monde &c.) Curtalius sort ici de son caractere de scelerat: une espece de remords de conscience le prend. Des Periers n’a pas bien suivi ce caractere. Puis qu’il avoit fait Curtalius assés mechant, pour entreprendre le vol du livre des Destinées, il ne devoit lui donner aucune idée de repentir, pour l’avoir volé.

< B_{iv} r. >

point predict & pronostiqué, & sil dict point
que nous le rendrons quelque foys, a celle fin
que nous soyons plus asseurez du faict. BYR⸗
PHA. Sil y est, nous le trouverons en cest en⸗
droict, car voicy le tiltre, Fata & eventus anni. 5
CVRTAL. St, St. Cache ce livre: car voicy
Ardelio qui vient: lequel le vouldroit veoir.
Nous le verrons plus amplement une autre
foys tout a loysir.

5 anni.] *CM 1537, CM 1538;* anni…… *CM Buc, CM Eug, CM Gen, CM 1711a, CM 1732*
6 voicy] ioy *CM 1537, CM 1732, CM 1856, CM 1858, CM 1873, CM 1958, CM 2019;* ie voy *CM 1538, CM Buc, CM Eug, CM Gen, CM 1711a, [CM 1712], CM 1841, Boerner*

*

quelque foys. That is, *quelque jour* (CM 1732*).

St, St. A classical interjection. It was apparently unfamiliar enough in French prose that the glossary to Rabelais' *Quart Livre* included an entry on it: 'St. St. St. une voix & sifflement par lequel on impose silence. Terence en use in Phorm. & Ciceron de Oratore'. François Rabelais, *Le quart livre des faicts et dicts Heroiques du bon Pantagruel* (Paris: Michel Fezandat, 1552) [NRB 45], sig. Y_{ii}v.

voicy … qui vient. This forms a stock phrase, and notwithstanding the repetition of *car voicy*, I took this to be the likeliest original reading (preferring *voicy* to *voyla* on palaeographical grounds). The editor of CM 1538 was bothered enough by *ioy* to emend it.

Ardelio. The meaning of this name is explained best by Martial (II.5, *in Attalum*):

Declamas belle, causas agis, Attale, belle,
Historias bellas, carmina bella facis,
Componis belle mimos, epigrammata belle,
Bellus grammaticus, bellus es astrologus,
Et belle cantas et saltas, Attale, belle,
Bellus es arte lyræ, bellus es arte pilæ.
Nil bene cum facias, facias tamen omnia belle,
Vis dicam quid sis? magnus es ardelio.

plus amplement. A Latinism; 'amplius'.

< B_{iv} v. >

Dialogue II.
Les personnages.
Trigabus. Mercure. Rhetulus. Cuber⸗
cus. Drarig.

TRIGABVS.
*I*E puisse mourir, Mercure, si tu es
qung abuseur, & fusses tu filz de
Iupiter troys foys, affin que ie te
le dye. Tu es ung caut Varlet.
Te souvient il du bon tour que tu feiz? onc⸗ 5
ques puis ne fuz tu icy. Tu en baillas bien
a noz Resveurs de Philosophes. MERCV⸗
RE. Comment donc? TRIGABVS. Comment?
Quant tu leur dis que tu avois la pierre Phi⸗
losophale, & la leur monstras, pour laquelle 10
ilz sont encore en grant peine, dont ilz tim⸗
portunerent tant par leurs prieres, que toy doub⸗
tant a qui tu la donneroys entiere, vins a la
briser, & mettre en pouldre, & puis la respandiz
par lareine du theatre, ou ilz estoyent disputans 15
(comme ilz ont de costume) a celle fin que
ung chascun en eust quelque peu, leur disant
quilz cherchassent bien, & que silz pouvoient

5–6 que tu feiz? … icy.] *CM 1753, CM 1841, CM 1856, CM 1858;* que tu feiz onques puis ne fuz tu icy? *CM 1537, CM 1538, CM 1711a, CM 1732, CM 1873, CM 2019, Giraud;* que tu feiz? Oncques puis ne fuz-tu icy? *CM 1958, CM 2000a*
10 monstras] *CM Buc, CM 1711a;* môntras *CM Gen;* montras *CM Eug, CM 1711b*[§]

Argumentum ex CM 1711a:

DIALOGUE II. / LA PIERRE PHILOSOPHALE. / ARGUMENT. / MERCURE, *averti par* TRIGABUS *de l'occupation des Philosophes, qui cherchent la* Pierre Philosophale*, se travestit en Vieillard, pour aller les voir dans l'arenne du Theatre, où il se raille de leur credulité & de leur égarement*.

II] *CM Buc;* Second *CM Eug, CM Gen*
Pierre Philosophale *(bis)*] *CM Eug;* pierre philosophalle *CM Buc, CM Gen*
arenne] *CM Buc, CM Gen*; arene *CM Eug*
raille de leur credulité] raille credulité *CM Gen*

*

Trigabus. This name is a play on *Trismegistus*—'thrice great'—but swaps in the root *gab-*, which means 'to mock'. Hence Trigabus is a 'triple-mocker'. (Trismegistus was often called *Trimegistus* in the Renaissance; see *seq*.)

Et fusses tu. Compare this to a line spoken by Peter to the shade of Julius II in *Iulius exclusus e cœlis*: 'Ut ter maximus sis ac magis etiam quam Mercurius ille Trimegistus / huc non recipieris, nisi fueris optimus, hoc est sanctus.'

affin que ie te le dye. 'I tell you'; 'just so you know'. An almost meaningless bit of conversational filler; see the same phrase at H_{ii} r. 2 and *affin que ie tienne cela de toy* at C_{iii} r. 14. See also some similar phrases in RS-FIN.

Varlet. A whippersnapper (Li.).

Oncques puis etc. Something has surely gone wrong here. *Oncques puis ne* is an ordinary phrase meaning 'never thereafter' (Huguet-ONQUES), but is never attested as a temporal conjunction, as CM 1537's punctuation would seem to require it to be. The most satisfactory solution was given by CM 1753, though I suspect its correction was nothing more than a felicitous misprint. It produces the meaning 'do you remember that trick you pulled? You haven't been around here since.' CM 1712 has 'Do you remember what a Trick you plaid, when you were here?'—which is a valiant but hopeless attempt to make sense of CM 1711a's reading. CM 1723 did better: 'Do'st remember the arch Trick thou playd'st 't'other Day? Has thou ever been there since?'

pierre philosophale. Mercury is connected doubly with the Philosophers' stone, not less in his association with Hermes Trismegistus than in that quicksilver, i.e. the metal mercury, was an important ingredient in the stone's alchemical preparation. See, for instance, the *Rosarium philosophorum* of Arnaldus Villanova. C. A. Meyer identified Lucian's anti-sectarian *Hermotimus* as the model for this dialogue, as a mockery of the search for truth. But the analogy is not exact, and depends on the interpretation of this dialogue that was first advanced by CM 1711b[§]. Lucian's *Charon* (*Speculatores*) is a closer parallel, as it depicts Mercury and Charon deriding the folly of money-hunting mortals from afar.

**

§. 1. Ce Dialogue, ce semble, devroit suivre le troisiéme, qui est une suite de l'avanture du livre des Destinées.
§. 2. (La pierre Philosophale) ou plûtôt la verité.
§. 5. (Quand tu leur dis que tu avois la pierre Philosophale, & la leur montras &c.) Si j'osois debiter ici mes soupçons, je dirois que Mercure joüe dans ces Dialogues un rolle bien odieux pour le Christianisme. Je dirois, par exemple, qu'on pretend ici ridiculiser celui qui nous apporta, descendant des Cieux, la Verité éternelle; Verité, qui par les divisions qu'elle a causées, a (s'il est permis de le dire,) bouleversé tout l'Univers; permettant qu'à cause d'elle, il se remplit de schismes, d'heresie, d'opinions extravagantes &c. Je dirois encore, que la suite du discours que Trigabus tient ici est une raillerie impie & outrée de ce que cette Verité a operé, quand elle a commencé de s'établir ici bas; & qu'on a afecté d'y mêler des contradictions & des operations ridicules, pour la mieux détruire. Si ces soupçons avoient lieu, adieu la sainteté du Cymbalum & le pieux dessein de ruïner le Paganisme.

< C_i r. >

recouvrer dicelle pierre philosophale, tant pe⸗
tite piece fust elle, ilz feroient merveilles, trans⸗
muroyent les metaulx, romproyent les bar⸗
res des portes ouvertes: gariroyent ceulx qui
nauroyent point de mal: Interpreteroyent
le langage des oyseaulx: Impetreroient facile⸗
ment tout ce quilz vouldroyent des Dieux,
pourveu que ce fust chose licite, & qui deust
advenir, comme aprés le beau temps la pluye,
fleurs & serain au primtemps, en esté poul⸗
dre & chaleurs, fruictz en autonne, froid &
fanges en hyver. bref quilz feroyent toutes cho⸗
ses, & plusieurs aultres. Vrayement ilz nont
cessé depuis ce temps de fouiller & remuer le
sable du theatre, pour en cuyder trouver des
pieces. Cest ung passetemps que de les veoir
esplucher. Tu dirois proprement que ce sont
petiz enfans, qui sesbattent a la pouldrette, si⸗
non quant ilz viennent a se battre. MERCV.
Et bien, nen ya il pas eu ung qui en ayt trou⸗
vé quelque piece? TRIGAB. Pas ung, depar
le dyable: mais il nya celuy qui ne se vante
quil en a grande quantité, tellement que si tout
ce quilz en monstrent, estoit amassé ensemble,
il seroit dix foys plus gros que nestoit la pier⸗
re en son entier. MERC. Il pourroit bien e⸗
stre, que pour des pieces dicelle pierre philoso⸗

10 primtems] *CM 1537, CM 1538, CM 1732, CM 1856, CM 1873, CM 1958;* printems *Du Verdier, CM 1711a, CM 1732, CM 1841, CM 1858, CM 1995a, Giraud, CM 2019.*

*

primtemps. A common spelling, in line with the etymology *premier temps*.

esplucher. Lit. 'to pare', here in a tropical sense of close inspection (Li.). RC-ESPLUCHER: 'To pick, or cull, as pease, &c; to plucke, or teyse, as Roses, Wooll, &c; also, to sift throughly, search narrowly, examine fully, peruse diligently.'

petiz enfans, qui sesbattent a la pouldrette. According to du Cange, *la pouldrette* was a children's game played with hairpins and dust. He cited one document from 1406 reading *Lesquelz enfans se prindrent à jouer à la Poudrete, et en jouant Thomassint dit à Jehannin, que il lui avoit getté de la poudre aux yeux*; and another from 1416 reading *Lesquelz alerent jouer aux espingles ou cymetiere de Mouchecourt, au jeu dit la Poudrette*. I do not think we can safely determine the rules of the game that Des Periers had in mind. Perhaps he did not know any such game himself, and was merely employing a stock rhetorical commonplace. On this point, see my comment below on *ricochet* at H_{iv} r. 2.

phale, ilz auroient choisi par my le sablé du
sable mesmes, & si ny auroit pas gueres a fai⸗
re: car il est bien difficile de les cognoistre den⸗
tre le sable, pource quil nya comme point de
difference. TRIGABVS. Ie ne scay: mais 5
iay veu plusieurs affermer quilz en avoient
trouvé de la vraye, & puis bien tost aprés dou⸗
bter si cen estoit, & finablement ietter la tou⸗
tes les pieces quilz en avoient, pour se mettre
a en chercher daultres. Puis de rechef aprés 10
en avoir bien amassé, ne se pouvoient asseurer
ny persuader que cen fust: tellement que ia⸗
mais ne fut exhibé ung tel ieu, ung si plaisant
esbatement, ny une si noble fable, que ceste
cy. Corbieu, tu les nous as bien mis en beson⸗ 15
gne noz veaulx de philosophes. MERCV.
Nay pas? TRIGABVS. Sambieu, ie voul⸗
droie que tu eusses veu ung peu le desduit, com⸗
ment ilz sentrebattent par terre, & comment
ilz ostent des mains lung de laultre les myes 20
dareine quilz trouvent: comment ilz rechignent
entre eulx quant ilz viennent a confronter ce
quilz en ont trouvé. Lung se vante quil en a
plus que son compagnon, lautre luy dict que
ce nest pas de la vraye. Lung veult enseigner 25
comme cest quil en fault trouver, & si nen peut
pas recouvrer luy mesmes. Lautre luy re⸗

1 sablé] *apex apud ipsum CM 1537;* sable *CM 1538, CM 1711a, [CM 1712], CM 1732, CM 1841, CM 1856, CM 1858, CM 1873, CM 1958, CM 2019*
tost] *CM Buc, CM Gen, CM 1711a;* tôt *CM Eug, CM 1711b*[§]
8 finablement] *CM 1537, CM 1538, CM Buc, CM 1732;* finalement *CM Eug, CM Gen (*b *postea suppl.), CM 1711a*
17 Sambieu] *CM 1537, CM 1538, CM 1711a, CM 1711b*[§]; Sansbieu *CM Buc, CM Eug, CM Gen*
17–18 vouldroie] vouldroye *CM Buc, CM Gen, CM 1711a;* voudrois *CM Eug, CM 1711b*[§]
18 veu] *CM Buc, CM Gen, CM 1711a;* vû *CM Eug, CM 1711b*[§]
18 peu le desduit] *CM Buc, CM Gen, CM 1711a;* peu le deduit *CM 1711b*[§]*;* peuple d'Eduit *CM Eug*

*

sablé. There is an unmistakable but heretofore unnoticed accent mark in CM 1537 that distinguishes this word from the following *sable*. Though I have never seen any dictionary that gives it this sense, it must mean 'sanded place'; i.e. the floor of the arena. (FEW-SABULŌ cites some examples of an analogous substantivized participle in patois, but none in standard French.)

fable. ‘Comedy’ according to CM 1732*, but probably simply ‘drama’, as with Lat. *fabula*.

tu les nous as. An ethical dative.

desduit. Pleasure; amusement (Li.; ChFr).

comment ilz rechignent entre eulx. ‘How they sneer at each other’ (cf. Li-RECHIGNER). RS-RECHINÉ translates *en rechinant* as *caperata fronte*; i.e. ‘with wrinkled brow’. RC-RECHIGNER: ‘To frowne, lowre, powt, be surlie, looke sullenly, sourely grimly, doggedly.’ Hu., citing only this passage, gratuitously bestows on *rechignent* the figurative sense of ‘quarrel’.

**

§. 6. (Et puis bien-tôt après douter si c’en étoit &c.) On raille ici l’irresolution & les doutes de ceux qui cherchent la pierre Philosophale, dont Bonav. des Periers parle ici.
§. 7. (Sambieu je voudrois que tu eusses vû un peu le deduit &c.) Bonav. des Periers décrit ici les mouvemens que se donnent les Philosophes en cherchant la Verité; leurs querelles, leurs pratiques à cette occasion; & les folles opinions qu’avancent quelques uns d’entre eux, pour montrer qu’ils ont trouvé cette verité, ou du moins qu’ils la cherchent à propos.

< C_{ii} r. >

spond quil le scait aussi bien & mieulx que luy.
Lung dict que pour en trouver des pieces, il
se fault vestir de rouge & vert. Laultre dict
quil vauldroit mieulx estre vestu de iaune &
bleu. Lung est dopinion quil ne fault manger
que six fois le iour avec certaine diette. Laul⸗
tre tient que le dormir avec les femmes ny est
pas bon. Lung dict quil fault avoir de la chan⸗
delle, & fust ce en plain mydi. Lautre dict du
contraire. Ilz crient, ilz se demeinent, ilz se in⸗
iurient, & dieu scait les beaulx procés crimi⸗
nelz qui en sourdent, tellement quil nya court,
rue, temple, fontaine, four, molin, place, caba⸗
ret, ny bourdeau, que tout ne soit plein de
leurs parolles, caquetz, disputes, factions, &
envies. Et si en ya aulcuns dentre eulx qui sont
si oultrecuidez & opiniastres, que pour la gran⸗
de persuasion quilz ont que lareine par eulx
choisie est de la vraye pierre philosophale, pro⸗
mettent rendre raison & iuger de tout, des
cieulx, des champs Elisiens, de vice, de ver⸗
tu, de vie, de mort, de paix, de guerre, du pas⸗
sé, de ladvenir, de toutes choses & plusieurs
aultres, tellement quil nya rien en ce mon⸗
de, de quoy il ne faille quilz en tiennent leurs
propos, voire iusques aux petis chiens des
garses des Druydes, & iusques aux pou⸗

16 aulcuns] *CM Buc, CM Gen, CM 1711a, CM 1732, CM 1753, CM 1856, CM 1858, CM 1873, CM 1958, Giraud, CM 2019;* aulcun *CM 1537, CM 1538, CM Eug, CM 1841*

*

Lung, etc. See Erasmus' *Laus stultitiæ*, § 54:

> Quid autem iucundius, quam quod omnia faciunt ex præscripto, quasi Mathematicis utentes rationibus, quas præterire piaculum sit. Quot nodos habeat calceus, quo colore cingula, vestis quot discriminibus varieganda, quâ materiâ, quotque culmis latum cingulum, qua specie, et quot modiorum capax cucullus, quot digitis latum capillitium, quot dormiendum horas.

Avoir de la chandelle, & fust ce en plain mydi. A reference to Diogenes the Cynic. Des Periers blurs the line between his satire of theologians and Lucian's original philosophical anti-sectarianism.

Toutes choses & plusieurs aultres. See also C_i r. 12–13, above. Paul Lacroix (CM 1841, p. 42, n. 2.): 'Allusion aux thèses ridicules de certains savants qui se faisaient fort de disserter *de omnibus rebus et de quæbusdam* [*sic*] *aliis*.' And Félix Frank (CM 1873, p. 78): 'Cette

dernière formule revient plusieurs fois & rappelle le titre de la fameuse thèse de Pic de la Mirandole: *de omni re scibili & quibusdam aliis*.' Giraud (p. 31), apparently taking inspiration from this latter note (but without citing it), held that the phrase refered to an oration once attributed satirically to Pico della Mirandola, *De omnibus rebus (de omni re scibili) et de quibusdam aliis*. None of these observations is quite right.

The joke *toutes choses & plusieurs aultres* has an obscure early history. In fact, outside of the *Cymbalum mundi*, I do not know of any instances of it at all in the sixteenth century. (That is not, of course, to say that such instances do not exist.) In 1600, the following book was published:

> *Le discours de Maistre Aliborum: qui faict toutes choses: et plusieurs autres. Avec la recepte pour faire la vraye Alchimie. Plus y sont adioustez (car s'il est vray, il peut bien estre) les gaiges & salaires desdicts confraires Souls-d'ouvrer, &c. Avec la valeur des Monnoyes de la dicte Confrairie* (Lyon: Bonaventure Nugo, 1600).

This instance of the phrase has the same alchemical context as the satire in the *Cymbalum mundi*. Another seventeenth-example is in the writings of Jacques Dutertre, a Capucin missionary in Persia, who thus described the scriptures of the Zoroastrians:

> Les *Guèbres* se vantent d'avoir pour leur libvre, *ktab samavi*, cœleste, un qui s'appelle *Pashéende*, antérieur au Viel Testament, *Taura*, que là dedans sont toutes les proféties du changement des monarchies, noms des Roys qui se doibvent succéder l'un l'autre, l'ordre et la suite des prophètes, *moursel*, c'est à dire qui s'abrogeant l'un l'autre debvoint diriger dans leur siècle les hommes au droict chemin.. Enfin que ce libvre dit toutes choses et plusieurs autres; comme naturellement tout le monde est désireux de sçavoir le futur, Cha Abbas, grand père de ce Roy icy a faict tout son possible pour avoir ce libvre, mais il s'est treuvé qu'il n'y en a point, n'estant resté parmi ces *Guèbres* que de vieilles traditions, *tevatour*, qui pour la plus part sont contes de vielle, *afsoné*, fables.[23]

Here there is also a close similarity to the themes in the *Cymbalum mundi*, albeit to the episode of the Book of Fate rather than the boasting alchemists. There is also an intriguing resemblance of phrasing: *Enfin que ce libvre dit toutes choses* recalls *bref quilz feroyent toutes choses* at C_i r. 12–13. It is tempting, but probably unjustified to see this as an indication that Dutertre had somehow read the *Cymbalum mundi*.

The joke was revived in a slightly different, Latin form (*de rebus omnibus et quibusdam aliis*), in the late eighteenth century. In its first such uses, it was presented as the title of a supposed book offered by for subscription by a ridiculous author. The Baron de Grimm wrote in July 1772:

> M. de Guibert est encore un peu jeune. Quand il aura jeté son premier feu, il sera peut-être fâché d'avoir annoncé le plan d'un ouvrage qui serait le seul une encyclopédie complète. Un tel ouvrage ne s'annonce que lorsqu'il est fait, et je ne crois pas qu'il soit au pouvoir d'un seul homme de l'exécuter, à moins

[23] 'Estat de la Perse, 1660'. BnF, MS Français 5632, fol. 13v. As printed in Francis Richard, ed., *Raphaël du Mans, missionaire en Perse au XVIIe s.*, vol. II: *Estats* et *Mémoire*, Moyen Orient & Océan Indien, XVIe – XIXe s. 9 (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1995), p. 33.

> que cet homme ne soit celui qui proposait, par souscription, un livre intitulé: *De rebus omnibus et quibusdam aliis*.[24]

We read in an Italian tract of 1784:

> Si vedono assai spesso tabelle d' Indulgenza pendenti alle Chiese con questa espressione: *Indulgenza Plenaria, ed Indulgenza delle stazioni*. Questa capricciosa esposizione mi fece risovvenire più olte colui che pose per titolo ad un cattivo suo libro le note parole: *De rebus omnibus, & quibusdam aliis*.[25]

Both of these authors refer to the joke as if it is already well-worn. In 1792, Schiller used it in a letter to Goethe, but left out the element of a forthcoming book:

> Hufeland der Jurist der sonst, wie jener gute Freund, *de rebus omnibus et quibusdam aliis* zu sprechen weiß, wußte mir nichts davon zu sagen.[26]

Soon, attributions of the phrase to historical persons crept in. First, Mme de Staël attributed it to a certain 'naïve savant of the Middle Ages':

> Il est impossible de lire Faust sans qu'il excite la pensée de mille manières différentes: on se querelle avec l'auteur, on l'accuse, on le justifie; mais il fait réfléchir sur tout, et pour emprunter le langage d'un savant naïf du moyen âge, *sur quelque chose de plus que tout* (1).
>
> (1) *De omnibus rebus et quibusdam aliis*.[27]

In 1822, William Macdonald applied it satirically to Aquinas:

> 'Not the full phalanx of fat folios,
> Filled with St. Tom. of Aquin's olios,
> Whose *tomes*, amounting to a score,
> Treat on all subjects — and some more.'[28]

And in 1828, Étienne Jouy made it something Pico had said about Aristotle:

> Si Voltaire, Rousseau, Montaigne, Diderot, d'Alembert, ont écrit, comme Pic de La Mirandole le disait d'Aristote, *de omnibus rebus et quibusdam aliis*, on conçoit de quelle immense utilité serait pour nous un excellent index de leurs œuvres.[29]

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[24] *Correspondance littéraire, philosophique et critique, adressée à un souverain d'Allemagne, depuis 1770 jusqu'en 1782, par le Baron de Grimm et par Diderot*, vol. II (Paris: F. Buisson, 1812), pp. 277–278.
[25] *Raccolta di opuscoli interessanti la religione. Opusculo I. Trattato storico-dogmatico-critico delle indulgenze,* vol. XI, Raccolta (Pistoia: Atto Bracali, 1786), pp 200–201.
[26] Schiller to Goethe, 9 December 1794. Printed in Hermann Hauff, ed., *Briefwechsel zwischen Schiller und Goethe in den Jahren 1794 bis 1805*, Zweite, nach den Originalhandschriften vermehrte Ausgabe, vol. I, vom Jahre 1794 bis 1797 (Paris: J. G. Cotta'scher Verlag, 1856), p. 37.
[27] Germaine de Staël-Holstein, *De l'Allemagne*, vol. II. Suite de la seconde partie. La littérature et les arts ([Paris]: [H. Nicolle], 1810), p. 216–217.
[28] *Fudge in Ireland* (London: J. Johnston, 1822), p. 78. His book also had the epigraph: *"De omnibus rebus et de quibusdam aliis." Op. Thomæ Aquinatis.*
[29] Victor-Joseph Étienne de Jouy, *Œuvres complètes d'Étienne Jouy*, vol. XXVII. Table générale des Matières (Paris: [Self-published] / Imprimerie de Jules Didot ainé, 1828), p. ii.

Around the same period, Lord Byron wrote in *Don Juan* that 'my tale is "De rebus cunctis et quibûsdam aliis".[30] The librettist Eugène Scribe cast his own witticism from the same mould:

> Je suis ce grand docteur, nommé Fontanarose,
> Connu dans l'univers… et… dans mille autres lieux ![31]

It was common for nineteenth- and twentieth-century authors[32] to name Voltaire as the one who jestingly added *et de quibusdam aliis* to Pico della Mirandola's *De omnibus rebus*—but never with any citation of either men's works. Ironically, the phrase is indeed to be found in the works of Voltaire: in his edition of the *Cymbalum mundi*.[33]

Meanwhile, a related form of the witticism was in parallel circulation from the sixteenth century. This can barely be called a real joke; consisted merely of making fun of philosophers or alchemists disputing *de omni scibili* (not *de rebus omnibus*). Take for example, Gabriel Harvey:

> Lullius, and his sectaryes, have the signet of Hermes, and the admirable Arte of disputinge infinitly *de omni scibili*.[34]

Or the *Pedantius*, a Cambridge drama:

> […] at ego nec Philosophos hos (qui de omni scibili superbè disputant) Generosos dicam, licèt se reges esse glorientur.[35]

The model for *this* phrase might well have been Pico, who in 1486 proposed the thesis (II.7.11): *Per numeros habetur via ad omnis scibilis investigationem & intellectionem*.[36] But there is not yet enough evidence to confirm this, and it seems at least equally plausible that Pico's thesis was only adduced in modernity to explain a satirical commonplace that originally had nothing to do with it. In any case, the classical model of one who invited disputations 'on all subjects' was the orator Gorgias.[37]

**

§. 8. (L'autre tient que le dormir avec les femmes n'y est pas bon.) Bonav. des Periers pourroit bien avoir ici en vuë, le Celibat des Ecclesiastiques. On sait assés que la prohibition du mariage au Clergé est un dogme de l'Eglise.

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[30] *Don Juan. Cantos XV. and XVI* (London: John and H. L. Hunt, 1824), p. 62.
[31] *Le philtre, opéra en deux actes, paroles de M. Scribe, musique de M. Auber. Représenté pour la première fois sur le Theatre de l'Académie Royale de Musique, le 15 juin 1831* (Paris: Bezou, 1831), p. 18.
[32] Like the editors of MEGA², glossing Marx's phrase '*über Alles in der Welt, und noch einiges andere*'. *Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels Briefwechsel, Januar bis August 1852* (III/4), p. 654.
[33] CM 1770, pp. 196, 198. Voltaire did not offer a gloss in either instance.
[34] Gabriel Harvey, *Pierces Supererogation, or A new Prayse of the Old Asse. A Preparative to certaine larger Discourses, intituled Nashes S. Fame* (London: John Wolfe, 1593), p. 29
[35] *Pedantius. Comœdia, olim Cantabrig. acta in Coll. Trin. Nunquàm antehàc Typis evulgata* (London: Robert Mylbourn, 1631), pp. 14–15.
[36] *De Adscriptis numero noningentis: Dialeticis: Moralibus: Physicis: Mathematicis: Mataphysicis: Thelogicis: Magicis: Cabalisticis: cum suis: tum sapientum Chaldeorum: Arabum: Hebreorum: Græcorum: Aegyptiorum: latinorumque placitis disputabit publice Iohanes Picus Mirandulanus concordie Comes* (Rome: Eucharius Silber, 7 December 1486), fol. [26r–v] [unsigned and unpaginated].
[37] Plato, *Gorgias* 456b; Cicero, *De Oratore* III.129.

< Cii v. >

pees de leurs petis enfans. Il est bien vray quil
en ya quelques ungs (ainsi que iay ouy dire)
lesquelz on estime en avoir trouvé des pieces:
mais icelles nont eu aucune vertu ne proprieté,
sinon quilz en ont transformé des hommes en
cigales, qui ne font aultre chose que cacquet=
ter iusques a la mort, daultres en perroquetz
iniurieux, non entendans ce quilz iargonnent,
& daultres en asnes, propres a porter gros faix,
& opiniastres a endurer force coups de bastons.
Bref, cest le plus beau passetemps, & la plus
ioyeuse risee de considerer leur facon de faire,
que lon vit oncques, & dont lon ouyt iamais
parler. MERCV. A bon escient? TRIGABVS.
Voire par le corbieu. Et si tu ne men veulx
croire, vien ten, ie te meneray au theatre, ou
tu verras le mistere, & en riras tout ton beau
saoul. MERCV. Cest tresbien dict, allons y.
Mais iay grand paour quilz me cognoissent.
TRIGABVS. Oste ta verge, tes talaires, &
ton chapeau, ilz ne te cognoistront iamais
ainsi. MERCVRE. Non non: ie feray bien
mieulx, ie men voys changer mon visage en
aultre forme. Or me regarde bien au visage
pour veoir que ie deviendray. TRIGA. Ver=
tubieu, quest cecy? Quel Proteus ou maistre
Gonin tu es? comment tu as tantost eu chan=

1–2 quil en ya] *CM Buc, CM Eug, CM Gen,* qu'il y en a *CM 1711a, CM 1711b*[§]
10 opiniastres] *CM Buc, CM Gen, CM 1711a;* opiniâtres *CM Eug, CM 1711b*[§]
10 bastons] *CM Buc, CM 1711a;* bâtons *CM Eug;* batons *CM Gen (corr. ad* bastons*), CM 1711b*[§]
18 tresbien] *ita apud CM 1537, neque* treſbien*, quominus typi colliderentur (vid. alias* treſ bien*,* eſ batement*), CM 1958, CM 2019;* treſ=bien *CM 1538 (in linearum discrimine);* tres-bien *CM 1732, CM 1841;* tres bien *CM 1856, CM 1858, CM 1873*
26 Proteus] Protheus *prave CM 1732*[*]

*

Cigales. CM 1732[*] sends us to Erasmus' entry *Cicadia vocalior* in the *Chiliades*, but to no purpose.

Daultres en perroquetz … & daultres en asnes. Cf. the *Eselroman*, in which a witch transforms herself into a bird, and then the protagonist Lucius into an ass.

opiniastres a endurer. CM 1732[*] refers very aptly to Prudentius' phrase *contumax doloribus*. It might also have cited some other examples of *opiniastre a____* (see the citation of Amyot in Li-OPINIÂTRE). Still, I do not think the reading *opiniastrés* can be completely ruled out.

A bon escient? 'Indeed?' (Hu-ESCIENT).

mistere. CM 1732* makes this out, like *fable* above, to mean a play or comedy, a sense which was derived from Christian mystery-plays. But I think it is more natural to understand it here in the lighter and broader sense of 'proceedings' (cf. FEW-MYSTERIUM).

Oste ta verge, *tes talaires, etc*. 'Venit Atlantiades positis caducifer alis.' —Ovid, *Metamorphoses* VIII.627.

Maistre Gonin. This is not a reference to Martin Gonin the Waldensian, but to a renowned court magician. The earliest reference I can find to him is an epitaph printed in 1541 (François Hubert, *La ieunesse du Banny de lyesse* [Paris: Denis Ianot], fol. 72v.):

De maistre Gonin enchanteur subtil & renommé. […]

> Maistre Gonin si souvent invisible
> Ne s'en est peu aulcunement deffendre,
> Pour le deduyt des gobeletz apprendre,
> Ne pour son art magicque, & cautelleuse
> N'a sceu charmer tant la mort oultrageuse
> Qu'il soit vivant, or puis que mort est il,
> Prions à dieu qu'en ceste place heureuse
> Soit si heureux, qu'il fut ca bas subtil.

**

§. 9. (Il est bien vrai qu'il y en a quelques-uns, … lesquels on estime en avoir trouvé de pieces, &c.) je croi que l'Auteur sous ces fictions designe les principaux Partis de la Religion Chrétienne.
§. 10. (Asnes propres à porter gros faix, & opiniâtres à endurer force coups de batons) on designe ici. Les [*sic*] Huguenots & les autres novateurs, à qui l'on faisoit soufrir divers maux en ce tems-là.

< C_{iii} r. >

gé de visage? ou tu estois ung beau ieune gars,
tu tes faict devenir ung viellart tout gris. ha
ientendz bien maintenant dont cela procede, cest
par la vertu des mots que ie tay veu ce pendant
mormonner entre tes levres: Mais par le cor⸗ 5
bieu si fault il que tu men monstres la science,
ou tu ne seras pas mon amy. ie paieray tout ce
que tu vouldras. Sil advient que ie sache une
foys cela, & que ie prenne tel visage que ie
vouldray, ie feray tant que lon parlera de moy. 10
Or ie ne tabandonneray iamais que tu ne le
me ayes enseigné. Ie te supplie, Mercure
mon amy, apprens moy les parolles quil fault
dire, affin que ie tienne cela de toy. MERCV.
Vraiement ie le veulx bien, pource que tu es bon 15
compaignon. ie le tenseigneray avant que ie
parte davec toy. Allons premierement aux a⸗
reines, & puis aprés ie le te diray. TRIGA.
Or bien, ie me fie en ta parolle. Voy tu cestuy
la qui se promene si brusquement? Ie vouldrois 20
que tu louysses ung petit raisonner, tu ne vis
oncques en ta vie le plus plaisant badin de phi⸗
losophe. Il monstre ie ne scay quel petit grain
dareine, & dict par ses bons dieux que cest de
la vraye pierre philosophale, voire & du fin 25
cueur dicelle. Tien la, comment il torne les
yeulx en la teste? est il content de sa personne?

3 dont] *CM 1537;* donc *CM 1538;* dond *CM Eug (adnotationem obsecutus), CM 1711b*^{ABC}*, CM 1732, CM 1732***;* d'ou *CM Buc, CM Gen, CM 1711a*
5 mormonner] *CM Buc, CM 1711a, CM 1753, CM 1856, CM 1858, CM 1873, CM 1958, Giraud;* mornonner *CM 1537, CM 1538, CM Gen, CM Eug, CM 1732, CM 2019;* marmonner *CM 1732***, CM 1841*
22 vie] *CM 1537, CM 1538;* yie *ob lituram apud CM 1914, quod mendum CM 1958, Giraud, Boerner, CM 2000, CM 2019 male τῷ CM 1537 imputant*
22 le plus] *CM 1537, CM 1538, CM 1711a, CM 1732, CM 1753, CM 1856, CM 1858, CM 1873, CM 1958, CM 2019;* de plus *CM 1841*, *CM 2000a, Giraud*

*

Viellart tout gris. This transformation recalls Plautus' *Amphitruo*, in which Mercury transforms himself into the old servant Sosia in order to avoid being recognized by mortals.

mormonner. 'To whisper; murmur'. *CM 1732** insisted on *marmonner*, which according to him was the form used by Clement Marot and Pierre de Ronsard. This was also the form used by Du Verdier in his syllabus of the *Cymbalum mundi* (not, however, at this place, but at F_{ii} v. 24–27 in the third dialogue.) But Olivetan's Bible has *mormonnera* at Isaiah 29.4 (translating

תִּצַּפְצֵף), which all but clinches the question. CM 1537's reading *mornonner* is certainly an error, slavishly imitated by CM 1538; no forms in *morn-* are listed by FEW-MARM-, I, 4.

par ses bons dieux. A common oath in medieval French.

torne les yeulx en la teste. Apparently a sign of ease and vainglory. I do not know of any dictionary that has pointed out this sense of the expression, but compare Chaucer's description of the Monk in the General Prologue to the *Canterbury Tales* (ll. 200–204):

> He was a lord ful fat and in good poynt,
> His eyen steepe and *rollynge in his heed*,
> That stemed as a fourneys of a leed;
> Hise bootes souple, his hoors in greet estaat,
> Now certeynly he was a fair prelat.

Apart from these two, I do not know of any other equivalent uses. The *Chanson de Roland* (CXLVII) has *andui li oil en la teste li turnent* of the dying Roland, and Rabelais wrote *tournant les yeulx en la teste / comme une chievre qui se meurt*.[38] Shakespeare's description of the lustful Tarquin is also not quite apposite:[39]

> Into the chamber wickedlie he stalkes,
> And gazeth on her yet unstained bed:
> The curtaines being close, about he walkes,
> Rowling his greedie eye-bals in his head.

Nor is the Vergilian expression *volvere oculos*, on which there has been some debate.[40]

[38] NRB 1, sig. K_{iiii}v.
[39] *Lucrece* (London: Richard Field, 1594), sig. D1r.
[40] William S. Anderson, 'Two Passages from Book Twelve of the *Aeneid*', *California Studies in Classical Antiquity* 4 (1971): pp. 49–65 [58–65].

< Ciii v. >

voy tu comment il nestime rien le monde au
pris de soy? MERCV. En voyla ung aultre
qui nest pas moins rebarbatif que luy, appro⸗
chons nous ung petit, & voions les mines quilz
feront entre eulx, & oyons les propos quilz 5
tiendront. TRIGABVS. Cest bien dict.
RHETVLVS. Vous avez beau chercher,
messieurs, car cest moy qui ay trouvé la feve
du gasteau. CVBERCVS. Mon amy, ne vous
glorifiez ia tant. La pierre philosophale est de 10
telle proprieté, quelle pert sa vertu si lhomme
presume trop de soy aprés quil en a trouvé
des pieces. ie pense bien que vous en avez:
mais souffrez que les aultres en cherchent, &
en aient aussi bien que vous, si leur est possi⸗ 15
ble. Mercure qui la nous a baillee, nentend
point que nous usions de ces reprouches entre
nous, mais veult que nous nous entraymions
lung laultre comme freres. Car il ne nous a
pas mis a la queste dune si noble & divine 20
chose pour dissension: mais plus tost pour di⸗
lection. Toutesfois (a ce que ie voy) nous fai⸗
sons tout le contraire. RHETVLVS. Or vous
avez beau dire, ce nest que sable tout ce que
vous autres avez amassé. DRARIG. Vous 25
mentez par la gorge, en voyla une piece, qui
est de la vraye pierre philosophale, mieulx

15 si] *CM 1537, CM 1538;* s'il *CM Buc, CM Eug, CM Gen, CM 1711a, CM 1732*
18 entraymions] *CM Gen, CM 1711a;* entr'aymions *CM Buc;* entre-aimions *CM Eug;* entr' aimions *CM 1711b§*
19 lung laultre] l'ung l'aultre *CM Buc, CM Gen;* l'ung l'autre *CM 1711a;* l'un l'autre *CM Eug, CM 1711b§*

*

Rebarbatif. 'Crabbed' (Li.). RC: 'Grimme, sterne, soure; austere, severe; froward, rude, or harsh of conversation.' Giraud (p. 30) claimed that this word was 'inconnu à Huguet'. An unfair inference: Huguet did not normally include words in his dictionary which he assumed would be grasped by educated modern readers.

Rhetulus. CM 1711b§ (see below) identified this as an anagram for *Lutherus.*

feve du gasteau. It is traditional to bake a bean into a cake on Epiphany and to crown its finder king in honour of the Magi. CM 1732* cites several examples of this phrase's proverbial use in the Renaissance.

Cubercus. This is 'Buccerus', or (in modern spelling) Martin Bucer. His conciliatory tone is apt for Bucer, who played a mediating role among the reformers on several doctrinal issues.[41]

Drarig. This is *Girard* spelt backwards, but which historical Girard was meant has been disputed since the eighteenth century. Gérard Roussel was suggested early on, and unless we are to take Girard as merely a stock name, this seems to be the likeliest identification. Far less plausibly, Erasmus (whose father was called *Gerardus*) was first proposed by Jean-Bernard Michault in 1754. This identification has been endorsed by Lucien Febvre and V.-L. Saulnier, and by an assortment of more recent commentators, but it is extremely tenuous. If Des Periers had wished to indicate Erasmus, he could have done so much more elegantly than by inverting his father's Christian name.

**

C. (Cubercus) hors un C qui est de trop, pourroit être *Bucerus*, savoir *Martin Bucer*, avec qui je ne sache pourtant pas que Des Periers ait eu communication […]
§. 3. Il n'est pas necessaire que Bucerus ici designé par Cubercus ait eu communication avec Des Periers, pour être acteur dans ce Dialogue. Il sufit qu'il ait été Reformateur; B. des Periers se moque de lui, comme de tous les autres, qu'il introduit ici cherchant la pierre Philosophale, ou plûtôt la Verité.
§. 4. (La pierre philosophale.) Il y a dans les Contes de Bonav. des Periers une *Irrision* de l'Alchemie, ou pierre Philosophale, qui a tout un autre sens que ce Dialogue.
§. 11. (Rhetulus: vous avés beau chercher &c.) Je crois à ce discours & aux suivans reconnoître Martin Luther. (Lutherus en Latin) Il est au reste vraisemblable, que Rhetulus est l'Anagramme de Lutherus & non d'un certain Thurelus.
§. 12. (Je pense que vous en avés, &c.) Cubercus ou Bucerus veut bien accorder à Lutherus (Rhetulus,) qu'il a découvert quelques parcellus [*sic*] de la verité, mais non qu'il l'aie trouvée toute; comme Rhetulus prétend le faire sentir, en disant qu'il a *trouvé la feve du gatau*.
§. 13. (Mercure veut que nous nous entr'aimions l'un l'autre comme freres) Des Periers profane ici sur la fraternité que l'Evangile prescrit aux Chrétiens.

[41] See Delaruelle, 'Étude', p. 11.

< C_{iv} r. >

que la vostre. RHETVLVS. Nas tu point
de honte de presenter cela pour pierre philo⸗
sophale? Est il pas bon a veoir que ce nest que
sable? Phy phy, oste cela. DRARIG. Pour⸗
quoy me las tu faict tumber? elle sera perdue. 5
ie puisse mourir de male rage, si iestoie hom⸗
me de guerre, ou que ieusse une espee, si ie ne
te tuoye tout roide, sans iamais bouger de la
place. comment est il possible que ie la puisse
trouver maintenant? Iavois tant pris de peine 10
a la chercher, & ce meschant, mauldict, &
abominable la ma faict perdre. RHETVL.
Tu nas pas perdu grand chose, ne te chaille.
DRARIG. Grant chose? Il nya tresor en ce
monde pour lequel ie leusse voulu bailler, que 15
males furies te puissent tormenter. O traistre
envieux que tu es, ne me pouvois tu autre⸗
ment nuyre, sinon de me faire perdre en ung
moment tous mes labeurs depuis trente ans?
ie men vengeray, quoy quil tarde. CVBER. 20
Ien ay quinze ou seze pieces, entre lesquelles
ie suis bien asseuré quil en ya quatre (pour le
moins) qui sont de la plus vraye, quil est pos⸗
sible de recouvrer. TRIGABVS. Or ca mes⸗
sieurs, dictes nous (sil vous plaist) que cest 25
que vous autres philosophes cherchez tant
tous les iours parmy lareine de ce theatre?

12 la ma] *CM 1537, CM 1538, CM 1732;* me l'a *CM Buc, CM Eug, CM Gen, CM 1711a*
21 seze] seize *CM 1538*
22 en ya] *CM 1537, CM 1538, CM Buc, CN 1711a, CM 1732;* y en a *CM Eug, CM Gen*

*

bon a veoir. 'Easy to see'. This use of *bon* for 'easy' has its analogue in English (OED-GOOD, 8c). It is not, as CM 1732* held, to be taken as a substantive.

ou que ieusse une espee. Balaam threatens his ass (Num 22:29): 'Pourtant que tu te mocque de moy. A ma volunté que ieusse ung glaive en ma main: car ie te tueroye maintenant.'

tuoye tout roide. 'Killed you with one blow' (Li-ROIDE, FEW-RIGIDUS).

ne te chaille. 'Don't let it trouble you'.

quoy quil tarde. 'However long it takes' (CM 1732*).

Or ca. 'How now!' (FEW-HĀC, IV.372b, -HŌRA, IV.473a).

< C_{iv} v. >

CVBERCVS. A quoy faire le demandez
vous? Scavez vous pas bien que nous cherchons
des pieces de la pierre philosophale, laquelle
Mercure mist iadis en pouldre, & nous la re⸗
pandit en ce lieu? TRIGAB. Et pour quoy
faire de ces pieces? CVBER. Pour quoy fai⸗
re dea? pour transmuer les metaulx, pour fai⸗
re tout ce que nous vouldrions, & impetrer
tout ce que nous demanderions des dieux.
MERCV. Est il bien possible? CVBER. Sil est
possible? en doubtés vous? MERC. Voire ien
doubte: Car vous qui avez dict nagueres que
vous en aviez pour le moins quatre pieces de
la vraye, pourriez bien faire par le moyen de
lune (si toutes ne les y voulez employer) que
vostre compagnon pourroit facilement recouvrer
la sienne laquelle lautre luy a faict perdre, dont
il est demy enragé. Et moy qui nay point
dargent, vous priroy voluntiers que ce fust
vostre bon plaisir de me convertir en escuz
quinze livres de monnoye (sans plus) que
iay en ma bourse, vous ny scauriez rien per⸗
dre: il ne vous pourroit couster que le vou⸗
loir, ou la parolle, si tant estoit que ces pieces
(que vous avez) eussent tant defficace que vous
dictes. CVB. Ie vous diray Monsieur, il ne le
fault pas prendre ainsi. vous devez entendre

6 pour quoy] *CM 1873;* pourquoy *CM 1537, CM 1538, CM 1711a, CM 1732, CM 1841, CM 1856, CM 1858, CM 1958, CM 2019*

*

Pour quoy faire. This must be written as two words in both instances, as both times it does not mean 'wherefore?' but 'for what [purpose]?'

Ie vous diray Monsieur. This is merely an emphatic interjection, and might be translated 'Now I say, sir…'. See F_{ii} v. 18 for another instance of it.

efficace. A substantive. See FEW-EFFICACIA; DMF-EFFICACE

quil nest pas possible que la pierre soit de tel⸗
le vertu, quelle estoit iadis, quand elle fut bri⸗
see nouvellement par Mercure, pource quelle
est toute esventee depuis le temps quil la respan⸗
due par le theatre. & si vous dy bien ung point 5
quil nest ia besoing quelle monstre sa valeur
quant ainsi seroit quelle lauroit encores. Et da⸗
vantage, Mercure luy peult soustraire & re⸗
stituer sa vertu, ainsi quil luy plait. MERC. Il
nest ia besoing, dictes vous? & pour quoy vous 10
rompez vous donc la teste, les yeulx, & les reins
a la chercher si obstinement? RHETVL. Non
non, ne dictes point cela, car elle est autant puis⸗
sante & vertueuse, quelle fut iamais, nonobstant
quelle soit esventee, comme vous dictes. Si ce que 15
vous en avez, ne monstre point par œuvre &
effect quelque vertu, cest bien signe que ce nen
est point de la vraye. Quant au regard de
ce que ien ay, ie vous advertiz bien dung cas
que ien fay ce que veulx, Car non seulement ie 20
transmue les metaux, comme lor en plomb (ie
vous dy le plomb en lor) mais aussi ien fay trans⸗
formation sur les hommes, quand par leurs opi⸗
nions transmuees bien plus durs que nul me⸗
tal, Ie leur fay prendre autre facon de vivre: 25
car a ceulx qui nosoient nagueres regarder les
Vestales, ie fay maintenant trouver bon de

10 &] *CM 1537, CM 1538, CM 1732; om. CM Buc, CM Eug, CM Gen, CM 1711a*
24 durs] *i.e. 'homines omni metallo rigidiores ob opiniones mutatas';* dure *CM 1537, CM 1538;* dures *CM Buc, CM Eug, CM Gen, CM 1711a, CM 1732, CM 1841, CM 1856, CM 1858, CM 1873, CM 1958, CM 2019*
24] metal, Ie leur fay] *CM 1711a, CM 1732, CM 1841, CM 1856, CM 1858, CM 1873, CM 1958, Giraud;* metal. Ie leur *CM 1537, CM 1538, CM 2019*

*

il nest ia besoing. 'It is not necessarily so'.

vertueuse. Endowed with (unearthly) power, with no moral connotation implied. It is equivalent to *de telle vertu*, above at ll. 1–2. See FEW-VIRTUS; RS-VERTU.

ie vous dy. 'That is—' (see also Gii r. 22). Uttered to correct what one has just said. CM 1732* cited Vossius on this phrase, who had written that one should correct onself in Latin with *volui dicere*, not *inquam*. The barbarism Vossius was describing had apparently emerged from naïve attempts to translate present-tense phrases like *je vous dis* and *I mean*.

tranformation sur les hommes. This speech is a parody of Luther's ecclesiastical innovations, which Des Periers evidently took to be sectarian and arrogant. Compare it to this speech in Luther's mouth in the satire *Ludus ludentem luderum ludens* of 1531:

> Quod vero ad religionem spectat palam & intrepide fateor […] adversus Thurcam non belligerandum, Decalogi præcepta observatu impossibilia: Patres tenebras verbi dei esse, Concilia omnia errasse, Ecclesiam Dei solum in spiritu, Sacramenta aut duo aut ad maximam tria existere, & ea gratiam nullam conferre, Ceremonias liberas & missam sacrificium neutiquam esse, Monachos, Vestales, Sacerdotes: Episcopos: Cardinales, Papas, Idola, Larvas oleatas, & Antichristos esse.[42]

Vestales. The similarity of nuns and vestals was a common trope in the 1530s. Just above, we saw the *Ludus ludentem luderum ludens* using '*vestales*' as a stand-in for nuns, but even its target Martin Luther made use of the equivalence:

> The Devil's Kingdom has been ruled by Monks since the beginning of the World. Though they have not always been called Monks, their teaching and life is monkish: that is, a different one to the one that God has commanded. Among the people of Israel they were called Baalites, Camarim, and the like; among the gentiles Galli, Vestales, and so on.[43]

That is, the Devil must have celibate servants for his earthly kingdom. But it is indifferent whether they're Cybelean galli or monks; vestal virgins or nuns: all of these play the same infernal role, and are interchangeable.

trouver bon. To approve (FEW-*TROPARE).

**

§. 14. (Ceux qui n'osoient n'a gueres regarder les Vestales, je fais maintenant trouver bon de coucher avec elles.) Luther épousa une Religieuse, comme l'on sait. A son exemple plusieurs Religieux en épouserent sans doute aussi, en abandonnant la Religion Catholique.

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[42] *Ludus ludentem luderum ludens, quo Ioannes Hasenbergius Bohemis in Bachanalibus Lypsiæ, omnes ludificantem Ludionem, omnibus ludendum exhibuit* (Landshut: Johann Weißenburger, 1531), sig. E_i v. – E_{ii} r.

[43] Und ist [des Teufels] Reich von anfang der welt her / durch Mönche regirt / ob sie wol nicht Mönche geheissen haben / so ist doch ir lere und leben Mönchisch / das ist / ein anders und sonderlichs oder bessers / denn Gott geboten hat / gewest / wie bey dem volck Israel / die Baaliten / Camarim und der gleichen / Bey den Heiden / die Galli und Vestales &c. waren. | *Das fünffte / Sechste und Siebend / Capitel S. Matthei / gepredigt und ausgelegt durch D. Mart. Luther* (Witteberg, 1532), sig. [A_{iv} r.]

coucher avec elles. Ceulx qui se soloient habil⸗
ler a la Bouhemienne, ie les fay acoustrer a la
Turque. Ceulx qui parcydevant alloient a che⸗
val, ie les fay trotter a piedz. Ceulx qui avoient
coustume de donner, ie les contrains de de⸗ 5
mander. Et si fay bien mieulx, car ie fay parler
de moy par toute la Grece, tellement quil en
y a telz qui soustiendront iusque a la mort con⸗
tre tous que ien ay de la vraye. & plusieurs au⸗
tres belles choses que ie fay par le moyen di⸗ 10
celles pieces, lesquelles seroient trop longues a ra⸗
compter. Or ca bon homme, que te semble il de
noz philosophes? MER. Il me semble quilz
ne sont gueres sages, monsieur, ne vous aussi.
RHETVLVS. Pour quoy? MERCV. De se 15
tant travailler & debatre pour trouver &
choysir par lareine de si petites pieces dune
pierre mise en pouldre, & de perdre ainsi leur
temps en ce monde icy, sans faire autre chose
que chercher ce que a ladventure il nest pas pos⸗ 20
sible de trouver, & qui (peult estre) ny est pas.
Et puis ne dictes vous pas que ce fut Mercure
qui la vous brisa, & respandit par le theatre?
RHETV. Voire, ce fust Mercure. MERCV.
O povre gens, vous fiez vous en Mercure, le 25
grand aucteur de tous abuz & tromperie? Sca⸗
vez vous pas bien quil na que le bec, & que par

1–2 se soloient habiller] *CM Buc (corr. ad seq.);* se souloient habiller *CM Eug, CM Gen, CM 1711a;* s'habilloient *CM 1711b§*
9 vraye. & plusieurs] *CM 1537, CM 1538, CM 1873, CM 2019;* vraye; & plusieurs *CM 1711a, CM 1732, CM 1841, CM 1856, CM 1858, CM 1958;* vraye, & plusieurs *Giraud*
25 povre] *CM 1537, CM 1538;* povres *CM Buc, CM Gen, CM 1711a, CM 1732,* pauvres *CM Eug, CM 1711b§*
25 gens,] *CM Gen, CM Eug, CM 1711b§;* gens! *CM Buc, CM 1711a, CM 1732*
25 fiez] *CM Buc, CM Gen, CM 1711a;* fiés *CM Eug, CM 1711b§*

**

§. 15. (Ceux qui s'habilloient à la Bohemienne, je les fais accoustrer à la Turque.) Les Hussites &c. étoient des heretiques sortis de Boheme. C'est eux que designe ici Des Periers, *par ceux qui s'habilloient à la Bohemienne.* Les Lutheriens & Calvinistes ont eu dans ces derniers tems beaucoup de conformité de sentimens avec ces Hussites. Des Periers dit ici qu'ils se sont accoutrés à la Turque; c'est à dire, que dans les guerres qu'ils ont excitées, ils ont commis plusieurs inhumanités.
§. 16. (O pauvres gens, vous fiés vous en Mercure, le grand Auteur des abus &c.) C'est ici le discours d'un impie.

< D_{ii} r. >

ses belles raisons & persuasions il vous feroit
bien entendre de vessies que sont lanternes,
& de nuees que sont poilles darain? Ne doub⸗
tez vous point quil ne vous ait baillé quelque
aultre pierre des champs, ou, peult estre, de 5
lareine mesmes, & puis quil vous ayt faict a
croire que cest la pierre philosophale, pour se
mocquer de vous, & prendre son passetemps
des labeurs, coleres, & debatz quil vous voit
avoir en cuydant trouver la chose laquelle nest 10
point? RHETVLVS. Ne dictes pas cela mon⸗
sieur, car sans faillir cestoit la pierre philoso⸗
phale, on en a trouvé des pieces, & en a lon
veu certaines experiences. MERCV. Vous le
dictes, mais ien doubte, car il me semble que 15
si ce la fust, vous feriez choses plus merveil⸗
leuses, veu la proprieté que vous dictes quelle
a, & mesmement comme gens de bon vouloir
que vous estes, pourriez faire devenir tous les
povres riches, ou a tout le moins, vous leur 20
feriez avoir tout ce qui leur est necessaire, sans
truander. RHETV. Les belistres sont de be⸗
soing au monde, car si tous estoient riches, lon
ne trouveroit point a qui donner, pour exercer
la belle vertu de liberalité. MERC. Vous trou⸗ 25
veriez aysement les choses perdues, & scauriez
les cas dont les hommes doubtent, affin de les

5 ou] *CM Buc, CM Eug, CM Gen, CM 1711a, CM 1732, CM 1841, CM 1856, CM 1858, CM 1873, CM 1958, Giraud, CM 2019;* on *CM 1537, CM 1538*
6 a croire] accroire *CM 1732**
13 lon] *CM 1537, CM 1538, CM 1732;* t'on *CM Buc, CM Eug, CM Gen, CM 1711a*
22 Les *CM 1537, CM 1538, CM 1732* Ces *CM Buc, CM Eug, CM Gen, CM 1711a*
25 Vous] *CM 1538;* Vons *CM 1537*

*

vessies que sont lanternes etc. 'That bladders are lanterns, and clouds are copper pans'. Three sources are relevant here. First is Martial XIV.lxii, *Lanterna de vesica*:

Cornea si non sum, numquid sum fuscior, aut me
Vesicam contra qui venit esse putat?

For unclear reasons, bladders-for-lanterns later became proverbial in medival French for a deception (e.g. '*me voulez vous faire entendant / de vecies que ce sont lanternes*' in *Pathelin*.) On the basis of this, Villon (*Testament* vv. 689–699) combined it with a long catalogue of other delusions:

Abusé m'a & faict entendre
Tousiours d'ung que ce fust ung aultre
De farine que ce fust cendre
D'ung mortier ung chapeau de faultre
De viel machefer que fust peaultre
D'ambesars que ce fussent ternes
Tousiours trompeur aultruy engeaultre
Et rend vecies pour lanternes
Du ciel une poille d'arain
Des nues une peau de veau
Du main que c'estoit le serain…

Finally, Rabelais (I.12) adapted two of these lines and wrote of the infant Gargantua that he '*croioyt que nues feussent pailles d'arain et que vessies feussent lanternes*'. Rabelais did not cite Villon very exactly, who had written that the sky itself, not the clouds, had been passed off as a bronze pan. (The clouds themselves had been made by Villon to be lookalikes with fleeces.) Des Periers' Mercury appears therefore to be quoting no other source than *Gargantua*, for he reproduces Rabelais' bizarre simile of pans and clouds rather than the more sensible variant in Villon. (There were four editions of *Gargantua* dated down to 1537: NRB 19–22.)[44] See also RC-NUE: '*Il pense que les nues sont pailles d'airain*. Hee thinkes the clowds are brasen spangles; like our; he thinkes the Moone is made of greene cheese.' Giraud, for his part, wrote (p. 30) that *poille* should not be taken to mean 'pan' but rather 'canopy'. This definition is indeed to be found in the dictionaries, but Giraud seems to have seized on it at random, and it is inappropriate here.

sans truander. 'Without [having to] beg for alms'. *Truander* is derived from the substantive *truant*, also existing in English, which means 'vagrant'. See FEW-*TRŪGANT.

belistres. 'Beggars'. There has been long debate on the etymology of this word, settling finally on German 'Bettler'. See FEW-BETELAERE. This very attestation of it served as important evidence along the way, for it is rare in evincing so unmistakably the sense 'beggar' rather than 'rogue'. Cf. CM 1732*: '(belistres) gueux. Cette signification de *belistre* bien marquée ici autorise Nicot qui fait venir ce mot de l'Allemand *betler, mendicus*. Wolf. Hungerus *in Bovillum* est le premier qui ait proposé cette étymologie.'

[44] Stephen Rawles and M. A. Screech, *A New Rabelais Bibliography: Editions of Rabelais before 1626,* Études Rabelaisiennes XX (Travaux d'Humanisme et Renaissance CCXIX) (Geneva: Droz, 1987), pp. 129–144.

< D_{ii} v. >

mettre dapointement selon la verité, laquelle
vous seroit bien cognue. RHETVLVS. Et
que diroyent les iuges, advocatz, & enque⸗
steurs? que feroient ilz de tous leurs codes, pan⸗
dectes, & digestes, qui est une chose tant ho⸗ 5
neste & utile? MERCV. Quand il y auroit
quelcun qui seroit malade, & on vous mande⸗
roit, vous ne feriez que mettre une petite pie⸗
ce dicelle pierre philosophale sur le patient,
quil seroit gary incontinent. RHETVLVS. 10
Et de quoy serviroient les medecins, & apo⸗
thicaires, & leurs beaulx livres de Galien, Avi⸗
cenne, Hippocrates, Egineta, & autres qui leur
coustent tant? Et puis par ce moyen tout le
monde vouldroit tousiours guerir de toutes 15
maladies, & iamais nul ne vouldroit mourir,
laquelle chose seroit trop desraisonnable.
TRIGABVS. En voyla ung lequel semble
avoir trouvé quelque chose, tenez comment
les aultres y accourrent denvie, & se mettent 20
a chercher au mesme lieu. RHETVLVS.
Ils font tresbien de chercher: car ce qui nest
trouvé, se trouvera. MERCVRE. Voire, mais
depuis le temps que vous cherchez, si nest il
point de bruit que vous ayez faict aulcun acte 25
digne de la pierre philosophale, qui me faict
doubter que ce ne lest point, ou (si ce lest) quelle

7 manderoit] manderiot *CM 1538*
12–13 Avicenne] *CM 1537, CM 1538, CM Buc, CM 1711a, CM 1732;* Avicena *CM Eug; illeg., corr. CM Gen*
13 Hippocrates] *CM 1537, CM 1538, CM Buc, CM 1732*; Hipocrates *CM Eug;* Hypocrates *CM Gen;* Hyppocrates *CM 1711a*
13 Egineta] Aegineta *CM 1732**

*

mettre dapointement. 'To put them in agreement; to reconcile them' (CM 1732*).

enquesteurs. Court officers tasked with cross-examining witnesses.

doubter que. '*Craindre que*' (CM 1732*). The right English rendering was given by CM 1712: 'suspect that'. See DMF-DOUTER, IIb, and D_{ii} r. 3–4. This significance, which is still preserved in the emphatic compound form *redouter*, was preserved by English *doubt* until the turn of the last century. See the examples in OED-DOUBT(*v.*), II.

< Diii r. >

na point tant de vertu que lon dict: mais que
ce ne sont que parolles, & que vostre pierre
ne sert que a faire des comptes. RHETVL.
Ie vous ay ia dict plusieurs cas que iay faict
par le moyen de ce que ien ay. MERCVRE. 5
Et puis quest ce que cela? Le grand babil &
hault caquet que vous avez, en est cause, & non
pas vostre grain de sable: vous tenez cela tant
seulement de Mercure, & non aultre chose:
car tout ainsi quil vous a payez de parolles, 10
vous faisant a croire que cestoit la pierre phi⸗
losophale, aussi contentez vous le monde de
belle pure parolle. Voyla de quoy ie pense que
vous estes tenuz a Mercure. TRIGABVS.
Ie puisse mourir si iestoye que du Senat, si ie 15
ne vous envoyoye bien tous a la charrue, aux
vignes, ou en galleres. Pensez vous quil faict
beau veoir ung tas de gros veaux perdre tout
le temps de leur vie a chercher de petites pier⸗
res comme les enfans? Encores si cela venoit a 20
quelque proffit, ie ne diroys pas: mais ilz ne
font rien de tout ce quilz cuydent, quilz res⸗
vent & promettent. Par le Corbieu ilz sont
plus enfans que les enfans mesmes: Car des
enfans encor en faict on quelque chose, & sen 25
sert lon aulcunement. silz samusent a quelque
ieu, lon les faict cesser aiseement pour les faire

15 en galleres] *CM 1537, CM 1732, CM 1856, CM 1858, CM 1873, CM 1958;* es galleres *CM 1538, CM Eug, CM 1841;* ez galleres *CM Buc, CM Gen, CM 1711a, CM 1753*
18 veaux] *edd.;* veaulx *CM 1732*[*]

*

Le grand babil & hault caquet. Jean Fréderic Bernard, publisher of CM 1711b and likely author of the paragraph-series, wrote a paragraph in an exactly contemporary book of his that displays influence from this phrase:

> L'habile a souvent la bouche fermée devant ces babillards, s'il veut parler, le peuple n'a plus d'oreilles pour lui; le *caqueteur* s'en est emparé; il osera dire à l'habile, *taisés-vous*. Voilà comme l'habile est souvent méprisé & rebuté. Nôtre siecle ne se paie que trop de ce vain *babil*.

Reflexions morales, satiriques & comiques: sur les Mœurs de nôtre siécle (Cologne [Amsterdam]: Pierre Marteau le Jeune [Jean Fréderic Bernard], 1711), p. 308 (emphasis. in original).

veaux. Lit. 'calves'; here 'sots' (FEW-VITELLUS), in a sense also attested in English (OED-CALF, c). This spelling was an acceptable variant of *veaulx*, notwithstanding the complaint of CM 1732*.

si iestoye que du Senat. CM 1732* glossed this correctly as 'If I were in the Senate's place', explaining that '*on parle encore aussi en Province*'. It had only recently been good French: Molière used the construction several times. Mathurin Cordelier, in his treatise on Latin usage, condemned the sentence *si ego essem quod de te, ego bene scio quid facerem* as an illiterate Gallicism: *De corrupti sermonis emendatione libellus, nunc primum per authorem editus* (Paris: Robert Estienne, 1530), p. 32C.

Senat. Paul Lacroix (CM 1858) wrote in a footnote to this word that Trigabus was referring to the Parlement of Paris, traditionally called *senatus* in Latin. I do not think that an allegorical interpretation is probable, but it may nevertheless be that Des Periers had the Parlement in mind, which had a principally judicial rather than legislative function, and which heard (appellate) criminal cases. This was, however, equally true of the Roman Senate in the Imperial period.

besongner: Mais ces Badins & Resveurs de
philosophes, quant ilz se sont une foys mis
a chercher des grains dareine parmy ce theatre
pensans trouver quelque piece de leur belle pierre
philosophale, on ne les peult iamais retirer de 5
ce sot ieu de barbue & perpetuelle enfance, ains
vieillissent & meurent sur la besongne. Com⸗
bien en ay ie veu qui devoyent faire merveilles?
Ouy da, des naveaulx, ilz en ont belles lettres.
RHETVL. On nen trouve pas des pieces 10
ainsi que lon vouldroit bien, & puis Mercure
nest pas tousiours favorable a tous. MERC.
Ie le pense. RHETVLVS. Or messieurs, il
ne vous desplaira point, si ie prens congé de
vous, car voy la monsieur le Senateur Venu⸗ 15
lus, avec lequel iay promis daller souper, qui
menvoye querir par son serviteur. MERCV.
A dieu donc monsieur. TRIGABVS. Voy
la de mes gens, il sera assis au hault bout de la
table, on luy trenchera du meilleur, il aura lau⸗ 20
divit, & le cacquet par dessus tous, & dieu scait
si leur en comptera de belles. MERCVRE.
Et tout par le moyen de ma pierre philoso⸗
phale. TRIGABVS. Et quoy donc? Quand
ce ne seroit ia que les repues franches quilz en 25
ont, ilz sont grandement tenuz a toy Mercure.
MERCVR. Tu voy de quoy sert mon art.

3 parmy] permy *CM 1538*
8 devoyent] debvoient *CM 1538*
10 On] *CM 1538,* ou *CM 1537*
15–16 Venulus] Venalis *Lacroix (CM 1841)*
17 MERCV.] *CM 1538,* MERCY. *CM 1537*
22 si] *CM 1537, CM 1538;* s'il *CM Buc, CM Eug, CM Gen, CM 1711a, CM 1732, CM 1753, CM 1841, CM 1856, CM 1858, CM 1873, CM 1958, CM 2000, CM 2019*

*

barbue. Construe with *enfance* not *ieu*; thus 'bearded and everlasting childhood (CM 1711b[ABC], CM 1712). This is one of the places where the alphabetical series in 1711b contains a correction of itself, being a composite of two different layers of notes. The first annotator construed *ieu de barbue & perpetuelle enfance* as a 'jeu d'enfans qui se touchent au visage, pour voir à qui rira le premier, ou celui à qui on touche, ou celui qui touche, et fait des grimaces'. The second commentator replied below: 'Ce jeu où l'on fait la grimace ne s'appelle pas le jeu de la *barbue*, mais de la *Babouë*; il en est parlé dans Rabelais l. 1. c. 22. et l. 4. c. 56. Il ne s'agit pas ici de cela. *Barbuë*, de même que *perpètuelle*, est l'epithete d'enfance pour donner a entendre que ces Viellards qui s'amusent a chercher la Pierre Philosophale sont des *Enfans barbus*. *Bis pueri senes*.' See CM Eug, fol. 41r.

Venulus. This is the name of Turnus' envoy to Diomedes in the *Aeneid*, introduced at the beginning of Book VIII. As Lucien Febvre (*Origène et Des Périers*, p. 35, n. 2) points out, he is also mentioned by Ovid (*Metamorphoses* XIV.460). According to CM 1732*, however, we should read not *Vĕnulus*, as in Virgil and Ovid, but *Vēnulus*; i.e. 'venal'. All things considered, *Venulus* seems to be another filler-name, with no particular meaning here.

laudivit. Not merely 'authority' (CM 1732*; ChFr), but the right to be heard on a given occasion (DMF-AUDIVI).

comptera de belles. 'Belles *bourdes*', according to CM 1732*; 'fine Stories' according to CM 1712. Perhaps the compositor omitted a word or two in this line.

repues franches. Lat. *libera cena*; a public dinner, proverbially frequented by parasites.

< D_{iv} r. >

Or il me fault aller faire encor quelque messa⸗
ge secret de par Iupiter mon pere, a une da⸗
me, laquelle demeure au prés du temple da⸗
pollo: & puis il me fault aussi ung petit veoir
mamye devant que ie retorne. A dieu. TRI⸗ 5
GABVS. Tu ne me veulx donc pas tenir pro⸗
messe? MERCV. De quoy? TRIGABVS.
De menseigner les motz quil fault dire pour
changer ma trongne & mon visage en telle
forme que ie vouldray. MERCV. Ouy dea, 10
cest bien dict: escoute en loreille. TRIGA.
Comment? Ie ne toy pas, ie ne scay que tu dis,
parle plus hault. MERCV. Voyla toute la
recepte, ne loblie pas. TRIGABVS. Qua
il dict? par le sambieu ie ne lay point entendu, 15
& croy quil ne ma rien dict, car ie nay rien
ouy. Sil meust voulu enseigner ce la, ieusse
faict mille gentillesses, ie neusse iamais eu
paour davoir faulte de rien, Car quant ieusse
eu affaire dargent, ie neusse faict que trans⸗ 20
muer mon visage en celluy de quelcun a qui
ces tresoriers en doyvent, & men feusse allé
le recevoir pour luy. Et pour bien iouyr de
mes amours, & entrer sans danger chez ma⸗
mye, ieusse pris souvent la forme & la face de 25
lune de ses voisines, a celle fin que lon ne meust
cogneu, & plusieurs aultres bons tours que

1 faire encor] *CM 1537, CM 1538, CM 1732; inv. CM Buc, CM Eug, CM Gen, CM 1711a*
22 ces] *CM 1537, CM 1538;* ses *CM Buc, CM Eug, CM Gen, CM 1711a, CM 1732*

*

de par Iupiter. 'By order of Jove' (FEW-PARS, I.2). See also E_{ii} r. 23; E_{ii} v. 18; E_{iii} r. 20; E_{iv} r. 6, below. However, *de par dieu* at E_i v. 2 and F_{ii} v. 9 means only 'by God', and *de par le diable* at E_{iv} v. 13 'by the Devil'. *Par* in all of these locutions is not a preposition, but a reduced form of *part*.

< D_{iv} v. >

ieusse faict. O la bonne facon de masques que
ceust esté, sil meust voulu dire les motz, &
quil ne meust point abusé. Or ie reviens a
moymesmes, & cognois que lhomme est bien
fol, lequel sattend avoir quelque cas de cela
qui nest point, & plus malheureux celuy, qui
espere chose impossible.

1 masques] *CM 1537, CM 1538, CM Eug;* masque *CM Buc, CM Gen, CM 1711a, CM 1732*

*

Or ie reviens etc. This whole exchange is reminiscent of the conclusion to Lucian's *Menippus*, in which the titular character finally reaches Tiresias in the underworld and begs him to tell him the secret of the good life. Tiresias refuses at first, and only after much cajoling whispers into his ear:

> Ὦ τέκνον, φησί, τὴν μὲν αἰτίαν οἶδά σοι τῆς ἀπορίας ὅτι παρὰ τῶν σοφῶν ἐγένετο οὐ ταὐτὰ γιγνωσκόντων ἑαυτοῖς· ἀτὰρ οὐ θέμις λέγειν πρὸς σέ· ἀπείρηται γὰρ ὑπὸ τοῦ Ῥαδαμάνθυος. Μηδαμῶς, ἔφην, ὦ πατέριον, ἀλλ᾽ εἰπὲ καὶ μὴ περιίδῃς με σοῦ τυφλότερον περιιόντα ἐν τῷ βίῳ. ὁ δὲ δή με ἀπαγαγὼν καὶ πολὺ τῶν ἄλλων ἀποσπάσας ἤρεμα προσκύψας πρὸς τὸ οὖς φησίν, Ὁ τῶν ἰδιωτῶν ἄριστος βίος, καὶ σωφρονέστερος παυσάμενος τοῦ μετεωρολογεῖν καὶ τέλη καὶ ἀρχὰς ἐπισκοπεῖν καὶ καταπτύσας τῶν σοφῶν τούτων συλλογισμῶν καὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα λῆρον ἡγησάμενος τοῦτο μόνον ἐξ ἅπαντος θηράσῃ, ὅπως τὸ παρὸν εὖ θέμενος παραδράμῃς γελῶν τὰ πολλὰ καὶ περὶ μηδὲν ἐσπουδακώς.

In English:

> … The simple man's life is best. The wise man stops astrologizing and looking into beginnings and ends. He spits at these wise syllogisms, and he takes it all for humbug, and the only thing he seeks is to bear the present affair well and to run on, ever laughing and troubled about nothing.

< E_i r. >

Dialogue III.
Les Personnages.

Mercure, Cupido, Celia, Phlegon, Sta⸗
tius, Ardelio.

MERCVRE.
*E*Ncores suis ie grandement esmer⸗
veillé comment il peult avoir si
belle patience. Le forfaict de Ly⸗
caon, pour lequel il fit iadis ve⸗
nir le deluge sur la terre, nestoit 5
point tant abominable que cestuy cy. Ie ne scay
a quoy il tient, quil nen a desia du tout fouldroyé
& perdu ce malheureux monde, de dire que
ces traistres humains non seulement luy ayent
osé retenir son livre, ou est toute sa prescien⸗ 10
ce: Mais encores, comme si cestoit par iniure
& mocquerie, ilz luy en ont envoyé ung au
lieu dicelluy, contenant tous ses petiz passetemps
damours, & de ieunesse, lesquelz il pensoyt
bien avoir faictz a cachette de Iuno, des dieux 15

8 monde, de dire] *CM 1537;* monde. De dire *CM 1732*[*]

Argumentum ex CM 1711a:

DIALOGUE III. / LE CRY PUBLIC. / MERCURE *vient à* Athenes*, pour y faire faire un Cry Public du* Livre des Destinées*, qui luy avoit été volé. Il rencontre* CUPIDON *qui luy apprend que deux personnes avoient son Livre, & qu'elles s'en servoient à dire la bonne avanture, & à predire l'avenir.* MERCURE*, par maniere de passe-temps, fait parler un Cheval, au grand étonnement de ceux qui l'entendent*.

III] *CM Buc, CM Gen;* Troisieme *CM Eug*
qu'elles] qu'ils *CM Buc, CM Eug, CM Gen*

*

contenant tous ses petiz passetemps damours.

a cachette de. Lat. *clam*. Cited by LC-CACHETES (À).

< E_i v. >

& de tous les hommes: Comme quand il se
feit Taureau pour ravir Europe: Quand il se
desguisa en Cygne pour aller a Læda: Quand
il print la forme dAmphitrion, pour coucher
avec Alcmena: quand il se transmua en pluye 5
dor, pour iouyr de danaé: quand il se transforma
en Diane, en Pasteur, en Feu, en aigle, en Ser⸗
pent, & plusieurs aultres menues follies, quil
nappertenoit point aux hommes de scavoir, &
encore moins les escrire. Pensez si Iuno trou⸗ 10
ve une foys ce livre, & quelle vienne a lire tous
ces beaulx faictz, quelle feste elle luy menera?
Ie mesbahis comment il ne ma getté du hault
en bas, comme il fit iadis Vulcanus: lequel en
est encor boiteux du coup quil print, & sera 15
toute sa vie. Ie me fusse rompu le col, car ie na⸗
vois pas mes talaires aux piedz pour voler,
& me garder de tumber. Il est vray que ce a
esté bien ma faulte en partie: car ie y devoye
bien prendre garde de par dieu avant que lem⸗ 20
porter de chez le relieur: mais que eussé ie faict?
cestoit la veille des Bacchanales, il estoit pres⸗
que nuyt, & puis tant de commissions que ie
avoys encores a faire, me troubloyent si fort
lentendement, que ie ne scavoye que ie faisoye. 25
Daultre part, ie me fioye bien au relieur, car
il me sembloit bien bon homme, aussi est il,

3 Læda] *CM 1537, CM 1732, CM 1856, CM 1858, CM 1873, CM 1958, CM 2019;* Leda *latinius CM 1538, Du Verdier, CM 1711a, CM 1712, CM 1732**, *CM 1753, CM 1841*
4 Amphitrion] *CM 1537, CM 1538, CM 1958, CM 2019;* Amphitryo *Du Verdier;* Amphytrion *CM 1711a, CM 1712, CM 1723, CM 1732, CM 1753, CM 1841, CM 1856, CM 1858;* Amphitryon *CM 1732**
6–7 danae … Diane … Pasteur … Feu … aigle … Serpent] *CM 1537*; danae … Diane … pasteur … Feu … Aigle … Serpent *CM 1538*
21 que] *CM 1732, CM 1873;* q *CM 1537;* qui *CM 1538, CM Buc, CM Gen, CM 1711a, CM 2019;* qu'y *CM Eug, CM 1753, CM 1841, CM 1856, CM 1858, CM 1958, CM 2000*

*

Comme quand etc. To judge from the contents listed by Mercury, this book would seem to be Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. See also the *Metamorphoses* itself at VI.103–114, in which Arachne's tapestry, so embarassing to the gods, is described:

Mæonis elusam designat imagine tauri
Europen; verum taurum, freta vera putares.
Ipsa videbatur terras spectare relictas
Et comites clamare suas tactumque vereri

Adsilientis aquæ timidasque reducere plantas.
Fecit et Asterien aquila luctante teneri,
Fecit olorinis Ledam recubare sub alis;
Addidit ut satyri celatus imagine pulchram
Iuppiter implerit gemino Nycteida fetu,
Amphitryon fuerit cum te, Tirynthia, cepit,
Aureus ut Danaen, Asopida luserit ignis,
Mnemosynen pastor, varius Deoida serpens.

En Diane. CM 1732*: 'en Diane pour Calypso; en *Pasteur* pour Mnemosyne; en *feu* pour Aegine, en *Aigle* pour Ganymede & pour Asterie; en *Serpent* pour Proserpine'. Felix Frank plagiarized this annotation (CM 1873, p. 93), adding to it a few of his own embellishments.

comme il fit iadis Vulcanus. This is imitated from the beginning of Lucian's *Charon*, in which Mercury says to Charon the Ferryman:

> Οὐ σχολή μοι, ὦ πορθμεῦ· ἀπέρχομαι γάρ τι διακονησόμενος τῷ ἄνω Διὶ τῶν ἀνθρωπικῶν· ὁ δὲ ὀξύθυμός τέ ἐστι καὶ δέδια μὴ βραδύναντά με ὅλον ὑμέτερον ἐάσῃ εἶναι παραδοὺς τῷ ζόφῳ, ἢ ὅπερ τὸν Ἥφαιστον πρῴην ἐποίησε, ῥίψῃ κἀμὲ τεταγὼν τοῦ ποδὸς ἀπὸ τοῦ θεσπεσίου βηλοῦ, ὡς ὑποσκάζων γέλωτα παρέχοιμι καὶ αὐτὸς οἰνοχοῶν.

quelle feste elle luy menera. For other antiphrastic uses of *faire*/*mener feste*, see DMF-FÊTE, C.4.d.

< Eii r. >

quant ne seroit ia que pour les bons livres quil
relie & manie tous les iours. iay esté vers luy
depuis, il ma iuré avec grandz sermens, quil
mavoit rendu le mesme livre, que ie luy avoye
baillé, dont ie suis bien asseuré quil ne ma pas
esté changé en ses mains. Ou est ce que ie fuz
ce iour la? il my fault songer. Ces meschans
avec lesquelz ie beu en lhostellerie du char⸗
bon blanc, le mauroyent ilz point desrobé, &
mys cestuy cy en son lieu? Il pourroit bien
estre, car ie mabsentay deulx assez long temps,
ce pendant quon estoit allé tirer le vin. Et par
mon serment, ie ne scay comment ce vieulx
rassotté na honte? Ne pouvoit il pas avoir veu
aultrefoys dedans ce livre (ouquel il cognois⸗
soit toutes choses) que icelluy livre devoit quel⸗
que foys devenir? Ie croy que sa lumiere la es⸗
blouy: car il failloit bien que cestuy accident
y fust predict, aussi bien que tous les aultres:
ou que le livre fust faulx. Or, sil sen courrous⸗
se, quil sen deschausse, ie ny scaurois que fai⸗
re. Quest ce quil ma baillé icy en memoire?
De par Iupiter laltitonant soit faict ung cry
publique par tous les carrefours Dathenes,
& sil est besoing, aux quatre coings du mon⸗
de, que sil ya personne qui ayt trouvé ung li⸗
vre intitulé: Quæ in hoc libro continentur:

1 ne] *CM 1537, CM 1538, CM 1732;* ce ne *CM Buc, CM Eug, CM Gen, CM 1711a*
5 pas] *CM 1537, CM 1538; om. CM Buc, CM Eug, CM Gen, CM 1711a CM 1732*
8 charbon] chardon *Giraud*
12 Et] *CM 1537, CM 1538, CM 1732;* He! *CM Buc, CM Eug, CM Gen, CM 1711a*
15 ouquel] *CM 1537, CM 1538, CM Gen;* auquel *CM Buc, CM Eug, CM 1711a, CM 1732*

*

il ma iuré. Max Gauna, CM 2000, p. 80n:

> Les critiques ont soutenu que le monde du Cymbalum est peuplé uniquement, d'une part, d'êtres pervers, cruels et cupides, et, de l'autre, de leurs victimes, semblent avoir oublié ce brave artisan.

charbon blanc. Giraud's conjecture ('white thistle') cannot easily be accepted, as the *charbon blanc* is attested elsewhere as the sign of a tavern and as a place-name.

ouquel. From 'en lequel'. *Auquel* ('à lequel') is not an exact equivalent.

sil sen courrousse, quil sen deschausse. 'If he takes it ill, let him doff it'; i.e. 'get over it'. See FEW-CALCEARE; ChFr-DESCHAUSSER (SE).

laltitonant. See the following verses, quoted twice in Cicero's *De divinatione* (I.xii, II.xx):

> *Nam pater altitonans stellanti nixus Olympo*
> *Ipse suos quondam tumulos ac templa petivit*
> *Et Capitolinis iniecit sedibus ignis.*

cry publique. This is a standard formula that was attached to royal and parliamentary decrees. For instance, the Chambre des Vacations' prohibition of beards, promulgated on 6 November 1535, closed with the words: 'A ordonné et ordonne ceste chambre ceste presente ordonnance estre publiee a son de trompe & cry public par les carrefourgs de ceste ville de Paris.'

**

§. 1. (Rassotté) Hebeté.

< Eii v. >

Chronica rerum memorabilium, quas Iupiter ges⸗
sit antequam esset ipse. Fatorum præscriptum,
sive eorum quæ futura sunt, certę dispositio⸗
nes. Catalogus heroum immortalium qui cum
Iove vitam victuri sunt sempiternam. Ou sil
ya quelcun qui sache aulcune nouvelle dicel⸗
luy livre, lequel appertient a Iupiter, quil le
rende a Mercure, lequel il trouvera tous les
iours en lacademie, ou en la grand place, &
icelluy aura pour son vin la premiere reque⸗
ste quil luy fera. Que sil ne le rend dedans huict
iours aprés le cry faict, Iupiter a deliberé de
sen aller par les douze maisons du ciel, ou il
pourra aussi bien deviner celuy qui laura, que
les astrologues: dont fauldra que icelluy qui
la, le rende non sans grande confusion, & pu⸗
nition de sa personne. Et quest ce cy? Memoi⸗
re a Mercure de bailler a Cleopatra de par
Iuno, la recepte qui est cy dedans ce papier
ployee, pour faire des enfans, & en delivrer
avec aussi grand ioye que quand on les con⸗
ceoit: & apporter ce qui sensuyt. Voire dea
apporter, ie le feray tantost: attendez vous y.
Premierement ung perroquet qui sache chan⸗
ter toute Liliade Dhomere. Ung corbeau, qui
puisse causer & harenguer a tous propos. Une
pie qui sache tous les preceptes de philosophie.

3 certę] *CM 1537;* certe *CM 1538*
20 ployee] *CM 1537, CM 1538, CM Eug, CM 1732;* ployé *CM Buc, CM Gen, CM 1711a*
23 le] *CM 1538, CM 1711a, CM 1732, CM 1753, CM 1841, CM 1856, CM 1858, CM 1873, CM 1958, Giraud, CM 2019;* la *CM 1537*

*

academie. We are in Athens, and this is an apparent reference to the gardens of Plato's Academy. '*Academia'*, however, was also the standard Latin term for a university in the sixteenth century.

aura pour son vin. It was common all over France in the sixteenth century to promise wine to the finder and returner of a book. This note, for example, appears on a a contemporary manuscript of Polybius:

> Le livre de la translation de la premiere bataille punique est a Iehan de la Garde, lequel la acheté dung nommé Gilbert, chancelier de Lion, priant ung

> chascun qui pourroient trouver ledit livre qui le luy veullent rendre, et il p[aye]ra voluntiers le vin.[45]

This La Garde was the very Parisian bookseller who would eventually be burnt in connection with Jehan Morin's prosecution in 1538. I have found descriptions of two other such promises on books of hours,[46] of one on a grammar book,[47] and of one on a copy of Juste's *Pantagruel* (NRB 7; destroyed in the bombing of Dresden).[48] There are also several additional examples listed in Albert Mautouchet, 'Les ex libris manuscrits', *Bulletin de la Société Archéologique, Historique, & Artistique. Le Vieux Papier* IV (1906): pp. 198–201.

**

§. 2. (Jupiter s'en ira par les douze maisons du Ciel, où il pourra aussi bien deviner . . . . . que les Astrologues.) L'Auteur se raille de la prescience que Jupiter devroit avoir comme Dieu. Le contre-coup de cette raillerie donne sur la Vaine Science des Astrologues.

[45] Lyon, Bibliothèque Municipale, Ms PA 31, fol. 59. See https://ccfr.bnf.fr/portailccfr/ark:/06871/004D34010069. This annotation was first pointed out in a nineteenth-century catalogue: Antoine-François Delandine, *Manuscrits de la Bibliothèque de Lyon*, vol. II (Lyon: François Mistral, 1812), p. 52.
[46] Jean-Baptiste Giraud, *Le legs Arthur Brölemann au Musée de Lyon* (Lyon, 1905), pp. 23 n. 3, 28.
[47] Léopold Delisle, *Catalogue des livres imprimés ou publiés à Caen avant le milieu du XVIe siècle*, vol. I (Caen: Henri Delesques, 1903), p. 202.
[48] Karl Falkenstein, *Beschreibung der Königliche öffentliche Bibliothek in Dresden* (Dresden: Walther'sche Hofbuchhandlung, 1839), p. 497.

< E_{iii} r. >

Ung Singe, qui ioue au quillard. Une guenon,
pour luy tenir son miroir le matin quand elle
saccoustre. Ung miroir dacier de Venise, des
plus grandz quil pourra trouver. De la Civet⸗
te, de la Ceruse, Une grosse de lunettes, des 5
Gandz perfumez. Le Carequant de pierrerie
qui faict faire <…>. Les cent nouvelles nouvelles,
Ovide de lart daymer, & six paires de poten⸗
ces Dhebene. Ie ne puisse iamais remonter
aux cieulx, si ie faiz rien de tout cela, & voyla 10
son memoire & sa recepte en pieces, elle yra
chercher ung autre vallet que moy, par le cor⸗
bieu. Comment me seroit il possible de porter
toutes ses besongnes la hault? Ces femmes
icy veulent que lon leur face mille services, 15
comme si lon estoit bien tenu a elles: mais
au diable lune qui dye, tien Mercure, voy la
pour avoir ung feutre de chappeau. Et puis
quest cecy? Memoire a Mercure de dire a Cu⸗
pido de par sa mere Venus (ha, est ce vous Ve⸗ 20
nus? vous serez obeye vrayement) que le plus
tost quil pourra, il sen voise tromper & abu⸗
ser ces Vestales (lesquelles cuydent estre si sa⸗
ges & prudentes) pour leur remonstrer ung pe⸗
tit leur malheureuse follie & temerité. Et que 25
pour ce faire, il sadresse a Somnus, qui luy pre⸗
stera voluntiers de ses garsons, avec lesquelz

6 Carequant] *CM 1537;* Carquan *CM 1538, CM Buc, CM Eug, CM 1711a;* Carquant *CM Gen, CM 1732*
7 qui faict faire <…>. Les cent] qui faict faire les cent *CM 1537, CM 1538, CM Eug, CM Gen, CM 1711a, CM 1732, CM 1856, CM 1873, CM 2019;* qu'elle fait faire. Les cent *B. Moneta [CM Eug, fol. 45r., CM 1711b II, p. 290], quam lectionem Marchand sero secutus [CM Mar];* que fait faire les Cent *CM Buc, CM 1753, CM 1841;* que faict faire; les Cent *CM 1858;* qu'il faict faire. Les cent *CM 1958, CM 2000; fort.* qui faict faillir. Les cent
7 nouvelles,] nouvelles. *CM 1537*
8 Ovide] *CM 1537, CM 1538, CM Gen, CM Buc, CM 1711a;* Guide *CM Eug, leg. CM 1711b*[ABC]
27 voluntiers] voulentiers *CM 1538*

*

quillard. Something like skittles or ninepins (Hu-QUILLARD). CM 1712 has 'nine-pins'. RC-QUILLE: '*Au quillard*. At cat and trap.'

grosse. Twelve dozen, like in English.

miroir dacier de Venise. CM 1732*: 'Les miroirs autrefois se faisoient de metaux polis, d'acier, d'argent, d'or même: Voyez Senec. *Liv. 1. Quæstion. Natural. ch. 13.* & Plin. *liv. 33.*

ch. 9. Des Periers en se conformant aux anciens tems ajoute ridiculement de Venise, comme si ç'avoit été un miroir de crystal & que Venise eut été alors connuë'.

Carequant. RS-QUARQUAN: '*ornement & bague qu'on pend au col*, Segmentum, Spira, Torques.'

qui faict faire etc. Some words—perhaps a whole line—seem to have been omitted here by the compositor of CM 1537. Alternatively we might read *qui faict faillir*, and take it as a reference to the necklace of Harmonia, which beguiled and ruined its wearers. (For what it's worth, *qui faict faillir* was the phrase used by Olivetan to translate מַשְׁגֶּה at Job 12:16.) The unmodified reading of CM 1537 is gibberish, and its various correctors have left it grammatical but meaningless. CM 1712, following the reading of CM 1711a (which Marchand later abjured), wrote '*The Chain of precious Stones* which makes up the *Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles, or a hundred new Novels*'.

potences. 'Crutches, struts' (FEW-POTENTIA). CM 1732* tried to fix the sense more narrowly, but groundlessly.

Singe. Lucian (*Apologia* 5) describes an ape belonging to Cleopatra that knew how to dance.

Guenon. A monkey holding a mirror to a vain woman was a common motif in emblems.

voise. An archaic subjunctive form of *aller*; now replaced by *aille* (CM 1732*).

Somnus. Somnus and his dream-bearing boys are described by Ovid (*M.* XI.633–649):

> At pater e populo natorum mille suorum
> Excitat artificem simulatoremque figuræ
> Morphea. non illo quisquam sollertius alter
> Exprimit incessus vultumque sonumque loquendi;
> Adicit et vestes et consuetissima cuique
> Verba. sed hic solos homines imitatur, at alter
> Fit fera, fit volucris, fit longo corpore serpens;
> Hunc Icelon superi, mortale Phobetora vulgus
> Nominat. est etiam diversae tertius artis
> Phantasos. ille in humum saxumque undamque trabemque,
> Quæque vacant anima, fallaciter omnia transit.
> Regibus hi ducibusque suos ostendere vultus
> Nocte solent, populos alii plebemque pererrant.
> Præterit hos senior cunctisque e fratribus unum
> Morphea, qui peragat Thaumantidos edita, Somnus
> Eligit et rursus molli languore solutus
> Deposuitque caput stratoque recondidit alto.

**

§. 3. (A Cupido……qu'il s'en voise tromper & abuser ces Vestales.) Tout ce discours renferme des Traits de Satyre contre les debauches secrettes des Religieuses, qu'il designe ici par *Vestales*; il taxe aussi en même tems leur hypocrisie.

< Eiii v. >

il yra de nuyct a icelles Vestales, & leur fera
taster & trouver bon en dormant ce quen veil⸗
lant elles ne cessent de blasmer: & quil escoute
bien les propos de regretz & repentances que
chascune tiendra a par soy, pour luy en man⸗ 5
der toutes nouvelles bien au long, & le plus
tost quil luy sera possible. Item dire a ces dames
& damoyselles, quelles noublient pas leurs
touretz de nez quand elles yront par la ville,
car ilz sont bien bons pour se rire & mocquer 10
de plusieurs choses que lon voit, sans que le
monde sen apercoive. Item advertir ces ieunes
filles quelles ne faillent pas darrouser leurs vio⸗
lettes devers le soir, quand il fera seicheresse:
& quelles ne se voisent pas coucher de si bon⸗ 15
ne heure, quelles nayent receu & donné le bon
soir a leurs amys: & quelles se donnent bien gar⸗
de de se coiffer sans miroir, & quelles appren⸗
nent & recordent souvent toutes les chansons
nouvelles. Quelles soyent gracieuses, courtoi⸗ 20
ses & amyables aux amans. Quelles ayent plu⸗
sieurs Ouyz aux yeulx, & force Nennyz en la
bouche: & que sur tout elles se facent bien prier.
a tout le moins que par leurs dictz elles ne vien⸗
nent point si tost a declairer leur volunté, ains 25
quelles la dissimulent le plus quelles pourront,
pource que cest tout le bon. la parolle faict le

22 Ouyz] *CM 1537, CM 1538, CM 1732;* Ouy *CM Buc, CM Eug, CM Gen, CM 1711a*
22 Nennyz] *CM 1537, CM 1538, CM 1732;* Nenny *CM Buc, CM Eug, CM Gen, CM 1711a*
23 prier.] prier; *CM 1732*, CM 1856, CM 1858;* prier, *CM 1958;* prier *CM 1537, CM 1538, CM 1873;* prier, à tout le moins, que *CM 1711a, CM 1732, CM 1753, CM 1841*

*

touretz de nez. 'Epistomium, vel buccula muliebris' (RS-TOURET DE NEZ). 'A muffler' (RC). A sort of covering for the nose and mouth, and proverbially capable of hiding one's smiles. See the many examples under Hu-TOURET, 1; and the newspaper article by Fernand Engerand, 'Le masque de visage', *Le Temps*, 25 March 1892, sec. *Variétés*, which cites this passage.

bien prier. As CM 1732* observed, a pause here saves the whole passage from obscurity.

cest tout le bon. 'That's the whole point'. (CM 1732*: 'sous entendés *de l'affaire*, sçavoir de dissimuler sa volunté'.) CM 1712: 'all the Good on't'.

la parolle faict le ieu. This means that one's word is as good as a real pledge. RC-PAROLE: '*Les paroles font le jeu: Pro*. Words make the game; Oxen by ropes, but men by words, are bound.'

< E_{iv} r. >

ieu. Bien. il ny aura point de faulte, si ie treu⸗
ve Cupido. Encores des commissions? Ha, cest
ma dame Minerve. ie cognois bien son escri⸗
pture. Certes ie ne luy vouldroye faillir, pour
perdre mon immortalité. Memoire a Mer⸗ 5
cure de dire aux Poetes de par Minerve, quilz se
deportent de plus escrire lung contre lautre, ou elle
les desadvouera, car elle nen ayme ny appreu⸗
ve aucunement la facon, & quilz ne samusent point
tant a la vaine parolle de mensonge, quilz ne 10
prennent garde a lutile science de verité. Et que
silz veullent escrire damour, que ce soit le plus
honestement, chastement & divinement quil leur
sera possible, & a lexemple delle. Davantage,
scavoir si le poete Pindarus a riens encores 15
mis en lumiere, & recouvrer tout ce quil au⸗
ra faict, & apporter tout ce quil pourra trou⸗
ver de la facon des painctres, Apelles, Zeuxis,
Parrasius, & aultres de ce temps, mesmement
touchant le faict de broderie, tapisserie, & pa⸗ 20
trons douvrages a lesguille. Et advertir tou⸗
te la compagnie des neuf Muses, quelles se
donnent bien garde dung tas de gens qui leurs
font la court faisans semblant les servir & ay⸗
mer, mais ce nest que pour quelque temps, a⸗ 25
fin quilz acquerent bruyt & nom des poetes,
& que par le moyen delles (comme de toutes

3–6 ie … Minerve] *om. CM Gen (suppl. a Marchand)*
11 science] *[CM 1712], Chenevière 1885, p. 57 (hic inconsulto);* silence *CM 1537, CM 1538*
13 honestement] *CM 1537, CM 1538, CM Gen;* honnestement *CM Buc, CM 1711a, CM 1732;* honnêtement *CM Eug, CM 1711b§*
18 Apelles] *CM 1537, CM 1538, CM 1732;* appellez *CM Buc, CM Eug, CM Gen (*a *corr. ad maiusculum), CM 1711a, [CM 1712] (*call'd*).*
19 Parrasius] *CM 1537, CM 1538, CM 1711a, CM 1723, CM 1732, CM 1753, CM 1856, CM 1858, CM 1873, CM 1958, CM 2019;* Parrhasius *CM 1712*, *CM 1732*, CM 1841*
23 leurs] *CM 1537, CM 1538, CM Buc, CM Eug, CM 1711a, CM 1858, CM 1873, CM 1958;* leur *CM Gen, CM 1711b§, CM 1753, CM 1841, Giraud*
26 nom des poetes] *CM 1537, CM 1538, CM Gen, CM 1732, CM 1856, CM 1858, CM 1873, CM 1958, CM 2019;* nom de poetes *CM Buc, CM Eug, CM 1711a, CM 1753, CM 1841, Giraud*

*

Memoire a Minerve etc. This passage is best understood if one keeps in mind the feuds of humanist poets so vividly described by Lucian Febvre.[49]

[49] *Le problème de l'incroyance au XVIe siècle* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1942), pp. 40–47.

se deportent. ‘That they leave off’ (Li.).

science de verité. It is hard to tell whether CM 1712’s reading represents a mistake or a clever conjecture. But it seems to be the true reading: *Scientia veri* is a much more natural counterpart to *vaine parolle de mensonge* than the unusual *silentium veritatis*. Furthermore, one can pay heed to knowledge of the truth; it is more difficult to say how one can pay heed to silence. If the emendation is not in fact to be accepted, we are left with a puzzling phrase in *science de verité*. As with ‘ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ’ and ‘the Forest Moon of Endor’, it is by no means apparent what logical relationship is intended between the two elements of this genitive construction. Either it is an objective genitive, and means *silence concerning the truth*; or else it is subjective, and means *the silence which belongs to truth*. The problem was first discussed by CM 1732*, which argued for the latter interpretation as follows.

> (Utile silence de verité) expression imaginée pour faire antithese avec vaine parole de mensonge, & qui fait ici un contresens; car à prendre ce passage à la rigueur, le devoir du Poëte seroit précisément opposé à celui de l’Historien, *ne quid falsi audeat, ne quid veri non audeat*; mais certainement l’Auteur veut dire toute autre chose. Il entend *que le plaisir que les Poëtes prennent à mentir, ne les empêche pas d’être retenus par la verité*; ce qui fait l’obscurité de ce sens; c’est le genitif de *verité*, qui paroît etre le regime de *silence*; comme si *silence de verité* vouloit dire *la verité passée sous silence*, au lieu que *silence de verité*, signifie ici le silence *que fait garder la verité*.

Consider also an instance of this phrase in Augustine’s *De libero arbitrio* (II.xxxv), in which it is clear that the subjective interpretation is intended:

> Multi beatam vitam in cantu vocum et nervorum et tibiarum sibi consituunt, et cum ea sibi desunt, se miseros iudicant; cum autem adsunt, efferuntur lætitia: et nos cum mentibus nostris sine ullo strepitu, ut ita dicam, *canorum et facundum quoddam silentium veritatis* illabitur, aliam beatam vitam quærimus, et tam certa et præsente non fruimur?

a lexemple delle. For *à son example* (CM 1732*); that is, Juno’s. This phrasing was meant to eliminate the confusion that could have been caused by an ambiguous relative pronoun.

acquerent bruyt & nom des poetes. CM 1712: ‘In order to acquire the Fame and Name of Poets’. But perhaps it is best to retain the reading of CM 1537 and to translate: ‘to win fame and the renown of the poets’. See Cicero, *pro Archaia* 27:

> Qua re in qua urbe imperatores prope armati poetarum nomen et Musarum delubra coluerunt, in ea non debent togati iudices a Musarum honore et a poetarum salute abhorrere.

**

§. 4. (Et que s’ils (les Poëtes) veulent écrire d’amour, que ce soit le plus honnêtement &c. qu’il leur sera possible.) Voici une leçon pour les Poëtes: savoir, qu’ils preferent la verité au mensonge, & la chasteté à l’obscénité. Cela est d’assez dure digestion pour Messieurs les

Poëtes; car après tout il faut vivre; les Princes payent les mensonges, & les Libraires les obscenitez & les fadaises.
§. 5. (…) Un tas de gens qui leur (aux Muses) font la cour, faisant semblant les servir, mais ce n'est . . qu'afin qu'ils . . . . puissent trouver accès envers Plutus.) Plutus est le Dieu des Richesses. C'est encore aujourdhui l'opinion des Poëtes; qui pouvoit passer pour veritable dans le tems que la Poësie étoit vierge, & que le chemin du Parnasse n'étoit qu'un sentier connu des honnêtes gens: mais à present que ce sentier est devenu le grand chemin des mulets & des ânes du Parnasse; qui croiroit s'enrichir à faire des vers se feroit siffler.

< E_{iv} v. >

aultres choses dont ilz se scavent bien ayder)
ilz puissent trouver accés envers Plutus, pour
les richesses, duquel elles se sont veu souvent
estre mesprisees & abandonnees, dont elles
devroyent bien estre sages doresenavant. Vraye⸗ 5
ment ma dame Minerve, ie le feray pour la⸗
mour de vous. Qui est cestuy la qui vole la?
Par dieu ie gage que cest Cupido. Cupido?
CVPIDO. Qui est ce la? he, bon iour Mercu⸗
re: est ce toy? & puis quelles nouvelles? Que 10
se dict de bon la hault en vostre court celeste?
Iupiter est il plus amoureux? MERCVRE.
Amoureux de par le diable? Il na garde pour
le present: mais la memoire & souvenance de
ses amours luy torne maintenant en grand 15
ennuy, & fascherie. CVPIDO. Comment donc?
MERCVRE. Pource que ces paillars humains
en ont faict ung livre, lequel de male adven⸗
ture ie luy ay apporté au lieu du sien, ou il re⸗
gardoit tousiours quant il vouloit comman⸗ 20
der quel temps il devoit faire, lequel iestoye
allé faire relier: mais il ma esté changé: ie men
voys pour le faire crier a son de trompe, affin
que sil ya quelcun qui layt, quil le rende. il men
a bien cuidé manger. CVPIDO. Il me sem⸗ 25
ble que iay ouy parler dung livre le plus mer⸗
veilleux que lon vit oncques, que deux com⸗

8 Cupido?] *CM 1537, CM 1538, CM 1732; om. CM Buc, CM Eug, CM Gen, CM 1711a*
24 qui layt] *CM 1538, CM Buc, CM Eug, CM 1711a, CM 1732, CM 1753, CM 1841, CM 1856, CM 1858, CM 1873, CM 1958, Giraud;* quil layt *CM 1537, CM Gen [!], CM 2019*

*

memoire & souvenance. The joke is that Jupiter is tormented by memory; not by mental memory, however, but by the written record that contains all his past misdeeds.

men a bien cuidé manger. ‘He was minded to eat me up for it’. CM 1712: ‘He cou’d have eat me for it’.

< F_i r. >

pagnons ont, avec lequel (ainsi quon dict)
ilz disent la bonne adventure a ung chascun,
& scavent aussi bien deviner ce qui est a ve⸗
nir, que iamais fit Tyresias, ou le Chesne de
Dodone. Plusieurs Astrologues briguent pour 5
lavoir, ou en recouvrer la copie: Car ilz di⸗
sent quilz feroyent leurs Ephemerides, Prono⸗
stications, & Almanachs beaucoup plus seurs
& veritables. Et davantage, ces gallantz pro⸗
mettent aux gens de les enroler au livre dim⸗ 10
mortalité pour certaine somme dargent. MER⸗
CVR. Voire? Par le corbieu cest ce livre la sans
aultre. Il nya que danger quilz ny escripvent des
usuriers, rongeurs de povres gens, des bou⸗
gres, des larrons, & quilz en effacent des gens 15
de bien, pource quilz nont que leur donner. Iu⸗
piter en auroit bien depar le diable. Et ou les
pourroys ie trouver? CVPIDO. Ie ne ten scau⸗
rois que dire: car ie ne suis point curieux de
ces matieres la. Ie ne pense sinon a mez petiz 20
ieux, menuz plaisirs, & ioyeux esbattemens,
& entretenir ces ieunes dames, a iouer au ca⸗
chemouchet au domicile de leurs petiz cueurs
ou ie picque & laisse souvent de mes legeres
flesches, a voltiger par leurs cerveaulx, & leurs 25
chatoiller leurs tendres mouelles, & delicattes
entrailles, a me monstrer & promener dedans

4 Tyresias] *CM 1537, CM 1538, CM 1711a, CM 1732, CM 1753, CM 1856, CM 1858, CM 1873, CM 1958, CM 2019;* Tiresias *CM 1712, CM 1732*, CM 1841*
14–15 des bougres] *CM 1537, CM 1538, CM Gen, CM 1732;* des b..... *CM Buc;* des Bou.... *CM 1711a; om. CM Eug*
25 & leurs] *CM 1537, CM 1538, CM 1711a, CM 1732, CM 1958, CM 2019;* & leur *CM 1753, CM 1841, CM 1856, CM 1858, CM 1873, CM 1995a, Giraud*
27 entrailles, a] *CM 1711a, CM 1732, CM 1753, CM 1841, CM 1856, CM 1858, CM 1873, CM 1958;* entrailles a *CM 1537, CM 1538, CM 2019*

*

disent la bonne adventure. Cf. Lucian's *Alexander Pseudomantis*, in which two imposters make a fortune telling oracles.

Chesne de Dodone. Site of the oracle of Jupiter.

briguent pour lavoir. 'They clamour to have it'; 'wou'd fain have it' (CM 1712). 'Ambiunt' (RS-BRIGUER).

usuriers, rongeurs de povres gens. ‘Usurers, devourers of the poor’. As *rongeurs de povres gens* was a stock phrase for usurers, I think we should take these noun-phrases as being in apposition, and not as separate items on the list. This conclusion is supported by the absence of *des* in front of *rongeurs*. See DMF-RONGEUR.

bougres. This word is the equivalent, in etymology and meaning, of English ‘bugger’. See OED; DMF; FEW-BULGARUS.

cachemouchet. Hu. cites this very place without offering any details of the game. According to CM 1732* and the more tentative hypothesis of LC, it is the same game as *cligne-musette*, which is described by Littré as resembling hide-and-seek. Sure enough, CM 1712 gives ‘hide and seek’.

< F_i v. >

leurs ryans yeulx, ainsi quen belles petites galle⸗
ries, a baiser & succer leurs levres vermeilles,
a me laisser couler entre leurs durs tetins,
& puis de la me desrober, & men aller en la
vallee de ioyssance, ou est la fontaine de iouven⸗ 5
ce, en laquelle ie me ioue, ie me rafreschy & re⸗
cree, & y faiz mon heureux seiour. MERC.
Ta mere ma icy baillé ung memoire pour
tadvertir de quelque chose: Tien, tu le verras
tout a loisir, & feras le contenu: car iay grand 10
haste. adieu. CVPIDO. Tout beau, tout beau
seigneur Mercure. MERCVR. Vertubieu,
tu me arracheras mes talaires, laisse moy aller
Cupido ie te prie, ie nay pas si grand envye
de iouer que toy. CVPID. Pourtant que ie suis 15
ieunette, amy nen prenez esmoy, ie feroys my⸗
eulx la chosette qune plus vieille que moy. MER⸗
CVRE. Ha, que tu as bon temps, tu ne te sou⸗
cyes gueres sil doit plouvoir ou neiger, comme
faict nostre Iupiter, lequel en a perdu le livre. 20
CVPIDO. Tousiours les amoureux auront
bon iour, Tousiours & en tout temps les amou⸗
reux auront bon temps. MERCVRE. Voire
voire, nous en sommes bien. CVPIDO. Il ya
ma damoyselle il ya ie ne scay quoy. Qui est 25
ceste belle ieune fille, que ie voy la bas en ung
verger seullette? Est elle point encore amou⸗

5 ioyssance] Joyssance *CM Buc, CM Gen, CM 1711a;* joüiss^{ce}. *CM Eug;* jouïssance *CM 1711b*§
5–6 iouvence] CM 1537, CM 1538; jouvance *CM Buc, CM Eug, CM Gen, CM 1711a, CM 1711b*§*, CM 1732*

*

Pourtant etc. As was first pointed out by the alphabet-series, this is a libidinous pastiche of one of Marot's poems (*Lyriques* XLV):

Pourtant si ie suis brunette
Amy, n'en prenez esmoy,
Aultant suis ferme et ieunette
Qu'une plus blanche que moi.

It was translated very aptly by CM 1712:

Tho' I'm young and in Life's Spring
Think me not unfit for Man:
I can better do the Thing
Than an older Body can.

Obscene travesties of Marot were nothing unique. Something similar, for example, appears in Chapter XIII of *Gargantua*—'comment Grandgousier congneut l'esperit merveilleux de Gargantua à l'invention d'un torchecul'—in which the infant giant delivers a long scatological parody of Marot's poetry.

chosette. Sex, as seen from the perspective of a lustful maiden, or else an adulteress or lover affecting a coy tone. The word is especially common in popular songs. See Hu-CHOSETTE.

Tousiours etc. CM 1712's translation, unhappier than the one above:

Tho' it thunder from above,
As Heav'n and Earth wou'd come together,
Still it shall go well with Love:
Lovers still shall have good weather.

bon temps. 'Pleasure; fun' (Li., Hu.). RC-TEMPS: 'Prosperitie; also, merriment, or time passed in merriment.'

**

§. 6. (La vallée de jouïssance, où est la fontaine de jouvance.) C'est le *non plus ultra* des Amans: C'est le païs où le Dieu cocuage reside, & d'où il envoye les cornes sur le front des époux, par je ne sai quelles vapeurs qu'il éleve jusqu'à leurs têtes.
§. 7. (Chosette) C'est cette bagatelle qui donne de la couleur aux belles: à bon entendeur demi mot. Voyez Gratien de Drusac dans ses Controvers. des sexes masculin & feminin.[50]

[50] This note is derived from Jacob Le Duchat, ed., *Œuvres du Maître François Rabelais, publiées sous le titre de Faits et dits du géant Gargantua et de son fils Pantagruel*, vol. III (Amsterdam: Henri Bordesius, 1711), p. 98, n. 10.

reuse? il fault que ie la voye en face. Nenny, &
toutesfoys ie scay bien que son amy languit
pour lamour delle. Ha, vous aymerez belle
dame sans mercy, avant quayez marché trois
pas. CELIA. O ingrate & mescognoissan⸗ 5
te que ie suis. en quelle peine est il maintenant
pour lamour de moy? Or cognois ie a ceste
heure (mais las cest bien trop tard) que la puis⸗
sance damour est merveilleusement grande, & que
lon ne peult eviter la vengence diceluy. Nay 10
ie pas grand tort dainsi mespriser & escondui⸗
re cestuy qui mayme tant? voire plus que soy
mesmes? Veulx ie tousiours estre autant insen⸗
sible qune statue de marbre? Vivray ie tous⸗
iours ainsi seullette? Helas, il ne tient qua moy: 15
ce nest que ma faulte, & folle opinion. Ha pe⸗
tiz oysillons, que vous me chantez & monstrez
bien ma lecon, que nature est bonne mere de
menseigner, par voz motetz & petitz ieux,
que les creatures ne se peuvent passer de leurs 20
semblables. Or vous feroys ie voluntiers une
requeste, cest que vous ne mimportunissiez plus
par voz menuz iargons: car ientendz trop ce que
vous voulez dire: & que ne me feissiez plus veoir
les spectacles de voz amoureux assemblemens: 25
car cela ne me peult resiouyr, ains me faict iu⸗
ger que ie suis la plus malheureuse creature qui

5 CELIA] CELINA *CM 1856 (in commentariis vero* Célie*)*
6 peine] *CM 1711a, CM 1732, CM 1856, CM 1858, CM 1873, CM 1958, Giraud;* piene *CM 1537, CM 1538*
22 mimportunissiez] *CM 1537, CM 1538, CM Eug, CM 1732;* m'importunassiez *CM Buc, CM Gen, CM 1711a*
27 que] *CM Buc, CM Eug, CM Gen, CM 1711a, CM 1732, CM 1753, CM 1841, CM 1856, CM 1858, CM 1873, CM 1958, Giraud, CM 2019;* ꝗ *CM 1537;* qui *CM 1538*

*

tousiours ainsi seullette. Lacour (CM 1856, p. 357, n. 1): 'Ces mots nous confirment dans l'opinion que Célie est une religieuse repentante d'avoir pour les cloîtres abandonné l'amour.'

petiz oysillons. No commonplace in French popular songs was thinner-worn than the lovesick maiden who sighs to the birds in an orchard. Usually she begged them to carry a message to her absent lover, but sometimes also envied them their joy, as here or as at the end of the *Pervigilium Veneris*.

motetz & petitz ieux. Both of these refer to genres of musical composition.

assemblemens. Giraud claimed that this word had an obviously obscene connotation, as if *assemblement* were an exact equivalent of *congressus* or *coitus.* He had apparently read the note on this word in CM 1732*, which had referred to the phrase *charnel assemblement* in the *Queste del Saint Graal* and left it to the reader to infer that *charnel* was intended here as well. The title of Chaucer's *Parliament of Fowls* (indeed, the *Assemble of Foules* in some early versions) is instructive on this point.

< F_{ii} v. >

soit en ce monde. Helas quand reviendra il mon
amy? Iay grand paour que ie ne luy aye esté si
farrouche, quil ne retourne plus. si fera, sil
ma autant aymee ou ayme encores, comme
ie layme maintenant. Il me tarde bien que ie 5
ne le voy: sil revient iamais, ie luy seray plus
gracieuse, & luy feray bien ung plus doulx ra⸗
cueil, & meilleur traictement, que ie nay pas
faict par cy devant. CVPIDO. Va va de par
dieu va, dict la fillette, puis que remede ny 10
puis mettre. Or, elle est bien la bonne dame,
elle en a ce quil luy en fault. MERCVRE.
Nest ce pas pitié, soit que ie vienne en terre,
ou que ie retourne aux cieulx, tousiours le
monde, & les dieux me demandent, si iay, ou 15
si ie scay rien de nouveau. il fauldroit une mer
de nouvelles, pour leur en pescher tous les
iours de fresches. Ie vous diray, a celle fin que
le monde ayt de quoy en forger, & que ien
puisse porter la hault, ie men voys faire tout 20
a ceste heure, que ce cheval la parlera a son
palefernier, qui est dessus, pour veoir quil di⸗
ra: ce sera quelque chose de nouveau a tout
le moins. Gargabanado Phorbantas Sarmo⸗
toragos. O, quay ie faict? iay presque proferé 25
tout hault les parolles quil fault dire pour fai⸗
re parler les bestes. Ie suis bien fol, quant ie y

22 palefernier] *CM 1537, CM Buc, CM 1856, CM 1858, CM 1873, CM 1958, CM 2019;* palafernier *CM 1538, CM Gen;* palefrenier *CM Eug, CM 1711a, CM 1732, CM 1753, CM 1841, CM 2000a, Giraud*

24–25 Gargabanado Phorbantas Sarmotoragos] *CM 1537, CM 1538, CM 1732, CM 1873, CM 1958, CM 2019;* Gargabanado, Phorbantas, Sarmotoragos *CM Buc, CM Eug, CM Gen, CM 1711a, CM 1712, CM 1723, CM 1841, CM 1856, CM 1858.*

*

Va va de par dieu va etc. As Giraud pointed out, this couplet is from the popular bawdy song *Il estoit ung ieune clerc*. A clerk disguises himself as a nun to gain entrance to the tavern's daughter's lodging. In these lines, the last of the poem, the girl bewails her stolen virginity and bids him begone.[51]

palefernier. A groom. If a metathesis or vowel-substitution can possibly be conceived for this word, it is a sure thing that it can be found somewhere. CM 1537 gives it in two forms (cf. F_{iii} v. 22 below); both are variants listed by FEW-PARAVERĒDUS.

[51] The poem is in *Sensuyvent plusieurs belles chansons nouvelles: nouvellement imprimees / lesquelles sont fort plaisantes. Et les noms dicelles trouverez en la table qui est a la fin du present livre. Avec aulcunes de Clement Marot / de nouveau adioustees.* (Lyon: Claude Nourry, [1534]), ff. [G_{iiii}] v.– [H_i] v., and also printed in Brian Jeffery, *Chanson Verse of the Early Renaissance*, vol. II (London: Tecla Editions, 1976), pp. 120–122.

Gargabanado Phorbantas Sarmotoragos. Lacroix wrote the first—but alas not the last—word on this in CM 1841: 'Par ces mots qui n'ont pas de sens, Bonaventure des Periers se moque des formules magiques usitées alors.' Éloi Johanneau, in his *Clef* published in the same volume, was more imaginative (see pp. 127–128). First, he suggested that they were nonsense words intended to make a mockery of the Latin mass that was unintelligible to its hearers. Second, he made the following etymological observations.

> – *Gargabanado* was a corruption of *carga ganado*, supposedly a Spanish husbandry-term for pack-animals. It stood for the commen people, oppressed by their priests like beasts of burden.
> – *Phorbantas* was a variant form of *Phorbas*, the son of Priam, whose name came from φορβάς, which supposedly meant 'pasture-fed'.
> – Sarmotoragos was a corruption of Σαρματοραγος—'qui est à la queue des Sarmates, le serre-file des Tartares, des Cosaques, comme le curé à la queue de la procession'. [I confess that the point of this escapes me.]

Félix Frank denounced Johanneau's speculations in CM 1873 as well for their incoherence as for the fact that Johanneau had put commas between the three magic words and failed to recognize them as a concatenated phrase. Frank then introduced an even more fantastical interpretation of his own, which must be read to be believed (p. 107):

> Je songeai au goût des subtilités alors régnant, à l'emploi des anagrammes par Rabelais & par Des Periers lui-même, à la forme assurément grecque des deux derniers mots, dont l'un au moins n'était pas dénaturé, car *Phorbantas* est l'accusatif pluriel masculin du participe φορβας, αντος, au pluriel, φόρβαντες, φόρβαντας, de φερβω, *alo, nutrio* (je nourris, j'alimente). Restaient *Gargabanado* & *Sarmotoragos*, qui, à l'aide d'une simple transposition de lettres, donnent *Gartabanado* & *Sargomoragos*. Or, le γ & le κ étant deux lettres similaires & correspondantes en grec, j'avais enfin le mot *Sarcomoragos*, formé de *Sarcomoros*: quoi de plus simple que l'emploi de ce nom, tiré d'un autre nom déjà forgé par Bonaventure pour un opuscule publié dans la même année ? Sur trois mots, j'en avais deux bien constitués; mais *Gartabanado* avait un aspect barbare, qui diparut vite par la substitution du π au β, lettres également correspondantes, changeant le mot en *Gartapanado* ou *Pantagarado*. Sauf les transpositions, qui sont la loi même de l'anagramme, ces substitutions de deux lettres correspondantes ont suffi pour rendre à la phrase (car c'est une phrase) sa physionomie & sa signification. Qu'on en juge: Πάντα γὰρ ἄδω φόρβαντας Σαρκομοραγὸς, c'est-à-dire : *Omnia nempe satio alentes humani fati Dux*. (Σαρκομόρος signifie *humana sors, humanum fatum*, ce qui figurait très-bien en tête de la *Prognostication des Prognostications*. Le mot grec Μόρος signifie *sors*, *fatum*, & Σάρξ, Σαρκὸς est pris, chez les Pères de l'Église, non-seulement pour la *chair, caro*, ou le *corps* humain, mais pour l'homme lui-même, *totus homo*.) On peut modifier légèrement notre phrase & la lire ainsi: Πάντα (ἔ)ργα ἄδω φόρβαντας Σαρκομοραγὸς (*omnia negotia satio alentes*, &c.) Mais le sens reste le même en bon français: *Or ça, je rassasie, je viens pour rassasier les nourriciers de toutes choses (les nourriciers du monde), moi qui conduis l'humaine destinée!*

< Fiii r. >

pense, si ieusse tout dict, & quil y eust icy quel⸗
cun qui meust ouy, il en eust peu apprendre la
science. PHLEGON, LE CHEVAL. Il
a este ung temps que les bestes parloyent: mais
si le parler ne nous eust point esté osté non plus 5
qua vous, vous ne nous trouveriez pas si be⸗
stes que vous faictes. STATIVS. Quest ce a
dire cecy? Par la vertu bieu, mon cheval parle.
PHLEGON. Voire dea, ie parle, & pour
quoy non? Entre vous hommes, pource que 10
a vous seulz la parolle est demouree, & que
nous povres bestes navons point dintelligen⸗
ce entre nous, par cela que nous ne pouvons
rien dire, vous scavez bien usurper toute puis⸗
sance sur nous, & non seulement dictes de nous 15
tout ce quil vous plait, mais aussi vous montez
sur nous, vous nous picquez, vous nous bat⸗
tez: il fault que nous vous pourtions, que nous
vous vestions, que nous vous nourrissions, &
vous nous vendez, vous nous tuez, vous nous 20
mangez. Dont vient cela? cest par faulte que
nous ne parlons pas. Que si nous scavions par⸗
ler, & dire noz raisons, vous estes tant hu⸗
mains (ou devez estre) que aprés nous avoir
ouy, vous nous traicteriez aultrement, comme 25
ie pense. STATIVS. Par la morbieu il ne fut
oncques parlé de chose si estrange que ceste cy.

3 LE CHEVAL] *CM Eug, CM Gen, CM 1732* ('peut-être'), CM 1753*[errata], *CM 1856, CM 1858, CM 1958, Boerner, Giraud, CM 2019;* IE CHEVAL *CM 1537, CM 1732, CM 1873;* Ie cheval.* *CM 1538; om. CM Buc, CM 1711a, [CM 1712], CM 1753, CM 1841*
17 picquez,] *CM 1537, CM Buc, CM 1711a;* picquez/ *CM 1538* picquez? *CM Eug, CM Gen*
21 Dont] *CM 1537, CM 1538;* Dond *CM 1732;* D'où *CM Buc, CM Eug, CM Gen, CM 1711a*

*

Phlegon. This is the name of one of Phaëthon's horses in Ovid. Cf. *Metamorphoses* II.153–5:

> Interea volucres Pyroïs et Eoüs et Æthon,
> Solis equi, quartusque Phlegon hinnitibus auras
> Flammiferis implent pedibusque repagula pulsant.

In his 1821 fragment *Smarra*, Charles Nodier named a horse Phlégon. Probably he was inspired to do so by the *Cymbalum mundi*, which he had already studied. Nodier, incidentally, also borrowed the *Cymbalum mundi*'s framing device for *Smarra*, and claimed that his book had been translated from a lost Slavonic manuscript. See Charles Nodier, *Smarra, ou les*

Démons de la nuit, songes romantiques, traduits de l'esclavon du comte Maxime Odin (Paris: Ponthieu, 1821).

LE CHEVAL. 'Ie cheval' was an obvious mistake in CM 1537, but Frank (CM 1873, pp. 108–9) made as much of its purportedly mystical meaning as he did of the magic words on the foregoing page. (Note that he stated incorrectly that the mistake had been corrected to *le cheval* in CM 1538.)

ung temps que les bestes parloyent. Henri Estienne commented the following on this proverbial phrase:

> Pareillement se dit par derision, Du temps que les bestes parloyent. Car c'est autant que si on disoit, Au temps iadis que les hommes estoyent si sots qu'ils se laissoyent persuader que les bestes parloyent. Ce qui est dict (comme ie croy) pour le regard des fables d'Esope, lesquelles se trouvoyent des lors traduites en nostre langue.[52]

See also a variant of this phrase in his father's entry RS-ATTENDRE, where it means 'never'.

picquez. Oblique strokes are used frequently by CM 1538 to render CM 1537's commas; but this use is confined almost entirely to the dedicatory letter and the first three quarters of the first dialogue, after which they abruptly disappear. This singular instance of it later in the book caused some confusion in the manuscripts derived from CM 1538.

[52] *L'introduction au traité de la conformité des merveilles anciennes avec les modernes: ou, Traité preparatif à l'Apologie pour Herodote* (Henri Estienne 1566), lib. I, cap. xxvii, p. 360.

< F_{iii} v. >

Bonnes gens, ie vous prie venez ouyr ceste
merveille, autrement vous ne le croiryez pas.
Par le sambieu mon cheval parle. ARDEL.
Qui a il la, que tant de gens y accourrent, &
sassemblent en ung troupeau? Il me fault veoir 5
que cest. STATIVS. Ardelio, tu ne scay
pas, par le corbieu mon cheval parle. AR=
DELIO. Diz tu? voyla grand merveille. Et
que dict il? STATIVS. Ie ne scay: car ie suis
tant estonné douyr sortir parolles dune telle 10
bouche, que ie nentendz point a ce quil dict.
ARDELIO. Metz pied a terre, & lescoutons
ung petit raisonner. Retirez vous messieurs
sil vous plait, faictes place, vous verrez aussi
bien de loing que de prés. STATIVS. Or 15
ca, que veulx tu dire belle beste, par tes pa=
rolles? PHLEGON. Gens de bien, puis quil
a pleu au bon Mercure de mavoir restitué le
parler, & que vous en voz affaires prenez bien
tant de loisir de vouloir escouter la cause dung 20
povre animau que ie suis, vous devez scavoir
que cestuy mon palefrenier me faict toutes
les rudesses quil peult, & non seulement il
me bat, il me picque, il me laisse mourir de
fain, Mais. STATIVS. Ie te laisse mourir 25
de fain? PHLEGON. Voire, tu me lais=
ses mourir de fain. STATIVS. Par la mor=

4 Qui a il] *CM 1537, CM 1538, CM Buc, CM Gen, CM 1732, CM 1856, CM 1873;* Qui a-t-il *CM 1711a, CM 1753;* Qu'y a-t-il *CM Eug, CM 1841;* Qu'y a-il *CM 1858, CM 1958*
20 de v.] *CM 1537, CM 1538, CM 1732;* que de *CM Buc, CM Eug, CM Gen, CM 1711a*
25 Mais.] *CM 1537, CM 1538, CM 1873, CM 2019;* Mais… *CM 1711a, [CM 1712], CM 1732, CM 1753, CM 1841, CM 1856, CM 1858, CM 1958, Giraud*

*

Ie te laisse etc. Cf. Aulus Gellius, IV.20.11ff. (cited by CM 1732*):

> Item aliud refert Sabinus Masurius in septimo memoriali severè factum. Censores, inquit, Publius Scipio Nasica et Marcus Popilius cum equitum censum agerent equum nimis strigosum et male habitum sed equitem eius uberrimum et habitissimum viderunt et cur, inquiunt, ita est, ut tu sis quam equus curatior? Quoniam, inquit, ego me curo, equum Statius nihili seruos. Visum est parum esse reverens responsum, relatusque in ærarios, ut mos est. Statius autem servile nomen fuit. Plerique apud veteres servi eo nomine fuerunt.

fain. An OF variant of *faim*. See FEW-FAMES.

< F_{iv} r. >

bieu vous mentez, & si vous le voulez souste⸗
nir, ie vous couperay la gorge. ARDELIO.
Non ferez dea, seriez vous bien si hardy,
de tuer ung cheval qui scait parler? Il est pour
faire ung present au roy Ptolomee le plus ex⸗ 5
quis quon vist iamais. Et si vous advertiz bien
que tout le tresor de Cresus ne le pourroit pas
payer. Pource advisez bien que vous ferez, &
ne le touchez point, si vous estes sage. STA⸗
TIVS. Pourquoy dict il donc ce qui nest pas 10
vray? PHLEGON. Te souvient il point
quant dernierement on tavoit baillé de lar⸗
gent pour la despence de quatre chevaulx que
nous sommes, que tu faisois ton compte ainsi·
Vous avez force fein, & force paille, faictes 15
grand chere, vous naurez que pour tant da⸗
veine le iour, la reste sera pour aller banque⸗
ter avec mamye. STATIVS. Il teust myeux
valu que tu neusses iamais parlé: ne te soucyes.
PHLEGON. Encores ne men chault il de 20
tout cela: mais quant ie rencontre quelque iu⸗
ment au moys que nous sommes en amour
(ce qui ne nous advient qune foys lan) il ne
me veult pas souffrir monter sur elle, & tou⸗
tesfois ie le laisse bien tant de foys le iour mon⸗ 25
ter sur moy. Vous hommes voulez ung droict
pour vous, & ung aultre pour voz voisins.

15 fein] *CM 1537, CM 1538, CM 1732;* foin *CM Buc, CM Eug, CM Gen, CM 1711a*
16–7 daveine] *CM 1537, CM 1538, CM Buc, CM 1711a, CM 1732; d'avoine CM Eug, CM Gen*
26 hommes] autres CM Gen *(corr. a Marchand)*

*

couperay la gorge. CM 1856: 'Allusion aux anathèmes de la papauté'.

Il est pour faire ung present. 'He's one to present to King Ptolemy' (CM 1732*).

au roy Ptolemee. Ptolemy II Philadelphus, the subject of Theocritus' seventeenth Idyll, was like Crœsus a king of proverbial wealth. Giraud (p. 31) would have us believe that the reference is to Ptolemy VI Philometor, seeing as he fell off his horse and died. But Des Periers probably had Ptolemy Lagides in mind, whom Lucian records (*Prometheus es* 4) as having acquired an all-black Bactrian camel as a novelty for his court.

ne te soucyes. 'You can be sure of that' (CM 1732*).

< F_{iv} v. >

Vous estes bien contens davoir tous voz plai⸗
sirs naturelz: mais vous ne les voulez pas lais⸗
ser prendre aux autres, & mesmement a nous
povres bestes. Combien de fois tay ie veu ame⸗
ner des garses en lestable pour coucher avec 5
toy? Combien de fois ma il fallu estre tesmoing
de ton beau gouvernement? Ie ne te vouldrois
pas requerir que tu me laissasses ainsi amener
des iumens en lestable pour moy, comme tu
amaine des garses pour toy: Mais quant nous 10
allons aux champs, tu le me pourrois bien lais⸗
ser faire en la saison, a tout le moins ung petit
coup. Il ya six ans quil me chevauche: & si ne
ma pas encores laissé faire cela une povre foys.
ARDELIO. Par dieu tu as raison mon amy, 15
tu es le plus gentil cheval, & la plus noble
beste, que ie veiz iamais, Touche la, iay une
Iument, qui est a ton commandement, ie la
te presteray voluntiers, pource que tu es bon
compaignon, & que tu le vaulx. tu en feras ton 20
plaisir. Et de ma part, ie serois tresaise, & ioy⸗
eulx si ie pouvois avoir de ta semence, quant
ce ne seroit ia que pour dire, voyla de la rache du
cheval qui parloit. STATIVS. Par le cor⸗
bieu ie vous en garderay bien, puis que vous 25
vous estes meslé de parler si avant. Sus sus, al⸗
lons, & vous deliberez de trotter hardiment,

6 il] *CM 1537, CM 1538, CM 1732;* t'il *CM Buc, CM Eug, CM Gen, CM 1711a*
10 amaine] *CM 1537, CM 1538, CM Buc, CM Eug, CM Gen, CM 1711a, CM 1732, CM 1856, CM 1732, CM 2019*; amaines *CM 1753, CM 1841, CM 1858, CM 1873, CM 1958, Giraud*
17 ie veiz] *CM 1537, CM 1538, CM 1732;* l'on veiz *CM Buc (corr. ad seq.);* l'on vit *CM Eug, CM Gen, CM 1711a*
18 est] *CM 1537;* eft *CM 1914, lituram litteræ miscens*
23 rache] *CM 1537, CM 1538, CM 1873, CM 2019;* race *CM Buc, CM Eug, CM Gen, CM 1711a, CM 1732, CM 1753, CM 1841, CM 1856, CM 1858, CM 1958, Boerner, Giraud*

*

beau gouvernement. 'Fine conduct' (FEW-GUBERNARE, p. 300b). CM 1712 has 'fine Management'; according to the OED this is indeed a rare use of the word *management*, but it may also be that the translator simply misunderstood *gouvernement*.

six ans. This scene is strongly reminiscent of the quarrel between Balaam and his ass at Num 22:28–30. Here is the passage in the translation of Olivetan:

> Adonc le Seigneur ouvrit la bouche de lasnesse / laquelle dist a Balaam: Que tay ie faict que tu ma ia battu par troys foys? Et Balaam respondit a lasnesse: Pourtant que tu te mocque de moy. A ma volunté que ieusse ung glaive en ma main: car ie te tueroye maintenant. Et lasnesse dist a Balaam: Ne suis ie pas ton asnesse? Tu as tousiour monté sur moy iusque a ce iour cy / ay ie accoustumé de te faire ainsi?

See also C_{iv} r. 7, above, which also borrows phraseology from this biblical passage.

chevauche. RC-CHEVAUCHER: 'To ride, or bestride a horse […]; also, to swive a woman.'

iay une Iument etc. Lacour (CM 1856, p. 362, n. 2): 'Les plaintes qu'on vient d'entendre sont claires: la réponse d'Ardelio (Luther) ne l'est pas moins: il annonce qu'il va rendre possible le mariage des prêtres par la réforme dont il est l'autheur.

rache. 'Seed; offspring'. FEW-RATIO, 3b.β cites this as one of the earliest attestations of the word in this sense. The exotic spelling is not to be treated as a mistake; the medial sibilant was rendered variously in early attestations as ⟨c⟩, ⟨ch⟩, and ⟨ss⟩.

& ne faictes point la beste si vous estes sage
que ie ne vous avance bien de ce baston. ARDELIO. Adieu adieu compagnon, te voyla
bien peneux de ce que ton cheval a si bien par-
lé a toy. STATIVS. Par la vertubieu ie lac- 5
coustreray bien si ie puis estre a lestable, quel-
que parleur quil soit. ARDELIO. Or iamais
ie neusse creu qung cheval eust parlé, si ie ne
leusse veu & ouy. voyla ung cheval qui vault cent
milions descuz. Cent milions descuz? on ne le scau- 10
roit trop estimer. Ie menvoys comter le cas a mai-
stre Cerdonius, lequel ne loblira pas en ces annal-
les. MERCVRE. Voyla desia quelque chose de
nouveau pour le moins, ie suis bien ayse quil y
avoit belle compaignie de gens, dieu mercy, qui 15
ont ouy & veu le cas. Le bruit en sera tantost par
la ville, quelqun le mettra par escript, & par ad-
venture quil y adioustera du sien pour enrichir
le compte. Ie suis asseuré que ien trouveray tan-
tost la copie a vendre vers ces libraires. Ce pen- 20
dant quil viendra quelques aultres nouvelles,
ie men voys faire mes commissions, & specia-
lement chercher la trompette de la ville, pour
faire crier sil ya personne qui ayt point trou-
vé ce diable de livre. 25

11 estimer] payer *CM Gen (corr. a Marchand)*
12 ces] *CM 1537, CM 1538, CM 1873, CM 2019;* ses *CM Buc*, *CM Eug, CM Gen, CM 1711a, [CM 1712], CM 1732, CM 1753, CM 1841, CM 1856, CM 1858, CM 1958. Vid. supra,* A_{ii} r. 23
16 par] *CM 1711a, CM 1732*; ꝑ *CM 1537;* per *CM 1538*
18 quil] *CM 1537, CM 1732;* qui *CM 1538, CM Buc*, *CM Eug, CM Gen, CM 1711a*

*

si ie puis estre a lestable. This construction occurs again at H_{iv} r. 8, below. It seems to mean 'once I get to the stable'.

Cerdonius. *Cerdo* is Martial's epithet for a cobbler, but it the semantic range of this word in antiquity is not clear. Erasmus used it liberally to mean 'menial', and the author of the paragraph-series glossed it in this sense.

par la ville. CM 1537's abbreviation *ꝑ* was expanded by CM 1538 to *per*, which Le Duchat attempted to exculpate as a legitimate dialectical variant: 'Dans le rare & fameux petit livre, intitulé *Cymbalum mundi*, de Bonaventure Des Périers, imprimé in 16. à Lyon l'an 1538. on trouve sur la fin du 3. Dialogue, *le bruit en sera tantost per la ville*. Et ce *per* de même qu'*appertenir*, *perfumer*, *perler*, *chesser*, ne doivent pas estre pris pour des fautes

d'impression, mais pour autant de preuves de la conversion réciproque de l'*a* & de l'*e* tres fréquente en ce tems-là.'[53]

**

§. 8. (Cerdonius) Cerdonius, Κερδώνιος de κέρδος, nom fait à plaisir pour un annaliste à gages. Le peuple des Annalistes à gage est dans ce siecle un peuple très-étendu. Il n'y a pas jusques aux femmes qui n'y aient pris droit de Bourgeoisie.

[53] *Œuvres du Maître François Rabelais*, p. XVII, n. 32.

< G_i v. >

Dialogue IIII.
De deux chiens, Hylactor &
Pamphagus.

HYLACTOR.
*S*Il plaisoit a Anubis, que ie peusse
trouver ung chien lequel sceut
parler, entendre, & tenir propos
comme ie fay, que ie seroye ayse?
Car ie ne me veulx pas avancer
de parler, que ce ne soit a mon semblable. Et
toutesfoys ie suis bien asseuré, que si ie vouloye
dire la moindre parolle devant les hommes, que
ie seroye le plus heureux chien, qui fut iamais.
ie ne scay prince ne roy en ce monde, qui fut
digne de mavoir, veu lestime que lon pourroit
faire de moy. Se ien avoye tant seulement dict
autant que ien vien de dire, en quelque compagnie
de gens, le bruyt en seroit desia iusques aux
Indes. Et diroit lon par tout, Il ya en ung tel
lieu ung chien qui parle. On viendroit de tous
les quartiers du monde, la ou ie seroye, & bail⸗
leroit lon de largent pour me veoir & ouyr
parler. Et encores ceulx qui mauroyent veu, &
ouy, gaigneroyent souvent leur escot a racompter
aux estrangers, & aux pays loingtains de ma

HYLACTOR] *CM 1732, CM 1753, CM 1841, CM 1858, CM 1958, Giraud; om. CM 1537, CM 1538, CM 1711a, CM 1856, CM 1873, CM 2019*
10 ne roy] *CM 1537, CM 1538, CM Eug, CM 1732;* ny roy *CM Buc, CM Gen, CM 1711a*
15, 18 lon] *CM 1537, CM 1538, CM Buc (*l *eras.), CM Gen, CM 1732;* on *CM Eug, CM 1711a*

Argumentum ex CM 1711a:

DIALOGUE IV. / LES CHIENS D'ACTEON. / ARGUMENT. / *Deux* Chiens*, qui avoient appartenu autrefois à* ACTEON*, s'entretiennent de la difference qu'il y a entre la Vie publique & la Vie privée, & de la sotte Curiosité des Hommes pour les choses nouvelles & extraordinaires*.

LES CHIENS D'ACTEON] Les deux chiens *CM Eug, leg. CM 1711b^{ABC}; om. CM Buc;* De deux chiens *CM Gen*
de la] *CM Buc; om. CM Eug, CM Gen (suppl. a Marchand)*
entre] *CM Buc;* de *CM Eug, CM Gen (corr. a Marchand), CM 1711b§*
et de la sotte … extraordinaires] *CM Buc; om. CM Eug, CM Gen (suppl. a Marchand)*

*

Hylactor & Pamphagus. Both of these names are given by Ovid to hunting-dogs in the pack of Actæon. Cf. *Metamorphoses* III.206–224. Henri Busson wrote that Pamphagus and Hylactor are merely the first and last dogs mentioned by Ovid, and that the meaning of these arbitrarily chosen names should not therefore be overemphasized.[54] His conclusion was correct, but not his premise: Melampus and Ichnobates are listed before Pamphagus. The name *Pamphagus* had been used before by Erasmus in his *De captandis sacerdotiis*. In that dialogue, a man called Pamphagus comes back from Rome after a fruitless quest to secure preferment from the Pope. He compares himself explicitly to a hunting dog in Diana's pack: 'Venatus equidem sum sedulo, at parum favit Delia.'[55] | Lacroix (CM 1841, p. 75, n. 5):

> On pourrait supposer, avec quelque vraisemblance, que les chiens *Pamphagus* et *Hylactor* représentent Luther et Calvin, qui, en dévorant la langue de Jésus-Christ, c'est-à-dire l'Évangile, ont appris la parole évangélique et la répètent aux hommes sans pouvoir se faire entendre d'eux. Cette explication concorde assez avec tous les détails de ce dialogue, dans lequel la Réforme est évidemment annoncée par les lettres venues des antipodes.

ie ne me veulx pas avancer de parler. 'I won't dare to speak'. See CM 1732*, RS-AVANCER.

gaigneroyent souvent leur escot. Lit. 'win [back] their expenses'; thus 'have something for their pains'. Not in Hu. CM 1712: 'g[e]t their Bread'.

**

§. 6. Je ne sai d'où vient que le titre de ce Dialogue porte, *Difference de la Vie publique & de la Vie privée*, puis qu'il pourroit s'intituler avec plus de raison; *Contre le goût que les hommes ont pour le Merveilleux & la Nouveauté*. Il y a au reste, quelque apparence, que Des Periers n'a qu'ébauché son dessein dans ces quatre Dialogues, & qu'il l'auroit developé un peu mieux dans la suite, s'il eut vecu. Le titre *de Cymbalum Mundi*, que porte l'Ouvrage entier, insinue assés que le but de cet Auteur étoit de se moquer du ridicule des opinions des hommes, & de prouver que tout ce que l'on croit vulgairement n'est pas plus raisonnable que le vain son d'une cloche ou de l'Instrument appellé en Latin *Cymbalum*. Pour établir, ou plûtôt pour renouveller ce Systême que le Christianisme avoit ruiné, il falloit commencer par tourner en ridicule la providence & la Divinité, c'est ce que Des Periers essaïe dans le premier & dans le troisiéme Dialogue; il falloit ensuite détruire la verité; c'est-là le but du second; enfin il censure le goût pour le merveilleux & la nouveauté. Voila le dessein du quatriéme Dialogue, qui, ainsi que je le crois, n'auroit pas été le dernier, si Des Periers avoit eu le tems d'achever l'établissement de son Systême.

§. 1. (Anubis) C'étoit un des Dieux des Egyptiens, dont le culte à ce que pretendent quelques uns se rapportoit au Soleil; on le representoit avec une tête de chien: D'autres croient que le culte d'Anubis se rapportoit à Mercure. Quoy qu'il en soit, Hylactor s'adresse à Anubis à cause de leur conformité d'espece & de forme.

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[54] Henri Busson, *Le rationalisme dans la littérature française de la Renaissance (1533–1601)*, Nouvelle édition, revue et augmentée, De Pétrarque à Descartes, I (Paris: J. Vrin, 1957), p. 187.
[55] See Maurice Prigniel, 'Notes sur une source probable du « Cymbalum mundi »', *Revue d'Histoire littéraire de la France* XXXVI, no. 2 (1929): pp. 221–222.

< G_{ii} r. >

facon, & de mes propos. Ie ne pense pas que
lon ayt veu chose plus merveilleuse, plus ex⸗
quise, ne plus delectable. Si me garderay ie bien
toutesfoys de rien dire devant les hommes, que ie
naye trouvé premierement quelque chien qui 5
parle comme moy, car il nest pas possible, quil
nen y ayt encores quelcun au monde. ie scay bien
quil ne me scauroit eschapper si petit mot, que
incontinent ilz ne courrussent tous a moy, pour
en ouyr davantage: & peult estre que a ceste cau⸗ 10
se ilz me vouldroyent adorer en Grece, ainsi que
lon a faict Anubis en Egypte, tant sont les hu⸗
mains curieux de nouveauté. Or, encores nay
ie rien dict, & ne diray entre les hommes, que ie
naye trouvé quelque chien qui ayt parlé a moy. 15
Toutesfois que cest une grand peine de se taire,
mesmement a ceulx qui ont beaucoup de cho⸗
ses a dire, comme moy. Mais voicy que ie fay
quant ie me trouve seulet, & que ie voy que personne
ne me peut ouyr: ie me prens a dire a par moy 20
tout ce que iay sur le cueur, & vuyde ainsi mon
flux de ventre, ie vous dy de langue, sans que
le monde en soit abreuvé. Et bien souvent en allant
par les rues a lheure que tout le monde est cou⸗
ché, iappelle pour mon passetemps quelcun de noz 25
voisins par son nom, & luy fay mettre la teste
a la fenestre, & cryer une heure. Qui est la?
Aprés quil a prou cryé, & que personne ne luy

*

a par moy. 'To myself' (RS-PART; FEW-PARS, I, 2). The omission of the *t* in this special use of *part* is regular, as was first pointed out by CM 1732*.

mesmement. 'Especially' (DMF-MESMEMENT, b).

prou. According to RS-PROU, the word means *multum* ('*a good deal*') and is derived from Latin *probe*. CM 1732* has it mean 'enough' and derives it tentatively from *pro*, as in *pro parte* and *pro facultate*. Both were right about its meaning; both wrong about its etymology. *Prou* (*proud* or *prout* in early attestations) is derived from *prode* ('profit'; 'boot'), a substantival neuter form of the post-classical adjective *prodis*, itself mistakenly back-formed from the verb *prodesse*. (It is thus equivalent to the Enlish word *proud*.) As an adverb, *prou* means 'abundantly', with a secondary suggestion of sufficiency. See FEW-PRŌDE.

< Gii v. >

respond, il se colere, & moy de rire. Et quant
les bons compagnons de chiens sassemblent pour al⸗
ler battre le pavé, ie my trouve voulentiers,
affin que ie parle librement entre eulx pour
veoir si ien trouveray point qui entende & 5
parle comme moy, car ce me seroit une grande
consolation, & la chose que plus ie desire en ce
monde. Or quand nous iouons ensemble, & nous
mordons lung lautre, ie leur dy tousiours quelque
chose en loreille, les appellant par leurs noms 10
& surnoms, en leur demandant silz parlent
point. de laquelle chose ilz sont aussi estonnez
que si cornes leur venoyent: Car voyans cela,
ilz ne scavent que penser, si ie suis homme desgui⸗
sé en chien, ou chien qui parle. Et afin que ie die 15
tousiours quelque chose, & que ie ne demeure
sans parler, ie me prens a crier, au meurtre, bon⸗
ne gens, au meurtre. Adonc tous les voisins ses⸗
veillent, & se mettent aux fenestres. Mais quand
ilz voyent que ce nest que mocquerie, ilz sen 20
retournent coucher. Cela faict, ie passe en une
aultre rue, & crye tant que ie puis: aux larrons
aux larrons: les boutiques sont ouvertes. Ce pen⸗
dant quilz se lievent, ie men voys plus avant, &
quant iay passé ung coing de rue, ie commence a 25
crier, au feu, au feu: le feu est en vostre maison.
Incontinent vous les verriez tous saillir en place,
les ungs en chemises, les aultres tous nudz, les

4 librement] *CM 1537, CM 1732, CM 1856, CM 1858, CM 1873, CM 1958, CM 2019;* liberalement *CM 1538, CM Buc, CM Eug, CM Gen, CM 1711a, CM 1753, CM 1841, Boerner*
5–6 entende & parle] entendent et parlent *CM Gen*
14 scavent] *CM 1537, CM 1538, CM Buc, CM Eug, CM Gen, CM 1732;* sçauroient *CM 1711a*
13 venoyent] venoyent a la teste *CM Gen (cancell.)*
17–18 bonne gens] *CM 1537, CM 1538, CM Gen, CM 2019;* bonnes gens *CM Buc, CM Eug, CM 1711a, CM 1732, CM 1753, CM 1841, CM 1856, CM 1858, CM 1873, CM 1958, Giraud*
18 les] *CM 1537, CM 1538, CM Eug, CM 1732;* ces *CM Buc, CM Gen, CM 1711a*
27 place,] *virg. CM 1711a, CM 1732, CM 1753, CM 1841, CM 1856, CM 1858, CM 1958; om. CM 1537, CM 1538, CM 1873, CM 2019*

*

moy de rire. An historical infinitive.

boutiques sont ouvertes. 'The shops lie open'. See OLD PATEO-4a.

< G_{iii} r. >

femmes toutes deschevelees, cryans: ou est ce?
ou est ce? Et quant ilz ont prou esté en ceste
sueur, & quilz ont bien cherché & regardé par
tout, ilz trouvent a la fin que ce nest rien, dont sen
retournent achever leurs besongnes, & dormir 5
seurement. Puis quant iay bien faict toutes les fol⸗
lies de mes nuictz attiques, iusques au chapi⸗
tre· Qui sunt leves & importuni loquutores,
pour mieulx passer le demourant de mes phan⸗
tasies, ung peu devant que le iour vienne, ie me 10
transporte au parc de noz ouailles, faire le loup
en la paille: ou ie men voys desraciner quelque
arbre mal planté: ou brouiller & mesler les
filetz de ces pescheurs: ou mettre des os & des
pierres au lieu du tresor que Pygargus lusurier 15
a caché en son champ: ou ie voys pisser au potz
du potier, & chier en ses beaulx vases. Et si
dadventure ie rencontre le guet, ien mors trois
ou quatre pour mon plaisir, & puis ie men fuy
tant que ie puis, cryant, qui me pourra prendre, si 20
me prenne. Mais quoy quil en soit, si suis ie bien
marry que ie ne trouve quelque compaignon lequel
sache aussi parler. Toutesfoys si ay ie bonne espe⸗
rance den trouver, ou il nen y aura point au mon⸗
de. Voyla Gargilius avec tous ses chiens qui sen 25
va a la chasse, ie men voy esbattre avec eulx,
affin de scavoir sil en ya point en la compaignie
quelcun qui parle. Dieu gard les compaignons, dieu

15 Pygargus] Pycargus *CM 1856, CM 1858;* Pygarus *CM 1712*
16 au] *CM 1537, CM 1538, CM 2019;* aux *CM Buc, CM Eug, CM Gen, CM 1711a, CM 1732, CM 1753, CM 1841, CM 1856, CM 1858, CM 1873, CM 1958, Giraud*

*

deschevelees. Cf. English *dishevely*. In the strict sense it means 'with hair unbound'.

noz ouailles. Why the possessive? Perhaps in allusion to Psalm 144.13: '*noz ouailles augmentent par mille / et sortent par millions en nos rues*'.

le loup en la paille. RC-LOUP: '*Contrefaire le loup en paille*. To eave-drop it; or, to lie skowting, and leering in a corner, or between sleeping and waking in bed, and understand, but take no notice, what persons doe passe, or what things be done, round about him.' This definition is cited defectively in CM 1873, p. 124. See also Rabelais (NRB 45, fol. 104v): 'Escouttez doncques, dist frere Ian, ce pendent que les chormes y font aiguade. Panurge la bas contrefaict le Loup en paille.'

Pygargus lusurier. This name presents some difficulty, as the word πύγαργος, 'white-arsed', has at least five different senses, abstract as well as concrete. In the first place, it is the name of two different kinds of animal. Juvenal refers to a *pȳgargus* (XI.138), but as a delicacy, and it is impossible to tell what kind of animal he means. It was used by the LXX as a name for a clean ruminant (דִּישֹׁן) at Deut 14:5, but against the relevance of this verse it can be urged that Olivetan's Bible translated דִּישֹׁן as *licorne*. Pliny also mentions a ruminant of this name (VIII.lxxix), but also a kind of eagle called *pygargus* (X.iii). This is backed up by Hesychius, who glosses πύγαργος as εἶδος ἀετοῦ, 'a species of eagle'. The twelfth-century scholiast John Tzetzes (schol. in *Lycoph*. 91; Scheer vol. II, pp. 50–51) reports that one Archilochus described a species of eagle called the ἅρπαξ πύγαργος, the 'rapacious white-tail'. This last scrap of scholarship was not so obscure as it might seem, as Favorinus later excerpted it at length it in his dictionary entry on πύγαργος. It is therefore not impossible that ἅρπαξ πύγαργος was the source from which Des Periers derived *Pygargus lusurier.* This would coincide with the opinion of CM 1732* that *Pygargus* alluded to a bird of prey.

CM 1732* also remarked that there is an old man in Plautus called Vulturius. This is not exactly right; 'vulturius' is an epithet, not a name, for an old man at *Trinummus* 101. (It is given there as a synonym of *turpilucricupidus*.) The word *vulturius* in fact attested many times in classical sources, and when it does not mean simply 'vulture', it means 'fortune-hunter', which is if anything the opposite of 'usurer'.

So much for animals. The word πύγαργος was also used in classical Greek as a descriptive adjective in its own right, with a meaning obscure enough to excite comment in the Middle Ages. Tzetzes' scholium just cited was occasioned by Cassandra's address to Paris in Lycophron's *Alexandra* (90–93):

> καὶ δή σε ναύτην Ἀχερουσία τρίβος
> καταιβάτις πύγαργον […]
> ξενώσεται.

> Even thee, sailor *pygargus*, will the downward path of Hell receive.

Tzetzes commented on it:

> Πύγαργον. δειλόν, ἢ αἰσχρόν, ἢ ἅρπαγα· εἰσι γὰρ μελάμπυγοι, πύγαργοι εἴδη ἀετῶν κατ᾽Ἀρχίλοχον ἀφ᾽οὗ ὁ ἅρπαξ πύγαργος. Ὁ δὲ αἰσχρὸς καὶ συνουσιαστικὸς τόπος πύγαργος λέγεται κατ᾽ἀντίφρασιν, ὁ μὴ ἀργὴν ἔχων τὴν πυγὴν, ἀλλὰ κινῶν αὐτὴν ἐν τῷ συνουσιάζειν. Ὁ δὲ δειλὸς πάλιν πύγαργος λέγεται, ὡς λευκὴν ἔχων τὴν πυγὴν ἐκ τοῦ ἐναντίου τῇ παροιμίᾳ τῇ λεγούγῃ· Ο ὔ π ω μ ε λ α μ π ύ γ ῳ τ ε τ ύ χ η κ α ς · ἐὰν γὰρ οἱ μελάμπυγοι γενναῖοι, καθάπερ Ἡρακλῆς, οἱ δὲ λευκόπυγοι πάντως ἀσθενεῖς, καὶ δειλοὶ καὶ ἄνανδροι. Θεῖα δὲ ἡ Ὠκεανοῦ τοῖς ἰδίοις τούτο παισίν εἶπε περὶ Ἡρακλέους· Οὔπω μελαμπύγῳ ἐντετυχήκατε.

That is:

> *Pygargus*. [This can mean] 1) *cowardly*, 2) *lascivious*, or 3) *rapacious*.
> 3) According to Archilochus, 'melampygi' and 'pygargi' are species of eagle, which is why the rapacious man is called 'pygargus'.
> 2) The lascivious and lewd man is proverbially called *pygargus* as a euphemism, for though he does not actually have gleaming-white buttocks, he wags them during sexual intercourse.
> 1) The coward is in turn called *pygargus*, as one who has white buttocks. This is the reverse of the proverb that says *Never yet hast thou come upon a black-*

> *arsed one* (i.e. Hercules). For if the black-arsed are noble, as Hercules was, then the white-arsed are absolutely feeble, cowardly and unmanly. For so said Thia the daughter of Ocean to her own children about Hercules: *Never yet have ye come upon a black-arsed one*.

In his *Chiliades*, under the proverb Μὴ τῷ μελαμπύγῳ περιτύχοις (*Ne in melampygum incidas*), Erasmus cited only definition (1) in this scholium, noting as Tzetzes had that the Greeks used πύγαργος as an epithet for an effeminate or cowardly man, just as its opposite μελάμπυγος was an epithet of Hercules. ('*Quod*', Erasmus wrote, '*eam corporis partem* [i.e. *πυγὴν*] *non Lydorum more vulsam, neque candidam, quemadmodum effeminati solent, sed nigris pilis hirsutam ac silvosam haberet*.') Erasmus did not cite the words ἅρπαξ πύγαργος in Tzetzes' gloss, or make any reference to eagles at all; nor did he cite the definition 'lewd'. Thus, if we are to assume that Des Periers learnt the word πύγαργος from Erasmus, it seems likeliest that he took it in the sense δειλός; i.e. 'soft; effeminate; cowardly'. This is not, however, a natural epithet for a moneylender. Perhaps after all Des Periers meant *Pygargus* merely as a ludicrous name, having stumbled across it in the *Adagia*.

Lacour, for his part (CM 1856, p. 367, n. 2), wrote the following note on the name, which was endorsed by Frank:

> En grec *cul blanc* étoit le nom d'un aigle qu'on appelle aujourd'hui *jean-le-blanc*. On n'a pas remarqué l'allusion tant soit peu satyrique de ce passage pour n'avoir pas réfléchi que jean-le-blanc étoit aussi le nom dérisoire que certains huguenots donnoient, au XVIe siècle, à l'hostie consacrée.

Why there should have been a reference to the Host in the name of this particular character, Lacour did not say.

qui me pourra prendre. In *Pantagruel* (NRB 1, sig. N_{ii}r.) Epistemon declares: 'Nous userons du droict de guerre / qui potest capere capiat.' This is a reference to Matthew 19.12: *Qui potest capere capiat*. Both Epistemon and Hylactor play on the double meaning of *capere*, and turn Jesus' utterance: *he that is able to understand* [*this saying*]*, let him understand it* into the literal *catch me if you can*.[56]

Gargilius. Cf. Horace, *Ep*. I.vi.58–61:

> *...venemur ut olim*
> *Gargilius qui mane plagas venabula servos*
> *Differtum transire forum populumque iubebat*
> *Unus ut e multis populo spectante referret*
> *Emptum mulus aprum.*

[56] See Marcel Duchemin, 'Origine d'une citation de Rabelais', *Bulletin de l'Association Guillaume Budé* Troisième série, no. 2 (June 1951): pp. 83–84.

< Giii v. >

gard espagnol mon amy. dieu gard mon compa⸗
gnon levrier. Ouy dea, ilz sont tous muetz:
au diable le mot que lon scauroit avoir deulx.
Nest ce pas pitié? Puis que ainsi est que ie nen
trouve pas ung qui me puisse respondre, ie voul⸗ 5
drois scavoir quelque poison ou herbe qui me
feist perdre la parolle, & me rendist aussi bien
muet quilz sont. Ie seroye bien plus heureux
que de languir ainsi du miserable desir que iay
de parler & ne trouver oreilles commodes pour 10
ce faire, telles que ie les desire. Et toy compaignon,
ne scaurois tu rien dire? Parlez a des bestes. Dy
he matin, parles tu point? PAMPHAGVS.
Qui appelles tu matin? Matin toy mesmes.
HYLACTOR. He mon compagnon, mon 15
amy pardonne moy, sil te plait, & maccolle,
ie te prie. Tu es celuy que iay le plus desiré
& cherché en ce monde. Et voyla ung sault
pour lamour de Diane, qui ma rendu tant
heureux en ceste chasse, que ie y ay trouvé ce 20
que ie cherchoye. En voyla encor ung autre
pour toy gentil Anubis. Et cestuy la pour Cer⸗
berus, qui garde les enfers. Dy moy ton nom sil
te plait. PAMPHAGVS. Pamphagus. HY⸗
LACTOR. Est ce toy, Pamphagus mon cousin, 25
mon amy? Tu cognois donc bien Hylactor.
PAMP. Voire dea, ie cognois bien Hylactor.
ou est il? HYL. Cest moy. PAMP. Par ta foy?

28 Par ta foy?] par ma foy! *Giraud*

*

espagnol. A spaniel. To judge from Hu-ESPAGNEUL, it was often joined in a pair with *levrier*.

oreilles commodes. 'Favourable ears'; 'ears fit to hear' (CM 1712). In Latin one speaks of *aures æquæ, benignæ, secundæ, propitiæ*, etc. I do not think that *aures commodæ* itself has a classical attestation, but I have seen one in a contemporary book.[57]

Parlez a des bestes. CM 1732*: 'il faut sous-entendre, *vous en tirerés de belles reponses*.'

matin. Giraud (p. 30): 'Si l'on n'explique pas «matin» par «chien *bâtard*», on risque de ne pas percevoir la vivacité du dialogue du chiens.' Let us be bored to death by the dialogue if we must; *mâtin* does not mean this. Just like the English 'dog', it was a general term of abuse, applied freely to Saracens and scoundrels. See DMF-MASTIN, I.b. The joke here is Hylactor's use of it in the literal sense, which accidentally offends Pamphagus.

[57] *Sententiæ aliquot memoratu non indignæ* (Paris: Nicolas Buffet, 1543), p. [1].

< G_{iv} r. >

Pardonne moy Hilactor mon amy, ie ne te pou⸗
voye recognoistre, car tu as une oreille coup⸗
pee, & ie ne scay quelle cicatrice au front, que tu ne
soulois pas avoir. dont test venu cela? HYLA.
Ne ten enquiers plus avant, ie te prie, la chose 5
ne vauldroit pas le racompter, parlons dautre
matiere. Ou as tu esté, & quas tu faict depuis
que nous perdismes nostre bon maistre Acteon?
PAM. Ha, le grand malheur, tu me renouvel⸗
les mes douleurs. O que ie perdiz beaucoup en 10
sa mort, Hylactor mon amy: Car ie faisoye
grand chere lors, ou maintenant ie meurs de fain.
HYL. Par mon serment nous avions bon temps,
quand ie y pense. Cestoit ung homme de bien que
Acteon, & vray gentilhomme, car il aymoit bien 15
les chiens. On neust osé frapper le moindre de
nous, quoy quil eust faict. Et avec cela que nous
estions bien traictez, tout ce que nous pouvions
prendre, feust en la cuisine, au gardemanger, ou
ailleurs, estoit nostre, sans que personne eust esté 20
si hardy de nous battre ou toucher, Car il la⸗
voit ainsi ordonné, pour nous nourrir plus libe⸗
ralement. PAMP. Helas, il est vray. le maistre
que ie sers maintenant, nest pas tel, il sen fault
beaucoup: car il ne tient compte de nous, ny ses 25
gens ne nous baillent rien a manger la plus part
du temps: & toutes les foys que lon nous trouve
en la cuysine, on nous hue, on nous hare, on

1 Pardonne moy] *CM 1537, CM 1538, CM 1732;* par bonne foy *CM Buc, CM Eug, CM Gen, CM 1711a, [CM 1712]*
1 Hilactor] *CM 1537, CM 1538, CM 2019;* Hylactor *CM 1711a, CM 1732, CM 1753, CM 1841, CM 1856, CM 1858, CM 1873, CM 1958, Giraud*
4 dont] *CM 1537, CM 1538;* dond *CM 1732;* d'où *CM Buc, CM Eug, CM Gen, CM 1711a*
14 ie y] *CM 1537, CM 1538, CM Buc, CM 1711a, CM 1732; j'y CM Eug, CM Gen*

*

plus avant. '[Any] further'. At H_{ii} r. 15 and G_{ii} v. 24 it has the concrete meaning 'farther'.

tu me renouveles. Aeneas to Dido (*Aen*. II.3): *Infandum regina iubes renovare dolorem*.

on nous hue. 'They cry at us' (Li-HUER).

on nous hare. Explained by CM 1732* as *crier haro*. It appears rather to mean 'harass'. HUHARER's examples make this apparent, but for some reason Huguet singled out this very passage as his only example of the special meaning '*chasser*'. CM 1712 has 'they hout and harr us', of which only the first is a real English word.

nous menace, on nous chasse, on nous bat tel⸗
lement que nous sommes plus murdris &
deschirez de coups, que vieulx coquins. HY⸗
LACT. Voyla que cest, Pamphagus mon amy,
il fault prendre en pacience. Le meilleur remede 5
que ie sache pour les doleurs presentes, cest dou⸗
blier les ioyes passees en esperance de mieulx
avoir. Ainsi que au contraire, le souvenir des
maulx passez sans crainte diceulx, ny de pis,
faict trouver les biens presens bien meilleurs, & 10
beaucoup plus doulx. Or, scais tu que nous fe⸗
rons Pamphagus mon cousin? Laissons leur cour⸗
re le livre, & nous escartons toy & moy pour
deviser ung petit plus a loisir. PAMPHAGVS.
Ien suis content, mais il ne nous fault gueres 15
demourer. HYLACTOR. Tant peu que tu
vouldras, peult estre que nous ne nous rever⸗
rons de long temps. Ie seray bien ayse de te
dire plusieurs choses, & den entendre aussi
de toy. Nous voicy bien, Ilz ne nous scau⸗ 20
roient veoir en ce petit boscage. Et puis leur
gibbier ne sadresse pas pardeca. Ce pendant ie
te demanderoye voluntiers si tu scays point la
cause pourquoy toy & moy parlons, & tous les
autres chiens sont muetz, Car ie nen trouvay 25
iamais qui me sceust rien dire fors que toy, &
si en ay beaucoup veu en mon temps. PAM. Nen
scais tu rien? Ie te la voys dire. Te souvient il

12 leur] *CM 1537, CM 1538, CM Eug, CM 1732*; leurs *CM Buc, CM Gen, CM 1711a*
16 demourer] *CM 1537, CM 1538, CM 1732, CM Buc, CM 1711a;* demeurer *CM Eug, CM Buc*
17–18 reverrons] trouverons *CM Buc, CM Eug, CM Gen, CM 1711a*
27–10 Nen scais … cela] *om. CM Gen, suppl. a Marchand*
28 Ie te la voys] *CM 1537, CM 1538, CM 1732;* ie te le *CM Buc, CM Eug, CM 1711a, CM 1753, CM 1841, Giraud (hæs.)*

*

Le meilleur remede etc. A precept best known from Dante (*Nessun maggior dolore* etc.), but stemming originally from Boëthius, *Consolatio philosophiæ*, II.iv:

> Sed hoc est quod recolentem vehementius coquit; nam in omni adversitate fortunae infelicissimum est genus infortunii fuisse felicem.

Ainsi que au contraire etc. Cf. Seneca, *ep. ad Luc*. LXXVIII.14–15:

> Deinde quod acerbum fuit ferre, tulisse iucundum est: naturale est mali sui fine gaudere. Circumcidenda ergo duo sunt, et futuri timor et veteris incommodi memoria: hoc ad me iam non pertinet, illud nondum. In ipsis positus difficultatibus dicat, *forsan et haec olim meminisse iuvabit*.

bien quand noz compagnons Melanchetes, Theri⸗
damas, & Oresitrophus saillirent sus Acteon
leur bon maistre, & le nostre, lequel Diane avoit
nouvellement transformé en serf, & que nous au⸗
tres accourrusmes, & luy baillasmes tant de
coups de dentz, quil mourut en la place? Tu dois
scavoir (comme iay depuis veu en ie ne scay quel
livre qui est en nostre maison) HYLACT.
Comment? tu scais donc bien lire. ou as tu apprins
cela? PAMPHAG. Ie le te diray aprés: mais
escoute cecy premierement. Tu doys entendre
que quand ung chascun de nous faisoit ses effortz
de le mordre, dadventure ie le mordiz en la lan⸗
gue, laquelle il tiroit hors la bouche, si bien que ien
emportay une bonne piece que iavallay. Or dict
le compte, que cela fut cause de me faire parler.
Il nya rien si vray: car aussi Diane le vouloit.
Mais pource que ie nay point encores parlé de⸗
vant les hommes, on cuyde que ce ne soit qune fa⸗
ble: toutesfoys si est on tousiours aprés pour
trouver les chiens qui mangerent de la langue Da⸗
cteon serf. Car le livre dict quil y en eust deux,
dont ien suis lung. HYLA. Corbieu ie suis donc
lautre: car iay souvenance que ie mangeay ung bon
loppin de sa langue. Mais ie neusse iamais pensé
que la parolle me fust venue a cause de cela.
PAM. Ie tasseure Hylactor mon amy, quil est
ainsi que ie le te dy: car ie lay veu en escript.

1 Melanchetes] *(Μελαγχαίτης) CM 1856, CM 1858, Giraud;* Melancheres *CM 1537, CM 1538, CM Eug, CM 1711a, CM 1712, CM 1723, CM 1732, CM 1753, CM 1873, CM 1958, CM 2019;* Melanchœtes *CM 1711b^{ABC}, CM 1841; Melanchoëtes CM 1753^{errata}*

1–2 Theridamas] *(Θηριδάμας) CM 1537, CM 1538, CM 1711a, CM 1712, CM 1723, CM 1732, CM 1753, CM 1841, CM 1856, CM 1858, CM 1873, CM 1958, CM 2019;* Therodamas *(Θηροδάμας) Giraud*

2 Oresitrophus] *(Ὀρεσίτροφος) CM 1537, CM 1538, CM 1711b^{ABC}, CM 1732, CM 1753, CM 1841, CM 1858, CM 1873, CM 1958, CM 2019;* Dresitrophus *CM Buc, CM 1711a, CM 1712;* Desitrophus *CM Eug, leg. et corr. CM 1711b^{ABC}, CM 1723*

4, 22 serf] *CM 1537, CM 1538, CM Gen (l. 22 tantum, corr.), CM 1873, CM 2019;* cerf *CM Buc, CM Eug, CM 1711a, CM 1732, CM 1856, CM 1858, CM 1958, Giraud*

20 toutesfoys] touteffoys *CM 1537*

8 maison)] *CM 1537, CM 1538, CM 1873;* maison)… *CM 1711a, CM 1732, CM 1856, CM 1958, Giraud;* maison. *CM Buc, CM 1858;* maison… *CM 1753, CM 1841;* maison). *CM 2019*

10 le te] *CM 1537, CM 1538, CM 1732;* te le *CM Buc, CM Eug, CM 1711a*

11 premierement] *CM Buc, CM 1711a;* premierm^{t} *CM Eug;* premier^{mt} *CM Gen*

*

saillirent sus Acteon. Lacour (CM 1856, p. 371, n. 2), agreeing with Lacroix, cited above:

> Selon nous, Actéon seroit le Christ, dont l'Eglise, — ici Diane, — a fait un Dieu. Plus bas, par la langue d'Actéon, Des Periers entend les Evangiles, sur lesquels furent d'abord concentrés les efforts des nouveaux réformés pour en rétablir le vrai sens. Ajoutons que l'auteur semble prédire, en appuyant sur la mort d'Actéon, que la réforme aura été le dernier soupir de la religion chrétienne, et qu'en livrant les Evangiles au libre examen on a rendu impossible tout culte à leur héros.

Melanchetes, etc. Ovid, *Metamorphoses* III.232–6:

> Prima Melanchætes in tergo vulnera fecit,
> Proxima Therodamas, Oresitrophos hæsit in armo.
> Tardius exierant sed per compendia montis
> Anticipata via est. dominum retinentibus illis
> Cetera turba coït confertque in corpore dentes.

Frank (CM 1873, p. 115) insisted on *Melancheres* as the right reading. He wrote:

> Il s'agit ici de *Melanchthon*; comme *Melanchetes* signifie *au poil noir* & que *Melanchthon* veut dire *terre noire*, Des Periers a mis *Melancheres* (pour *Melancheras*;—χερὰς, mélange de vase & de gravier, *gravier noir*), qui se rapproche bien plus de l'idée du mot Melanchthon. Johanneau a donc relevé à tort la faute apparente.

Theridamas. Giraud considered this spelling erroneous, on the apparent grounds that the spelling *Therodamas* is now given by most modern editors of Ovid. But even if it is wrong, *Theridamas* is indeed the reading of most mss. of the *Metamorphoses* (III.233), and certainly of any text that Des Periers could possibly have consulted. Frank (loc. cit.) on this name:

> *Zwingle* est désigné par *Theridamas* (dompteur de bêtes fauves); mais on n'a pas vu pourquoi : c'est que *Zwingle* vient de *Zwingen*, dompter, ou de *Zwinger*, dompteur, en allemand.

Oresitrophus. Frank, rounding out his inspired identifications:

> *Oresitrophus* (né, nourri dans les montagnes) désigne, selon moi, Luther, l'apôtre de la *Wartbourg*, originaire, en outre, d'un pays de mines & de montagnes.

serf. An unimpeachable variant of *cerf*. See FEW-CERVUS. Frank (loc. cit.), who agreed with Lacroix and Lacour that Acteon stood for Christ, thought that the spelling *serf* was significant, as it alluded to Christ's being made a serf by Rome, which Lacour had already identified under the guise of Diana. In further proof that *Diane* stood for Rome, Frank added that both the goddess and the city had three names.

aussi. 'So', not 'too'. See DMF-AUSSI, a.

HYLA. Tu es bien heureux de te cognoistre
ainsi aux livres, ou lon voit tant de bonnes cho⸗
ses. Que cest ung beau passetemps, ie vouldroye
que Diane meust faict la grace de scavoir au⸗
tant que toy. PAM. Et ie vouldroye bien que ie nen
sceusse ia tant, car de quoy sert cela a ung chien,
ny le parler avec? Ung chien ne doibt autre
chose scavoir, sinon abayer aux estrangers, ser⸗
vir de garde a la maison, flatter les domestiques,
aller a la chasse, courir le lievre, & le prendre,
ronger les os, lescher la vaisselle, & suivre son
maistre. HYLA. Il est vray: mais toutesfoys si
faict il bon scavoir quelque chose davantage: car
on ne scait ou lon se trouve. Comment? tu nas
donc point encore donné a entendre aux gens, que
tu scais parler? PAMP. Non. HYLA. Et pour
quoy? PAMP. Pource quil ne men chault: car
iayme mieulx me taire. HYL. Toutesfoys si
tu voulois dire quelque chose devant les hommes,
tu scais bien que les gens de la ville non seulement
te iroyent escouter, sesmerveillans, & prenans
plaisir a te ouyr: Mais aussi ceulx de tout le
pays a lenviron, voire de tous costez du monde
viendroyent a toy pour te veoir, & ouyr parler.
Nestimes tu rien veoir a lentour de toy dix
milions doreilles qui tescoutenet, & autant dyeulx
qui te regardent en face? PAMP. Ie scay bien
tout cela. Mais quel prouffit men viendroit dad⸗

8 estrangers] *CM 1537;* estrangiers *CM 1538*
12, 18 toutesfoys] touteffoys *CM 1537*

< H_{ii} r. >

vantage? Ie nayme point la gloire de causer,
affin que ie le te dye: car avec ce que ce me seroit
une peine, il ny auroit si petit coquin a qui il
ne me faillist tenir propos, & rendre raison.
On me tiendroit en chambre, ie le scay bien, on 5
me froteroit, on me pigneroit, on maccoustre⸗
roit, on madoreroit, on me doreroit, on me
dorelotteroit, Bref, ie suis bien asseuré que lon
me vouldroit faire vivre autrement que le na⸗
turel dung chien ne requiert. {Mais.} HYLAC. 10
Et bien, serois tu pas content de vivre ung pe⸗
tit a la facon des hommes? PAMPH. A la facon
des hommes? Ie te iure par les trois testes de
Cerberus, que iayme mieulx estre tousiours
ce que ie suys, que plus avant ressembler les hom⸗ 15
mes, en leur miserable facon de vivre, quand
ne seroit ia que pour le trop parler dont il me
fauldroit user avec eulx. HYLAC. Ie ne suis
pas de ton opinion. Vray est que ie nay point
encores parlé devant eulx. Mais sans cela que 20
iavoye en phantasie de trouver premierement
quelque compagnon qui sceut parler comme nous,
ie neusse pas tant mis a leur dire quelque chose:
car ien vivroye mieux, plus honnorablement,
& magnifiquement. Ma parolle seroit preferee 25
a celle de tous les hommes, quoy que ie disse:
Car incontinent que iouvriroye la bouche pour
parler, lon feroit faire silence pour mescouter.

10 Mais.] *CM 1537, CM 1538, CM Gen, CM 1873, CM 2019;* Mais… *CM Buc, CM Eug*, *CM 1711a, CM 1732, CM 1753, CM 1841, CM 1856, CM 1858, CM 1958; fort. omittendum*
10 HYLAC.] HyLAC. *CM 1537*
22 nous] *CM 1537, CM 1538, CM 1732;* moy *CM Buc, CM Eug, CM Gen, CM 1711a*
26 quoy que] *CM Buc, CM Gen, CM 1711a;* quoique *CM Eug, CM 1711b*[§]

*

On me tiendroit etc. Abel Lefranc pointed out the Rabelaisian *copia* of this sentence.[58]

dorelotteroit. 'Pamper' (Li-DORLOTER); 'dandle' (CM 1712).

Le naturel dung chien. 'A dog's nature' (Li-NATUREL, 19; OED-NATURAL, n.1, I.2).

**

§. 2. (Ma parolle seroit preferée à celle de tous les hommes, quoique je disse &c.) Cela est vrai; les hommes se laissent tellement aller au merveilleux & à l'extraordinaire, qu'ils ne sont plus capables de juger sur ce qu'on leur debite, & d'y distinguer le vrai du faux, le raisonnable du ridicule.

[58] 'La penséee secrète', p. lxiv.

< Hii v. >

Ne scay ie pas bien que cest que des hommes?
Ilz se faschent voulentiers des choses presentes,
accoustumees, familieres, & certaines, & ay⸗
ment tousiours mieulx les absentes, nouvel⸗
les, estrangeres, & impossibles. Et sont si sot⸗ 5
tement curieux, quil ne fauldroit qune petite
plume qui seslevast de terre le moins du monde
pour les amuser tous quantz quilz sont. PAM⸗
PHAGVS. Il nya rien si vray, que les hommes
se faschent douyr parler lung lautre, & voul⸗ 10
droyent bien ouyr quelque chose dailleurs
que deulx mesmes. Mais considerez aussi,
qua la longue il leur ennuiroit de te oyr causer.
Ung present nest iamais si beau ne si plaisant
qua lheure quon le presente, & que avec belles pa⸗ 15
rolles on le faict trouver bon. On na iamais tant
de plaisir avec Lycisca que la premiere foys que
lon la couvre. Ung collier nest iamais si neuf,
que le premier iour quon le mect: Car le temps en⸗
vieillit toutes choses, & leur faict perdre la gra⸗ 20
ce de nouveauté. Auroit lon prou ouy parler les
chiens, on vouldroit ouyr parler les chatz, les beufs,
les chevres, les ouailles, les asnes, les porceaulx,
les pulces, les oyseaulx, les poissons, & tous aul⸗
tres animaulx. Et puis quauroit lon davantage 25
quand tout seroit dict? Si tu consideres bien, il
vault mieulx que tu soys encores a parler, que
si tu eusse desia tout dict. HYLAC. Or ie ne

2 faschent] *CM Gen;* fâchent *CM Buc, CM Eug, CM 1711a;* fachent *CM 1711b§*
2 voulentiers] *CM 1537*, *CM 1538;* volontiers CM Buc*, CM Eug, CM Gen, CM 1711a, CM 1711b§*
3 accoustumees] *CM Gen;* accoûtumées *CM 1711b§;* accoutumées *CM Eug, CM 1711a*
12 considerez] *CM 1537*, *CM 1538, CM Buc, CM Eug, CM Gen, CM 1732, CM 1958;* consideres *CM 1711a, Giraud*; considere *CM 1841*
14 ne] *CM 1537*, *CM 1538, CM 1732;* ny *CM Buc, CM Eug, CM Gen, CM 1711a*
22 ouyr] *CM Buc, CM Eug, CM 1711a, CM 1732, CM 1753, CM 1841, CM 1856, CM 1873, CM 1958, Boerner, Giraud, CM 2019;* ouy *CM 1537, CM 1538, CM Gen, CM 1858*
22 beufs,] *CM Buc, CM Eug, CM Gen, CM 1711a, CM 1732, CM 1753, CM 1841, CM 1856, CM 1858, CM 1873, CM 1958; om. virg. CM 1537, CM 1538, CM 2019*
23 les ouailles] *CM Buc, CM Eug, CM Gen, CM 1711a, CM 1732, CM 1753, CM 1841, CM 1856, CM 1858, CM 1873, CM 1958, Giraud, CM 2019*; le ouailles *CM 1537, CM 1538*
28 eusse] *CM 1537, CM 1538, CM Buc, CM Gen, CM 1856, CM 1858, CM 1873, CM 1958, CM 2019*; eusses *CM Eug, CM 1711a, CM 1732, CM 1753, CM 1841*

*

tous quantz. Like Latin *quotquot sunt*.

qua la longue. RC-LONG: '*À la longue*. At length, in tract or continuance of time, yet at the last, after much adoe.'

Lycisca. A bitch in Actæon's pack. Cf. Ovid, *Metamorphoses* III.220: '*et Thoos et Cyprio velox cum fratre Lycisce*'.

le temps envieillit toutes choses. Aristotle, *Physics*, IV.12 (221ᵃ): 'γηράσκει πάνθ' ὑπὸ τοῦ χρόνου'. A similar thought is to be found in the opening section of the *Roman de la rose*.

perdre la grace de nouveauté. Compare this to a passage in Dolet's dedicatory letter (addressed to Guillaume Budé) to his *Commentarii*, in which he skewered Erasmus for his ephemeral novelty (sig. *4ii r.):

> Satis enim superque novi, quàm inania sint, & quàm subita oblivione deleantur, quamque celeriter fastidio, atque satietate posteritatem enecent, quæ sine doctrinæ commendatione, vel historiæ monimentis à doctis exeunt. Ficta orationum argumenta (sublata dicendi consuetudine fingenda sunt) aptè, distinctè, ornatè, variéque pertractes. Pugnaci, & refractariolo defensionum, apologiarumque genere in hunc, in illumve te vibres. Epistolas germana quadam, & vera linguæ Latine conscribas. Voluminum strue bibliothecas oneres; vulgi Grammaticorum, vel hominum curiosiorum plausi maximo tum sanè excipiere, sed brevi interibit novitatis gratia, æqualibusque qui placueris, posteritati frigebis certè quidem totus.

This gives us a clue to Des Periers' own motivations in this fourth dialogue. Hylactor is a garrulous storyteller like Erasmus was in Dolet's conception. He tells tales without regard to their truth or elegance, and offers neither thing which could possibly give lasting worth to a literary production: instruction in history, or religious teaching.

les oyseaulx, les poissons. Horace, Odes IV.3.19–20*: O mutis quoque piscibus / donatura cycni si libeat sonum*.

**

§. 3. (Ils se fachent volontiers des choses presentes, accoûtumées & familieres &c.) Le goût des hommes est si changeant & tellement porté à la nouveauté, qu'effectivement le moindre objet nouveau les surprend, & les attache. On regarde avec application un *Chinois*, un *Siamois*, un *Mexicain*; on examine attentivement un habit de mode nouvelle, ou d'un goût bizarre; on reçoit sans balancer les raisons d'un homme qui ne parle pas comme les autres. On saisit, pour ainsi dire, les Dogmes de celui qui ose croire, ce que personne n'avoit crû, jusques alors. Quand les Reformateurs s'aviserent de prêcher sur des bancs, en pleines ruës, sur le marché, dans les hales; on courut avec empressement pour entendre ces nouveaux *Evangelizans*. Combien y en eut il qui se rendirent autant à la maniere de prêcher, qu'aux raisons du Predicateur?

men pourrois pas tenir longuement. PAM⸗
PHAGVS. Ie men raporte a toy, on te aura en
fort grand admiration pour ung temps, on te pri⸗
sera beaucoup, tu mengeras de bons morceaulx,
tu seras bien servy de tout, excepté que lon ne te 5
dira pas, duquel voulez vous? car tu ne boys point
de vin, comme ie croy: au reste, tu auras tout ce que
tu demanderas: Mais tu ne seras pas en telle li⸗
berté que tu desireroys: Car bien souvent il te
fauldra parler a lheure que tu vouldrois dor⸗ 10
mir, & prendre ton repos. Et puis ie ne scay
si a la fin on se faschera point de toy. Or il est
temps de nous retirer pardevers noz gens, allons nous
en a eulx: mais il fault faire semblant davoir bien
couru & travaillé, & destre hors daleine. HY⸗ 15
LACT. Quest ce que que ie voy la au chemin?
PAMPHAGVS. Cest ung paquet de lettres,
qui est tumbé a quelcun. HYLACT. Ie te prie
desplie le, & regarde veoir que cest, puis que tu
scais bien lire. PAMPHAGVS. Aux antipodes 20
superieurs. HYL. Aux antipodes superieurs? ie
croy quil y aura quelque chose de nouveau. PAM.
Les Antipodes inferieurs, aux Antipodes su⸗
perieurs. HYL. Mon dieu, quelles viennent de
bien loing. PAM. Messieurs les Antipodes, par 25
le desir que nous avons de humainement converser
avec vous, a celle fin dapprendre de voz bonnes
facons de vivre, & vous communiquer des nostres,

1 PAM⸗] *CM 1538;* PHAM⸗ *CM 1537*
5 seras] *CM 1538, CM 1873, CM 1958, Giraud;* sera *CM 1537, CM 1732, CM 2019*

*

Tu ne boys point de vin. See Aulus Gellius, XIII.xxxi: 'Quid significet prandium caninum, rem leviculam, diu et anxie quaesivimus. Prandium autem abstemium, in quo nihil potatur, caninum dicitur, quoniam canis vino caret.' This was excerpted by Erasmus in his *Chiliades* under the heading *Caninum prandium*. Hence also RC-DISNER DE CHIEN: 'A meale made onely of bread, & water; or wherein there is nothing drunke but water.'

Lacour interpreted this sentence allegorially as: 'car tu n'admets pas la preesence réellle dans le vin de la cène' (CM 1856, p. 375n).

tu ne seras pas en telle liberté. This whole speech is derived from Lucian's *De mercede conductis*, which expounds the sleeplessness and servile bondage associated with a life of supposed luxury in a great house. Lucian also explains the danger of eventually becoming tiresome to one's masters:

> Ἐπειδὰν δὲ ἄσιτόν τε καὶ ἄποτον ἡ νὺξ καταλάβῃ, λουσάμενος πονηρῶς ἀωρὶ περὶ αὐτό που σχεδὸν τὸ μεσονύκτιον ἥκεις ἐπὶ τὸ δεῖπνον, οὐκέθ᾽ ὁμοίως ἔντιμος οὐδὲ περίβλεπτος τοῖς παροῦσιν, ἀλλ᾽ ἤν τις ἄλλος ἐπεισέλθῃ νεαλέστερος, εἰς τοὐπίσω σύ.

Aux antipodes superieurs. Cf. Servius (at *Aen*. VI. 532): 'Tiberianus … inducit epistolam vento allatam ab antipodibus quæ habet superi inferis salutem'. | Lacroix (CM 1841, p. 74, n. 1): 'C'est-à-dire sans doute: les chrétiens réformés aux catholiques romains.'

converser avec vous. 'To consort, hold intercourse with you'; thus identical to the Latin *conversari*. This is also the original sense of the English equivalent *to converse*, the modern sense of which is not attested before the turn of the seventeenth century (OED).

suyvans le conseil des astres, avions faict passer
par le Centre de la terre aulcuns de noz gens
pour aller par devers vous: mais vous ayans
aperceu cela, leur avez estouppé le trou de vo⸗
stre costé, de sorte, quil fault quilz demeurent
aux entrailles de la terre. Or nous vous prions
que vostre bon plaisir soit leur donner passage:
autrement nous vous en ferons sortir pardela
de tant de costez, & en si grande abundance, que
vous ne scaurez au quel courir: Tellement, que
ce que lon vous prie faire de grace & amour, se⸗
rez contrains souffrir par force, a vostre grande
honte & confusion. Et Adieu soyez. Voz bons
amys les Antipodes inferieurs. Voyla bien des
nouvelles. HYL. Cest mon, & merveilleuses.
PAM. Escoute, on me husche, il men fault aller.
nous lirons le demeurant des lettres une aultre
foys. HYL. Mais ou est ce que tu les mettras?
Cache les la en quelque trou de ceste pyrami⸗
de, & les couvre dune pierre, on ne les trouve⸗
ra iamais, & puis au iourdhuy a quelque heure
si nous sommes de loysir, ou demain qui est le
iour des Saturnalles, nous les viendrons achever
de lire: car iespere quil y aura quelques bonnes
nouvelles, aussi bien te veulx ie apprendre plu⸗
sieurs belles fables, que iay ouy racompter autre⸗
foys: comme la fable de Prometheus, la fable du
grand Hercules de Libye, la fable du iugement

*

Or nous vous prions. The Antipodeans' threat seems to be inspired by an episode recounted at Numbers 21:21–31 and at Deuteronomy 2:24–37. The Israelites send an embassy to Sihon, king of the Amorites, requiring safe passage through his land, and threatening ruin in case of a refusal. When Sihon refuses, the Israelites conquer the land by the sword, slaughter all of its inhabitants, and take the cattle for themselves. If not this, then there are many instances in classical literature of a tribe's demanding passage through another tribe's territory, like the repeated requests of the expansionist Helvetii at the beginning of Caesar's *Commentarii*.

Cest mon. 'Sunt autem assentientis verba illa. nam si dixero, *C'est un bon homme*, vel *C'est un fin homme*: assentiendo mihi respondebitur, *C'est mon.*'—Henri Estienne, *Hypomneses de gallica lingua* (Paris: Henri Estienne, 1582), p. 210.

on me husche. 'I'm being cried for'. See Hu-HUCHER, which cites this passage among its many examples.

Hercules de Libye. This was a figure who earned a few passing references from Latin authors. Cf. Sallust, *De bello Jugurthino*, IXC: 'Erat inter ingentis solitudines oppidum magnum atque

valens nomine Capsa, cuius conditor Hercules Libys memorabatur.' Furthermore, Solinus (*Collectanea*, XXIV.2) and Capella (*De nuptiis*, VI.667) both remark that Africa takes its name from Afer, the son of Libyan Hercules. Des Periers' direct source, however, was probably none of these three, but rather Jean Lemaire's *Illustrations de Gaule et singularitez de Troye* (ca. 1510), which described the exploits of Hercules of Libya on the basis of information in Annius of Viterbo's forgery *De his quae præcesserunt inundationem terrarum*.[59] In cap. I.xi, Lemaire explained that Hercules of Libya had come to Gaul, married Queen Galathea, and ruled as its tenth king. Here, from the edition of 1512 on Gallica, is a woodcut showing Hercules de Libye himself (left, with club and crown):[60]

Source gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque nationale de France

[59] The early publication history of Lemaire's book is very complicated; see Jacques Abelard, *Les* Illustrations de Gaule et singularitez de Troye *de Jean Lemaire de Belges. Étude des éditions — Genèse de l'œuvre*, Publications romanes et françaises 140 (Geneva: Droz, 1976).
[60] Jan Le Maire de Belges, *Les Illustrations de Gaule & Singularitez de Troye* (Paris: Geoffroy de Marnef, 1512), fol. 8r.

< H_{iv} r. >

de Paris, la fable de Psaphon, la fable de Erus qui
revesquit, & la chanson de Ricochet, si dad⸗
venture tu ne la scaiz. PAMPHAG. Tu men
bailles bien. ie suis tout bersé de telles matie⸗
res. Hastons nous, ie te prie, & nous taisons, 5
que noz gens qui sont icy prés, ne nous oyent
parler. HYLACTOR. Ie ne parleray donc
meshuy? Si feray par Diane, si ie puis estre en
nostre maison: car ie ne men pourroie plus tenir.
Adieu donc. PAM. Et nonblie pas de bien ou⸗ 10
vrir la bouche, & tirer la langue, affin de faire
les mines davoir bien couru. PAM. Ce follastre
Hylactor ne se pourra tenir de parler, affin que
le monde parle aussi de luy. Il ne scauroit dire
si peu de parolles quil nassemblist tantost beau⸗ 15
coup de gens, & que le bruit nen coure incon⸗
tinent par toute la ville, tant sont les hommes
curieux, & devisans voluntiers des choses nou⸗
velles & estrangeres.

1 Psaphon] *CM 1732*;* Saphon *CM 1537, CM 1538, CM 1711a, CM 1711b§, CM 1732, CM 1753, CM 1841, CM 1858 CM 1958, CM 2019;* Sappho *CM 1712*
1 Erus] *CM 1537, CM 1538, CM 1711a, CM 1712, CM 1732, CM 1753, CM 1841, CM 1858, CM 1958, CM 2019;* Er *CM 1711b^ABC;* Eurus *CM 1723;* Esus *Johanneau (1836)*
2 revesquit] *CM 1537, CM 1538, CM Buc, CM Gen, CM 1711a;* renasquit *CM Eug, CM 1711b§*
4 bersé] *CM 1537, CM 1538, CM 1732;* versé *CM Buc, CM Eug, CM Gen, CM 1711a*
10 nonblie] *CM 1537, CM 1873;* noublie *CM 1538, CM Buc, CM 1711a, CM 1732, CM 1753, CM 1841, CM 1856, CM 1858, CM 1958, Giraud, CM 2019*
10 donc. PAM. Et] donc, Pamphagus, et *CM 1711b^ABC*
12 PAM.] *CM 1537, CM 1538, CM Eug, CM Gen, CM 1856, CM 1858, CM 1873, CM 2019, nec immerito, quod hic epilogus incipit;* Pamphagus seul *CM Buc (*seul *suppl.), CM 1711a, [CM 1723], CM 1732, CM 1753, CM 1841; om. CM 1712, CM 1958, Giraud*
15 nassemblist] *CM 1537, CM 1538, CM 1732;* n'assemblast *CM Buc,CM Eug, CM Gen, CM 1711a*

*

bersé de telles matieres. 'I learned those things in my crib'. (Li-BERCER, citing this passage).

[P]saphon ... Erus. As 1711b^ABC and CM 1732* pointed out, both of these names as they appear in CM 1537 are malformed, and had been better written *Psaphon* and *Er*. It hardly follows, however, that Des Periers himself got them right. Each case must be treated separately. For the former, the relevant document is Erasmus' entry *Psaphonis aves* in his *Chiliades*. This was the common source of the tale in sixteenth-century France, so it seems plausible that Des Periers wrote *Psaphon* as he had found it in Erasmus, and that the form *Saphon* was a mistake by the compositor of CM 1537. In the second case, however, it seems likely that Des Periers wrote *Erus*. The reference is to Er the Pamphylian, the resurrected soldier told of by Socrates in the closing passage of Plato's *Republic* (614b–621d). There,

Plato only mentions his name in the genitive form Ἠρὸς τοῦ Ἀρμενίου. Plutarch, citing this passage (*Symposiaca* IX.740.B), gave the name in the accusative form Ἦρα. On such slight evidence, it was not necessarily easy in the Renaissance to deduce the right nominative form, which gave rise to a collateral form *Erus* that can be found in many books. For example Ficino, the most prominent translator of the *Republic*, wrote *Eri Armenii* at 614b, which implied the nominative *Erus*. On the other hand, Macrobius wrote the nominative *Er* in a famous and widely diffused book.[61]All told, both forms were in circulation, and it would have been surprising if Des Periers harboured enough scruples on this matter to have insisted on *Er* for *Erus*. | Abel Lefranc (*Pantagruel*, p. LXIV, n. 3): 'L'allusion à Erus (Herus, maître, seigneur) offre un sens facile à saisir.'

chanson de Ricochet. Giraud writes that Guillaume Budé glossed this as 'argumentum vel sententia quæ exitum non habent'(p. 31). I do not know what lost work of Budé he discovered. RS-RICOCHET (drawn, Estienne notes, from the papers of the late Budé) reads as follows: 'Ricochet. La chanson du ricochet, Asystaton, Asystatos cantilena. ut Asystatum argumentum, quod exitum non habet.' The words so badly quoted by Giraud do not directly define the *chanson du ricochet*; they are in fact Budé's explanation of the epithet *aystatos*. This in turn wants explanation: just what he meant by *quod exitum non habet* is not apparent from the immediate context: ἀσύστατον has the general meaning 'unstable', and does not obviously mean 'endless'. A glance at Budé's *Commentarii linguæ græcæ* (Robert Estienne, 1548) makes the meaning plain. Under the heading Σύστασις (pp. 498–9), Budé cited the *De statibus* of Hermogenes (I.13–24), who had outlined several different types of the logical fallacy ἀσύστατον. The fourth of these was the 'ἀσύστατον κατὰ τὸ ἄπορον', which Budé glossed as the *genus asystati cuius exitus nullus*. This meant an argument whose successful proof did nothing but re-open the original problem. To explain this concept, Budé excerpted Hermogenenes' example of Alexander, who was told in a dream that one should not pay any heed to what one hears in dreams. In further illustration he cited Lactantius (*Div. inst*. III.6), who had described Arcesilaus' neo-Socratic dictum that 'nothing can be known' as an example of the *genus philosophiæ asystaton*, for that its affirmation calls its own premises into question. (If the proposition 'nothing can be known' is assumed as true, then something can be known after all, but now that thing which we know is the impossibility of knowledge, and we are right back where we started.) Thus by qualifying the *chanson de ricochet* as *asystaton* Budé did not mean only 'endless', but 'having no way out', or 'endless because the argument doubles back on itself'. (In the logical terminology of the twentieth century, such an argument or song is called 'recursive'.) The *chanson de ricochet* itself, if Budé's epithet for it was accurate, would seem not merely to have been a song with no end, but a song whose end demanded the song's own repetition. Songs like this are still sung today by children: *There's a Hole in the Bucket* and *John Jacob Jingleheimer Schmidt* are two. Now, we do not know the words of any actual *chanson de ricochet* of the sixteenth century. And it may be that the phrase *chanson de ricochet* had already passed into proverbial use long before Des Periers' day, and no longer referred to any particular song in current use; or else was a genre of songs rather than the name of any one in particular. In the earliest attestation of *ricochet* cited by Li., the 1432 *Histoire de Boucicaut*, the word is already used in an idiomatic sense. The same is true of Rabelais' mention of the *chanson de ricochet* in *Pantagruel* (iii.10). See also under RC-RICOCHET: '*C'est la chanson du ricochet*: Tis an idle, or endlesse tale, or song; a subiect whereof one part contradicts, marres, or overthrowes, another.' Whatever the case, Hylactor is only making a joke after all, as he facetiously makes

[61] 'Sed ille Platonicus secretorum relator Er quidam nomine fuit, natione Pamphylus.' *Commentarii in Somnium Scipionis* I.

the *chanson de ricochet* into a solemn mythological tale. CM 1723, translating loosely, rendered *chanson de ricochet* as the 'Tale of the Cock and the Bull', which was a very good equivalent.

meshuy. In the meaning 'henceforth' (CM 1732*); not 'today', as Paul Lacroix glossed it (CM 1841, p. 75, n. 4). See DMF-MAISHUI, C.

nonblie. In spite of CM 1538's correction, this does not need to be taken as an error for *noublie*, but merely as a variant thereof. Only Félix Frank was bold enough to let it stand, and for once on philological rather than cryptogrammic grounds. He also listed it in ChFr-OMBLIE. See the other attestations of this nasalized form at FEW-OBLĪTARE, I.1.b, and the etymological discussion in the same article on p. 274b. Note also the intermediate form *oblier* at D_{iv} r. 14 and G_i r. 12, above.

Il ne scauroit dire etc. Compare the phraseology to a passage in Des Periers' *Lysis*:

> Vous ne scauriez si tost estre assis & entrer en parolles, qu'il ne vienne vers vous de soymesmes, comme ie pense, tant est curieux & desirant d'ouyr.[62]

**

§. 4. (La Fable de Saphon) Qu'elle est cette Fable de Saphon? dont il veut parler. [*sic*]
§. 5. (La fable de Erus qui renaquit) Cette fable est rapportée par Platon Liv. dern. de sa Rep. Plutarque, Macrobe, & Ciceron. Cet Er étoit un Pamphylien, soldat de profession, qui resuscita douze jours après sa mort. Des Periers pourroit bien avoir en vuë, quelque chose de plus réel & de plus solide que la fable d'Erus: mais qu'il n'ose pas dire ouvertement, non plus que tout ce qu'il se contente d'insinuer dans ces Dialogues.

[62] *Recueil des œuvres* (1544), p. 7.

Testimonia of *Cymbalum mundi* antedating CM 1711a.

I have aimed to make this an exhaustive list, except with respect to formulaic academic disputations of the late seventeenth century. I have also omitted many (but not all) reprints, posterior editions and translations. A few entries make no mention of the *Cymbalum mundi* itself, but were nevertheless important enough to the development of its reputation that I included them here. Passages that I have never seen cited in modern scholarship are marked with an asterisk.

7 March 1538
Pierre Lizet, president of the Parlement of Paris
Register of the Parlement of Paris

AN X[1A] fol. 221r.–v., printed in James K. Farge, ed., *Religion, Reformation, and Repression in the Reign of Francis I: Documents from the Parlement of Paris, 1515–1547*, 2 vols, Studies and Texts 196 (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2015), pp. 464–465. Printed also in CM 1732.

Ce iour maistre Pierre Lizet, premier president en la Court de ceans, a dit a icelle que mardi dernier sur le iour il receut ung pacquet où y avoit unes lectres du roy et une du chancellier avec ung petit livre en langue françoise intitulé cymbalum mundi; et luy mandoit le roy quil avoit fait veoir led. livre et y trouvoit de grans abuz et heresies, et que a ceste cause il eust a senquerir du compositeur et de limprimeur pour luy advertir et apres proceder a telle punition quil verroit estre a faire. Suivant lequel commandement il avoit fait telle diligence que hier il fist prendre led. imprimeur qui sappelloit Iehan Morin et estoit prisonnier et avoit fait visiter sa boutique et avoit lon trouvé plusieurs folz et erronez livres en icelle venant dAllemaigne, mesmes de Clement Marot, que lon voulloit faire imprimer. A dit aussi que aucuns theologiens lavoient adverty quil y avoit de present en ceste ville plusieurs imprimeurs et libraires estrangiers qui ne vendoient sinon livres de limpression dAllemaigne contenans plusieurs habuz et erreurs; et au iourduy es colleges on ne lisoit plus aux ieunes escoliers sinon livres parmy lesquelz y avoit beaucoup derreurs; et quil y failloit pourvoir promptement, estant certain que lon feroit service a Dieu, bien a la chose publique, et service tresagreable au roy, lequel luy escripvoit que lon ne luy povoit faire service plus agreable que dy donner prompte provision sur ce.

16 April 1538
Pierre Lizet to Antoine Du Bourg

Archives Nationales, AE/II/607, original shelfmark : J//966/30/7 [permalink: https://www.siv.archives-nationales.culture.gouv.fr/siv/media/FRAN_IR_057573/A1_263/FRAN-AEII_N200184N00001]

Monseigneur ie vous ay voulu aduertir que Iehan morin libraire qui a faict imprimer le petit livre Intitule symbalum mundi pourquoy il a este constitué prisonnier suivant lordonnance du Roy / Sest trouve charge dauoir vendu a ung Iehan de la garde aussi libraire quatre petits livres les plus blasphemes heretiques et scandaleux que lon sauroit poinct dire contre le St. sacrement de lautel & toute la doctrine catholique / lesquelz ont este bruslez avec led. de la garde & autres executez ces iours passez a mort & par ce que led morin libraire est prisonnier

de lordonnance du Roy / vostre plaisir soit en parler aud seigneur a ce quil luy plaise me faire entendre sur ce son bon plaisir de commandement.
Monseigneur apres estre treshumblement Racommande a vostre bonne grace priray le benoist saulveur vous donner tresbonne & tres longue vie de Paris ce xvi avril.

Undated [1538]
Jehan Morin

On a sheet tucked into CM 1538a.

A Monseigneur le Chancellier.
Supplie humblemant Iehan Morin, pauvre ieune garson, Libraire de Paris, que comme ainsy soit qu'il aie par ignorance, et sans aucun vouloir de mal faire, ou mesprandre, imprimé ung petit Livre appellé Cymbalum mundi: lequel livre seroit tumbé en scandale, et reprehension de erreur, a cause de quoi ledict suppliant pource qu'il la imprimé auroit esté mis en prison a Paris, et a presant y seroit detenu en grande pauvreté, et doumage a luy insuportable: qu'il vous plaise de vostre benigne grace luy faire ce bien de luy octroier letres, et mander a Monsieur le premier president de Paris, et a monsieur le Lieutenant criminel, que voulez bien qu'il soit relasché à caution de se represanter toutesfoys, et quantes que le commandement luy en sera faict: attendu que par sa deposition il à declaré lauteur dudict livre, et que en ce cas il est du tout innocent, et quil ny eust mis sa marque, ny son nom s'il y eust pencé aucun mal. Ce faisant ferez bien, et iustice, et l'obbligerez a iamais prier Dieu pour vostre prosperité et santé.

17 June 1538
Register of the Parlement of Paris

Archives Nationales X^{2B} 5, printed in Farge, ed., *Religion*, pp. 472–474.

Veu par la Court le proces faict par le prevost de Paris ou son lieutenant criminel a lencontre de Iehan Morin, libraire, demourant rue Saint Iaques en ceste ville de Paris, prisonnier en la Consiergerie du Palais a Paris, appellant de la sentence contre luy donnee par led. prevost ou sond. lieutenant par laquelle et pour raison de ce quil auroit baillé vendu, et delivré aucuns livres contenans plusieurs erreurs et scandales et fait imprimer en sa maison ung livre intitulé Cymbalum mundi, auquel y a, comme lon dit, aucuns erreurs et paroles scandaleuses contre la foy catholique, comme plus a plain est declairé oud. proces, il auroit esté condenné a estre mené en ung tumbereau devant leglise Nostre Dame de Paris et illec faire amende honorable, nue teste et a genoulz, tenant en ses mains une torche de cire ardant, et requerir mercy et pardon a Dieu, au roy, et a iustice; et les meschans livres qui seroient trouvez en sa possession brulez en sa presance. Ce faict, estre batu nud de verges par les carrefours de ceste ville de Paris, aiant la corde au col, tourné au pilory, banny a tousiours de ce roiaume; et ses biens declairez confisquez au roy; et, oy et interrogé par lad. Court icelluy prisonnier sur sad. cause dappel, et tout consideré, il sera dict que, avant que proceder au iugement dud. proces, la Court a ordonné et ordonne led. livre intitulé Cymbalum mundi estre montré et communiqué a la faculté de theologie pour scavoir si en icelluy y a aucuns erreurs et heresies; et aussi sera informé super vita et moribus dud. prisonnier pour, ce faict et le tout veu par lad. Court, estre procedé au iugement dud. proces ainsi que de raison. Et ce pendant, led. prisonnier sera mis en lieu seur quil sera advisé pour le mieulx, a ce que ce pendant il se puisse fair panser et medicamenter de la maladie a luy survenue. F[rançoys de Sainct-André; N[icole] Lesueur.

1 July 1538
Register of the Faculty of Theology

James K. Farge, ed., *Registre des conclusions de la Faculté de théologie de l'Université de Paris*, vol. II: Du novembre 1533 au 1er mars 1550, Textes et Documents sur l'Histoire des Universités 3 (Paris: Klincksieck, 1994).
pp. 129–30: (f. 46v; 147A) | Congregatio facultatis fuit die prima mensis iulii, post missam eiusdem facultatis, anno predicto, in qua presentavit honorandus magister noster Le Sirier, decanus, quemdam librum intitulatum *Symbalum mundi sibi missum*, ut dicebat, a suprema curia; quo presentato, deputavit predicta facultas ad videndum predictum librum magistros nostros Clerici, de Grambus, Bertou et Laurencii; quo viso per predictos deputatos, referent facultati. – Item retulerunt domini sentenciarii de eorum auditoribus.

19 July 1538
Register of the Faculty of Theology

First printed in Charles Du Plessis d'Argentré, *Collectio judiciorum de novis erroribus* [...] Tomus primus, in quo exquisita monumenta ab anno 1100. usque ad annum 1542. continentur (Paris: Andre Cailleau, 1728), p. x, but here as in ibid.:
pp. 130–1 (f. 47r; 148A) | Anno Domini millesimo quingentesimo XXXVIII°, die decima nona mensis iulii, congregata facultate theologie apud collegium Sorbone super libro intitulato *Cymbalum mundi* misso ad facultatem per curiam parlamenti, auditis deliberationibus magistrorum nostrorum, conclusum fuit quod, quamvis liber ille non contineat errores expressos in fide, tamen quia perniciosus est, ideo supprimendus.

31 July 1538
Andreas Zebedæus

First printed in Gabrielle Berthoud, 'Lettres de réformés saisies à Lyon en août 1538', *Revue de théologie et de philosophie* 24, no. 99 (June 1936): pp. 154–178.

My transcription from vol. 502 in the Collection Dupuy in the Bibliothèque Nationale.

[Summary of a letter from Andreas Zebedæus to Charles de Candelay, Geneva, 31 July 1538.]

foll. 13–14 | Larticle suyvant dit que France est par grans espritz tiree a lenseigne de Epicure Et que celluy qui a faict Cymbalum mundi ne tendit Iamais a aultre chose. Lequel (ce dit) estoit sorty de eulx et avoit este clerc de Olivuetain a mectre la bible en francoys. Le iiie article contient ce propoz: il me souvient bien de Dolet Rabelez et Marot et ie mestonne quant ie rememore ce quon men a dit a Lyon.

1543
Guillaume Postel

Guillaume Postel, *Alcorani, seu Legis Mahometi et evangelistarum concordiæ liber, in quo de calamitatibus orbi Christiano imminentibus tractatur* (Paris: Petrus Gromorsus, 1543).

p. 72 | Ut superiori tractatione docui per omnia convenire Antichristorum omnium parenti Muhamedi cum Cenevangelistis,ut minus id mirum videatur, addam secretiora mysteria &

scopum ad quem tota isthæc nova professio collimet, palamque fiet non satis habere quicquam usquam terrarum perfidi dogmatis assertum fuit id mordicus tutari hanc factionem, nisi etiam tam directe quam indirecte (ut aiunt) neget deum, atque de suo cœlo eiicere conetur. Facit fidem impie vivendi & more brutorum quicquid collibitum est sequendi omnium consuetudo, non paucorum etiam publica impietatis professio, id arguit nefarius tractatus Villanovani de tribis prophetis, Cymbalum mundi, Pantagruellus & novæ insulæ[1] quorum authores erant Cenevangelistarum antesignani.

Quoted in Lucien Febvre, *Le problème de l'incroyance au XVIe siècle. La religion de Rabelais*, L'Évolution de l'Humanité, LIII (Paris: Albin Michel, 1942), pp. 111–112.

1544
Catalogue of Books Forbidden by the Faculty of Theology

Le Catalogue des livres censurez par la faculté de Theologie de Paris (Paris: Jehan André [printed by Benoist Prevost], 1544).
Catalogus librorum Gallicorum ab incertis authoribus.
…
Cymbalum mundi.

21 October 1549
Adrien Fournier, notary

Inventaire après décès de Gilbert de Hodic, notaire au Châtelet
Archives Nationales MC/ET/III/300
Under the category 'Histoires'

foll. 31*v*.–32*r*. | Item la Division du monde / La chiromantie / Le livre de cuisine [?] / Petit fatras / La complainte de la teste / Plutarque de la tranquillité d'esprit / Le premier livre de la metamorphose dovide / la fleur de toutes nouvelles / Adages de mere sotte / Ladresse de fourvoye / Oraison de Lucian / Les oeuvres de [C] marot La suite de ladolescence clementine / Les merveilles descosse / Les menuz propos / Cymbalum mundi / La decoration de nature humaine / le chevallier sans reproche tous lesd. livres Reliez en vingts petitz volumes Prisez ensemble xx s. p.

1550
John Calvin

John Calvin, *De scandalis quibus hodie plerique absterrentur, nonnulli etiam alienantur à pura Evangelii doctrina* (Geneva: Jehan Crespin, 1550).

pp. 54–5 | Et certè qui nunc passim regnat Evangelii contemptus, certum est belluinæ cuiusdam vitæ præsagium. Nam quum hoc extremum sit curandis hominum vitiis remedium, ubi Dominus cum Evangelio suo affulget, quibus nihil prodest remedium hoc, eos esse incurabiles constat. Qui verò medicum scientes ac volentes aut eludunt, aut procul abigunt, ultrò sibi quasvis accersunt mortes. Ut caput hoc concludam, quibus atrox malum, ut est, censetur impietas, hi ex hac gravitate pœnæ quàm indignè Evangelii sui contemptum ferat Dominus, æstimant: atque hoc documento in eius fide & obedientia confirmatur. Agrippam,

[1] Read: *novæ moriæ*? See below, 'De summo in hac vita apprehensibili'.

Villanovanum, Doletum & similes notum est tanquam Cyclopas quospiam Evangelium semper fastuosè sprevisse. Tandem eò prolapsi sunt amentiæ & furoris, ut non modò in Filium Dei execrabiles blasphemias evomerent, sed quantum ad animæ vitam attinet, nihil à canibus & porcis putarent se differre. Alii (ut Rabelaysus, Deperius, & Goveanus) gustato Evangelio, eadem cæcitate sunt perculsi. Cur istud? Nisi quia sacrum illud vitæ æternæ pignus, sacrilega ludendi aut ridendi audacia antè profanarant? Paucos nomino. Quicunque eiusdem sunt farinæ, eos sciamus nobis à Domino in exemplum quasi digito monstrari, ut sollicitè in vocationis nostræ studio pergamus, ne quid simile nobis contingat.

Id., *Des scandales qui empeschent auiourdhuy beaucoup de gens de venir a la pure doctrine de l'Evangile, & en desbauchent d'autres* (Geneva: Jehan Crespin, 1550).

pp. 74–75 | Pour conclure cest article, ie dy en somme, que ceulx qui estiment l'impieté estre un crime enorme, comme elle est, recognoissent combien Dieu prise son Evangile, quand il fait une punition si rigoureuse de ceulx qui n'en ont tenu compte. Parquoy tant s'en fault qu'ils soyent troublez de veoir ceulx qui se desbordent à telle impudence, que plustost cela les conferme à la vraye foy. Chacun sçait qu'Agrippa, Villeneuve, Dolet, & leurs semblables ont tousiours orgueilleusement contemné l'Evangile: en la fin, ils sont tombez en telle rage, que non seulement ils ont desgorgé leurs blasphemes execrables contre Iesus Christ & sa doctrine, mais ont estimé quant à leurs ames, qu'ils ne differoyent en rien des chiens & des pourceaux. Les autres, comme Rabelais, Degovea, Deperius & beaucoup d'autres que ie ne nomme pas pour le present, apres avoir gousté l'Evangile, ont esté frappez d'un mesme aveuglement. Comment cela est-il avenu? si non que desia ils avoyent par leur outrecuidance diabolique profané ce gage sainct & sacré de la vie eternelle? Ie n'en ay guere nommé pour ceste heure: mais nous avons à penser que Dieu nous monstre au doigt toutes telles gens, comme miroirs, pour nous advertir de cheminer en sa vocation avec crainte & solicitude, de peur qu'il ne nous en adviene autant.

*

The latter is Calvin's own translation of the former. Note his retention of the form *Deperius*.

Before 1556
Guillaume Postel

'De summo in hac vita apprehensibili, seu De sapientia secunda sive creata dispunctio. Ad sacrosanctum Theologorum Parisientium coetum et Galliae concilium.'

Attested in two manuscripts, neither one an autograph:

Bibliothèque Méjanes (Aix-en-Provence), MS 52 (395) foll. 69–92.
BnF, MS François 2115, foll. 85v.–95r.

fol. 79r. (Méjanes) / fol. 94v. (BnF) | […] impietati omnia divina & humana ridenti proscindentique. Extat passim Sextus Empiricus providentiam Dei tollens & ridens. Extant impie Villanovani, Moriæ novæ, Salcizæ, cimbali mundi, Marcelli Palingenesii Rabelesi & similium impietatum nefariæ commentationes Deum omnino & Christum omniaque diuina & sancta ideo ridentes, quod revera non est possibile persuadere quod Deus habeat Rerum humanarum curam nisi ad particularia movetur.

Quoted partially (from the Méjanes manuscript, defectively cited) in François Secret, 'La traduction de l'*Axiochus* par G. Postel', *BHR* XXVIII, no. 1 (1966): pp. 109–111 [111n].

1557
The Pauline Index

Index auctorum, et librorum, qui tanquam hæretici, aut suspecti, aut perniciosi, ab officio S. Ro. Inquisitionis reprobantur, et in universa Christiana republica interdicuntur (Rome: Antonio Blado, 1557). [Only surviving copy: British Library, C.53.c.57.]

p. 14 | [under *Incert. auct. libri condemnati*] Cymbalum mundi.

The same appears in the second edition: *Index auctorum, et Librorum, qui ab Officio Sanctæ Rom. et Universalis Inquisitionis caveri ab omnibus et singulis in universa Christiana Re publica mandantur, sub censuris contra legentes, vel tenentes libros prohibitos in Bulla, quæ lecta est in Cœna Domini expressis, et sub aliis pœnis in Decreto eiusdem Sacri officii contentis* (Rome: Antonio Blado, 1558), sig. C_{ii} v.

1560
Guillaume Postel

פתיחת או מאירת עינים
Apertio sive illuminatio oculorum
Basel, Universitätsbibliothek, O III 52

foll. 9v–10r. | Vos alloquar qui Gallice scitis. Unde Thelemitarum impietas libris Rablesi inter nugas et sacra permixta orta est? Unde primi Cymbali mundi auctores, unde fabulæ Briquenarinæ, unde prodiit demum Libertinorum lubrica pestis, unde dem Gotlosen ut aptissimo Germaniæ vocabulo dicam latens impietas, qua quum principium aulæ, post sparsum hoc dogma, maxime vero Iudiciarii coetus hominum libris huius modi imbutorum nati sunt, quorum fidem in illo alioqui antea iam a pueris pene hac fece imbuto Olivario contra vosmetipsos experti estis, et revera crudelius longe postea estis in cæteris experturi.

For an earlier transcription, see Carlos Gilly, 'Guillaume Postel et Bâle. Quelques additions à la Bibliographie des manuscrits de Guillaume Postel', in *Guillaume Postel, 1581-1981 (Actes du Colloque international d'Avranches, 2-9 septembre 1981)* (Paris: Editions de la Maisnie, 1985), 41–77 [71].

1564
The Tridentine Index

Index librorum prohibitorum, cum Regulis confectis per Patres a Tridentina Synodo delectos, auctoritate Sanctiss. D. N. Pii IIII, Pont. Max. comprobatus (Rome: Paulus Manutius, 1564).

p. 37 | [Auctorum incerti nominis libri prohibiti] Cymbalum mundi

1566
Henri Estienne

Henri Estienne, *L'introduction au traité de la conformité des merveilles anciennes avec les modernes: ou, Traité preparatif à l'Apologie pour Herodote* ([Geneva]: [Henri Estienne], 1566) [First ed., 572 pp.]

pp. 102–104 | Ie parleray maintenant de ceux qui ne se contentent de proferer leurs blasphemes haut & clair entre leurs semblables, ou en presence d'autres aussi, ausquels ils s'efforcent de faire despit en despitant Dieu: ou bien d'en remplir les banquets & compagnies ioyeuses, (ou ils font couler lesdicts blasphemes sous pretexte de gosseries & rencontres facetieuses) mais, afin que tout le monde en puisse estre tesmoin, les font imprimer. Qui est donc celuy qui ne sçait que nostre siecle a faict revivre un Lucian en un François Rabelais, en matiere d'escrits brocardans toute sorte de religion? Qui ne sçait quel contempteur & mocqueur de Dieu a esté Bonaventure des Periers, & quels tesmoignages il en a rendu par ses livres? Scavons-nous pas que le but de ceux-ci & de leurs compagnons a esté, en faisant semblant de ne tendre qu'à chasser la melancholie des esprits & leur donner du passetemps, & en s'insinuant par plusieurs risees & brocards qu'ils iettent contre l'ignorance de nos predecesseurs (laquelle a faict qu'ils se sont laissez mener par le nez aux cagots abuseurs) venir apres à ietter bien des pierres en nostre iardin, comm' on dit en commun proverbe? c'est à dire, donner des coups de bec à la vraye religion Chrestienne? Car quand on aura bien espluché tous leurs discours, ne trouvera-on pas que leur intention est d'apprendre aux lecteurs de leurs livres à devenir aussi gens de bien qu'eux? c'est à dire de ne croire de Dieu & de sa providence non plus qu'en a creu ce meschant Lucrece? de leur apprendre que tout ce qu'on en croit, on le croit à credit? que tout ce que nous lisons de la vie eternelle, n'est escrit que pour amuser & repaistre d'une vaine esperance les povres idiots? que toutes les menaces qui nous sont faictes de l'enfer & du dernier iugement de Dieu, ne sont non plus que les menaces qu'on fait aux petits enfans du loup garou? & pour conclusion, que toutes religions ont esté forgees es cerveaux des hommes? Or Dieu scait si tels maistres ont faute d'escholiers prestans l'oreille à telle leçon. Car suyvant ce que i'ay dict tantotst, qu'on voit des personnes qui ne sont pas encore venues iusques à l'atheisme, mais sont apres pour en trouver le chemin, il est certain que plusieurs font du sentiment qu'ils ont de Dieu comme aucuns malades de la dispense des medecins. Car comme nous voyons des malades qui nonobstant la resolution qu'ils ont prise de manger & boire ce que bon leur semblera & non pas ce que le medecin ordonnera, l'importunent toutesfois de les dispenser d'user de ce qui est contre son ordonnance, comme si cela leur devoit faire plus grand bien ou moins de mal, quand ils auront impetré de luy ceste dispence: pareillement voyons-nous iournellement des hommes qui estans totalement deliberez & resolus, combienque leur conscience s'oppose à leurs entreprises, de passer outre, auroyent neantmoins grand desir de les pouvoir mettre en execution avec le consentement d'icelle: & pourtant s'efforcent par tous moyens de reietter tout sentiment de Dieu, lequel fait qu'ils sont comme contrerolez par leur conscience. Or ne sçauroyent-ils prendre plus aisé ni plus court chemin pour parvenir à leur intention que d'aller à l'eschole des docteurs susdicts. Et pour clorre ce propos, ie di que les livres de ces deux que nous avons nommez, & de leurs compagnons, sont autant de filets tendus pour prendre ceux qui ne sont bien armez de la crainte de Dieu: & que ces filets sont d'autant plus mal-aisez à voir, qu'ils sont mieux couvers de propos plaisans & chatouillans les oreilles. Et pourtant doivent estre advertis tous ceux qui n'ont point d'envie de se desvoyer du bon chemin auquel il a pleu à Dieu les mettre, de se donner guarde de tels chasseurs. Car quant aux autres desquels i'ay tantost parlé, ils ne sont point à plaindre, d'autant qu'ils ne tombent point en tels filets sans y penser, mais s'y enveloppent volontairement.

p. 261–262 | Or comme les hommes trouvent plusieurs autres occasions de desespoir, aussi oyons-nous parler de plusieurs personnes qui se sont desfaictes pour autres raisons. Et entr'autres on peut alleguer un assez bon nombre d'usuriers de nostre temps, qui par un iuste iugement de Dieu n'ont attendu autres bourreaux en ce monde. Et generalement sont subiects à ceste tant infame & tant execrable mort tous ceux ausquels la conscience fait le proces. Car

apres que le proces est faict & parfaict là dedans par une procedure extraordinaire, aussi par une voye extraordinaire est mise en execution la sentence. […] Ie n'oublieray pas Bonaventure Des periers, l'auteur du detestable livre intitulé *cymbalum mundi*, qui, nonobstant la peine qu'on prenoit à le garder (à cause qu'on le voyoit estre desesperé, & en deliberation de se deffaire) fut trouvé s'estant tellement enferré de son espee sur laquelle il s'estoit ietté, l'ayant appuyee le pommeau contre terre, que la pointe entree par l'estomach sortoit par l'eschine.

p. 350 | I'ay parlé ci dessus (en traittant de ceux qui s'estoyent desfaicts eux-mesmes) de Bonaventure Des periers auteur du detestable livre nommé *cymbalum mundi*, comment nonobstant la peine qu'on prenoit à le garder (à cause qu'on le voyoit estre desesperé) fut trouvé s'estant tellement percé de son espee qu'il avoit appuyee le pommeau contre terre, que la pointe entree par l'estomach sortoit par l'eschine.

1581
Jean Chassanion

[Jean Chassanion], *Des grands et redoutables iugemens et punitions de Dieu advenus au monde, principalement sur les grands, à cause de leurs mesfaits, contrevenans aux Commandemens de la Loy de Dieu. Le tout mis en deux livres suivant la distinction des deux tables de la dite Loy: où il y a plusieurs points notables & d'importance, dont la cognoissance est bien utile & profitable à un chacun* (Morges: Jean le Preux, 1581).

p. 140 | Ce mal-heureux Bonaventure des Periers, auteur du detestable livre intitulé Cymbalum mundi, où il se moque ouvertement de Dieu & de toute religion, tomba finalement en desespoir, & se tua soy-mesme maugré toutes ses gardes.

1584
François Grudé, sieur de La Croix du Maine

François Grudé, *Premier volume de la bibliotheque du sieur de La Croix-Du-Maine. Qui est un catalogue general de toutes sortes d'Autheurs, qui ont escrit en François depuis cinq cents ans & plus, iusques à ce iourd'hui: avec un Discours des vies des plus illustres & renommez entre les trois mille qui sont compris en œuvre, ensemble un recit de leurs compositions, tant imprimees qu'autrement* (Paris: Abel l'Angelier, 1584).

pp. 36–37 | BONNADVENTVRE DES PERIERS, natif de Bar-sur-aulbe au Duché de Bourgogne, valet de chambre de la Royne de Navarre sœur du Roy François I.
Il a traduit l'Andrie de Terence en vers François, imprimee à Lyon.
Il a escrit un iuste volume de poësies Françoises, imprimees à Lyon.
Il est autheur de quelques contes & faceties plaisantes, imprimees soubs son nom, soubs le tiltre de Nouvelles recreations de Bonadventure des Periers, &c. Mais les deux premiers autheurs de cet ouvrage sont Iaques Peletier du Mans, Medecin & Philosophe, & Nicolas Denisot surnommé le Comte d'Alsinois, desquels nous parlerons en leur ordre.
Ce livre a esté imprimé plusieurs fois, tant à Paris qu'à Lyon.
Il est autheur d'un livre detestable & remply d'impietez intitulé Cymbalum Mundi, ou Cloclette [sic *in some copies; corr. to* Clochette *in others*] du Monde, escrit premierement en Latin par iceluy des Periers, & depuis traduit par luy-mesmes en François soubs le nom de Thomas du Clevier, imprimé à Paris l'an 1537.

Il se tua en fin, avec une espee qu'il se mist dans le ventre estant devenu furieux & insensé. Il vivoit en l'an 1537.

1585
Antoine du Verdier, seigneur de Vauprivas

Antoine du Verdier, *La Bibliotheque d'Antoine du Verdier, Seigneur de Vauprivas, Contenant le Catalogue de tous ceux qui ont escrite, ou traduict en François, & autres Dialectes de ce Royaume, ensemble leurs œuvres imprimees & non imprimees, l'argument de la matiere y traictee, quelque bon propos, sentence, doctrine, phrase, proverbe, comparaison, ou autre chose notable tiree d'aucunes d'icelles œuvres, le lieu, forme, nom, & datte, où, comment, & de qui elles ont esté mises en lumiere. Aussi y sont contenus les livres dont les autheurs sont incertains* (Lyon: Barthelemy Honorat, 1585), pp. 1177–1178.

THOMAS DV CLEVIER a traduict de Latin en François un traicté intitulé Cymbalum mundi: contenant quatre Dialogues Poëtiques, fort antiques, ioyeux & facetieux. [impr. À Lyon 16º par Benoit Bonnyn 1538. Ie n'ay trouvé autre chose en ce livre qui merite d'avoir esté plus censuré que la Metamorphose d'Ovide, les dialogues de Lucian, & les livres de folastre Argument & fictions fabuleuses. Au premier Dialogue l'autheur introduict Mercure Byrphanes, & Curtalius, lesquels se trouvans en une hostellerie d'Athenes à l'enseigne du Charbon Blanc, où Mercure d'aventure arrivé descendu du ciel de la part de Iupiter qui luy avoit baillé un livre à faire relier, ces deux bons frippons pendant qu'il s'en estoit allé à l'esbat tirent d'un paquet qu'il avoit laissé sur le lict ce livre, le desrobent & en son lieu en mettent un autre contenant tous les petits passe-temps d'amour, & les folies de Iupiter, comme, quand il se feit Taureau pour ravir Europe: Quand il se desguisa en Cygne pour coucher aver Alcmena: Quand il se transmua en pluye d'or pour iouyr de Danaë: Quand il se transforma en Diane, en Pasteur, en feu, en Aigle, en serpent: & plusieurs autres menues folies. Au second Dialogue sont introduites quelques Philosophes cerchans des pieces de la pierre Philosophalle parmy le sable du theatre, où autrefois comme ils estoyent disputans, Mercure la leur ayant monstree ces resveurs l'importunerent tant par leurs prieres que ne sçachant à qui la donner entiere il la brisa, & mit en poudre, puis la respandit parmy l'arene à fin qu'un chacun en eust quelque peu, leur disant qu'ils cerchassent bien & que s'ils en trouvoyent seulement une piece ils feroyent merveilles, transmuëroyent les metaux, romproyent les barres des portes ouvertes, gueriroyent ceux qui n'ont point de mal, impetroyent facilement des Dieux tout ce qu'ils voudroyent, pourveu que ce fust chose licite & qui deust advenir, comme apres le beau temps la pluye, fleurs & serain au printemps, en esté poussiere & chaleurs, fruicts en Automne, froid & fanges en hyver: en quoy l'autheur se mocque du vain labeur des Alchimistes. En fin apres que Trigabus a dit que Mercure peut restituer & soubstraire quand il luy plait à ceste Pierre Philosophale sa vertu: Mercure (qui y est aussi introduit) ayant changé son visage en autre forme, assavoir d'un beau ieune gars qu'il estoit en viellard tout gris, se monstre à eux & leur dit que depuis le temps qu'ils la cerchent, il n'est nouvelles qu'ils ayent fait aucun acte digne de la pierre Philosophale, qui le faict penser que ce ne l'est point, ou (si ce l'est) qu'elle n'a point tant de vertu qu'on dit: mais que ce ne sont que paroles, & que leur pierre ne sert qu'à faire des comptes. Au troisieme Dialogue est prins & poursuivy le propos du premier touchant le livre desrobé à l'autheur de tous larrecins, intitulé.

Quæ in hoc libro contintentur: Chronica rerum memorabilium quas Iupiter gessit antequam esset ipse. Fatorum præscriptum: Sive, eorum quæ futura sunt, certæ dispositiones. Catalogus Heroum immortalium, qui cum Iove vitam victuri sunt sempiternam.

Par là l'autheur se mocque premierement des Payens idolatres & de leur faux Dieu Iupiter, comme voulant dire qu'il n'a oncques esté, ou s'il a esté, il estoit homme, & ne feit onc actes admirables ne tels que fabuleusement on a escrit de luy. Par le second chef du tiltre du livre il se gabe du Destin, & fatale necessité & tacitement de l'Astrologie iudiciaire. Et par le troisieme, de ceux qui pour leur grandeur s'estiment comme Dieux. En-apres il fait discourir Mercure des memoires & charge que les Dieux & Deesses luy ont baillé chacun particulierement à faire en terre en ce voyage, & le mesme Mercure par la vertu de quelques parolles qu'il marmonne faict qu'un cheval nommé Phlegon parle & raisonne avec son palfrenier. Au quatriesme & dernier Dialogue, deux chiens l'un dict Hylactor & l'autre Pamphagus qui furent autresfois du nombre de ceux qui devorerent Acteon, chacun de ces deux ayant avallé un lopin de la langue du Veneur transmué en cerf, laquelle il tiroit hors la bouche: se rencontrans long temps apres devisent ensemble de plusieurs choses plaisantes.

Between 1584 and 1586
Estienne Pasquier

Estienne Pasquier, *Les lettres d'Estienne Pasquier, Conseiller et Advovocat* [sic] *general du Roy en la chambre des Comptes de Paris* (Paris: Abel l'Angelier, 1586).

[In a letter: *A Monsieur Tabourot Procureur du Roy au balliage de Dijon*]

fol. 246 r. | Au demourant ie trouve qu'en ceste seconde impression, vous appropriez à Iacques Pelletier les faceties de Bonaventure du Perier: Vous me le pardonnerez, mais ie croy qu'en ayez de mauvais memoires. I'estois l'un des plus grands amis qu'eust Pelletier, & dans le sein duquel il desployoit plus volontiers l'escrain de ses pensees. Ie sçay les livres qu'il m'a dit avoir faits. Iamais il ne me feit mention de cettuy. Il estoit vrayement Poëte, & fort ialoux de son nom, & vous asseure qu'il ne me l'eust pas caché: Estant le livre si recommandable en son sujet, qu'il merite bien de n'estre non plus desavoüé par son autheur, que les faceties Latines de Poge Florentin: Du Perier est celuy qui les a composees, & encores un autre livre intitulé *Cimbalum mundi*: Qui est un Lucianisme, qui merite d'estre ietté au feu avec l'autheur s'il estoit vivant.

1597
Thomas Beard (Translator of Chassanion)

Thomas Beard, *The Theatre of Gods Iudgements: Or, a Collection of Histories out of Sacred, Ecclesiasticall, and prophane Authours, concerning the admirable Iudgements of God upon the transgressours of his commandments. Translated out of French, and augmented by more than three hundred Examples* (London: Adam Islip, 1597).

pp. 143–4 | How miserable was the end of *Periers*, the author of that detestable booke intituled *Symbalum mundi*, wherein he openly mocked at God and his religion: even hee fell finally into despaire, and notwithstanding all that guarded him killed himselfe.

ca. 1590
Pierre de L'Estoile

The following annotations, in the hand of Pierre de L'Estoile, appear in CM 1538_i:

Title page:

[In reddish ink]

Delestoille

L'aucteur Bonadu[enture]
des Periers homme meschant et athee
comme il app[ert]
par ce det[esta]
ble liure

[In darker ink]

Telle vie, telle
fin: Aueré par
la mort de ce miserable
indigne de porter le nom
D'homme.

On the first page of dialogue I [in reddish ink]:

Dixit insipiens in Corde
Suo, Non est Deus.

Between 1595 and 1658
'J. Bigot'

Manuscript note on a copy of La Croix du Maine's Bibliothèque, next to the description of the Cymbalum mundi. Transcribed in François Berriot, 'Notes manuscrites sur l'exemplaire de la *Bibliothèque* de La Croix du Maine ayant appartenu à Claude-Pierre Goujet', *Réforme, Humanisme, Renaissance* 30 (1990): pp 37–49.

p. 40 | Antoine Du Verdier, qui avoit veu ce livre et qui ne le trouve pas si impie, a beaucoup pres, que le fait icy La Croix du Maine sur la foy d'Henry Etienne, dit que c'est a Lion qu'il a esté imprimé, in 16, chez Benoist Bonin, 1538. Il consiste en 4 dialogues dont Du Verdier raporte le sujet, page 111 de sa *Bibliotheque* au mot Thomas du Clevier.

1600
Simon Goulart*

Simon Goulart, *Histoires admirables et memorables de nostre temps. Recueillies de plusieurs Autheurs, Memoires, & Avis de divers endroits. Premier Livre* (Paris: Jean Houzé, 1600).

p. 17 | Bonaventure des Periers, autheur d'un detestable livre intitulé Cymbalum mundi, où il se mocque de la vraye religion, autant & plus que des superstitions, nonobstant la peine qu'on prenoit à le garder (à cause qu'on le voyoit estre desesperé, & en deliberation de se desfaire) fut trouvé s'estant tellement enferré son espee, sur laquelle il s'estoit ietté, l'ayant appuyee le pommeau contre terre, que la poincte entree par l'estomach sortoit par l'eschine. *Là mesme* [*Traité de la conformité des merveilles anciennes avec les modernes*].

1607
Richard Carew (Translator of Estienne's *Apologie*)

A World of Wonders: or an Introduction to a Treatise touching the Conformitie of ancient and modern wonders: or A Preparative Treatise to the Apologie for Herodotus. The Argument whereof is taken from the Apologie for Herodotus written in Latine by Henrie Stephen, and continued here by the Author himselfe. Translated out of the best corrected French copie. (London: John Norton, 1607).

p. 74–75 | I come now to those hel-hounds of the damned crue, who do not content to belch out their blasphemies among their mates (companions like themselves) or in presence of those whom they would gladly anger, by swearing and blaspheming; nor to furnish the table at great feasts and merry meetings with them, (where they passe for current under the name of ieasts and pleasant conceits) do further set them forth in print, that all the world may take notice of them. Who knoweth not that this age hath revived *Lucian* againe, in the person of *Francis Rabelais*, making a mock of all religion in his divelish discourses? or what a prophane Scoggin *Bonaventure des Perriers* was in deriding of God? and what pregnant proofes he hath given hereof in his worthy worke? The marke (we know) which these varlets aimed at, was outwardly indeed to make as though they would but drive away melancholike dumps, and passe away the time with pleasant discourse. But indeed and truth to insinuate themselves by varietie of ieasts and quips, which they cast forth against the ignorance of our forefathers (which was the cause they suffered themselves to be abused, as it were led by the nose by superstitious Priests) and by this means *A ietter des pierres en nostre iardin* (as it is in the French proverbe) that is, to mock and gird even at Christian religion it selfe. For after diligent perusing of their discourses, it will easily appeare, that it was their maine drift, the onely mark and scope which they aimed at, to teach the Readers of their bookes, to become as honest men as themselves: that is, to beleeve in God, and to be perswaded of his providence no otherwise than wicked *Lucretius* was: that whatsoever a man beleeveth, he beleeveth in vaine: that whatsoever we reade in Scripture of eternall life, is written for no other end but to busie simple idiots, and to feede them with vaine hope: that all threatnings concerning hell and the last iudgement denounced in the word, are nothing but meerebugs, like those wherewith we terrifie yong children, making them afraid of the fayry, hob gobling, or bul-begger: in a word, that all religions were formed and framed by the braine of man. And I feare me such masters have but too many schollers at this day, readie to listen to such instructions. For some there be who are not as yet plaine Atheists, but onely inclining that way, who deale with the knowledge they have of God, as sicke men do with the licence of Phisitians. For as sicke patiens, notwithstanding they have resolved to eate and drinke what themselves think good, and not what the Phisitian shall prescribe, importune him to dispence with them against his prescript, for such and such meates, as though it would do them more good or lesse hurt when they have once obtained such a licence: so is there a generation of monsters rather then of men, who notwithstanding they have resolved to go on in their wicked courses, though their consciences checke them never so much, yet could wish with al their hearts, they might follow them with consent thereof: and therefore labour by all meanes to extinguish and obliterate all sense and knowledge of God out of their minds, the light whereof doth shew them the leudnes of their lives. And they can make no shorter a cut, nor take an easier course to come to the period of their intended purpose, then to go to schoole to the foresaid Doctors. To conclude, the bookes which have bene written by these two worthy writers, and their pue-fellowes, are so many snares or baited hookes layd to catch such simple soules as are not well guarded with the feare of God: being so much the more harder to be espied, by how much they are better sugered over with merry conceits, delighting and

tickling the eare. And therefore all those that feare to go astray out of the right way wherein God hath set them, must be admonished to beware of such hunters. As for professed Atheists, they are the lesse to be pitied, considering they fall not into such snares at unawares, but voluntarily intangle themselves therein.
p. 160 | And here I may not forget *Bonaventure des Periers* (author of that damnable booke called *Cymbalum mundi*) who notwithstanding the paines which was taken in watching of him, (for that they saw him in a desperate mood, ready upon every light occasion to sacrifice himselfe to his owne shame) fell upon his sword, the point running in at his breast, and out at his backe.
p. 214 | I have heretofore shewed (where I spake of such as made away themselves) how *Bonaventure de Periers* (author of that detestable booke called *Cymbalum mundi*) notwithstanding the pains that his friends tooke in keeping and watching him (for that they saw him in a desperate moode,) was found to have run upon his sword, having set the pomell to the ground, the point running in at his breast, and out at his backe.

1623
Marin Mersenne

Marin Mersenne, *Quæstiones celeberrimæ in Genesim, cum accurata textus explicatione* (Paris: Sebastian Cramoisy, 1623).

[The following excerpts appear on a leaf that has been cancelled in most copies. Unmutilated copies are Herzog August Bibliothek A: 84.18 Theol. 2° (1) and Augsburg, Staats- und Stadtbibliothek: 2 Th Ex 286.]
Columns 669–672 | Caput primum. Versiculus I. Primæ quæstionis adversus Atheos Colophon, In quo Atheismi expugnandi modus affertur. […]
Imprimis verò rationes omnes, quibus antea usi sumus, ut Deum esse probaremus, non parum ad id proderunt, deinde solutiones omnium paralogismorum, quibus veritatem impetunt, sed cùm plurimi non obediant rationi, & veluti brutorum more vivant, sintque cerebro tam debili, ac malè feriato, ut statim ratiunculis quibusdam, vel fabellis transferantur, quas in libellis descriptas vident, quibus statim Purgatorium, & Infernus, atque beatorum sedes deridentur, ut manifestum est in pasquillis, qui hac æstate, sicut & præcedentibus sæculis quorundam Atheorum, & impiorum hominum artificio volitant, quale nuper visum est Chronicum aliquod eorum, quibus fortunam veluti subesse, vel favere aiunt; & longè antea mundi cymbalum, quod Bonaventura de Peréz impiissimus nebulo gallicè vertit, ne quo monstro Gallia careret, quem plurimi Atheum fuisse asserunt: hinc fit, ut non desint, qui initio cymbali illius scripserint ad cautelam; *Dixit insipiens in corde suo, non est Deus*, atque notaverint illum in vita impiissimum fuisse, et morte periisse. Anno verò 1538. excussum fuit, & 4. dialogis constat, in quorum primo Mercurius, Byrphanes, Curtalius, & Hospita; in secundo Trigabus, Mercurius, Rhetulus, Cubercus & Drarig: in tertio Mercurius, Cupido, Celia, Phlegon, Statius, & Ardelio. In quarto denique duo canes colloquentes Hylactor, & Pamphagus introducuntur. Quibus omnibus plurimas de Mercurio, Iove, &c. fabulas complectitur Peresius, per quas fidem Catholicam irridere, & ea, quæ de Deo verissima esse dicimus, & credimus, reiicere velle videtur.
Apud Lucianum plurimi dialogi reperiuntur, ex quibus præcedens facilè sumi potuit: & quidem multorum Christianorum stultitiam admiror, qui in istius Luciani Athei lectione bonas horas collocant, adeout vix aliquem librum ita tritum invenias, licet venenum animis infundat; Hinc à paucis annis toties, tótque modis iterum iterúmque typis excussus fuit. Faxit Deus ut ex eius lectione nullus in Atheismum ruat quod vix pollicere, aut sperare ausus fuerim; verùm qui libros sanctos Luciano postponunt, & eius dogmata pro veris amplectuntur,

neque huic impietati vale facere volunt, pereant, & eorum nomina de libro deleantur, eisque sit in alio sæculo pars, & supplicium æternum cum Lucianistis. Itaque cùm isti libelli veneno refertissimi plurimorum ingenia mendacii nebulis offendant, & tantum una libellorum istorum pagina, curiosorum hominum animis detrimentum afferat, ut ne quidem volumen integrum, licet verissimis rationibus solidissimum, & errorem evidenter revincens, eis poste vix mederi possit; eapropter Reipublicæ præfecti, Principes, Episcopi, & quicúnque præfecturam aliquam gerunt sedulò cavere debent, & omnimoda ratione perficere, ne huiuscemodi libelli conscribantur, atque emendi prostent. […]
Hic igitur primus est modus, quo Atheismus extingui potest, si omnes eiuscemodi libelli tollentur, nec ullus præter vera, & ad bonos mores facientia scribat. Ubi velim intelligas non solos pasquillos, verum etiàm libros, qui alioquin bona complecti videntur, nisi Athismo scaterent, quales sunt libri Charontis de sapientia, Machiavelli de principe, & Repub. Cardani de subtilit. & iudic. astor. & in supplem. Almanach, & alibi passim; Campanellæ; Vanini dialogi, Flud, & alii plurimi, quos vel omnino perire, vel accuratè saltem expurgare operæpretium fuerit: illi siquidem non semel animæ mortalitatem insinuant, vel alios errores disseminant, qui ad Atheismum adducere possint, adeout non indigeamus libellum istum afferre, quem de tribus impostoribus, vel cur receptum sit Evangelium, à Valeo, vel ab alio nebulone conscriptum, vel fabellam Mercurii è cœlo descendentis, & omnes homines, velut chymicos, & lapidis philosophici perquisitores deridentis ab impio Peresio de Latino idiomate in Gallicum conversam, in qua, ni fallor, tribus suis dialogis insinuat, quicquid de religione dicitur, nullo fundamento niti, & pro nugis habendum.

1628
Robert Burton

Democritus Junior [Robert Burton], *The Anatomy of Melancholy. What It Is, with All the Kinds, Causes, Symptomes, Prognostickes & Severall Cures of It*, The thirde Edition, corrected and augmented by the Author (Oxford: Henry Cripps, 1628).

p. 619 | *Marinus Mercennus* (*Comment. in Genes. cap. 1*) suspects *Cardan* for his subtleties, *Campanella*, and *Charrons* booke of wisdome, with some other tracts to savour of *Atheisme* (*so that a man may meet an Atheist, as soone in his study, as in the street*); but amongst the rest that pestilent booke *de tribus mundi impostoribus, quem sine horrore (inquit) non legas, & mundi Cymbalum dialogis quatuor contentum, Anno 1538. auctore Peresio, Parisiis excusum* &c.

1635
Gisbertus Voetius*

Gisbertus Voetius, *Thersites Heautontimorumenos. Hoc est, remonstrantium hyperaspistes, catechesi, et liturgiæ Germanicæ, Gallicæ, & Belgicæ denuo insultans, retusus; idemque provocatus ad probationem mendaciorum, & calumniorum quæ in Illustr. DD. Ordd. & ampliss. Magistratus Belgii, Religionem Reformatam, Ecclesias, Synodos, Pastores &c. sine ratione, sine modo effudit* (Utrecht: Abraham ab Herwiick & Herman Ribbius, 1635).

p. 80 | Quid audio? De nullâ hæresi, de nullis blasphemiis, Atheismis, de nullis libellis famosis & scandalosis judicare licebit Magistratui nisi coram, ipsos authores ad Ordinarium (ut vocant) Processum admittant. Si qui Fanatici Wigelius, Seidelius, Michaël Metsius, Turca, Iudæus, Servetus, […] Socinus, Neuserus, Atheus, Magus quicunque, eorumque discipuli furores suos voce & scriptis disseminent: cavete vobis Principes & Magistratus Christiani ne

quidquam moveatis, nisi coram viros audiatis, & post perreptas omnes diaboli foricas e. gr. *Alcoranum*, *Thalmuden*, *Librum mirabilium*, *Cymbalum mundi*, Socini prolixos & perpetuos commentarios, *Picatricis*, P. *de Albano*, *Agrippæ*, *Arbatel*, *Trithemii &c. libros Magicos*, habitis super illis replicis, duplicis, triplicis & sic in infinitum, quousque & quantum heroibus illis visum fuerit ex formulâ Remonstranticâ, tandem ritè aliquid statuatis pro conservatione fidei Christianæ pro pace Reipubl. & Ecclesiæ.

1639
Gisbertus Voetius

Gisbertus Voetius, *Selectarum disputationum theologicarum*, vol. I (Utrecht: Joannes à Waesberge, 1648).

[De Atheismo, pars secunda. Resp. Gualtero de Bruyn Amisfurt. Ad diem 29 Iunii 1639]
p. 136 | Bonaventura de Perieres author Cymbali mundi (quem Atheismi seu Epicureismi insimulant Honsdorfius *in Theatro iudiciorum Dei cap. 24*. Et Passim *Mersennus in Genesin*) in desperationem incidit & infelices manus sibi intulit: ut refert *Honsdorf. loc. cit*.
[De Atheismo, pars quarta. Resp. Gualtero de Bruyn Amisfurt. Ad diem 13 Iulii 1639]
pp. 199–200 | XV. *Probl*. Quid judicandum de *Bonaventura de Periers*? *Resp*. *Honsdorffius in libro* supra *cit. ad 3. præcept.* eum numerat inter Atheos. Et sic *Henricus Stephanus tract. præpar. ad apologiam Herodoti c*. 26. *p.* 364. ubi autorem dicit libri detestabilis, cui tit. *Cymbalum mundi*; & proprio gladio desperabundum se transfixisse. Mersennus in Genesim p. 669 eum vocat *Bonaventuram de Perez*, & describit, tanquam *monstrum, impiissimum nebulonem*; addit: *quem plurimi Atheum fuisse asserunt &c. atque notarunt illum in vita fuisse impiissimum, & morte periisse*. Refert ibid. non fuisse autorem *Cymbali Mundi* (quod habet *Honsdorf*. & *Henricus Stephanus*) sed in gallicum illud transtulisse, & sic editum anno 1538. Præterea librum illum constare quatuor dialogis; & plurimas fabulas de Iove, Mercurio &c. complecti *per quas fidem catholicam irridere, & ea, quæ de Deo verissima esse dicemus & credimus, rejicere velle videtur*. Quod si Deo, de cœlo, inferno sacris literis revelata rejiciat, utique subscribimus Mersenni judicio: sin vero fabulas tantum de purgatorio, aliaque hominum commenta, utique hinc Atheismi non convincitur. Sed erunt forte qui excipiant summum fuisse oratorem & poetam, & hæc solummodo vulgarium tunc poetarum & literatorum more (quam laudabili & Christiano nunc non disputabo) ita descripsisse. Quibus reponi potest: nihil vetare, quin Lucianum omnesque prophanos & impios poetas atque antiquos literiones imitando quis subdolè Atheismum, Epicureismum, Gentilismum hominum animis instillet; quamvis stylum ludicris ambiguitatibus, & jocis, item mimesibus, prosopœnis [*sic*] &c. ita moderetur, ut si quis hæc ad examen revocet, colore aliquo eludere & elabi possit. Quomodo meminimus à Sceptico-Libertinis & Epicureis nebulonibus alicubi in Belgio omnem pietatem & fidem Christianam dicteriis quibusque apud homines traductum esse, exempli gratia, Tragœdia scribitur, & in theatrio exhibetur tit. *Iphigenia*: in quâ ethnica illa, de Hecate triformi, de diis sanguine humano, idque ex consilio sacerdotum, placandis perstringuntur. Si quis pius metuat (ut quidem autores illos novit) eos Mysterium Trinitatis, & redemptionis nostræ per sanguinem Christi velle deridendum proponere & sic Epicureismo, Deismo, aut Turco-Socinismo viam munire: quomodo hoc evincet; cum promptum semper sit effugium; rideri tantum fabulas Gentilium. Ut ad Bonaventuram revertamur, dum has theses scribens, de illo inquiro, commodum ex auctione aliquâ nactus sum ejus tract. cui tit. *Nouvelles recreations* &c. editum denuo Rhotomagi anno 1606. apud Raphaelem du Petit Val, qui se nominat typographum Regium. Eum carptim percurrens, offendi nihil aliud esse quam *colloquia prava*; hoc est, narrationes & dissertationes, meris morologiis, vanitatibus, obscœnitatibus, nominis divini abusibus refertas, quo quidem nemini nisi Epicureis (quibus

voluptas summum bonum) placere potest. Et tamen librum cum auctore in cœlum tollit, quisquis præfationem præficit. Sed ne meipsum fastidiosâ libri ejus lectione, & lectorem relatione eorum, quæ eo continentur, multum fatigem, suffecerit ex primâ novell. quæ instar præambuli est, annotasse, quod dicat se libellum illum oportunè tunc edere, ut in mediis bellis civilibus & publicis calamitatibus habeant unde se oblectent imprimis matronæ & virgines, quas ad lectionem nominatim scurrilium quæ ibi occurrunt, contentiosè invitat. Summam autem & maximè convenientem huic vitæ nostræ doctrinam esse: *Bene vivere & lætari*; quod postea interpretatur: *ridere*. Ut autem media ad finem ducentia ab illo instituuntur, non video aliud quid illum fuisse, aut saltem ibi voluisse formare, quam pinguem & nitidem Epicuri de grege porcum, seu mavis Menippum, aut Diogenem.

ca. 1647
Guillaume Colletet

'Vie de Bonaventure Desperiers, 1542', in *Vies des poètes françois par ordre chronologique depuis 1209 jusqu'en 1647*, BnF, NAF 3073, foll. 150–153. This is a copy of the lost original. I have corrected it against Louis Lacour's transcription of the original document in CM 1856, p. lxiv; and Paul Lacroix's in CM 1858, p. XXXIX.

Enfin après avoir en une infinité de rencontres rendu des preuves de sa suffisance dans les bonnes lettres, il tomba d'une fièvre chaude qui lui troubla le sens de telle sorte et le remplit d'une telle fureur que prenant une épée nue dans ses mains, il se la passa de toute sa force au travers du corps dont il mourut environ l'an 1542 sous le règne de François Ier, triste et déplorable fin qui ne découvre que trop l'infimité de la vie humaine. […]

II fut encore l'auteur d'un livre aussi méchant qu'impie à ce que disent quelques uns intitulé *Cymbalum mundi* ou *clochette du monde* qui fut depuis traduit par lui-même, de latin en françois sous le nom de Thomas de Clavier et publie l'an 1539. Pasquier, dans le 8e livre de ses *Lettres meslées*, parlant de ce livre, dit qu'il sent le Lucianisme et qu'il mériteroit d'estre jeté au feu avec son auteur s'il estoit encore vivant. Néanmoins il me semble que c'est estre bien rigoureux, et que c'est aller bien viste pour un docte et franc gaulois, qui n'estoit pas tellement ennemy des belles [CM 1856: vielles] hardiesses et de l'ingénieuse raillerie, qu'il en voullust effacer tous les caracteres dans les œuvres de Lucien mesme. Et si le Pantagruel de Rabelais luy a tant pleu, comme luy ont si souvent reproché ses adversaires, je m'estonne pourquoy il traitte si mal ceste Cymbale à sonnettes résonnantes, qui ne despleut pas aux curieux de son temps et qui fit alors tant de bruit. Il faut que j'advoüe que les divers eschantillons que j'en ay veus dans la Prosopographie et dans la Bibliothèque de Du Verdier ne sont nullement impies ni criminelles, et qu'il y a des dialogues dont le plus sevère Caton du christianisme ne rougiroit point d'estre l'auteur. Avec tout cela je ne laisse pas de m'en rapporter aux esprits forts [?] qui ont vu l'ouvrage entier et qui sont capables d'en porter un jugement sincère et désintéressé…

ca. 1656
Librarian of the Bibliothèque Royale

Note on CM 1538_i

Z .1203. / Il y a une Edition du meme livre en lettres rondes, faite à Paris en 1537. de sorte que celle cy est posterieure d'un an à celle de Paris

1663
Gottlieb Spizelius

Gottlieb Spitzel, *Scrutinium Atheismi historico-ætiologicum* (Augsburg: Johannes Prætorius, 1663)

p. 55–57 | Eodem stigmate porrò notandi sunt LIBRI nefandi, quorum nonnulli Atheismum manifestè propugnant, qualis Tractatus ille horrendus *de Tribus Impostoribus* … nec non nequissimum illud *Mundi Cymbalum*, quod Latinè primò conscriptum Bonaventura de Perez (quem teste Mersenno p. 669. plurimi atheum fuisse asserunt,) gallicè vertit: Quatuor liber ille constat dialogis, in quorum primo Mercurius, Byrphanes, Curtalius & Hospita; in secundo Trigabus, Mercurius Rhetulus, Cubercus & Drarig; in tertio Mercurius Cupido, Celia Phlegan [*sic*] Statius & Ardelius [*sic*]; in quarto denique duo canes colloquentes Hylactor & Pamphagus introducuntur. Quibus plurimas de Mercurio, Iove &c. fabulas complectitur Author, per quas fidem Christianam irridere, & ea quæ de Deo verissima esse dicimus & credimus rejicere velle videtur. Hinc non defuerunt qui initio Libri illius hæc verba scripserint: *Dixit insipiens in corde suo non est deus.*

1672
Johann Müller*

Johann Müller, *Atheismus devictus. Das ist Ausführlicher Bericht von Atheisten / Gottesverächtern / Schriftschändern / Religionsspöttern / Epicurern / Ecebolisten / Kirchen und Prediger Feinden / Gewissenslosen Eydbrüchigen Leuten / und Verfolgern der Recht-Gläubigen Christen. Mit gründlicher Wiederlegung ihrer erschrecklichen und verdamlichen Irrthümen. Zu Ehren dem Unsterblichen wahren Gott und seinem Sohne dem Gecreutzigten Jesu / zu Bekräfftigung der Göttlichen Warheit / den betrübten / verachteten / verspotteten Predigern / zu beständigem Trost / dem Teuffel aber und seinem Anhang zu ewiger Schmach und Schande* (Hamburg: Johann Naumann and Georg Wolff, 1672).

p. 61 | *Godefridus à Valle*, welcher das Buch de *arte nihil credendi* geschrieben / ist zu Pariß verbrandt worden. Der Jesuit *Garassus* welcher ein Atheist gewesen / ist dergleichen verbrandt worden. *Bonaventura de Perieres*, welcher das Buch *Cymbalum mundi* geschrieben / ist in Verzweiffelung gefallen und hat sich selbst entleibet.

1673
Johann Lassenius*

Johann Lassenius, *Besiegte Atheisterey / Darin aus heiliger Schrifft behaubtet / auch theils aus der Natur und gesunden Vernunft erwiesen. Daß die heil. Schrifft Gottes Wort; warhafftig ein Gott; die Seele der Menschen unsterblich; eine allgemeine Aufferstehung der Todten zu hoffen; Teuffel / Gespenster / Himmel / Hell / ein Gewissen und Ewiges Leben sey. Mit gründlicher Beantwortung / der Gegen-seitigen Einreden* (Hamburg: Johann Naumann and Georg Wolff, 1673).

p. 122 | *Honsdorf. in Theatr. judic. Dei. c. 24* narrat *Bonaventuram Periers*, interpretem nefandi Cymbali mundi, in desperationem tandem incidisse, sibique ipsi manus intulisse.

1674
Vincent Placcius

Vincent Placcius, *De scriptoribus occultis detectis Tractatus Duo, quorum prior Anonymos detectos, in capita, pro argumentorum varietate distinctos, posterior Pseudonymos detectos Catalogo Alphabetico, exhibet.* (Hamburg: Christian Guth, 1674).
pp. 124–5 | DLI. CYMBALUM MUNDI. Auctorem hujus libri detestabilis, in Disp. Voëtiana de Atheismo p. 199. Nominatum legimus, *Bonaventuram de PERIERS* ex *Henr. Stephani* tract. Præpar. Ad apologiam Herodoti c. 26 p. 364 & *Hunsdorffio* ad præceptum 3. & αὐτοχειρίᾳ vitam finisse. *Mersennus* tamen ibidem citatus in Genesin p. 669. *De PEREZ* eum vocat, & *monstrum, impiissimum nebulonem, &c*. non tamen auctorem, sed interpretem dicti libri anno 1538. Ab ipso editi facit. Vide illum citantem, & argumentum libri referentem quoque *Spizelium* scrutin. Ath. 2. §.14. p. 56.

1676
Gottlieb Spizelius

Gottlieb Spitzel, *Felix litteratus ex infelicium periculis et casibus, sive de Vitiis literatorum commentationes historico-theosophicæ, quibus infelicium ex animo, h. e. vitiosorum literatorum calamitates et miseriæ, conquisitis exemplis et documentis selectioribus exponuntur, atque eruditis, ad veræ et imperturbatæ felicitatis sedem tendentibus via tutissima ostenditur* (Augsburg: Gottlieb Göbeln, 1676)

p. 124 | Altera, quam nequissimus ille humani generis adversarius ad subvertenda doctorum hominum ingenia adhibet machina, est LIBRARIS, scriptis omnigenâ IMPIETATE refertis onusta, quæ inter palmarium locum tractatus ille horrendus sibi vendicat *de tribus impostoribus* […] execrabile insuper MUNDI (ita dictum) CYMBALUM, quod latinè primò conscriptum Bonaventura de Perez gallicè vertit, quatuor constans dialogis, quorum argumenta alibi recensuimus.

ca. 1676
Anonymous*

Émile Henriot, 'Le manuscrit d'un inconnu', *Le Temps*, 7 August 1934, p. 3.

C'est un gros cahier manuscrit, d'une belle écriture bouclée, relié en veau et portant au dos, sur une étiquette de maroquin rouge, la mention *Remarques critiques*. Voilà bien des années que je l'ai acquis, et payé vingt sols (or), à Aix-en-Provence. Je l'ai feuilleté souvent, et il m'a toujours intrigué, comme un perpétuel « de qui est-ce ? » Ce sont des extraits, des citations, des historiettes, des pensées, reproduits sans ordre dans ce manuscrit, et la plupart du temps sans référence […]

Voulez-vous, sur si belles invites, que nous feuilletions ensemble ce mystérieux petit volume ? … Dès les premières pages, je tombe sur cette étonnante mention : « Six paires de potences d'ébène », et, tout de suite après, suivent ces lignes, qui m'ont toujours paru d'un tour fort joli, mais que je n'ai su retrouver imprimées nulle part : « Qu'il aille chercher Somnus, qui a si souvent amené à ces vestales de garçons et leur a fait trouver si charmant, en dormant, la chose qu'elles blâment tant (de bouche) en veillant, et qu'il se tienne à la fente de leur porte pour ouÿr les regrets qu'elles font de s'être déjà presque enterrées touttes vives par le vœu d'observer des choses contre nature à un âge où à peine connaissent-elles ce qu'elles vouent : surtout que les demoyselles ayent plusieurs *non* dans la bouche, et rien qu'un bon

oui dans les yeux, mais qu'elles soient garnies de sçavants refus : car c'est tout le bon du jeu… »

1679
Petrus Schele

Petrus Schele, *Psychoscopia, id est, Consideratio Animæ humanæ quoad Immortalitatem, et a separatione statum* (Nuremberg: Wolfgang & Johann Jonathan Felsecker, 1679).

p. 116 | Nemini præterea obscurum est, qvomodo in proximis temporibus multi introductionem atheismi publicis scriptis susceperint, qvibus omni procul dubio nihil tam vanum aut ridiculum apparuit, qvam animæ immortalitas. *Autor de tribus impostoribus* M. sive sit *Bernhardinus Ochinus*, sive *Poggius Florentinus*, sive *Aretinus*, nil minus credidit. *Isaacus Peyrerius* Præ-Adamita cum prædecessore Magistro suo *Jordano Bruno*, A. 1600 Romæ in Campo Floræ exusto, S. literarum autoritatem neqviter enervans, de immortalitate animæ non potuit immotam fidem habere. *Thomas Campanella* in atheismo triumphato per ludicra argumenta illum magis astruens, qvam expugnans, credidisse haud creditur vitam sempiternam, sed magis ad castra *Luciani*, (qvi initio Ecclesiastes Antiochenus fuit, post Atheus factus; per cavillationem etiam animæ muscarum tribuit immortalitatem,) *Machiavelli*, *Celsi*, *Juliani*, accessum facit. *Julius Cæsar Vaninus* in amphitheatro æternæ providentiæ qveritur, atheismum esse sectam pestilentissimam, qvem tamen in ipsis etiam tormentis est professus, referente *Grammande* l. 3. hist. p. 210. & *Reinesio* de atheismo, p. 249. Adde *Voëtium*, disput. select. part. 1. p. 147. Ejusdem farinæ homo fuit Jesuita *Garassius* propter impietatem etiam combustus. *Godefridus à Valle* scripsit librum de arte nil credendi, qvi flammis fuit consecratus Parisiis Anno 1582. qvare fidem immortalitatis non potuit habere. *Bonaventura de Perieres* scripsit cymbalum mundi, librum refertum blasphemiis, & Empectarum[2] cavillationibus, qvæ cum perennitate vitæ non concordant: his certè omnibus mortalitate animæ nil potuit esse infallibilius.

1683
Louys Moreri

Louys Moreri, 'Des Periers (Bonaventure)', in *Le grand dictionaire historique, ou le mélange curieux de l'histoire sacrée et profane, qui contient en abbregé les vies des Patriarches, des Iuges et des Rois de l'Ancien Testament, des Souverains Pontifes de l'Eglise; des saints Peres & Docteurs Orthodoxes, des Evêques des quatre Eglises Patriarchales, des Cardinaux, des Prelats celebtres; & des Heresiarques*, 3rd ed., vol. II (Paris: Jean Giran & Barthelemy Riviere, 1683), p. 856.

Des PERIERS (Bonaventure) natif de Bar sur Aube, vivoit dans le XVI. Siecle, en 1536. & il fut Valet de Chambre de Marguerite d'Orleans, Reine de Navarre, sœur du Roy François I. Il publia quelques Poësies & d'autres Pieces. La Croix du Maine dit que ce Bonaventure des Periers est Auteur du detestable Livre intitulé *Cymbalum mundi*, qu'il le mit ensuite en François, & qu'étant devenu furieux il se tua luy-même.

1685
Nicolas Catherinot

[2] 'Scoffers'' (< ἐμπαίκτης).

Nicolas Catherinot, *L'art d'imprimer* ([Bourges]: [Nicolas Catherinot], 1685)

pp. 7–8 | Il suffit d'observer que la profession d'Imprimeur est necessaire noble & Royale, qui sont trois grands points, & illustres.

Mais les abus de l'imprimerie sont grands, les uns dans la matiere et les autres dans la maniere. Dans la matiere quand on imprime des Ouvrages contre l'Eglise, l'Estat ou les bonnes mœurs. Contre l'Eglise comme ces deux livres impies que ie n'ay iamais veu & que ie ne desire point voir, l'un *de tribus impostoribus*, & l'autre *Cymbalum mundi*: le 1. est attribué à Alphonse Roy d'Espagne surnommé le Sage. Le 2. est de Bonaventure des Perriers Officier de Marguerite de Valois Duchesse de Berry lequel perit miserablement. Les Auteurs se déguisent ordinairement, mais ie donneray un iour la Bibliotheque demasquée. Contre l'Estat […]

1688
Daniel Morhof

Daniel Georgius Morhofius, *Polyhistor, sive de notitia auctorum et rerum commentarii. Quibus præterea varia ad omnes disciplinas consilia et subsidia proponuntur*, vol. I (Lübeck: Peter Böckmann, 1688).

p. 74 | Fuere quidem tales libri inter τὰ μυστήρια τῆς ἀσεβείας & ἀνομίας publicâ censurâ relati, neque in publicum prodierunt; sed nunc libri æque mali, pene dixerim pejores, impunè in publicâ luce comparent, & ab omnibus leguntur. Quid est Benedicti Spinosæ libris pestilentius? & hi tamen ubique triumphant. … Hujus generis plures alii sunt libri, ut: *Ars nihil credendi*, qui adscribitur Gothofredo à Valle, cujus mentio fit apud Voëtium [*sic*] *Disp. de Atheismo*: & alius, cui titulus, *Cymbalum mundi*, cujus itidem Voëtius mentionem facit, & autorem ejus nominat Bonaventuram de Periers. Henricus Stephani [*sic*] in *Tract. præparatorio ad Apol. Herod. cap. 26.* Mersennus *Commentario in Genesin pag. 689* vocat eum de Perez.

April 1689
August Pfeiffer*

Ad lectiones privatas Anti-Atheisticas, SS. Theologiæ cultores, quin & aliarum Facultatum Studiosos, peramanter invitat, simulque controversiarum, quæ nobis cum atheis et scepticis, uti & infidelibus atque hæreticis, qvatenus illis suppetiantur, per universum Theologiæ Systema intercedunt, Recensum Methodicum, ceu Collegii materiam exhibet D. Augustus Pfeiffer (Leipzig: Christopher Fleischer, 1689).

[I know of only one surviving copy of this lecture programme. Once Paul Anton's, it is in the Bibliothek der Franckeschen Stiftungen under the shelfmark 180 G 22 [3]. I have consulted its reprint in Christian Thomasius, *Ernsthaffte / aber doch Muntere und Vernünfftige Thomasische Gedancken u. Errinnerungen über allerhand außerlesene Juristische Händel*, Dritter Theil (Halle: Rengersche Verlags-Buchhandlung, 1721), pp. 70–91.]

p. 74 | Quanquam vero idem omnibus Atheis fixus sit scopus, non pari tamen passu ad eundem contendunt. Alii enim sibi solis sapiunt, qvis alii credant, securi: alii audaciores & typho inflati ex neqvitia famam captant, scabiemqve Atheismi sui aliis afficare laborant. Et horum alii qvidem impudenter & levato quasi velo agunt, animiqve sensa plane seupinant, & vel in DEI existentiam, vel providentiam, vel scripturas Propheticas & Apostolicas, vel in

Mosis & Christi personam, veritatemqve miraculorum vel animorum immortalitatem & qvicqvid sive præmiorum sive pœnarum est post hanc vitam qua scriptis, qua dictis insurgunt. Talis autor libri sceleratissimi de tribus impostoribus, qvem pleriqve Aretino adiudicant (Conf. Voët. *I.c. p. 198* J. Rodius *de Anonym. p. 33.* Dekherr. *de Adesp. p. 129*. & Epist. Bælii *ap. eund.* p. 373. Wagner *Exam. Ath. p. 7*. Spizel *l.c. p. 55*. Morhof. *Polyh. p. 71*. J. Michaëlis *ad Goffarell. p. 330*.) Talis itidem autor libelli Atheistici in Polonia Cracoviæ A. 1588 sub titulo: *Simonis religio*, incerto autore editi, in qvo præter cœtera portentiloqventia, etiam ista reperiuntur: *Credo in tria, Cœlum, Terram & Cœli formam: In cœlum patrem atque creatorem omnium: in terram, rerum omnium matrem atqve nutricem; & in cœli formam omnia sentientem atqve intelligentem. Ede itaqve, bibe, lude, jam Deus figmentum est*. Idqve autor maledictus vocat *symbolum Simonis Theodorianum*. Ejusdem plane farinæ est Godofredi a Valle liber *de arte nihil credendi*: item libellus Valei vel alterius nebulonis: *Cur receptum sit Evangelium?* Nec non neqvissimum illud *Mundi Cymbalum* a Bonaventura Periers sive de Perez teste Mersenno p. 669. Gallicè translatum, qvod quatuor dialogis constat, prorsus Lucianicis, qvibus una cum gentilium fabulis religio Christiana ludibrio habetur.

p. 91. | Qv. II. Αὐτοχειρία *an sit licitum, tutum & commodum medium se, necessitate urgente, rebus humanis subducendi, & an omnes αὐτόχειρες damnandi*? Neg. prius contra Stoicos, qvos praxi sua Bonav. Periers sive de Perez interpres scelerati libri, qvi vocatur Cymbalum mundi, Uriel Acosta aliiqve ex grege Atheorum expressere: Posterius Aff. cum Limit.

1692
Nathanael Falcken*

Nathanael Falcken, 'Q.B.D.V. de Falsa recentiorum auctorum dæmonologia, Dissertatio Præliminaris, Varias Recentiorum ad Atheismum Vias ac Methodos, imprimis per negatam Dæmonum existentiam, commonstrans, Respondente Joh. Isaaco Trempenau. Gedan.', in *Nathanaelis Falcken/ D. SS. Theol. In Gymn. Carol. Prof. Publ. Primar. Nec non ad Div. Mariæ Pastoris & Synodi Stetinensis Præpositi, antehac Collegii Philosoph. In Almâ Leucoreâ Assess. & Decani, Νῦν ἐν ἁγίοις, Dissertationes Quatuor, De Dæmonologia recentiorum autorum falsa, Anno 1692. Wittebergæ habitæ, Nunc verò Præfixis literis Schomerianis ibidem recusæ.* (Wittenberg: Martin Schultz, 1694), pp. 1–23.

pp. 1–2 | §. 2. Neque tamen, quæ nostri maximè seculi summa infelicitas est, defuerunt in hunc usque diem, quos tali raptos vertigine sensimus, ut huic conatui studioque penitus se impenderent, id demum cum magnâ sui laude conjunctum arbitrati, si subtilius atque alii tractassent artificium, & quantum ingenio valeant, in hoc abominabili tractando opere experti essent. Nihil jam attinet, omnium eorum recensere Nomina & Conatûs, qui magis crassum exhalantes aerem in apertam negandi Numinis licentiam proruerunt: quorsum, si referre veteres placeret, ante alios collimavit infamis Auctor Libri (quem Grotius unquam extitisse dubitat, sed contra aliorum αὐτόπτων fidem) *de tribus impostoribus*, (qui Lipsio Fridericus II. Imperator, Thomæ Browne Bernhardinus Ochinus, Campanellæ Poggius Plorentinus, Mersenno Petrus Aretinus, Dannhavero Simon de Tornaco fuisse creditur. Vid. etiam Dekherrus de Libris Adesp. p. 119. & Morhof. Polyhist. p. 71.) eundemqve procul dubio lapidem movit *Godofredus à Valle, in L. de Arte nihil credendi*; & alius in *L.* cui tit. est. *Cur receptum sit Evangelium*; nec non Auctor Libri, qui *Cymbalum Mundi* dicitur. De quo an *Bonaventura de Perez* fuerit, Honsdorffius, Henr. Stephanus & Mersennus, ac denique Voetius, quem vid. Disp. Sel. P. 1. p. 155. disquirunt; ut nihil dicam de sceleratissimo Scriptore *Libri*, qui sub tit. *Simonis Religio*, prodiit.

1693
Ehregott Daniel Colberg*

Ehregott Daniel Colberg, *Disputationem de tolerantia librorum noxiorum politica, Divinâ favente gratiâ, & Annuente Amplissima in inclyta Academiâ Gryphicâ Facultate Philosophica, M. Ehre-Gott Danielis Colbergii, Moral. Prof. Ordin. Eruditorum Censuræ exponit Nicolaus Engelholm, Austria-Svecus, in Auditorio majori, ad diem Julii Anni Jubilæi Svedici qui est post natum Christum M DC. XCIII.* (Greifswald: Daniel Starck, 1693).

sig. B_3 r. | Atheismus privativus est privatio cognitionis & cultus DEI, homini inesse debiti, si vel essentiam, voluntatem, opera DEI non rectè cognoscimus, vel illegitimà veneramur. […] Hujus farinæ libri sunt BONAVENTURÆ DE PERETZ *Cymbalum mundi*: Huic enim auctori scriptum impium tribuit HENR. STEPHANUS (Tract. Præpar. ad Apolog. Herodot. c. 16, p. 364), more dialogistico Christianum ridens (vid. Spitzelii Scrutin. Atheism. p. 56). GODOFREDI À VALLE *liber de Arte nihil credendi*: SIMONIS *religio scelestissima*: libellus, *Cur receptum sit Evangelium?* qvorum SPIZELIUS in *Scrutinio Atheismi* mentionem facit.

1697
Immanuel Weber*

Immanuel Weber, *Beurtheilung der Atheisterey / Wie auch derer mehesten deßhalben berüchtigsten Schrifften* (Frankfurt: Henning Grossen, 1697).

pp. 132–133 | …Ferner des *Bonaventuræ de Periers*, oder / wie ihn Mersennus nennet / de Perez, [*In Genesin*, p. 669.] *Cymbalum mundi*, worinnen er die göttliche Geheimnisse und Glaubens-Articul / durch die Heydnischen Fabeln zu verdrehen gesuchet haben soll. Und ob ihm wohl einige das Wort reden / auch Mersennus l.c. saget / er sey nicht Autor, sondern habe das Buch nur ins Frantzösische übersetzet / und A. 1538 herauß gegaben / so beweiset doch Voëtius [*sic*] (l.c. p. 200. *Problem*. 15) auß einem andern Buche dieses Mannes / betitult Nouvelles recreations, daß er ein eiteler Phantast gewesen seyn müsse / indem er solch mit lauter Sau-Zothen und Narren-Theidungen angefülltes Werck nur zu dem Ende geschrieben zu haben selbst gestehet / damit die Leute / sonderlich das Frauen-Zimmer in damahligen Krieges-Troublen sich die Melancholie und Zeit damit vertreiben mögten. Honßdorff berichtet / daß er als ein Epicurer und Atheiste endlich in Verzweiffelung gerathen / und selbsten Hand an sich geleget (*Theatr. Judic. Dei, c. 24*).

1699
Gottlob Timäus*

Gottlob Timæus, *Dissertatio moralis de Indifferentismo morali, quam in florentissima Academia Wittebergensi pro loco in Amplissima Facultate Philosophica benevole sibi assignato Præses M. Gottlob Timæus, Crottendorffio Misn. Respondente M. Christian Gottlieb Beiche / Damens. Sax. Eruditorum censuræ exponit D. XIII. Jul. A.O.R. M DC XCIX* (Wittenberg: Christian Kreusig, 1699).

§. 2. | Eodem loco habendi sunt Gothofredus a Valle in libro *de arte nihil credendi*, & alius in libro cui Titulus est: *cur receptum sit Evangelium*: nec non Autor Libri, qvi Cymbalum Mundi dicitur, de qvo an *Bonaventura de Perez* fuerit, *Honsdorfius, Heinricius Stephanus, Mersennus ac denique Voëtius* [*sic*] *in parte disp. Select. Pag. 199.* Disquirunt; Ut nihil nunc dicam de sceleratissimo Scriptore libri qvi sub Titulo *Simonis Religio* prodiit.

1699
Gottfrid Arnold*

Gottfrid Arnold, *Unparteyische Kirchen- und Ketzer-Historie / von Anfang des Neuen Testaments biß auff das Jahr Christi 1688*, vol. II. Von Anno 1500. biß 1688 (Frankfurt: Thomas Fritsch, 1699).

p. 600 | Damit wir aber auch etliche special-exempel solcher leute sehen / wil ich die bekantesten kürtzlich anführen. Da ich denn derer älteren nicht gedencken wil as des Arelini, der das buch de 3. Impostoribus soll gemacht haben / des Bonaventuræ de Perez mit seinem Cymbalo Mundi, des Pohlnischen Scribenten / der Religionem Simonis gemacht. Ingleichem Jordani Bruni, welchem von dem Pfaffen offenbahrlich unrecht geschehen ist / daß er als ein Atheiste verbrannt worden / weil er mehr als eine welt behauptet hat / in dem buch de innumerabilibus sive de universo & Mundis, wie ihn die verständigen dißfals auffrichtig vindiciret haben. (Vid. Mothosius loc. cit. pag. 75. Weberus l. c. pag. 68.) Auch nicht des Godofredi à Valle, der ein Buch: Ars nihil credendi geschrieben / und schon im vorigen seculo zu Pariß verbrannt worden.

1702
Johann Reinhard*

Johann Friedrich Reinhard, *Theatrum prudentiæ elegantioris, ex Justi Lipsii Libris Politicorum erectum* (Wittenberg: Johann Wilhelm Meyer and Gottfried Zimmermann, 1702).

pp. 202–203 | Inter Libros atheos principes sunt. […] *Cymbalum Mundi*, cujus itidem Voetius mentionem facit, & autorem nominat *Bonaventuram de Periers*: Henricus Stephanus vero (& Mersennus), de Perez.

1702
Pierre Bayle

Pierre Bayle, 'Periers (Bonavanture des)', in *Dictionaire Historique et Critique*, 2nd ed., vol. III, III vols (Amsterdam: Reinier Leers, 1702), pp. 2380–2381.

PERIERS (BONAVANTURE DES) nâtif de Bar sur Aube en Bourgogne, fut valet de chambre de Marguerite de Valois Reine de Navarre et sœur de François I (*La Croix du Maine, biblioth. Franc. pag. 56*). On a de lui un volume de poësies Françoises, qui fut imprimé après sa mort (*Du Verdier Vau-Privas, biblioth. Franc. pag. 131*) à Lion par Jean de Tournes l'an 1544. *in 8*. & la traduction (*en vers François*) de l'*Andria* de Terence, & plusieurs contes (A) en prose sous le titre de *nouvelles recreations* (*La Croix du Maine ibid.*). Je n'ai jamais vu son *cymbalum mundi* qui (B) est, dit on, un ouvrage très impie. Il fit une malheureuse fin, car (*Id. ib. pag. 57*) *il se tua avec une espée qu'il se mist dans le ventre estant devenu furieux & insensé*. Divers Auteurs parlent (C) de ce desespoir. Mr. Allard debite que nôtre Bonavanture s'appeloit Perier, & qu'il étoit *de l'Ambrunois*, & qu'il *a écrit en vers une apologie pour Marot absent, contre Sagon l'an 1580* (*Allard; Biblioth. de Dauphiné pag. 172*). Il est sûr qu'il fit cette apologie, mais non pas cette année-là: il étoit mort avant l'année 1544.

Footnote (A).
Plusieurs contes en prose sous le titre de nouvelles recreations] La Croix du Maine debite

que *les deux premiers autheurs de cet ouvrage sont Jaques Peletier du Mans, Medecin & Philosophe, & Nicolas Denisot surnommé le Comte d'Alsinois*. Etienne Pasquier en parle autrement dans une lettre qu'il écrivit à Tabourot Sieur des Accords auteur du livre des bigarrures. Je trouve, lui dit-il (Pasquier, lettres liv. 8. 10. 1. pag. 493. édit. de Paris 1619. in 8.), "qu'en ceste seconde impression, vous appropriez à Jacques Pelletier les faceties de Bonaventure du Perier. Vous me le pardonnerez, mais je croy qu'en ayez de mauvais memoires. J'estois l'un des plus grands amis qu'eust Pelletier, & dans le sein duquel il desploioit plus volontiers l'escrain de ses pensees. Je sçay les livres qu'il m'a dit avoir faits. Jamais il ne me feit mention de cestuy. Il estoit vrayement Poëte, & fort jaloux de son nom, & vous asseure qu'il ne me l'eust pas caché: Estant le livre si recommandable en son sujet, qu'il merite bien de n'estre non plus desavoüé par son autheur, que les faceties Latines de Poge Florentin. Du Perier est celuy qui les a composees, & encores un autre livre intitulé *Cimbalum mundi*: Qui est un Lucianisme, qui merite d'estre jetté au feu avec l'hauteur [*sic*] s'il estoit vivant." Ce qu'on doit tenir pour certain est que cet Auteur n'a pas composé tous les contes qui se voient dans ses nouvelles recreations. Il ne peut pas avoir fait celui qui est le premier dans l'édition que Mr. Voet a indiquée. C'est celle de Roüen 1606, chez Raphaël du Petit-Val. On assûre dans le premier conte que l'on publie cet ouvrage bien à propos, afin de fournir aux Dames une lecture divertissante pendant les guerres civiles qui causoient tant de maux publics. Des Periers ne pouvoit point parler de la sorte, car il mourut long tems avant les premieres guerres civiles de France. Raportons le jugement de ce celebre Theologien. (Gisb. Voetius disput. theolog. vol. 1. pag. 200). *Eum (*librum*) carptim percurrens, offendi nihil aliud esse quam colloquia prava; hoc est, narrationes & dissertationes, meris morologiis, vanitatibus, obscœnitatibus, nominis divini abusibus refertas, quo quidem nemini nis Epicureis (quibus voluptas summum bonum) placere potest. Et tamen librum cum auctore in cœlum tollit, quisquis præfationem præfixit. ... suffecerit ex primâ novella quæ instar præambuli est, annotasse, quod dicat se libellum illum oportunè tunc edere, ut in mediis bellis civilibus & publicis calamitatibus habeant unde se oblectent imprimis matronæ & virgines, quas ad lectionem nominatim scurrilium quæ ibi occurrunt, contentiose invitat. Summam autem & maximè convenientem huic vitæ nostræ doctrinam esse: Bene vivere & lætari; quod postea interpretatur:* ridere. Des Periers ne fut pas le seul qui composa de semblables contes. Les neuf matinées du Seigneur de Cholieres sont de la même trempe, gaillardes & recreatives, & bien pleines d'obscenitez. Je pense que la premiere édition est celle de l'an 1585. à Paris chez Jean Richer in 8. avec privilege du Roy.

Footnote (B).
Son cymbalum mundi *qui est, dit-on, un ouvrage très impie*.] Il l'écrivit *premierement en Latin, & puis il le traduisit en François sous le nom de Thomas du Clevier, imprimé à Paris l'an 1537*. La Croix du Maine (*Bibliot. Franc. pag. 56, 57*) qui s'exprime ainsi assûre que c'est un ouvrage *detestable & rempli d'impietez*. Nous avons dejà vû qu'Etienne Pasquier en faisoit le même jugement. J'ai trouvé une espece d'analyse de ce *cymbalum mundi* dans la Bibliotheque Françoise de du Verdier-Vauprivas, & parce que la plupart de mes lecteurs ne pourroient pas recourir commodement à cette Bibliotheque, j'ai cru qu'ils me sçauroient fort bien gré des extraits que je leur en fournirois. (*Du Verdier Vauprivas Biblioth. Franc. pag. 1177, 1178.*) [*Full citation of Du Verdier's entry, as given above*.] Il ne paroît point que du Verdier Vau-Privas ait trouvé aucun venin dans cet ouvrage, mais seulement le ridicule de la religion paienne &c. La plupart des autres lecteurs ont pretendu que sous pretexte de se moquer du Paganisme, Bonaventure des Periers avoit attaqué la veritable religion. Le Pere Mersenne en a jugé de la sorte. Cette homme-là, dit-il, étale les fables de Jupiter, & de Mercure, &c. & se veut par là fraier le chemin à tourner en ridicule la foi Catholique, & à rejetter les plus grandes veritez que nous disions, & que nous croiïons de Dieu. (*Mersennus in*

Genesim pag. 669. apud Voetium ubi supra pag. 199.) *Per quas* (fabulas) *fidem catholicam irridere, & ea quæ de Deo verissima esse dicimus & credimus, rejicere velle videtur*. Il dit que Bonaventure des Periers, ne fut que le traducteur François du *cymbalum mundi*, & que c'étoit un fripon d'une impieté achevée, *impiissimum nebulonem*, & que bien des gens l'ont cru athée. Mr. Voet qui n'avoit point vu cet ouvrage-là ne decide point sur l'atheïsme de l'auteur; il l'en decharge même, en cas que le *cymbalum mundi* ne soit qu'une moquerie du purgatoire, & de plusieurs autres inventions des Chretiens. Il ajoûte qu'il est possible qu'un homme seme l'atheïsme, ou l'épicureïsme dans des ouvrages badins, & pleins de fictions, & qu'on se serve de cette ruse afin que si l'on étoit poursuivi, l'on eût des échapatoires. Il ajoûte aussi que dans une piece de theatre intitulée *Iphigenie*, l'on peut se moquer d'Hecate qui avoit trois formes, & fronder les Dieux qui demandent des victimes humaines, & percer de mille censures les prêtres qui conseillent ces sacrifices. On peut avoir pour but de tourner en ridicule la Trinité & la passion du fils de Dieu, & d'ouvrir la porte au Deïsme ou à un Socianisme Mahometan; mais on peut soutenir aussi en cas de besoin, que ceux qui le prenent de la sorte sont des calomniateurs, & que l'on n'a fait que plaisanter sur les fables du paganisme. Raportons les paroles de Voetius, elles insinuent qu'il s'étoit passé quelque chose de semblable sur le theatre de quelque ville de Hollande. (*Voetius ubi supra.*) *Quibus reponi potest: nihil vetare, quin Lucianum omnesque prophanos & impios poetas atque antiquos literiones imitando quis subdolè Atheismum, Epicureismum, Gentilismum hominum animis instillet; quamvis stylum ludicris ambiguitatibus, & jocis, item mimesibus, prosopopœiis &c. ita moderetur, ut si quis hæc ad examen revocet, colore aliquo eludere & elabi possit. Quomodi meminimus à Sceptico-Libertinis & Epicureis nebulonibus alicubi in Belgio omnem pietatem & fidem Christianam dicteriis quibusque apud homines traductum esse, exempli gratia, Tragœdia scribitur, & in theatro exhibetur tit. Iphigenia: in quâ ethnica illa, de Hecate triformi, de diis sanguine humano, idque ex consilio sacerdotum, placandis perstringuntur. Si quis pius metuat (ut quidem autores illos novit) eos Mysterium Trinitatis, & redemptionis nostræ per sanguinem Christi velle deridendum proponere & sic Epicureismo, Deismo, aut Turco-Stocinismo viam munire: quomodo hoc evincet; cum promptum semper sit effugium; rideri tantum fabulas Gentilium.*

Les reflexions de ce Professeur en Theologie sont très-raisonnables; il y a deux manieres de se moquer des superstitions, l'une très-bonne, l'autre très mauvaise. Les Peres de l'Eglise qui ont étalé tout le ridicule des fausses divinitez sont très-loüables, car ils se proposoient d'ouvrir les yeux aux Paiens, & de confirmer les fideles. Ils n'ignoroient pas qu'en inspirant du mepris & de l'aversion pour le paganisme, ils fortifioient l'attachement à la vraie foi, & donnoient de bonnes armes aux Chretiens contre le choc des persecutions. Mais Lucien qui s'est tant moqué des faux dieux du paganisme, & qui a repandu tous les agrémens imaginables sur la description qu'il a faite des folies & des impostures de la Religion des Grecs, ne laisse pas d'être digne de detestation, puis qu'au lieu de faire cela par un bon motif, il n'a cherché qu'a contenter son humeur moqueuse, & qu'il n'a point temoigné pour la verité que pour le mensonge. Voilà deux modeles, celui des Peres de l'Eglise, & celui de Lucien, qui peuvent servir à faire juger raisonnablement de plusieurs satires qui ont été faites dans ces derniers siecles contre les abus de religion. Rabelais doit être consideré comme un copiste de Lucien, & je pense qu'il faut dire la même chose de Bonaventure des Periers, car je trouve que les (*La Croix du Maine que j'ai cité ci-dessus, & Henri Estienne dont on verra les paroles dans la remarque suivante.*) Protestans ne sont moins en colere contre le cymbalum mundi, que les Catholiques. Il faut seulement prendre garde qu'il s'est glissé dans le Christianisme une infinité d'abus qui sont si semblables aux desordres du paganisme, que l'on ne sçauroit écrire contre les Paiens, sans fournir un grand pretexte à plusieurs devots de dire que la religion Chretienne a été percée par les flancs de la religion paienne. C'est à ceux qui donnent lieu à ces reproches à examiner en leur conscience quelle a

été leur intention, & s'ils ont eu effectivement pour but que l'on trouvât dans leur descriptions des anciens desordres le portrait des abus modernes. On accuse quelques Protestans Anglois non-conformistes de n'avoir decrit fort vivement la corruption de l'ancien clergé Romain, qu'afin de faire des peintures qui rendissent odieux l'état present des Episcopaux. On nous aprend dans (*Toland vie de Milton pag. 138.*) la vie de Milton, que son histoire d'Angleterre jusques à Guillaume le conquerant fut imprimée l'an 1670. Mais non pas telle qu'il l'avoit écrite, car les censeurs en effacerent plusieurs endroits où il decrivoit la superstition, le faste, & les ruses des Ecclesiastiques qui avoient vecu sous les Rois Saxons. Les Reviseurs du manuscrit s'imaginerent que cela portoit contre le clergé de Charles II. On ajoûte (*Id ib.*) que Robert Howard aiant sçu qu'on l'accusoit d'avoir foüetté dans un certain livre le clergé d'Angleterre sur le dos des prêtres paiens, & sur celui des prêtres Papistes, repondit malignement & subtilement, qu'avoit-il à faire là, pourquoi se trouvoit-il là? (*On se souviendra peut-être ici de la Comedie du pedant joüé, où quand on lui parle de la rançon de son fils il demande si souvent,* que Diable alloit il faire dans cette galere?)

Footnote (C).
Divers auteurs parlent de ce desespoir.] Raportons seulement les paroles de Henri Estienne: (*Henri Estienne apolog. d'Herodote chap. 18. sub fin. p.m. 231. Voiez aussi chap. 26. pag. 309.*) "Je noublieray pas Bonaventure Des periers, l'auteur du detestable livre intitulé cymbalum mundi, qui, nonobstant la peine qu'on prenoit à le garder (à cause qu'on le voyoit estre desesperé, & en deliberation de se deffaire) fut trouvé s'estant tellement enferré de son espee sur laquelle il s'estoir jetté, l'ayant apuyee le pommeau contre terre, que la pointe entree par l'estomach sortoit par l'eschine." Voiez aussi Jean Chassanion au chapitre 24. (*A la page 170. de l'édition de Geneve 1586. in 8.*) du 1. livre des histoires memorables des grans & merveilleux jugemens & punitions de Dieu.

12 April 1703
[?]*

'Das 468. Sendschreiben. Daß der Atheismus nicht eine blosse Unwissenheit und menschlicher Fehler sey', *Geheime Brieffe / so zwischen curieusen Personen über notable Sachen der Staats- und gelehrten Welt gewechselt worden / nebst einigen Remarques Uber die neuesten Begebenheiten / So monatlich vorfallen.* Des dritten Cabinets Vierte Post (1703): pp. 313–219.

p. 318 | Es wird sonst Italien vor der Atheisten Geburts-Stadt gehalten; Franckreich aber ihre hohe Schule / und Holl- und Engelland ihre Herberge genennet / wie denn auch die vorhandenen Atheistischen Bücher in diesen Ländern herfürkommen: als das Buch de tribus mundi Impostoribus, soll nach Mersenni Meinung Petrus Aretinus Florent. gemachet haben. Julius Cæsar Vaninus war ein Italiäner / und kam in Franckreich / alda seine Lehre / in seinem Dialogo enthalten / auszubreiten; So wird auch der Autor der Historie de Severambres, so ein Frantzos ist / hierher gerechnet; und Johannes Bodinus, der sonst berühmte Frantzos wird in seinem Dialogo de abditis rerum sublimium arcanis unter die Atheisten gezehlet. Cymbali Mundi eines Atheistischen Buchs im 16ten Seculo Autor wird Bonaventura de Periers oder de Perez gehalten. In Holland sind des Spinosæ seine Schrifften ausgehecket worden. Gothofretus à Valle, so Artem nihil credendi geschrieben / wird vor einem Niederländer gehalten.

1705
[Christian Thomasius?]*

‘Observatio IX. seu continuatio I. observationis de libris raris’, in *Observationes selectæ ad rem litterariam spectantes*, vol. X (Halle: Officina Libraria Rengeriana, 1705), pp. 204–231. p. 229 | Sed & Godofredi a Valle ars nihil credendi, & Bonaventuræ Periers *Cymbalum mundi* & Iulii Cæsaris Vanini citata supra opera rarioribus scriptis putamus annumeranda. Illorum quidem, quia Morhofio, Webero aliisque diligentissimis eiusmodi librorum rimatoribus invisa sunt iisque solum modo ex Voetii Spizeliique fide innotuerunt.

1706
Burkhard Gotthelf Struve

Burkhard Gotthelf Struve, *Introductio ad notitiam rei litterariæ & usum bibliothecarum. Accessit dissertatio de doctis impostoribus*, Editio secunda, auctior & emendatior (Jena: Ernest Claude Bailliar, 1706).

Cap. 9, ‘De libris damnatis et prohibitis’, § XII, p. 453. | Alius BONAVENTURA de PERIERS in numerum refertur Atheorum, eo quod scripserit *cymbalum mundi* quem librum impium & blasphemum, latina lingua primum scriptum dicit in Bibliotheca Francica Crucimanius, *Parisiis* impressum *1537*. Bælius autem ex Verdier Vauprivas Bibliotheca Francica p. 1177, contentorum huius cymbali recensionem exhibet, ex qua videmus, irrisorem illum esse paganismi & forsan etiam aliquot in religione abusuum. Licet Mersennus apud Voetium dissert. de Atheismo vol. I p. 200 velit, autorem eo ipso irridere quoque voluisse veritati religionis Christianæ. Librum non vidimus, quid sentiant alii exposuisse contenti.

1707
Georg Classen*

Θεοῦ Συνεργοῦντος: Disputatio theologica de miraculis quoad naturam suam & probandi valorem consideratis. … quam in celeberrima ad Varnum Academia Prævia Reverendissimæ Fctis Theologicæ approbatione sub umbone viri summe reverendi, amplissimi atque excellentissimi Dni. Henrici Ascanii Engelken / … Die 23. Julii Anno MDCCVII. publicæ, placidæque disquisitioni sistit Autor & Respond. Georgius Classen, Rendesburgo-Holsatus, Theol. Stud. (Rostock: Nikolaus Schwiegerau, 1707).

pp. 3–4 | Huic adjungi meretur Autor Libri, cui tit. *Ars nihil credendi*, & Liber nefarius; *cur receptum sit Evangelium*, & iterum alius: *Cymbalum mundi* qui inscribitur, quorum cum aliis mentionem facit *Voetius Disp. de Atheismo*, quæ continetur Dispp. Select. P. 1. p. 114 seq., *in cujus quarta parte historica, tum antiquitates, tum novitates nonnullas de Atheis perstringit*.

1708
Vincent Placcius

Vincentius Placcius, *Theatrum anonymorum et pseudonymorum, ex Symbolis & Collatione Virorum per Europam Doctissimorum ac Celeberrimorum* (Hamburg: Sumptibus Viduæ Gothodredi Liebernickelii, 1708).

p. 105 | (698. α in editione priori num. DLI) CYMBALUM MUNDI. Auctorem hujus libri detestabilis, *in Disp. Voëtiana* de Atheismo p. 199. nominatum legimus *Bonaventuram de PERIERS* ex *Henr. Stephani* tract. præpar. ad apologiam Herodoti c. 26. pag. 364. & *Hunsdorffio* ad præceptum 3. & αὐτοχειρίᾳ vitam finisse. *Mersennus* tamen ibidem citatus in

Genesin pag. 669. *de PEREZ* eum vocat, & *monstrum, impiissimum nebulonem*, &c. non tamen auctorem, sed interpretem dicti libri anno 1538. ab ipso editi facit. Vide illum citantem, & argumentum libri referentem quoque *Spizelium* scrutin. Ath. 3. §. 14. p. 56. qui tamen non auctorem, sed interpretem ex Latino Gallicum una cum *Mersenno* eundem facit, ac Ao. 1582 librum tradit; excerpente Dn. *Normanno*, qui dubitat hinc an αἰώνυμον [*sic*] prodierit. At Stephanus *Paschasius*, uti mihi *Rauschiana Symbola* Hungarica excerpsit, sive Estienne Pasquier livr. 8. de ses Epistr. Ep. 14. ad Steph. Tabourot. p.m. 325 b quod nimirum Bonav. de Perier composuerit librum cui titulus: Cymbalum mundi qui est (inquit) un Lucianisme, qui merite d'estre jettè au feu avec l'autheur, s'il vivoit. Ibidem *Pasquier* memoria lapsum Tabourotum arguit, quod Facetiarum libellum Jacobo *Pelletario* adscripserit, quæ auctorem eundem hunc du *Perrier* haberent.

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The citations of 'Normannus' and the *Rauschiana Symbola* refer to manuscripts.
This passage was cited in CM 1856 (p. 310) as conjecturing (on Spizelius' authority) an edition of the *Cymbalum mundi* in 1682; but Placcius, as can be seen, did not actually say this.

1709
Johan Upmarck*

Johan Upmarck, *Ἀθεομάστιξ. Dissertatione historico-philosophica, quam suffragante ampliss. ordine philosoph. in illustri Upsaliensi Athenæo sub auspiciis viri amplissimi Dn. Johannis Upmarck / eloq. & polit. prof. reg. & skytt. h.t. Decani spectabilis, ad diem 31 Martii Anno MDCCIX. in Audit. Gustav. Majori publico candidorum examini submittendam constituit S:æ R:æ M:tis Alumnus, Folcherus Morin Calmariensis* (Uppsala: Johan H. Werner, 1709).

pp. 23–26 | Alii præsidia quærunt sub fabularum involucris, impias chartas ex abdito ac infami orco inductas, furias scilicet satyrasque volantes in DEum, in vulgus spargendo. Hoc nomine notari meretur liber detestabilis, cui titulus, *Mundi Cymbalum* Anno 1538 editus; cujus auctorem referunt impiissimum, ubi in vivis erat, nebulonem, BONAVENTURAM de PEREZ sive PERIERS, ut vult Hondorffius (*in Theatro judiciorum Dei cap. 24. ad 3. præcept. Morhof. Polyhistor. Literar. p. 74*) & Henricus Stephanus (*Tract. præparator. ad apologiam Herodoti cap. 26. pag. 364*): vel saltem transtulisse e Latina in lingvam Gallicam, ut vult Mersennus (*Comment. in Genesin pag. m. 669. Gisb. Voetius disp. Selectar. part. I p. 136. & 199. Reinhardus in animadvers. ad J. Lipsii Politicor. Lib. I. cap. 2. §. 10. not. 1. Vincent. Placcius de Scriptis & Scriptoribus anonymis pag. 124. n. 551. Spizelius in Scrutin. Atheismi pag. 56. 57.*) & hunc secutus Pfeifferus (*Lect. Anti-Atheist. pag. 14*). Liber ipse constat quatuor Dialogis prorsus Lucianis: in quorum primo Mercurius, Byrphanes, Curtalius & Hospita: in secundo Trigabus, Mercurius, Rhetulus, Cubercus & Drarig: in tertio Mercurius, Cupido, Celia, Phlegon, Statius & Ardelio: in quarto denique duo canes colloquentes Hylactor & Pamphagus introducuntur. Ex quibus primarii & præcipui tres sunt illi sunt Dialogi, qui continent Chronica rerum memorabilium, quas Juppiter gessit, antequam esset ipse. Fatorum præscriptum: sive eorum quæ futura sunt, certæ dispositiones. Catalogus Heorum immortalium, qui cum Jove vitam victuri sunt sempiternam (*Du Verdier Vauprivas Biblioth. Franc. p. 1178. vid. Bayle Dictionaire Historiq. & Critiq. in Perier Tom. III. p. 2381*). Verum semper mihi mens est purum animum in pura religione esse debere, ne ludus in re seria sine rubore, sine scrupulo conscientiæ, aliquid profani sapiat. Sed quid fas non est nefario homini, qui imposturas gentilium de Mercurio, Jove &c. ad Christianos absque metu

sceleris transtulit. An sufficiant, ut hoc arguant crimen, *Nouvelles Recreations* &c. (*Editus est liber ille Rhotomagi apud Raphaëlem du Petit Val An. 1606*) non facile dixero. Format in his sibi solum pingvem & nitidum Epicuri de grege porcum, seu mavis Menippum, aut *Diogonem; cujus finis est: Bene vivere & lætari*, quod postea interpretatur per *ridere*. (*Gisb. Voetius Disput. Select. Part. I. pag. 200*). Altius quoque latet hoc ulcus; impietas affixa est præcordiis. De priori libro justa est querela, unde constet fabulam Mercurii e cœlo delabentis, ab impio Perezio tribus Dialogis jocularíter insinuatam fuisse; & quidquid de religione ab illo dicitur nullo niti fundamento ac pro nugis habendum (*Mersenn. Comment. in Genesin pag. 672*). Ultimo auctorem, utpote ex desperatione, quæ plerumque Atheismi est comes, violentas sibimetipsi inferentem manus, horrendus & atrox excepit exitus (*Spizelius in Scrutin. Atheismi pag. 133*). VALEO autem…

1709
Johann Franz Buddeus*

Johann Franz Buddeus, *Allgemeines Historisches Lexicon, in welchem das Leben und die Thaten* […] *in Alphabetischer Ordnung mit bewehrten Zeugnissen vorgestellet werden*, Dritter und Vierdter Theil / H—Z (Leipzig: Thomas Fritsch, 1709).

p. 157 | Periers / (Bonaventura des) bürtig von Bar an der Auber in Burgund / wurde kammerdiener bey Margaretha von Valois / Königin von Navarra / Francisci I schwester. Man hat von ihm ein buch von frantzösischen gedichten / welches nach seinem tode an. 1544 in 8vo zu Lion gedruckt worden / eine übersetzung der Andria des Terentii in frantzösische verse / und viele erzehlungen oder fabeln in ungebundener rede / unter dem titul nouvelles recreations. Sonderlich aber ist sein buch cymbalum mundi genannt wegen der darinnen enthaltenen gottlosigkeiten beruffen. Welches er lateinisch geschrieben / und hernach selbst unter dem namen Thomas du Clevier ins frantzösische übersetzt / und a. 1537 zu Paris drucken lassen. Er hat ein unglückseliges ende genommen / denn nachdem er rasend und unsinnig worden / hat er sich selber indem er sich einen degen in bauch gestochen / umgebracht. Mons. Allart sagt / er sey aus dem ambrunischen gewesen / und habe wider den Sagon vor den abwesenden Marot in versen eine apologie geschrieben an. 1580. Welches auch geschehen / allein diese jahr-zahl ist falsch / indem er schon vor dem 1544sten jahre gestorben. *La Croix du Maine* & *du Verdier Vauprivas* bibl. franc.; *Henr. Estienne* apol. d'Herodot. c. 18 & c. 26 ; *Io. Chassanion* hist. mem. des grands & merveill. jugemens & punit. Dieu l. 1 c. 24; *Allard* bibl. de Dauphiné p. 172; *Bayle*.

1710
Peter Dahlmann

Peter Dahlmann, *Schauplatz der masquirten und Demasquirten Gelehrten bey ihren verdeckten und nunmehro entdeckten Schrifften / aus gewissen Anzeigungen / glaubwürdigen Nachrichten / und wahrscheinlichen Conjecturen bewährter Männer / nach ihren vornehmsten Denckwürdigkeiten / samt Beyfügung neuer Raisonnements und Autoritäten* (Leipzig: Johann Ludwig Gleditsch and M. G. Weidmanns, 1710).

p. 360 | CYMBALUM MUNDI &c.
Eröffnung.
Dieses ist ein lästerliches Atheistisches Scriptum, welches Anno 1582. ediret worden. Es bestehet aus IV. Dialogis. In dem ersten werden Mercurius, Byrphanes, Curtalius & Hospita; in dem anderen Trigabus, Mercurius, Rhetulus, Cubercus & Drarius; in dem dritten

Mercurius, Cupido, Lelia, Phlegau, Statius & Ardelius; in dem vierdten endlich gar zwey Hunde Hylactor und Pamphagus redend introduciret. Da denn solcher gestalt der Author viele Fabeln vorstellt / dadurch der Christliche Glaube lächerlich durchgezogen / und dasjenige / was von Gott und seinem Worte von der Christlichen Kirche geglaubt ist / verworffen wird. Der Author dessen soll nach der meisten Meynung Bonaventura de PERIERS oder de PEREZ seyn. vid. Spizelii *Scrutin. Atheism. 3. §.14. p. 56.* Einige sagen / er wäre nicht eigentlich Author, sondern hätte es nur ins Lateinische vertiret.