Portraits from the French Renaissance and the Wars of Religion

ANDRÉ THEVET

translated by EDWARD BENSON

edited with introduction and notes by
ROGER SCHLESINGER

foreword by T. K. RABB

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and the Wars of Religion

Habent sua fata libelli

Early Modern Studies Series

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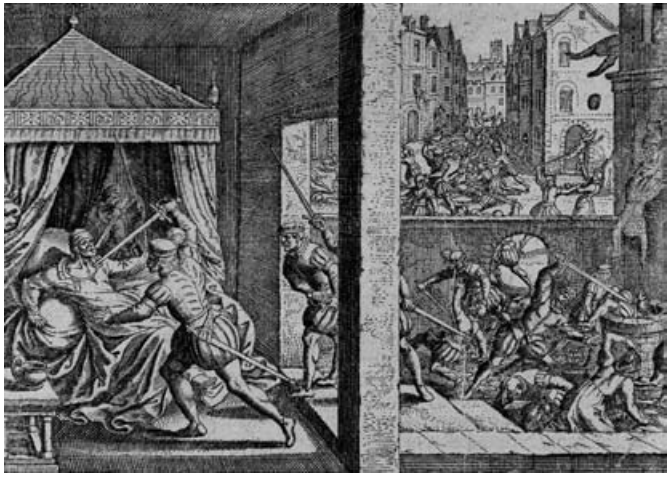

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Foreword

T. K. Rabb

Collections of brief biographies are among the most ancient of the enterprises of the historian. Thus, although the magisterial accounts of Rome by Livy and Tacitus occupy a central place in our understanding of the government and society they portrayed, many of the most interesting insights into the age come from the pioneering practitioners of the art of multiple biography, Plutarch and Suetonius. What they perfected was the brief, incisive portrait of the great and famous—in Suetonius' case, they were all emperors. And what their short biographies permitted was an attention to the telling detail that brings a period as well as a person to life by means that the more ambitious historians would only rarely employ. Thus Suetonius, after having presented Germanicus as an ideal and heroic figure, cuts him down to size and reveals the effort behind the image in one incisive sentence: "His legs were too slender for the rest of his figure, but he gradually brought them to proper proportions by constant horseback riding after meals."

For the France of the sixteenth century, André Thevet was Plutarch and Suetonius combined. Although his renown was primarily as the writer of travel accounts and geographic treatises, his massive collection of biographies is not only a brilliant window into the development of historical writing, but also an unrivalled source for the understanding of his era. His portraits may not have the critical bite of his Roman predecessors, but they rest on an effort of meticulous research that the ancients did not match. Thevet found out everything he could about his subjects, and he offered his readers both a sweep through the past and a virtual encyclopedia of his age. Unlike his Florentine contemporary Giorgio Vasari, who compiled the lives of famous artists, Thevet was not trying to promote a particular party line. And unlike his famous successor in England a century later, John Aubrey, he was not on a constant lookout for scandal and juicy stories. This was the sober work of a deeply learned man who wanted the world to know about those whom he considered significant figures of the past, and especially of his own time.

That the information about his contemporaries is especially invaluable is, at least in part, because of the momentous developments of the period through which he lived. For this was not only the century of

Europe's first major encounter with the rest of the world—a topic Thevet made his own through his travels and writings—but also the century of the Reformation. The cataclysmic effects of the religious change launched by Martin Luther in Germany and expanded in France by Jean Calvin were felt in every sphere of life: politics, society, literature, and the arts. Every aspect of the history of Thevet's native land in the 1500s was affected by these changes, and for that reason alone his account of the lives of those who had to struggle with the consequences of the Reformation (whether or not he takes up this theme) is essential reading.

One story in particular is illuminated by the biographies collected in this book. Starting in the second half of the fifteenth century, the French monarchy had begun the long and slow process of consolidating its authority over all of France. Following the disasters and disruptions of the Hundred Years' War with England, the reign of Louis XI (1461–1483) had witnessed a reassertion of royal authority that was to be expanded by his successors for almost a century. They were often involved in foreign wars, but these served as an excellent distraction for a king's chief rivals, the landed nobility. What was particularly impressive was the relentless rise in taxation, in the central government's legal powers, and in the size of the bureaucracy and the army, all of which enhanced the monarch's stature.

That process mirrored similar advances by kings in England and Spain at this time, but in France it was brought to an abrupt halt by the effects of the Reformation. In England, Henry VIII and Elizabeth coopted the religious reforms and brought their realm into the Protestant fold without major upheaval. Spain remained a vigorous and watchful adherent of Catholicism, where religious dissent could gain no foothold. But France was torn apart by confessional dispute. By the middle of the sixteenth century, Calvinism had won hundreds of thousands of adherents, particularly in south-central and southwestern regions of the country, far from the center of royal authority in Paris. With the death of the determined and forceful Henri II in 1559, soon after the conclusion of yet another foreign war, France came under the rule of a succession of weak and uncertain kings. It was inevitable, therefore, that both nobles and Protestants (known to the French as Huguenots) should have reasserted themselves, and by 1562 civil war had broken out.

Thevet was witness to all these events. Although he lived just long enough to see a strong leader, Henri IV, at last come to the throne and issue in 1589 an edict of toleration for the Huguenots that brought the civil strife to an end, his last years were dominated by the chaos and destruction of these so-called Wars of Religion. Writing from within the cauldron and publishing at a time when the prospects for peace were

bleak, he was nevertheless able to put together calm, dispassionate, and scholarly portraits of his subjects. We have here the rulers and the aristocrats who presided over the remarkable growth of government from the late fifteenth century onward, and who then had to contend with the forces unleashed by civil war. Given his own interests, it is hardly surprising that Thevet pays particular attention in these biographies to the cultivation of the arts and the life of the mind. But he also devoted full-scale biographies to writers and scholars like Budé and Postel. Thevet, in sum, is an indispensable gold mine if one seeks to encounter directly some of the most important individuals who shaped sixteenth-century France. And for those who love the varieties of history, he stands as a worthy heir to Plutarch and Suetonius.

Translator's Acknowledgments

I would like to thank many friends, colleagues, and students who are innocent of any involvement in the project, but who have helped me figure out the (decidedly nonlinear) evolution of early modern French culture: particularly W. F. Church, Nancy Lyman Roelker, Susan Porter Benson, Judith Bennett, Cynthia Harrup, Natalie Zemon Davis, Steven Greenblatt, Marcel Tetel, Chris Waters, Chris Pinet, Pat Murphy, Ruth Doyle, Anne Berthelot, Eliane Dalmolin, and Maureen Dunnigan. I am also grateful to the librarians of the *Bibliothèque Mazarine* in Paris, the Universities of North Carolina, New Mexico, Western Illinois, Central Missouri, and Connecticut, and Brown University.

Edward Benson

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Roger Schlesinger

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Introduction

André Thevet's Life, Travels, and Works

Historians know little about the early life of André Thevet.[1] He was born in Angoulême, but even the dates of his birth and death have been matters of controversy. Until the mid-1980s, scholars who had studied his life believed that Thevet lived from 1502 to 1590 or, more likely, from 1504 to 1592. In 1985, however, Frank Lestringant, the most prolific of all Thevet scholars, made a convincing case for a birth date of 1516 or 1517, based on an unequivocal statement by Thevet himself.[2] At the age of ten, he was placed in the Franciscan monastery in Angoulême against his will.[3] Later, with the support of the powerful La Rochefoucauld family, he obtained a university education at Poitiers and Paris and then secured an appointment as private secretary to the cardinal of Amboise. Perhaps inspired by the books in the cardinal's library at Gaillon, Thevet developed a strong interest in travel and made several journeys to Italy, Switzerland, Naples, and Africa in the 1540s. He eventually became one of the most widely traveled Frenchmen of his day and claimed to have spent seventeen years in foreign places.[4]

Thevet's career as an author of geographical literature began with a journey to the Middle East. In June 1549, under the patronage of Jean, cardinal of Lorraine,[5] he sailed from Venice to the Levant, where he remained for four years. He toured Constantinople with the Genoese ambassador in November 1549, and accompanied the celebrated naturalist Pierre Gilles[6] to Istanbul, Rhodes, Athens, and Alexandria in a search for antiquities in 1550. He also visited Lebanon, Arabia, and Malta before returning home.[7] In 1554, he published an account of his travels

[1]The only book-length biography of Thevet is Lestringant, *André Thevet*.

[2]Lestringant, introduction to *Cosmographie de Levant*, xiii. In his biography, Lestringant uses the dates 1516–92 for Thevet's life.

[3]Lestringant, introduction to *Cosmographie de Levant*, xiii n1.

[4]Thevet, *Cosmographie universelle*, vol. 1, dedication.

[5]Thevet mentions Jean in his biography of Charles, cardinal of Lorraine, but does not take the opportunity to mention this act of patronage.

[6]See below, p. 15, "Pierre Gilles, Postel, & Thevet." Thevet uses the place-name Chalcedon, which refers to modern Kadiköy, today a district of Istanbul.

[7]Moréri, *Le grand dictionaire historique*, 10:138.

in the East under the title *Cosmographie de Levant,* which he dedicated to his former patron, François de la Rochefoucauld.

Thevet capitalized on the success of his first book[8] by seizing an opportunity to travel to the New World, and in so doing became an author of even greater reputation. In 1555 he obtained the position of *aumônier* (chaplain) for the expedition to colonize Brazil led by Nicholas Durand, chevalier de Villegaignon. Thevet landed at Guanabara, the site of modern-day Rio de Janeiro, on 10 November 1555, but fell ill soon thereafter and returned to France on the first available ship about ten weeks later. Then he published his second work, *Les singularitez de la France Antarctique*.[9] Here, in the first illustrated French book about the New World, Thevet discussed the fate of the Villegaignon expedition, contributed valuable ethnographic data on the customs of the Tupinamba Indians, and gave precise descriptions of animals and plants. He also included accounts of Mexico, Florida, and Canada—regions he claimed to have visited on the return journey to France. Frank Lestringant, who has edited this work, concluded that *Singularitez* is "without question a seminal work for sixteenth century travel literature. With this work, devoted in large measure to Native American cannibals of the Rio de Janeiro area, a current appears which will continue in the works of Léry, then Montaigne, to culminate finally in the Age of Enlightenment in the myth of the Noble Savage so dear to Diderot and Raynal."[10] His more recent assessment of Thevet's work is that "we consider him one of the very first of the modern ethnographers."[11]

Lestringant's opinion echoed that of Thevet's contemporaries, who also gave *Singularitez* a favorable reception. French editions appeared in Paris and Antwerp in 1558, and Italian and English translations appeared respectively in Venice (1561, 1583, 1584) and London (1568). As a result of his two successful geographical accounts, Thevet obtained a number of positions at court and in the church. He became *aumônier* to Catherine de Médicis, royal cosmographer (geographer) to four French kings (Henri II, François II, Charles IX, Henri III), canon of the cathedral in Angoulême, abbot of Notre Dame de Madion in Saintonge, and overseer of the Royal Collection of Curiosities at Fontainebleau.

Although Thevet made no more journeys to the New World after

[8]Thevet's work was published again two years later.

[9]Thevet, *Singularitez*.

[10]Lestringant, introduction to *Singularités de la France Antarctique*, 7.

[11]Lestringant, "L'insulaire de Rabelais," 253.

publication of *Singularitez,* he did write several additional travel accounts, including his most extensive work, *La Cosmographie universelle d'André Thevet, cosmographe du roy* (1575). The Brazilian section of this book is more complete than its counterpart in *Singularitez,* and is important for its description of the lifestyle and beliefs of the native Tupinamba. Indeed, Thevet's account of these Indians is among the best extant, being based on the author's own experiences and perhaps on interviews with other eyewitnesses. However, Thevet also attempted to convey an entirely different impression of his voyage to the New World, especially to North America, than he had presented in *Singularitez*.[12] In the earlier work he wrote that he had been "very close to Canada" but now—almost twenty years later—he asserted that he landed there and spent more than twenty days examining the country. In fact, Thevet wrote his descriptions of Canada in *Cosmographie* as if he were recounting his own personal experiences, and he even included accounts of conversations with natives.[13]

The publication of *Cosmographie* began the decline of Thevet's reputation as a scholar. Jean de Léry, one of the ministers sent by Jean Calvin to participate in the establishment of Villegaignon's ill-fated colony in Brazil, wrote his own account of the enterprise in 1578.[14] Here, Léry accused the Catholic Thevet of being little more than an "impudent liar" in blaming Protestants for the colony's failure and asserted that his works were "secondhand rags and tatters."[15]

Just as religious differences may have motivated Léry's hostility to Thevet, so too can an ulterior motive be found in the criticisms of François de Belleforest. These two authors had published "rival" cosmographies within months of each other in 1575, and neither missed an opportunity to attack the integrity and credibility of his competitor.[16] Belleforest, for example, accused Thevet of stealing material from his work, and noted that a "certain author of *Singularitez Antarctiques*" stole information from other authors and accepted rumor as truth. Thevet, in turn, attacked Belleforest by pointing out that his rival had never traveled to the New World and therefore had to rely on others' accounts for his information.[17]

[12]North America is described in vol. 2, fols. 984–1020. An English translation is given in Schlesinger and Stabler, *André Thevet's North America*, 27–69, 134–58, 172–215.

[13]Hoffman, in *Cabot to Cartier*, 178–79 and table 7, examined these "conversations" and concluded that all but two of Thevet's phrases derive from the vocabularies in Jacques Cartier's *Brief Récit*.

[14]de Léry, *Histoire d'un voyage*. An English translation of Léry's work is Whatley's *History of a Voyage*.

[15]"vieux haillons et fripperies"; see Léry's preface to *Histoire d'un voyage*.

[16]Belleforest, *La Cosmographie de tout le monde*. See below, p. 49, "Death of the Prince of Portien," for more on Thevet's rivalry with Belleforest.

[17]See Belleforest, *La Cosmographie de tout le monde*, 2: cols. 2039–40. Jean Adhémar

According to Thevet, Belleforest, on his deathbed, begged forgiveness for the attacks he had made on Thevet's scholarly reputation.[18] Moreover, in a letter to the cartographer Abraham Ortelius, Thevet also complained about Belleforest and Sebastian Münster, upon whose work Belleforest's own was based:

> During the lifetime of the good father Seb. Münster I recall that having written me familiarly, he took in good part some remarks I had made to him and which he did not find superfluous touching foreign countries. He did not mention my name nor did Belleforest, although it is no lie that they greatly profited from me in remedying their inexperience. Sometimes they sought me out, they made many mistakes, and did not always show me the gratitude they owed me.[19]

In fact, Richard Hakluyt found the works of both Thevet and Belleforest to be "wearie volumes bearing the titles of universall Cosmographie which some men that I could name have published as their owne, beying in deed most untruly and unprofitablie ramassed and hurled together."[20] Henri Lancelot de Voisin, sieur de la Popelinière, echoed this judgment when he asserted that both Thevet and Belleforest wrote not for the public interest but their own profit, "which they obtained by the miserable work of their unbridled pens."[21]

Perhaps the most damning compilation of Thevet's faults was written by his famous contemporary Jacques-Auguste de Thou (1553–1617), a scholar noted for his impartial approach to the events of his time.

> [He] applied himself to writing books, which he sold to miserable publishers: after having compiled extracts of different authors, he added to them everything he could find in road guides and other such books, which are in popular hands. In fact, more ignorant than you could possibly conceive and having no acquaintanceship with literature, nor antiquity, nor chronology, he put in his books the uncertain for the certain, the false for the true, with

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has shown that Thevet had seen Belleforest's work before his own was published and that he had indeed taken, almost verbatim, entire passages from Belleforest's work; *Frère André Thevet,* 76.

[18]Thevet, *Vrais pourtraits*, fol. 560r.

[19]Thevet's complaints may be found in his letter to the cartographer Abraham Ortelius in Hessels, *Abrahami Ortelli… epistulae*, 329–30.

[20]Hakluyt, preface "To the Reader," *Principal Navigations* (1589) in *The Original Writings & Correspondence of the Two Richard Hakluyts*, 2:402.

[21]de Voisin, *L'histoire des histoires,* 455–58. A modern edition of this work is *L'histoire des histoires*, ed. Desan.

> an astonishing assurance. I remember that some of my friends, clever people with a keen wit, having gone one day to see him to amuse themselves, made him believe in my presence ridiculous and absurd things, which children even would have trouble swallowing; which made me laugh a lot. I can therefore not keep from pitying some people who, although well-versed in the sciences, not only do not perceive his stupidities of a charlatan, but cite him every day with honor in their writings. I have often been astonished that a man so easily fooled, has himself fooled persons of such great reputation. I therefore warn them now to no longer in the future dishonor their works by citing an author so ignorant and contemptible.[22]

Brief critical accounts in the eighteenth century, for example those of Jacob le Duchat and Jean-Pierre Nicéron, repeated the typical accusations of Thevet's ignorance and mendacity.[23] By the nineteenth century George Dexter, writing in the fourth volume of Justin Winsor's *Narrative and Critical History of America,* claimed that Thevet's "reputation for truth-telling is so poor that many historians are inclined to reject altogether his recital of the voyage along our coast," while the *Nouvelle biographie générale,* a standard reference, concluded in 1866 that Thevet's works had fallen into a "well-deserved oblivion."[24]

That judgment lasted only for a little more than a decade. Revisionist interpretations of Thevet's work began in 1878 with Paul Gaffarel's new, annotated edition of *Singularitez* and his biographical article on Thevet ten years later.[25] While Gaffarel lamented Thevet's lack of organization and his tendency to exaggerate, he also pointed out that Thevet's works had preserved for future generations curious details about the New World that otherwise might have been lost. For Gaffarel, Thevet's most important characteristics were his insatiable curiosity and desire to acquire and disseminate as much knowledge as possible.

These two contributions, together with another short biography of Thevet by Marcellino Da Civezza, who used the unpublished notes of Ferdinand Denis (d. 1890), a specialist in the history of Brazil, to summarize and

[22]Jacques-Auguste de Thou's history of his own time was first published as *Historia sui temporis* in 1620. The quotation is from the English edition, *Histoire universelle*, 651–52.

[23]le Duchat, *Satyre Menippée*, 2:285; and Nicéron, *Mémoires* (1733), 23:74–83.

[24]Dexter, "Cortereal, Verrazano, Gomez, Thevet," 4:1–32, quote at 12; Hoefer, *Nouvelle biographie générale* (1866), 45: col. 128.

[25]Gaffarel's 1878 edition of *Singularitez* included a "Notice biographique" of Thevet (v–xxxiii) that he revised and published in *Bulletin de Géographie Historique et Descriptive*, 166–201.

present in scholarly form what was known about Thevet at the end of the nineteenth century,[26] combined to improve Thevet's reputation. In 1905 Edouard de Jonghe first revealed Thevet's materials on Aztec civilization, still considered among the best written outside Spain and the Indies, in his "Histoyre du Mechique, manuscrit français inédit du XVIe siècle," and "Thevet, Mexicaniste." Two years later Daniel Touzard defended Thevet's claim to have introduced tobacco into France,[27] and in 1911 Gilbert Chinard noted the considerable influence Thevet exerted on French conceptions of Native Americans.[28]

Estevão Pinto and Jean Adhémar continued to rehabilitate Thevet's reputation in the 1940s. In 1943, Pinto published "O Franciscano André Thevet," the first scholarly article on Thevet in Portuguese, followed in 1944 by his translation of *Singularitez* into the same language. Inspired by Pinto, Manoel da Silveira Cardozo offered the first important account of Thevet's career in English. A few years later Adhémar, who had already published "André Thevet collectionneur de portraits," wrote the first full-length biography of Thevet, *Frère André Thevet, grand voyageur et cosmographe des rois de France au xvie siècle* (Paris, 1947). Unfortunately, Adhémar treated his subject rather uncritically and failed to cite his sources. Six years later, however, Suzanne Lussagnet presented *Le Brésil et les Brésiliens par André Thevet,*[29] an important study for stimulating further research on Thevet's works. It contains the sections on Brazil from *Cosmographie universelle* and two previously unpublished manuscripts—"Histoire de deux voyages" and "Grand Insulaire"[30]—and continues to be

[26]Da Civezza, *Saggio di bibliografia*, 590–94.

[27]Whether credit for the introduction of tobacco into France should go to Thevet or to Jean Nicot, the French ambassador in Lisbon (1558–60), whose surname provides the origin of "nicotine," is a matter of controversy. Thevet claimed that he brought back tobacco seed from Brazil and cultivated it at Angoulême before Nicot sent the seed to François II. It is interesting to note that Thevet brought *Nicotiana tabacum*, the type of tobacco used almost universally today, back from Brazil. Nicot's seed, *Nicotiana rustica*, which originally came from Florida, is primarily grown in Turkey now. See Hamilton, "What the New World Gave the Economy of the Old." Another point in favor of Thevet's priority is that it was the Tupinamba word for tobacco, "petun," mentioned by Thevet in *Singularitez* (fol. 60r) and *Cosmographie* (fol. 1014r), which became the original word for tobacco in French, Portuguese, and English. Also see Touzard, "André Thevet d'Angoulesme," 1–47.

[28]Chinard, *L'exotisme Américain*, chap. 4.

[29]Lussagnet, *Brésil et les Brésiliens*.

[30]Thevet, *Histoire d'André Thevet angoumoisin, cosmographe du roy, de deux voyages par luy faits aux Indes australes et occidentales* … (1588, BN. MS. Fr. 15454); and Thevet, *Le grand insulaire et pilotage d'André Thevet angoumoisin, cosmographe du roy* … (1586?, 2 vols. BN. MS. Fr. 15452 and 15453), both in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France. A critical edition of the former, edited by Jean-Claude Laborie and Frank Lestringant, has recently been published.

a standard reference for the early history of Brazil. Lussagnet's work is also important for the judgment of Thevet's scholarship offered by Charles-André Julien in his introduction to the book. Here he compared Thevet to a "commentator who wanders over the world on the trail of unpublished and picturesque materials." He opined that Thevet's principal qualities were "a passion for traveling that made monastery life unbearable for him, a scorn for danger which caused him to face the perils of the sea and forays into 'strange' countries, an insatiable curiosity which led him to continually refresh and complete his knowledge, and finally the art of interviewing those in the know and extracting information from them."[31]

While Lussagnet reaffirmed the importance of Thevet's descriptions of Brazil and the Tupinamba, in the 1930s William F. Ganong had begun to establish Thevet's reputation as an authentic source for the history of sixteenth-century Canada. Ganong's work, however, did not become readily available until it was collected and published in 1964 by Theodore E. Layng under the title, *Crucial Maps in the Early Cartography and Place-Nomenclature of the Atlantic Coast of Canada.* Ganong emphasized that Thevet's text was taken from oral sources and, as a result, contained important, original, and accurate information. The far-reaching influence of Ganong's reinterpretation of Thevet's scholarly worth can be seen clearly in the work of Bernard G. Hoffman, who concluded that "Thevet's description of Canada contains original information obtained verbally from [Jacques] Cartier himself, which could not have been invented by any stretch of the imagination and which is subject to check."[32]

Scholars writing more recently have explored specific aspects of Thevet's work and have edited and translated most of his geographical texts. Important studies include those by Marcel Destombes, Rüdiger Joppien, P. E. H. Hair, Janet Whatley, and, of course, Frank Lestringant.[33] In addition to writing persuasive and original studies on different aspects of Thevet's career, Lestringant published new editions of several of Thevet's works. [34] Jean Baudry also published a facsimile edition of *Singularités* (1982) with a useful introduction. Finally, Eugenio Amado translated *Singularitez* into Portuguese (1978), and Roger Schlesinger and Arthur P. Stabler produced an annotated English translation of Thevet's accounts of Mexico, Florida, and Canada from *Singularitez, Cosmographie univer-*

[31]Lussagnet, *Brésil et les Brésiliens*, v.

[32]Hoffman, *Cabot to Cartier*, 171–72.

[33]Destombes, "André Thevet (1504–1592)," 123–31; Joppien, "Etude de quelques portraits," 125–36; Hair, "A Note on Thevet's Unpublished Maps," 105–16; and Whatley, "Savage Hierarchies," 319–30.

[34]Lestringant's principal works are listed in Works Cited below (see both Lestringant and Thevet).

selle, and the previously unpublished "Grand Insulaire" (1986).[35]

A more balanced, and positive, assessment of Thevet's geographical works has evolved from this careful scholarship. Marcel Trudel, for example, summarized the prevailing attitude towards Thevet when he described him as "a bogus scholar and a naïve compiler of facts," but he also admitted that Thevet's information, often resting on no known written sources, has been proven accurate by present-day scholars.[36] Another recent scholar, Olive P. Dickason, ranked Thevet with Léry and Hans Staden as the period's leading sources of New World ethnographic data and declared that he "casts his net wider than the other two, who confined their attentions to Brazilians. Thevet not only added flesh to the bare bones of Cartier's published observations, but also pondered entrepreneurial prospects of New France that Cartier must have considered but did not record."[37]

Thevet's Sources

Thevet consulted a vast array of source materials to glean information about the great variety of peoples, places, and events described in *Vrais pourtraits*. Some of his sources can be inferred, although he almost never acknowledged them himself. He used Amyot's translation (1559) of Plutarch's *Lives* for his figures from the ancient world and Trithemius' *De scriptores ecclesiasticis* (1512) for his medieval ecclesiastics.[38] He also relied on Paolo Giovio's *Elogia veris clarorum virorum* (1546), which was translated into Italian by Lodovico Domenichi in 1554 and into French by Blaise d'Everon in 1559. Thevet also used his own extensive collection of materials that he had collected during his travels and which he describes in *Cosmographie universelle*.[39] The importance of these items cannot be exaggerated; he used his position as royal cosmographer to collect rare documents and artifacts. Of special significance is the Codex Mendoza, an illustrated history of the Aztecs detailing political and social events and customs from the establishment of Tenochtitlán in 1324 to the Spanish conquest in 1519.[40] This account of native life apparently came into

[35]Thevet, *Singularités*, ed. Baudry; Thevet, *As singularidades da França Antarctica*, trans. Amado; and Schlesinger and Stabler, *Thevet's North America*.

[36]Trudel, "André Thevet," 1:680.

[37]Dickason, *Myth of the Savage*, 178.

[38]Adhémar also mentions unspecified works by Conrad Gesner and John Leland as sources; *Frère André Thevet*, 60.

[39]Thevet, *Cosmographie Universelle*, vol. 2, fol. 471r.

[40]The Codex Mendoza is in the Bodleian Library at Oxford (MS. Arch. Selden. A.1). The best modern edition of the codex is Clark, *Mexican Manuscript*.

Thevet's possession when the French intercepted the ship carrying the codex to Spain. Richard Hakluyt, while in Paris in 1587, bought it from Thevet for twenty French crowns, and Samuel Purchas later published it as the "choisest of my jewels."[41]

Les vrais pourtraits et vies des hommes illustres

Heretofore, virtually all studies and analyses of Thevet's work and thought have centered on his geographical writings. His scholarly output, however, was certainly much broader than those works, and included history and commentary on the events of his time. An examination of his biographies of illustrious men provides a more complete and balanced view of his contribution to sixteenth-century literature, and deserves to be included in any subsequent reevaluations or reinterpretations of Thevet's work.

Published for the first time in 1584, André Thevet's *Les vrais pourtraits et vies des hommes illustres* is outstanding among Renaissance collections of biographies because of its great variety of subjects.[42] It encompasses more than two hundred lives, drawn from virtually all regions of the world, from antiquity to Thevet's own sixteenth century, and it contains the first biographies in European literature of Native Americans.[43]

Although scholarly debate over the value of Thevet's work has centered almost exclusively on his geographical works, he himself regarded *Vrais pourtraits* as the culmination of his career and went into debt to finance its printing.[44] The book is a collection of 232 biographies, almost all of them illustrated with an engraved portrait of its subject.[45] Thevet devoted the first volume, containing eighty-three chapters, to "personnages signalez pour la rarité de leur sçavoir" (those known for their erudition). In the second volume, containing 149 chapters,[46] he described

[41]Hakluyt, *Hakluytus Posthumus,* 15:412–504. For an account of Hakluyt's purchase of the Codex from Thevet, see Quinn, *Hakluyt Handbook*, 1:294–95.

[42]Cf., for example, the more limited scope of other contemporary collections: Giovio, *Elogia veris clarorum vivorum*; Vasari, *Le vite de piu eccellenti*; and du Verdier, *La biographie*.

[43]Annotated translations of Thevet's biographies of Native Americans are in Schlesinger and Benson, *Portraits from the Age of Exploration*.

[44]Thevet, *Vrais pourtraits*, viii. Catherine de Médicis' librarian, the Florentine Giovanni-Battista (Jean-Baptiste) Bencivenni, also supported the publication of this work. See Balmas, "Documenti inediti su André Thevet," 56.

[45]Ten chapters lack portraits (vol. 1, chaps. 45, 60, 76, 78; vol. 2, chaps. 46, 59, 88, 119, 121, 127). Adhémar listed 221 portraits, omitting Aristotle's and giving provenance where he knew it, in the second volume of *Inventaire du fonds Français*.

[46]The last chapter of the second volume is numbered 150, but chapters 9, 10, and 51 are

the lives of warriors, navigators and sea-captains, lawyers, orators, and a few artisans. Like other Renaissance biographers, Thevet included figures from antiquity and the Middle Ages in his work, but *Vrais pourtraits* is distinguished by the high percentage of biographies of Thevet's contemporaries, particularly of individuals from Asia, Africa, and the Americas.[47] The inclusion of so many non-Europeans reflected his own interests in geography and ethnography, and it fed the reading public's growing appetite for information about strange and exotic people living in far-off lands.[48]

This volume presents annotated English translations of thirteen biographies from *Vrais pourtraits* that describe the lives and deeds of Thevet's famous contemporaries. Together, they provide an insightful, interesting, and multifaceted account of the history of sixteenth-century France. The biographies have been divided into three categories: monarchs, aristocrats/warriors, and scholars. Within each group, the figures are arranged chronologically according to the date of their death. Thevet's treatment of these subjects reveals his interests as well as those of his audience: details of the lives of the privileged elite, their abilities and success in politics and war, their social status, family connections, and genealogy. The biographies also show reverence for high culture and scholarly achievement.

Thevet's biographies, of course, are valuable not only for the information they provide about their subjects, but they also reveal a great deal of information about the author's own values and beliefs. He is not interested in the lives and exploits of women, unless they bear directly on the lives of his male subjects (as mothers, daughters, sisters, etc.) or are unusually prominent, as in the case of Marguerite of Angoulême. For example, his treatment of Blaise de Monluc provides detailed information about Monluc's sons, but neglects even to mention his six daughters. The biography of Henri II provides information about the king's wife, Catherine de Médicis, but not about his mistress, Diane de Poitiers.

While it is obvious that Thevet is interested primarily in French figures and French history and current affairs, he does include mention of some foreigners important in the lives of his subjects. These include,

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missing, while there are two chapters each numbered 28 and 29, for a net reduction of one chapter. The table of contents of the second volume, where the errors occur, has 150 entries only because Horace is listed twice, under *H* and *Q* (Q. Horace Face).

[47]For an annotated English translation of Thevet's six biographies of European explorers (Francisco Pizarro, Hernán Cortés, Afonso d'Albuquerque, Christopher Columbus, Amerigo Vespucci, Ferdinand Magellan) and six biographies of Native Americans (Atahualpa, Montezuma, Nacol-absou, Paracoussi, Quoniambec, Paraousti Satouriona), see Schlesinger and Benson, *Portraits from the Age of Exploration*.

[48]For more on this theme in the literature of this time, see the classic studies by Chinard, *L'exotisme Américain*; and Atkinson, *Les nouveaux horizons*.

among others, Henry VIII, Charles V, Barbarossa, Andrea Doria, Süleyman the Magnificent, several popes, and the Greek scholars Janus Lascaris and George Hermonymus. Nevertheless, his silences in this area are noteworthy. His biography of François I recognizes the king's efforts to raise the level of French culture, but makes no mention of the king's patronage of such Renaissance luminaries as Benvenuto Cellini and Leonardo da Vinci. Thevet is also silent about Chabot's support of the Italian explorer Giovanni Verrazano, who sailed for France, and the French explorer of the St. Lawrence, Jacques Cartier.

On the other hand, Thevet's biographies reveal that he was thorough and careful in his research. His attempts at self-promotion, compared with his work on exploration, are subdued. While he continued to attempt to correct the errors or misconceptions of anonymous "others," he engaged in few polemics with his traditional rivals, except for his "archenemy" François de Belleforest, famous in his own day as a collector of tragic tales. In fact, one might wish that Thevet had developed his opinions more thoroughly. To cite but one example, he frequently claims that religion was merely a pretext for the French religious wars of the latter sixteenth century, but offers no alternative explanation of their origin. Thevet, who so often claimed that he wanted to "avoid prolixity," was true to his word for once. Nevertheless, these biographies allow us to see the care their author took to get his facts straight. And given his allegiance to Catholicism and the Crown, and the contentious and divisive nature of his subject matter, he is more evenhanded than one might expect.

Readers will find that Thevet's accounts of French lives and events are much more detailed than those found in modern books on sixteenth-century French history. Not only are these unique details interesting, they also play an important role in helping the reader evaluate Thevet's writings as historical literature and appreciate how his personal values affect his interpretation of French history and the events of his own time. Clearly Thevet wanted to recount the lives of illustrious men, but how did he define such individuals? What characteristics did they all share? For Thevet, there seem to be four criteria. The most obvious is that illustrious men are members of some elite. They all have risen to prominent positions in the political, religious, and educational institutions of the state. Two of them (Budé and Postel) were famous intellectuals and did much to promote classical studies in France. Second, with the possible exception of these two scholars, Thevet chose heroic men who fought with courage and skill on the battlefield and in the political arena. No doubt Thevet focused on military and political affairs, a favorite subject for Renaissance historians (consider the works of Francesco Guicciardini or Niccolò Machiavelli), because war dominated his time

and would have been of interest to his audience. His emphasis on heroism and military adventure, however, also provided him the opportunity to express his personal appreciation for such qualities. In fact, Thevet thought that he too possessed these same qualities. For example, in a biography not included in this volume, he recounted the story of his narrow and daring escape from South American cannibals, a tale he probably invented.[49]

Thevet's third criterion follows the second one rather closely. He believes that his subjects are famous and that their well-deserved reputations have spread far and wide. Thevet not only gives the reader the benefit of his own opinion on this issue, he also tells us that they were regarded as such by their contemporaries. As evidence of their distinction, he includes, where possible, epitaphs written to commemorate and applaud their great deeds (Budé, François I, and Postel). Thevet also provides details about each illustrious man's death and, in a few cases, describes their sepulchers (cardinal of Lorraine, Chabot, Du Bellay, and Gaston de Foix). He also wants his readers to imagine the physical appearance of his subjects. To this end he provides a copperplate portrait of each subject and in some cases complements the portrait with a written description of their physical appearance (Charles IX, François I, and Monluc).

Thevet's fourth criterion demands that illustrious men behave according to certain religious and political principles. They must be good Roman Catholics, of course, as well as honest and loyal servants of the monarchy—and if they cherish intellectual pursuits, so much the better. All of Thevet's subjects served the church or the state in one capacity or another. The three monarchs included here patronized scholars and defended their subjects and the Catholic Church from political and religious enemies. Even the two scholars (Budé and Postel) served the monarchy by promoting the development of education and libraries. Thevet believed that educated and intelligent aristocrats served the monarchy best. In his biography of François I, for instance, he complains about the "ignorance of some who enjoyed benefices," while his remarks on Du Bellay include praise for his humanistic outlook and education. Thevet demonstrated his unqualified support of the French monarchy, which employed him for almost all of his adult life, by his strong condemnation of treason or disloyalty to the king: his remarks about Poltrot's conspiracy against the Duke of Guise, and the description of his execution, provide but one vivid example.

[49]See Schlesinger and Benson, *Portraits from the Age of Exploration*, 122, 122n7.

The Historical Context of *Les vrais pourtraits*

Thevet's criteria make sense. His emphasis on loyalty to church and state no doubt reflects values he learned and embraced in his own religious and political career, while his belief in the power of education and the importance of reputation constitute two of the main characteristics of Renaissance thought. Indeed, Thevet regarded reputation, recognition, and fame so highly that he named two islands in the New World after himself.[50] But Thevet's interest in these issues goes well beyond his subjects' place in society. He appears almost to be obsessed with their genealogies, and provides detailed information not only about parents and siblings, but also extended family members and even godparents. Thevet's interest in this subject originated neither in his personal life nor in his career. Why did it fascinate him so much?

One obvious answer is that in the Renaissance children inherited their status from their families. Thevet's interest in the importance of families, however, also reveals much about the time in which he lived. Sixteenth-century Europe saw almost incessant warfare and instability, especially in France. Under these circumstances, family connections offered a measure of security and status beyond what any government could provide. Indeed, the importance of families is suggested by the fact that the great foreign war of Thevet's lifetime, the so-called Habsburg-Valois War, derives its name not from the political states that fought each other, but from the two families that ruled those areas. This war, together with the French religious wars that followed, dominated the history of Thevet's France.

Members of the Habsburg family, the rulers of Spain and the Holy Roman Empire, had been fighting French monarchs since the late fifteenth century, particularly over various dynastic claims to parts of Italy. Warfare continued into the sixteenth century because of both ideological and practical conflicts between the Habsburg and Valois leaders. Charles V, the Holy Roman Emperor, believed that he represented the secular arm of the Catholic faith.[51] François I not only took exception to Charles' claims to represent Catholicism, he also wanted to break free from Habsburg encirclement (the "Habsburg noose"). Charles, as Charles I, ruled Spain to the south, and controlled German lands to the east and the Spanish Netherlands (including the modern nations the Netherlands and Belgium) to the north. The Habsburgs' position gained additional strength from alliances in 1520 and 1522 with Henry VIII's government in England.

[50]For details, see Schlesinger and Stabler, *André Thevet's North America*, xxxii, 30, 50, 75, 103, and map 4.

[51]For more on Charles, see Blockmans, *Emperor Charles V*.

War between the Holy Roman Emperor and the French king erupted when François invaded northern Italy in 1515 and seized Milan. Although Charles recognized French control there in 1516, his policies and priorities changed when he became Holy Roman Emperor three years later. Now Milan became strategically important to him because it connected the rest of his holdings in Spain, Austria, and the Netherlands to the wealthy city-states of northern Italy. After 1521, Charles and François waged war against each other again and again; and after the French king's death in 1547, his son Henri II, who had spent years as Charles' captive following the Treaty of Madrid (1525), continued his father's fight. By the early 1550s, however, Charles faced revolts from German Lutheran princes who had allied with Henri and, more importantly, both Charles and Henri were on the verge of bankruptcy. In 1555 Charles agreed to the Peace of Augsburg, which officially recognized Lutheranism in the Holy Roman Empire in those areas already ruled by Lutheran princes.

With that issue settled, Charles abdicated the following year, dividing his vast empire between his brother Ferdinand, who became Holy Roman Emperor, and his son Philip, who became king of Spain as Philip II.[52] The war continued for a few more years, but ended in 1559, primarily because neither side could afford to continue fighting. As a result of the Treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis, which ended the war, Habsburg Spain became the dominant power in Europe. France lost control of Flanders, Navarre, Artois, and Tournai, and relinquished its claims to Naples and Milan while Philip II's empire eventually stretched from Europe to the Americas to the Philippines, which were named in his honor. Perhaps French leaders consoled themselves with the fact that for the first time in a generation, they were no longer at war.

But peace in France lasted only three years. The war that began in 1562 pitted French Catholics against French Huguenots. With the benefit of hindsight, it is clear that the consequences of two specific events, approximately twenty years apart, led to the religious war. In 1516 François I negotiated a treaty with the pope (the Concordat of Bologna), by which the king recognized the supremacy of the pope over church councils and in return gained the power to appoint all French bishops and abbots. The agreement made François' government wealthy and gave the king a good deal of power over church organization; consequently it is easy to understand why the king sought to protect the Catholic Church and his kingdom from Protestants. Then, in 1536, Jean Calvin published his celebrated *Institutes of the Christian Religion,* written in French and dedicated to François. Although Calvin's desire to convert

[52]For more on Philip II, see Kamen, *Philip of Spain*; and Parker, *Philip II*.

the king to the "reformed religion" failed, his ideas appealed to members of the nobility, the middle class in the largest French cities, especially Paris and Lyons, and the intellectual elite.

Three additional events in 1559 made matters worse: delegates from Calvinist congregations in France, meeting secretly in Paris, framed a confession of faith and a book of discipline; two members of the powerful Guise family (François, Duke of Guise, and his brother Charles, cardinal of Lorraine) were given important positions in the French government; and King Henri II died unexpectedly. His weak successors could not stop or slow the spread of Calvinism in France. Their failure threatened to tear French society apart. Sixteenth-century thinkers believed that the king and his subjects should have the same faith because religious uniformity held society together. Heresy equaled treason. Indeed, Catholics felt particularly threatened by Calvinist claims that Christians had no obligation to obey leaders who defied God.[53]

War broke out in 1562 when the Duke of Guise stopped at Vassy, in Champagne, to attend Mass. Some of his followers fought with and killed a number of Huguenots who had gathered to worship nearby. The war that followed lasted for twenty-seven years and saw the monarchy, in the hands of Catherine de Médicis, Henri II's widow, Queen Mother, and regent, vacillate between offers of toleration to Huguenots on the one hand and plots to assassinate them on the other. Indeed, the most notorious event during the war combined both approaches.

In 1572 Catherine arranged the marriage of her daughter Marguerite de Valois to Duke Henri of Navarre, a member of the Bourbon family and a Huguenot. This marriage, of course, might have helped unite the two religious factions. Instead, thousands of Huguenots, in Paris to celebrate the wedding, were massacred—and the killing spread to the rest of the country.[54] During the final phase, the War of the Three Henrys (1584–89), the two Catholic claimants to the throne, Henri III and Henri, Duke of Guise, were assassinated, and the third Henri, king of Navarre, assumed the throne as Henri IV.[55] Given the fact that Thevet wrote during such violent and uncertain times, it cannot be surprising that he emphasized such

[53]See, for example, François Hotman's *Francogallia*, published in 1573, which claimed that the kings of France governed only through the consent of their subjects. Salmon and Giesey have published a modern English translation, *Francogallia*. For more on Hotman, see Kelley, *François Hotman*.

[54]For more on the massacre, see Sutherland, *Massacre of St. Bartholomew*; and Kingdon, *Myths about the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacres*. For detailed accounts of the war, see Thompson's classic study, *Wars of Religion in France*; and these more recent works: Salmon, *Society in Crisis*; Holt, *French Wars of Religion;* Knecht, *French Civil Wars;* and Diefendorf, *Beneath the Cross*.

[55]For more on Henri's policies as king, see the epilogue below.

themes as military prowess, loyalty, heroism, and the importance of family connections.

The Copperplate Engravings in *Vrais pourtraits*

Thevet's use of copperplate engravings distinguishes *Vrais pourtraits* from other Renaissance collections of biographies. In fact, Jean Adhémar went so far as to assert that "this will be less a biographical than an iconographical dictionary, a succession of portraits of famous men, each accompanied by a short note on the life and works of the person represented. The note will be brief, it is but an accessory, the important thing is the portrait."[56]

Vrais pourtraits is the logical culmination of Thevet's lifelong interest in book illustration. *Les singularitez de la France Antarctique,* his first work on America, for example, has been described as one of the most beautiful French books of the sixteenth century: "Whether we speak of their documentary interest or their artistic merit, of their greatness or of the life which we see in them, Thevet's illustrations surpass all other sixteenth-century works of art on America. The care lavished on the work bears ample witness to the importance Thevet attached to their publication."[57] After using woodcut illustrations so effectively in *Singularitez,* Thevet continued his practice of incorporating them, some in modified form, in *Cosmographie universelle*.

Although several authors already had made good use of copperplate engraving by the middle of the sixteenth century, Thevet's use of this new technology helped popularize it.[58] In typical immodest fashion, he declared in the preface to *Vrais pourtraits*: "I was obliged to seek out the engravers I had heard were expert, well trained and skilled in drawing from life and representing naturally the look of the people whom I proposed. Toward this end, I had to bring the best engravers I could find from Flanders, and I was so successful that I may boast of being the first to make copperplate engraving as stylish in Paris as it already was at Lyons, Antwerp, and elsewhere."[59] Nevertheless, even if Thevet exaggerated his own importance, he certainly championed the use of copperplate engraving, and *Vrais pourtraits* contributed significantly to its popularity.[60]

[56]Adhémar, "André Thevet collectionneur," 41–54, quote at 46.

[57]Joppien, "Etude de quelques portraits," 125–36, quote at 126.

[58]A detailed history of book illustration in France is in Brun, *Livre français*, esp. 95–102.

[59]Brun cites this passage as "being of capital importance for the history of engraving in France"; *Livre français*, 100–101.

[60]Joppien, "Etude de quelques portraits," 132. One measure of the book's influence is that laterally reversed derivatives of Thevet's portraits of Columbus, Vespucci, Magellan, and Cortés appeared in Bullart, *Academie des sciences et des arts*, 2:265,

Thevet used a variety of sources to ensure that his portraits were accurate, including royal, aristocratic, and ecclesiastical collections. He described this diligent search for authentic materials in the preface of *Vrais pourtraits*:

> In order to make the reader feel the truth of what I say, everybody knows how hard I have worked to gather and order the portraits which I reproduce here, and whether the expense would not have discouraged anybody else who had tried to bring such a daring enterprise to fruition. For my own part, I can assure the reader of having visited most libraries and shops, French as well as foreign, in order to recover, to the extent possible, all the rare objects [*rarities & singularities*] which I knew to be necessary to accomplish my aim.

Further evidence of Thevet's desire for authenticity is his letter of 1584 to Monsieur Ronat, "Avocat au Parlement." Explaining that he had discarded the engraving of La Trémouille after it was already done, he noted that he decided to use a second portrait provided by the Queen Mother, even though doing so doubled his expenses for that illustration.[61]

Jean Adhémar and Jean Baudry, comparing the engravings in *Vrais pourtraits* to other known likenesses, concluded that Thevet's efforts to provide authentic portraits proved generally successful.[62] Moreover, some of them preserved iconographic data that otherwise would have perished, in the same way that his prose has preserved some ethnographic descriptions. To cite but one example, he copied the portrait of Jean d'Orléans, Count of Angoulême, from a stained glass window in the Celestine Church in Paris that no longer exists.[63]

Thevet's Biographies Already in Print

A second French edition of *Vrais pourtraits* appeared in Paris in 1670/71, under the title *Histoire des plus illustres et sçavans hommes,* and was reissued in 1695. The addition of more contemporary figures enlarged this work and made necessary its division into eight smaller volumes, "for greater ease, because such curious works, of which the subject matter is so easily divided, are as suited to the countryside or solitary walks

273, 275, 277.

[61]Thevet, "Lettre d'André Thevet à Ronet," item 6.

[62]Adhémar, "André Thevet collectionneur," 53; and Thevet, *Singularités*, ed. Baudry, 52–54.

[63]Cholakian, introduction to *Vrais pourtraits*, Thevet, xi; see also fol. 300r.

as they are to the study, and also because the reader is less tired if he can hold them in his hand than if he has to lower his gaze to a desk."[64] In 1973, Scholars' Facsimiles and Reprints issued a reproduction of the original 1584 edition of *Vrais pourtraits,* with a helpful introduction in English by Rouben C. Cholakian, but with no annotations to the text.

Only thirty-three of Thevet's more than two hundred biographical sketches have been translated into English. In 1657, George Gerbier ("alias D'Ovvilly") translated twenty chapters to add to North's Plutarch under the title *Prosopographia: or, some select pourtraitures and lives of ancient and modern illustrious personages* and added five others when the work was published again in 1676.[65] Since that time, only a small number of additional biographies have been translated into English. These include Edward Bennett's translation of Thevet's chapter on Paraousti Satouriona, "King of Florida," and another translation of the biography of Gutenberg. Neither of these is annotated.[66]

In 1993 Roger Schlesinger and Edward Benson published annotated English translations of twelve of Thevet's biographies. Seven of these were published in English for the first time: Francisco Pizarro, Afonso d'Albuquerque, Amerigo Vespucci, Ferdinand Magellan, Montezuma, Nacol-absou (King of the Promontory of the Cannibals), and Paracoussi (King of the Platte).[67]

A Note on the Translation and Annotations

The translator has attempted to translate Thevet's sixteenth-century French into modern English without destroying or improving the character of the original prose. Like most sixteenth-century writers, Thevet did not break his discourse into paragraphs, so the translator has not done

[64]Quotation is from the 1695 edition, p. 2, "Le Libraire au Lecteur."

[65]*Prosopographia…* was added to *The lives of the noble Grecians and Romans, compared together, by that grave learned philosopher and historiographer Plutarch of Chaerona. Translated out of Greek into French, by James Amiot… and out of French into English, by Sir Thomas North, knight*. The 1657 edition contained translations of Thevet's chapters on Constantine the Great, Archimedes, Diogenes, Constantine Paleologus, Justinian, Aristotle, Homer, Sappho, Saladin, Edward (Prince of Wales), Charlemagne, Timur, Priscian, Artemisia, Terrence, Hismael Sophi, Georges Castriot, Tamombeus, Atabalipa (Atahualpa), and Gutenberg. The 1676 edition added Cortés, Basil (Duke of Muscovy), Sebastian I (King of Portugal), Quoniambec, and Columbus.

[66]Charles E. Bennett published the biography of Paraousti Satouriona in *Laudonnière and Fort Caroline*, 171–76. And see McMurtrie, *Jean Guttemberg, Inventor of Printing*.

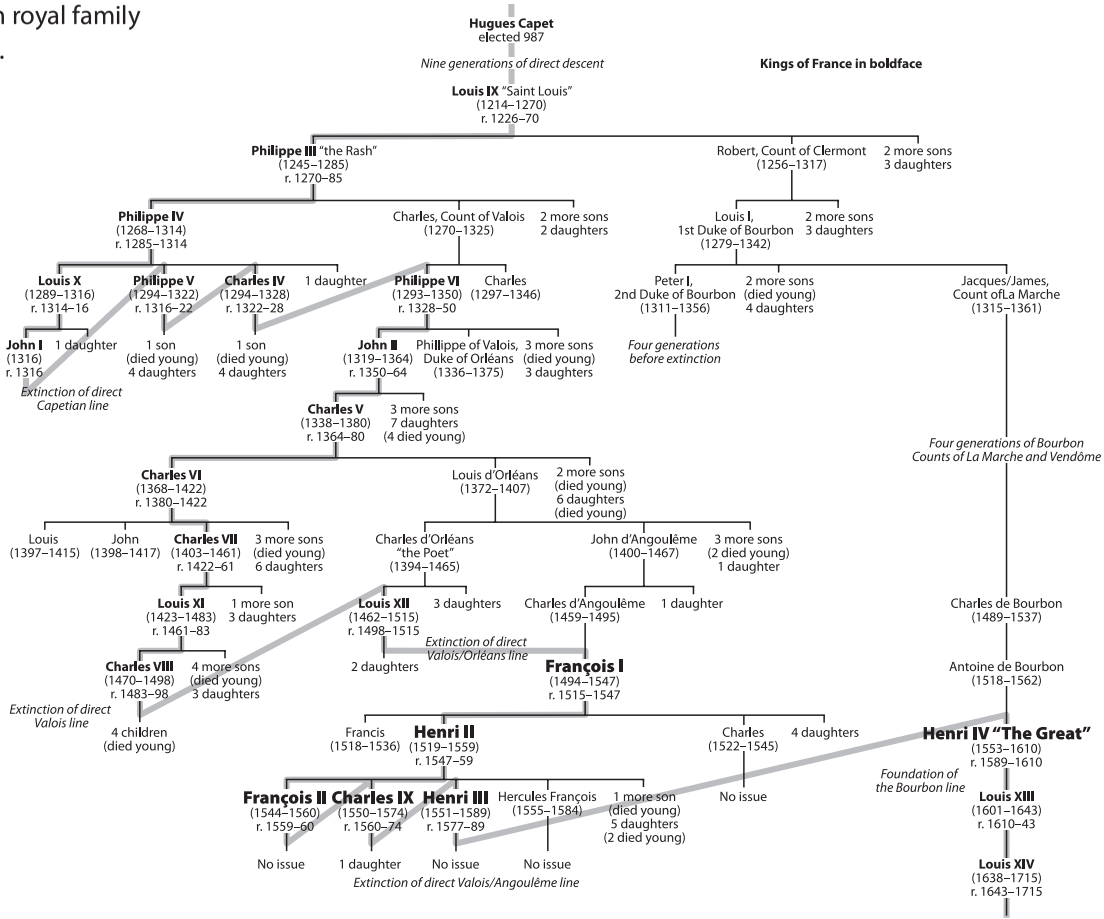
[67]Schlesinger and Benson, *Portraits from the Age of Exploration*. The volume also includes English translations of five other biographies, annotated for the first time: Hernán Cortés, Christopher Columbus, Atabalipa (Atahualpa), Quoniambec, and Paraousti Satouriona.

so either, though Thevet's marginal rubrics have been retained, which should help readers find their way. Thevet's orthography (except for a few proper nouns), capitalization, use of italics, and accent marks have been retained as well, although occasionally a word or two [in brackets] has been added for clarity. Annotations have been limited to items of special interest, and footnotes usually appear only at the first mention of an item. Throughout the text, folio numbers appear in brackets and refer to the original 1584 edition of *Vrais pourtraits*. When Thevet is mistaken about the date of an event, we have provided the correct one in brackets immediately following his statement.

Map of France

Map of northern Italy

Genealogy of the French royal family
from Louis IX to Henri IV.



François I, King of France

Translator's Introduction

Thevet's biography of François I of France provides evidence of the evolution of the *noblesse d'épée*, the aristocracy that owed its preeminence to force of arms. The Hundred Years' War, which had ended half a century before the birth of François I, had been a struggle between shifting alliances of grandees; and the Salic Law mentioned by Thevet was a medieval invention by lawyers for the "French" (Valois/Armagnac) to refute the claims of the "English" (Plantagenet/Burgundian) to the French Crown. Charles de Bourbon's 1523 betrayal of his king before Pavia was a sixteenth-century echo of feudal nobles' practice of shifting allegiance for advantage, no matter how temporary.

It is no simple coincidence that Thevet's complaints about nobles' ignorance precede so closely his complaints about their propensity toward violence. Toward the end of this chapter, moreover, he goes so far as to suggest that François invaded Italy in order to drain the energy of his fractious vassals.

Thevet was himself a commoner, so his relentless encomia of the new learning breathe more than a whiff of self-interest, as do his astute remarks on the dearth of resources for François' Italian campaigns and the fiscal expedients adopted by the pope to raise papal armies—which Thevet then linked to the birth of the Protestant Reformation.

It is, in short, possible to find evidence here of inchoate contemporary awareness of the economic and social bases and consequences of the political development of the nation-state, as the sovereign sought to tame the class of which he had originally been merely *primus inter pares* (first among equals). Thevet's awareness of the economic and social bases and consequences of the political development of the nation-state was, however, due at least in part to his ambiguous position as a scholar/writer seeking to advance and protect his own place in early modern society, since he had neither the legal credentials and background to join the king's judiciary (the *noblesse de robe*) nor the family pedigree and physical strength for the military aristocracy.

François I of His Name, King of France

Book IIII Chapter 6

[fol. 210r]

Wisdom and valor the foundations of Royalty

Not for nothing has it been said that Royalty's twin pillars are wisdom and valor [*vertu*]: wisdom serves to minister to parts of the Kingdom in question, and to keep them in the good order, which maintains its splendor, firmness, and authority, valor, prowess, and magnanimity to yoke those who mistakenly wish to attack the state, disturb and overthrow it; the two together [210v] support Principalities and maintain them in happy stability. I do not have to lose myself in the forests and thickets of classical antiquity for proof of what I said, although the Greek and Roman Empires offer us all too much proof of its truth, but I do not wish to stray from our France, which has already furnished us some excellent examples. Above all the magnanimous wisdom of this first François who by his skill has so freed France from the claws of those who wished tyranni-

cally to enslave it that I should be criticized for ingratitude were I to allow this great globe of famous men to spin without pausing over France's pride, who was not only a victorious Mars but also the nourishing Father and lover of good learning. It is not that I shall make a point of specifying everything that would be required for a history of his sayings, deeds, and accomplishments; I aim merely for a kind of summary, to represent for his posterity the most worthy virtues, which maintained him in his Royal grandeur so his descendants, seeing themselves in his greatness, might continue in the successful and valorous exploits, which will immortalize François' name forever. And because some affect to believe that he of whom I wish now to speak was summarily elevated to the French crown, and because his accession was disputed by some Princes,[1] I wish to show whence he came before plunging into the tale of his valorous exploits. There is general agreement that his father was Charles, Count of Angoulême, son of Jean d'Orléans, Count of Angoulême, well known by Historians for the thirty-two years he spent in England after being captured at the battle of Agincourt; they released him in the year 1445,[2] and he died in the year 1468 [1467]. François' mother was Louise of Savoy, daughter of Philippe, the seventh [second] Duke of Savoy of this name, and of Marguérite de Bourbon. She [Louise] died the twenty-second of September, the year 1531, in a village named Grez en Gastinois [Gâtinais], so that we are forced to conclude that, since King Louis XII had died without male heirs, there was no one closer in any collateral line than François, which will be easy to understand as follows. Charles V had two sons, to wit Charles VI from whom came Charles VII, and from him, the aforementioned Louis XI, who sired Charles VIII. The second was Louis Duke of Orléans who had three sons with Valentine [Valentina], daughter of Galeas [Gian Galeazzo], Duke of Milan: Charles who was Duke of Orléans, Jean Count of Angoulême, and Philippe Count of Vertus. With Marie de Cleves, Charles [211r] had Louis, who became the twelfth King of France by that name, and Marie, who was given in marriage to Jean de Foix, viscount of Narbonne. Louis XII had but two daughters, to wit Claude and Renée, who was married to Hercules [Ercole d'Este] Duke of Ferrara, the twenty-eighth of June, in the year 1528. Now, we all know that the Salic law prevents the kingdom from

*Genealogy of François I^er^*

Death of the Queen mother

François came to the throne as the nearest male blood relative

[1]François' accession to the throne has been described as "'in a certain measure a coup d'état,' because he proclaimed himself king regardless of the fact that Mary Tudor might still produce a son by the late king." Knecht, *Renaissance Warrior*, 41.

[2]At the age of thirteen, Jean was sent as a hostage to England, where he remained for thirty-two years. In 1415 he was joined by his elder brother Charles, Duke of Orléans, the poet of the Rondeaux, who also had been taken prisoner at the Battle of Agincourt.

passing through the distaff side,[3] so it was necessary to remount the branch to Jean, Count of Angoulême, who, with Marguerite, the daughter of the Seigneur de Rohan, had Charles and Jeanne, who was married to Charles de Coitivy [Coëtivy], seigneur de Taillebourg and Baron of Craon. Our François and Marguérite, duchess of Angoulême and later queen of Navarre, were descendants of Charles, so this is why he was anointed at Reims on the twenty-fifth day of the month of January, the year 1514 [1515], in the presence of deputies representing the twelve peers of France. He was crowned at Saint Denis according to the ancient tradition, at a ceremony attended by all the lords and princes and others who must attend. He was recognized by the sovereign courts [*Parlements*][4] in such a way as to confound those illiterates who maintain that he was slipped surreptitiously into the throne without having been called to it by right of succession. As was also the case with those who under cover of the marriage between him and Claude, daughter of Louis XII (who died the twenty-sixth [twentieth] day of July, the year 1524), maintain that the throne then passed to her. How could that be? Claude could not be crowned herself; is it plausible that François should be disinherited because of her? So François was born the year of grace 1495 [1494], the twelfth of September, and came to the throne in his twenty-first year,[5] succeeding Louis XII who, by virtue of his good treatment of his people, not overcharging them with taxes and the like, which all too often crush subjects, was called "father of the people," as was also Philippe, the third of his name and the nineteenth Duke of Burgundy, [who] was called "the good" for lessening the hearth and other taxes and forced loans.[6] If these two princes deserved being remembered for these qualities, the one of whom I am speaking here [François] should be included, as much for the care he took to build and burnish his kingdom as for the affection he showed to virtuous and erudite people. He stayed but little time in his kingdom before gathering a great and fierce army against the Sforza, the presumptive Duke of Milan and his Swiss soldiers. In the campaign in Milan he made best use of the prowess of the army of which he made Charles de Bourbon, as valorous as any knight of his time, the commander. By his singular [211v] skill, Charles so captivated François'

François anointed and crowned King

François' birth

Louis XII father of the people

Philippe the Good, Duke of Burgundy

War in Milan

[3]Thevet writes, "Ne tombe en quenoüille [spindle]."

[4]The supreme judicial court.

[5]Even if Thevet's dates are correct, his arithmetic is not. If François were born in 1495 he would have been nineteen, not twenty-one years old, in 1514.

[6]Philippe "the Good" (1396–1467) was the most important of the Valois Dukes of Burgundy. For a modern account of his life and reign, see Vaughan, *Philip the Good*.

heart that even though there had been no Constable[7] in France since the death of Louis of Luxembourg,[8] who was beheaded in Paris in the reign of Louis XI on the 19th day of December, the year 1475, for treachery toward the French crown, as well as toward the King of England and the house of Burgundy. At the beginning of François' reign Charles de Bourbon was made Constable of France, and he acquitted himself of this charge so to his King's liking for a while that, whether out of a desire to grant advancement to the Princes of royal blood or out of a wish not to be so ungracious as not to recognize the valor of this heroic chevalier, he gave Charles Châtelleraudoye [Châtellerault?] as a duchy, even though this land was held in fief to Poitou and only carried the title of county.[9] The war for Milan served in part as an opportunity for the Duke of Bourbon to demonstrate his magnanimity, as well as giving François a way to avenge himself for the wrong he thought to have suffered by the screwing [*escorne*] by which Maximilian [Massimiliano], son of Louis [Ludovico] Sforza, was threatening to usurp [the] title to Milan. The King prepared a powerful army, because he had to take on a powerful foe. Pope Leon [Leo X] gave succor to the Milanese from the South, which allowed the seigneur d'Himbercourt [Humbercourt] to take the Roman Prospero Colonna[10] prisoner at Ville-franche [Villafranca]. The King then caused his army to advance on Milan, because he learned that the Swiss were marching day and night to relieve the Milanese from the North, and even that they had entered Novarra, from which Pierre de Navarre [Pedro Navarro] had chased them. At that juncture, they began to speak of an understanding with the King who, since he had no quarrel with them, sent the amount to which he had agreed by Lautrec.[11] The Swiss, however, allowed themselves to be led around by the nose by the Cardinal of

Charles de Bourbon made Constable, a title that had been vacant during the reigns of three Kings

Charles de Bourbon advanced by King François

War against Maximilian [Massimiliano] Sforza

War against the Swiss

[7]The constable of France, the highest military officer under the king, was appointed for life. His responsibilities included the authorization of military expenditures and the allocation of troops to garrison towns. During military campaigns, the constable commanded the army in the king's absence and the vanguard of the army in his presence. The constable also carried the king's sword and commanded all the lord marshals (*maréchaux*) of France. For more information on the duties of constables and marshals, see Knecht, *Renaissance Warrior*, 42–43.

[8]The Count of St. Paul.

[9]François appointed his most powerful vassal, Charles III, Duke of Bourbon, to the office of constable on 12 January 1515. Charles also served as governor of Languedoc and grand chambrier of France.

[10]Prospero Colonna (1452–1523) was an Italian condottiero in the service of the pope and the Holy Roman Emperor.

[11]Odet de Foix, seigneur de Lautrec, represented François in negotiations with the Swiss.

Sion[12] of the Imperial camp. They blinded themselves by the ridiculous presumption that they were conquerors of Kings, so they turned around, in violation of their sworn agreement, and made to take the King by surprise who, suspicious of just such perfidy as this, decided to destroy this disloyal regiment. The battle [of Marignano (modern Melegnano)] was fairly rudely joined; there were losses on both sides, so fierce were both sides that it seemed impossible ever to separate them. The Swiss finally lost and fled. It is not at all my intention to steal the honor of victory from the noble captains and soldiers who behaved martially in this battle, but the praise must be attributed primarily to the indomitable François, nor may one deny that he worked continually to encourage his army to comport itself in a manly way against the excessive pride of these motley conquerors who were themselves conquered. The next day [212r] the Swiss who were left, supported by those who had sortied from Milan, about thirty-six thousand combatants on foot or horse, charged the French so hard that the son of the count of Petillane, the Seigneur d'Himbercourt [Humbercourt], François the brother of Charles, Duke of Bourbon and Constable, Charles de Trimouille [or Tremoille] Prince of Thaloirut [Thouars], the Count of Sancerre, the seigneur de Bussy, Captain Movy [Mouy], and other very brave Captains [were killed].[13] This defeat softened neither the French hearts nor the hold they had on the Milanese, however, who surrendered the city to the King and submitted themselves to his mercy. Maximilian [Massimiliano] Sforza did likewise who, after being besieged by Pierre de Novarra [Pedro Navarro] for a while, saw that the tunnels already dug under the Castle walls had so undermined them that a great part had already collapsed, and surrendered to the King's mercy, who granted it to him and thereupon seized Milan, established justice, and appointed officers for the governance of the city.[14] At this point he had a parley with Pope Leon [Leo] the tenth of his name at Boulogne la Grasse [Bologna], which did France no good at all, due to the partial abolition of the Pragmatic Sanction.[15] He had shortly before

The Swiss are not conquerors of Kings

Swiss discomfiture of the French

François Seigneur of Milan

[12]Mathias, Cardinal Schiner, was bishop of Sion.

[13]Among the French nobles killed in the battle were François de Bourbon, the Count of Sancerre, the Prince of Talmont, and the seigneurs de Bussy and d'Humbercourt.

[14]Massimiliano Sforza surrendered on 4 October 1515. François offered him a pension on condition that he settle permanently in France. He died in Paris in 1530. The French entered Milan on 11 October 1515 and remained there until the end of the month. They left the city in the hands of Bourbon and Antoine du Prat, chancellor of France, who was appointed chancellor of Milan, and Jean de Selve, first president of the Parlement (Court) of Bordeaux.

[15]The Concordat of Bologna gave the French king the right to choose bishops and abbots. One of its key provisions was that François would recognize that the pope's

made peace with the Swiss who, thanks to a large sum, which the King gave them, declared themselves his friend, and his ally along with the people in Pavia. This conference at Boulougne [Bologna] caused the toothless Crusade [*Croisade sans effect*] which was so mishandled that it awakened Martin Luther and several others who, under cover of its abuses and having discovered the unhappy purposes to which they felt most of the money contributed to the Crusade jubilee was going, left the Catholic Church in one fell swoop. This peace lasted but a short time, for the King heard in Lyons at the end of Lent that the Emperor Maximilian had suborned some of the King's allies and even had secret intelligence with a few citizens of Milan and that he was arriving on the plain of Verona and at Landes with a large force.[16] The Duke of Bourbon who had been left Governor and Lieutenant General in Milan no sooner learned all this than he sortied from Milan to attack them but, seeing the Emperor's army at least half again as powerful as the King's, he withdrew, thinking that it would be foolhardy for him to risk his troops against the mass of the enemy. Nonetheless the Emperor was so exhausted before the siege of Milan that he was forced, not without great shame, to turn on his heel after having dug it in for so long, that he was forced to borrow fifty thousand angelots[17] from Henry VIII of England. The better to assure his own state, the King reached an alliance with Archduke Charles (who was then merely the King of Aragon and was later Emperor) [212v] at Noyon but the treaty never took effect.[18] The wars in Picardy, moreover, began immediately thereafter, which lasted to the present day [1584?]. In the year 1521, the Spaniards and Hannuyers[19] laid siege to the city of Mésières [Mézières], which turned out to be a pure waste of time because of the resistance of Captain Bayard, with the Sieurs [Anne] de Montmorency, de Montmoreau, [Gratian] de Lucé, [Jean] de la Tour, de Bremont, Jean de

Crusade

The Emperor Maximilian before Milan

Treaty of Noyon

War in Picardy

authority was superior to that of church councils. At Bologna, François and Leo X also agreed on the need for a crusade against the Turks.

[16]In Austria, Cardinal Schiner, who had survived the battle of Marignano, was urging Emperor Maximilian I to invade Milan and restore the Sforzas to power. Maximilian had been assured that the Milanese would rise against the French and that he would have the support of the Swiss. In addition, King Henry VIII had sent his secretary, Richard Pace, to Switzerland to raise an army against the French. In March 1516, Maximilian crossed the Alps and declared war on the French and their Venetian allies.

[17]A coin used in France from the Middle Ages. Some angelots were imprinted with the image of an angel, hence their name.

[18]The Treaty of Noyon (13 August 1516) divided the Italian peninsula into two spheres of influence: France in the north and Spain in the south. The treaty was soon superseded, however, by the "perpetual peace" of Fribourg (29 November 1516) and the Peace of Cambrai (11 March 1516).

[19]Men from the Flemish province known in French as Hainault.

Bureil, de la Barbee, Nicolas de Touars [Thouars], and several others, who so valiantly repulsed the Spaniard that he was forced to lift the scorched-earth siege he had been laying to the city.[20] The King began immediately to pursue the Emperor from whom, in [on] behalf of the King of Navarre who had lost his lands for having served the King Louis XII, he took Fontarabie[21] whence the Emperor was evicted by the Sieur de Ludé[22] who entered it even though it was reputed to be impregnable. Later, thanks to the efforts of Pope Leon [Leo X], the Milanese rebelled against the Seigneur de Lautrec, governor of the territory for His Majesty, so that, due to a lack of reinforcements, he left the territory.[23] After Charles V was installed as Emperor, the King's affairs began to become yet more clouded, because of the alliance between the Emperor and the King Henry of England.[24] The latter invaded Picardy in October of the year 1524,[25] and was already gaining a foothold, had his enterprise not been interrupted by the aid in munitions and warriors dispatched from Paris. There the seigneurs de Vendôme and de la Trémouille[26] parried their blows, as was appropriate. But de la Trémouille could hardly stop there; he was recalled to Burgundy of which he was governor because the Spaniard wanted to alight there.[27] Seeing his efforts to foment rebellion could never succeed so long as the valiant Trémouille was there, Charles gave up his pursuit. Trémouille was promptly sent back to Picardy to reinforce

Fontarabie taken by the Sieur de Ludé

Revolt of the Milanese against the sieur de Lautrec

War against the English and the Spaniard who had invaded France

[20]On 20 August 1521, imperial forces attacked France's northeast border. An army commanded by Henry of Nassau and Franz von Sickingen besieged Mézières. On 23 September, a small French force under the command of Jacques de Montgomery, seigneur de Lorges, brought supplies to the besieged city. Three days later the siege was lifted. Pierre du Terrail, seigneur de Bayard, commanded the forces defending Mézières.

[21]Fuenterrabía (Spanish spelling), at the mouth of the Bidasoa River, on the Franco-Spanish border, was considered the key to Spain during these wars.

[22]Jacques de Daillon, seneschal d'Anjou, seigneur and Baron of Ludé.

[23]Lacking resources, Lautrec had to disband part of his army. As a result, he could not resist a full offensive by Prospero Colonna. Lautrec retreated to Milan, where his cruel administration of the city ensured a friendly welcome for the imperial forces when they broke through Milan's defenses on 19 November 1521. The expulsion of the French from other cities in the duchy quickly followed the fall of Milan.

[24]Charles became Holy Roman Emperor on 23 October 1520. On 23 August 1521, Cardinal Wolsey agreed to the Treaty of Bruges, committing England to enter the war on the imperial side in the following year.

[25]Perhaps Thevet is referring to the English invasion of Picardy in 1522.

[26]Charles de Bourbon, Count then Duke of Vendôme and Louis de La Trémouille, the "chevalier sans reproche."

[27]Charles was still nominally Duke of Burgundy, though no longer Count of Franche-Comté; he owed allegiance to François, just as—once Charles was crowned emperor—François owed it to him for the duchy of Milan.

Vendôme with Marshals[28] [Odet de] Foix and [Anne de] Montmorency, and the troops of Mésières [Mézières] and Baugé. If the troubles I have laid out here at some length served to exercise the wisdom and prudence of this magnanimous King, those which followed did so even more fully. The King of England swore him a war to the death through a herald who found the King in Lyons. He received word that his Constable the Duke of Bourbon switched allegiance to the Emperor[29] along with several notable lords and gentlemen, and that the English and Flemish were arming to return once again to Picardy.[30] He did not lose hope for all of this. To counter any plans the Prince of Bourbon might have made, he seized his Chancellor and Seneschal [213r], the Seigneurs [François] des Cars and Saint-Vallier, and two of the Constable's gentlemen in charge of his treasury, and had them locked up in the dungeon [*conciergerie*].[31] He discovered the secret plans and conspiracies of the Seigneur de Bourbon from these men, and made his own prudent plans against them. And because Jean de Poitiers, Seigneur de Saint-Vallier, refused to sing in the way desired, even though he had confessed in the tower of Loches[32] to President [Jean] da Selva and the Bishop of Le Puy that the incident that caused the Duke of Bourbon to revolt was the response the King had given to articles Bourbon had sent to the Court [*Parlement*] of Paris on his suit against the Queen-regent on the subject of his holdings, he [Saint-Vallier] was

The Sieur de Bourbon deserts the King

Sentence of ignominious death passed on the Sieur [Saint-Vallier]

[28]There were twelve marshals in France. They commanded all other military officials but could give no orders without direction from the constable.

[29]In 1521 Suzanne, Duchess of Bourbon and Auvergne, the constable of Bourbon's wife and cousin, died without children, opening the question of the great Bourbon inheritance. She had bequeathed all of her possessions to her husband, but the Queen Mother (Louise of Savoy) claimed the inheritance through her mother, Marguerite, one of the sisters of Peter II (the last duke of the main branch of the house of Bourbon) and Suzanne's aunt. Louise proposed to settle the question by marrying Charles. When he rejected her offer, François I confiscated a portion of the Bourbon estates and Louise instigated efforts to undermine Charles' positions at court and among the aristocracy. When Charles' lawsuit to reclaim his inheritance failed, he offered his services to the emperor and fled to Italy in 1523. Louise recovered Auvergne and became its duchess. Charles de Bourbon died on 6 May 1527 during the sack of Rome—reportedly at the hands of Benvenuto Cellini. See Knecht, *Renaissance Warrior*, chap. 10, for more details.

[30]In mid-August 1522 François received a letter from Louis de Brézé, grand seneschal of Normandy, warning of an impending plot against him by Charles de Bourbon. For details, see Knecht, *Renaissance Warrior*, chap. 10.

[31]On 5 September 1523, three of Bourbon's supporters, Jean de Poitiers, seigneur de Saint-Vallier, Antoine de Chabannes, bishop of Le Puy, and Aymar de Prie, were arrested in Lyons. On 20 December they were moved to Paris.

[32]Loches became a royal residence and prison in the fifteenth century when Louis XI imprisoned his enemies there in iron cages.

sentenced on 17 February of the year 1523 to be stripped of his weapons and to be beheaded on the Place de la Grève,[33] where he was led to have the sentence executed, and all he expected at the moment was to go through with it. Even so, his execution was stayed by the king, so he escaped execution.[34] Meanwhile, the King ordered that all his fortresses and cities be on guard because of the rebellion of the Constable and his allies. The King of England did not tarry to make good his threat against the King; Henry VIII landed at Therouenne [Thérouanne] to join the Flemish where they were marvelously discomfited by Captain Pierre-pont,[35] the Lieutenant of the Duke of Lorraine. They managed even less against Dorlans [Doullens], so effectively did de la Trémouille parry their blows, though he did not manage to stop them from taking Braye, Roye, and Mont Didier [Montdidier]. While his enemies were pressing so hard in Picardy, the King did all he could to speed his expedition to Italy, to recover his Duchy of Milan, where he was very eager to go, but since the pressing needs of his kingdom prevented his departure, he sent Guillaume Gouffier, seigneur de Bonnivet and Admiral of France, who could do nothing because the Duke of Bourbon had already seized Milan, so he was forced to return with the seigneurs de Vaudemont, de Vandenesse [Jean de Chabannes], and Captain Bayard. De Bourbon had them followed by four thousand musketeers [*harquebusiers*], who wounded the Admiral as well as the seigneur de Vandenesse, who died shortly thereafter of his wound, as did Bayard the generous of heart, who having dismounted from his horse placed himself under a tree and shortly died there,[36] a fact by which the seigneur de Bourbon, who was at Bayard's death, made himself most unpleasant.[37] When a subject rises against his Prince, he gives him much more trouble than any enemy could, however strong he might be: you see [it was] the Sieur de Bourbon who single-handedly frustrated the King's designs on Milan. He laid siege to Marseille and placed it in such danger, that [213v] it was necessary to dispatch the Seigneurs

The English in Picardy

The Seigneur de Bonnivet can do nothing for the King's cause in Milan

Death of Captain Bayard and other French seigneurs

The Sieur de Bourbon before Marseille

[33]In front of the Hôtel de Ville in Paris.

[34]After the king commuted Saint-Vallier's sentence to imprisonment on 17 February, he was taken to Loches, where he remained until his release in 1526. The story that Saint-Vallier's daughter, the celebrated Diane de Poitiers, obtained his reprieve by becoming the king's mistress provided Victor Hugo with part of the plot of *Le Roi s'amuse*, later used by Giuseppe Verdi in *Rigoletto*. It is more likely, however, that Saint-Vallier owed his reprieve to the fact that Diane de Poitiers' husband, Louis de Brézé, had warned François of the Bourbon conspiracy in the first place.

[35]Guillaume de Rochefort, sieur d'Ally.

[36]The scene recalls the end of *La Chanson de Roland*.

[37]When Bonnivet was wounded by an arquebus shot, the Count of Saint-Pol took command.

Philippe de Chabot, Rance, and others, and even to raise an army, of whom the seigneur de la Palice was lieutenant, in order to dislodge him.[38] To recall the battle of Pavia[39] would be to reopen the wound which disfigured France for so long, in view of the defeat of our side and the capture of the King himself, which we must impute primarily to the shock which the sieur de Bourbon gave him in order to avenge himself of the slight given when the King did not deign to give him satisfaction for the wrong done him by Louise the Queen mother, and thereby gave him cause to leave the Court. Likewise, I do not wish to speak of the treaty of Madrid,[40] neither of the deliverance of the King, because that would inflate this discourse overmuch. In addition the worthlessness [*nullité*] of the treaty of which we have already spoken caused things to happen otherwise than specified by the treaty, as the histories of that time justify at all too great length. After his liberation [from captivity in Spain], he did not cease from pursuing his first designs against the Emperor Charles, who tried to invade Provence, but all he gained from his trouble was the shame of having to flee, after having left an infinite number of his men in the Piedmont, which he crossed in order to retake Milan [in 1544]; his exploits there will not be set down by me, no more than the prowess of François de Bourbon, the Sieur d'Anguien [Enghien], who accomplished the famous defeat of the Spanish and Landsknechts at Carmaignole [Carmagnola], in the

The battle of Pavia

The Seigneur d'Anguien at Carmaignole [Carmagnola] and Cazignan [Carignan]

[38]Thevet refers to Philippe de Chabot, seigneur de Brion and admiral of France, Nicolas Rance, and Jacques de Chabannes, seigneur de Lapalisse and marshal of France.

[39]The battle of Pavia (24 February 1525) resulted in the greatest slaughter of French nobles since the Battle of Agincourt (1415). See Konstam, *Pavia*. Those killed included many of the king's closest friends and advisors, especially Bonnivet, Galeazzo da San Severino, and Lapalisse. Lescun and René of Savoy died of their wounds soon afterwards. The Count of Saint-Pol, who had been badly injured in the face, unexpectedly recovered; he was imprisoned in Pavia castle, but escaped on 15 May after bribing his guards. The bodies of François of Lorraine and Richard de la Pole were found among those of the *Landsknechts*. Prisoners taken included Henri d'Albret, king of Navarre; Louis, Count of Nevers; Anne de Montmorency; and the seigneurs de Florange, Brion, Lorges, La Rochepot, Annebault, and Langey. The only important French noble to escape death or capture was the king's brother-in-law, Charles d'Alençon, who died on 15 April following his return to France. About 4,000 prisoners whose status did not command noteworthy ransoms were released on parole; they included Blaise de Montluc, the future marshal of France and memorialist. For differing versions of the capture of François I, see Knecht, *Francis I*, 169–70. For more on the battle of Pavia, see Konstam, *Pavia*.

[40]After his capture at the battle of Pavia, François regained his freedom by consenting to the Treaty of Madrid (1526), by which he renounced his claims in Italy, agreed to surrender Burgundy to the emperor, and abandoned his authority over Flanders and Artois. The king met the terms of the treaty until 1535, when the death of the Duke of Milan opened the question of the Milanese succession. French forces invaded Italy in 1536 and again in 1542.

year 1544, where he took two thousand five hundred prisoners, among whom were Don Charles of Gonzague [Gonzaga], commander of the vanguard and of their cavalry, Remy of Mandone [Raimond de Cardone y Mendoza], commander of the Spanish, and other nobles and officers of note. Likewise, were I to recall the capture of Cazignan [Carignan], it would seem as if I wished to provoke the incredibly good fortune [*voudroie chatoüiller l'heur*] which accompanied the remarkable nobility of this virtuous prince. I vastly prefer to refer the reader to the ample discussion of this subject in the *Annales de France*[41] and to search for the cause of the war over Milan. To tell the truth, had it been necessary to buy the Duchy of Milan, the kingdom could have paid it with the money it had to pay out to conquer it, in addition to the ransoms garnered by the Spaniard [Charles V] and the loss of several thousand brave and valorous officers, but that is how it is. Princes do not look so closely, no matter what it costs, everything they claim to possess must needs be surrendered to them. No one can deny that this land was long sought by the French. The source of their claim was through Valentine [Valentina], daughter of John Galeace [Gian Galeazzo], named first duke of Milan by [Holy Roman Emperor] Wenceslas, who was married to Louis, Duke of Orléans on the condition that, if John Marie [Gian Maria] and Philip Marie [Filippo Maria], his two brothers who were Dukes, died without male heirs, the [214r] legitimate children and successors of Valentine [Valentina] would inherit title to the Duchy of Milan.[42] And they say the Pope countersigned this treaty. For this reason Charles d'Orléans, son of Louis and Valentine [Valentina], after the death of his uncle[43] raised an army to attack Milan, and his successors continued this struggle down to our François, who felt so strongly about this claim that he was unable to give himself the time to think about the needs of his kingdom. Hardly was he back in France (so to speak) when he began to reassemble his forces to go reconquer his Milan. And since he had to pass through the lands of the Duke of Savoy, who was then at Court, he [François] asked him [the Duke] to allow this passage. The Duke failed to give his assent because of the alliance he had sworn with the Emperor. It would have been well worth his while to grant the King's request, insofar as this

French claims on Milan

[41]Thevet here refers to the work of his great rival, François de Belleforest, *Les chroniques et annales de France*… (Paris: Gabriel Buon, 1573).

[42]Valentina Visconti was the daughter of Gian Galeazzo Visconti and Isabelle, daughter of King John II of France (1350–64). Gian Galeazzo had been created hereditary Duke of Milan by Emperor Wenceslas in 1395. Valentina married Louis d'Orléans. Gian Galeazzo's two brothers, Gian Maria and Filippo Maria, died without legitimate heirs.

[43]Filippo Maria Visconti died in 1447.

Why, and according to what right, Savoy was conquered by the King of France

refusal gave him [the king] the opportunity to seize Savoy in the name of Louise, his mother and the daughter of Philippe, Duke of Savoy,[44] who brought [Charles d'Angoulême] sixty thousand écus in dowry and had a promise of the County of Baugé and the castle of Bourg en Bresse for the first male offspring of this marriage by virtue of his birthright [*preciput*] and because of Marguerite de Bourbon his ancestor and the wife of the aforementioned Philippe: likewise for the succession he claimed by virtue of the testaments of the Counts of Provence, of which he had often notified and warned the Duke, who gave no sign of wanting to hear about it. He pursued his claim so far that the French royal house enjoyed possession for more than thirty years.[45] It was nonetheless returned to the Duke Philibert Emmanuel [Emmanuel Philibert] by the peace made in the year 1558, providing that he marry Marguerite d'Valois[46] the only [surviving] sister of Henri II,[47] an illustrious and virtuous prince, who, after having restored the flourishing University of Bourges, and having illustrated her good name[48] with a plethora of heroic acts, left this world to ascend to the heavens in the year 1574. When I begin to examine the beginning, process, and outcomes of this war for Milan, for my own part, I am forced to deplore the loss of French blood and the emptying of French coffers employed toward this end, and on the other hand to recognize that the war was somewhat profitable for France, not so much just because of the Piedmont and Savoy, which were then joined to the French crown, but for the exercise which our Frenchmen took there to make themselves fit for war, and to undertake nothing to overthrow the state.[49] This was wisely recognized by the great brain of

Marguerite d'Valois

How France profited from the war for Milan

[44]Louise's father, Philippe, Count of Bresse, was a younger son of the Duke of Savoy. Philippe became duke in 1496, but died the following year.

[45]The French occupied Savoy from 1536 to 1559. Emmanuel Philibert (r. 1553–80) was able to recover most of Savoy in 1559 under the terms of the Treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis. On the treaty, see Ruble, *Le traité de Cateau-Cambrésis*; and Gentile, *Les traités du Cateau-Cambrésis*.

[46]In order to reduce the appearance of an outright surrender of Savoy and Piedmont by the French, the Treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis stipulated that Duke Emmanuel Philibert marry Henri II's sister Marguerite, who was still unwed at the age of thirty-six. This marriage was a condition of the claim to Savoy and Piedmont. Obviously, the duke valued returning home to rule as more important than the possibility of not providing an heir to his recovered estates.

[47]Henri had two sisters, Marguerite and Madeleine. The latter married James V of Scotland in 1536, but she died in the following year, only seven weeks after her arrival in Edinburgh. In 1538 King James married the widowed Mary of Guise.

[48]Thevet resorts to a lame but untranslatable pun: "[ayant] fleurdelisé sa renommée." The fleur-de-lys, of course, was the emblem of the royal house.

[49]Thevet's point here, that war was a good way to drain the excess energy of the

The opinion of Chancellor du Prat on the need for the war for Milan

Antoine du Prat, Chancellor of France,[50] to whom some argued that the recovery of Milan was very difficult, and that it would empty France's treasuries, and that the leaders whom the kingdom would need would remain there [214v]. Alas (quoth he), Milan must stay as it is, for it serves as a purgation for France, removing the evil humors from spoiled and debauched men, which could infect and corrupt the Kingdom, if they did not take a little air. If I were not bored with prolixity, I should place a list here of what he [François] did in 1515 at Genoa, which he placed under his power several times, for the Genoese are more fluid and changeable than the sea that surrounds them. After having conquered Milan he subjected Genoa when Octavian Fregose [Ottaviano Fregoso] was Duke: but they could not respect their sworn oath. They built the fortress of Bride at great expense in the year 1527, so they were attacked so fiercely a second time by Andrea Doria and Odet de Foix, seigneur de Lautrec, that they were forced to surrender.[51] But what need is there to tarry over the victories and bellicose exploits of this magnanimous prince, since he so spread the fame of us Frenchmen by pen as well as the sword that he has rightly been called the Apollo of the Gauls, for the salutary medicines he prescribed to chase the diseases that might otherwise have befouled the body and composition of the Kingdom. Toward this end he restored the knowledge of the Hebrew, Greek, and Latin tongues to honor. He was the King who instituted the twelve Royal Professors[52] of his University of Paris, and it was he who inherited the title by right of primogeniture [*preciput*] of Father, nursemaid, and lover of good learning, which he conducted to such perfection that they arrived at the summit of their glory, to the point that the century of Augustus, the adopted son of Julius Caesar, was not so well supplied with writers so great and full of diversity of learning as the time that gave us this François, father of the muses on the royal throne.[53] If I

Genoa placed under the power of the Kings of France

François I^er^ the Apollo of the Gauls

Francois I^er^ the father of the humanities

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aristocracy, is one François himself adhered to when he promulgated an ordinance, early in his reign, setting up the army for an Italian campaign.

[50]Antoine du Prat was chancellor of France, chancellor of Milan, archbishop of Sens, abbot of Saint-Benoît-sur-Loire, and a cardinal.

[51]The Genoese Andrea Doria, the foremost naval leader of his day, allied with the French forces attacking Genoa in 1527. In 1528, disillusioned with French policy, he transferred his allegiance to Charles, and helped imperial forces drive the French from Genoa. In recognition of his service, Charles made him admiral of the imperial fleet and Prince of Melfi.

[52]*Lecteurs*, literally "readers." Randle Cotgrave's *Dictionarie of the French and English Tongues* (London, 1611) gives "a Professor, or publicke Reader in an Universitie" for *Lecteur publique*.

[53]At the beginning of François' reign, French scholars wanted the king to create an

wished to elaborate at length what would be necessary to specify the illustriousness of the Academy of Paris, I should overextend this discourse; I dare say in general that this indomitable Prince has, by his own efforts, care, and resources brought the famous Academy from Athens back to Paris.[54] To him must be attributed (without breaching the honor due his predecessors) praise[55] for the rare and rich libraries of this kingdom. So careful was he to have good books that there is no corner of the earth that he did not turn over[56] to find material that would be worthy of helping decorate the Royal Library as he wished to build it for the splendor of good learning.[57] Thevet speaks of it more soundly having made the trip to the Levant with the Sieur Pierre Gilles, a man of consummate learning in several disciplines, whom François charged with recovering several [215r] exquisite books in Asia and Greece, and toward this end gave him the sum six thousand pounds [*livres*], in addition to the honorable salary with which François provided him.[58] Still, if we are to believe a few others who have written on this subject, Gillaume Postel was the one who received the sum of four thousand écus to gather books with which this King of the Gauls enriched his library of Fontaine-belle-eau.[59] I have no doubt at all that my good friend and companion Postel brought some beautiful books,

Francois I^er^ solicitous of beautiful libraries

Pierre Gilles, Postel, & Thevet

institution devoted to the study and teaching of Greek and Hebrew. Although the king announced his intention to establish such an institution in 1517, it was not until 1530 that he appointed two professors of Greek and two of Hebrew.

[54]Plato founded the Academy in Athens in 387 BCE.

[55]Thevet's text reads *dos*, "back," but based on context, it seems reasonable that he meant to write *los,* "praise."

[56]"il n'y a coin de la terre, où il n'ait fait fonder pour recueillir tout ce qui pourrait estre de precieux & digne de reparer la singularité d'une Librayrie Royale." Literally, "there was no corner on the earth that he did not have melted to gather everything that might be precious and worthy to help in the construction and illustration of a royal library." Thevet wrote an elaborate pun on "coin" for "corner" as well as "coin" (from the corner of the mold from which coins were poured; see Bloch and Wartburg, *Dictionnaire Étymologique de la langue française,* s.v. "coin."

[57]In 1522 Budé was appointed *maître de la librairie du roi* at Fontainebleau and supervised the acquisition of Greek manuscripts. For more information on the king's libraries, see Franklin, "La bibliothèque du Roi"; and Knecht, *Renaissance Warrior*, 471–77.

[58]Thevet had described his trip with Gilles earlier in *Cosmographie de Levant* (Lyons: Jan de Tournes et Guil, 1556). Frank Lestringant has edited a modern edition (Geneva: Droz, 1985). For more on Gilles, a French humanist whose study of Aristotle and other ancient writers led him to study zoology and ichthyology, see Hamy, "Le Père de la zoölogie." Thevet departed for the Levant in June 1549.

[59]Thevet, of course, is suggesting a *volksetymologie* for Fontainebleau. François sent Guillaume Postel, an expert in classical and European languages, to the Ottoman Empire to collect manuscripts in Middle Eastern languages. For more information on this expedition, see Chesneau, *Le Voyage de Monsieur d'Aramon*; and Lestringant, *Voyages en Egypte: 1549–1552*. For Thevet's biography of Postel, see page 159 below.

but I would have great difficulty believing that he did so after receiving so great a sum, since I know the opposite to have been true. Whether Postel received these coins or no, the liberality of this prince, who never tired of deploying his fiscal resources to refurbish his Arsenal[60] of sciences in order that he could repel the powers of the ignorant and Barbarians who might dare attack the fortress of disciplines, is all the more to be prized. It has been a pleasure for me to write such a long discourse on the large sums, which this Prince had to disburse, for military expenses as much as for the service and advancement of the Muses, in order that spurring all other Kings, Monarchs, and Emperors to follow in his footsteps, I may erect a model of the management[61] that they ought to exercise, inasmuch as no one can deny that the weight on his shoulders of such long wars terribly interrupted the accumulation of his treasury, yet we nonetheless see that he had put aside one million seven hundred thousand écus at his death, even without the March quarterly receipts, and that he owed nothing, except for small debts to his allies and to the Bank of Lyons, that he did not wish to pay to keep them in his debt.[62] Peace achieved with all the Princes of the earth, the boundaries extended to the gates of Milan: the kingdom full of great officers and the most learned men in the world. At this point might it be objected that he was not as overloaded with payments to mercenaries as were those who followed him. He had Germans, English, Italians, Swiss, Albanians, Spaniards, and *Grisons.* All these payments aside from those to his allies, did not exceed one hundred thirty thousand pounds [*livres*] per year, at most. And as for the salaries he gave to his subjects, Princes of royal blood, Knights created by his order, officers in great number, Lieutenants, Royal office holders, officers of the royal courts, Ambassadors, students studying on scholarship and many excellent artisans and learned persons, they add up to but four hundred twenty-seven thousand six hundred ninety-two pounds. Today the payments to foreigners and those inside the kingdom take off [*decuplent*]: interest due climbs much more rapidly than all the salaries so that even though people pay more today than they

*Great management of the King François I^er^*

*The state of payments left by François I^er^*

[60]Probably deriving from the Arabic *dár-as-sanâ* (a workhouse), the most famous "arsenal" in Thevet's time was in Venice. France, however, had arsenals in Rouen and Honfleur, for example, as early as the thirteenth century.

[61]*mesnagement*, "husbandry" (Cotgrave, *Dictionarie*). "Economy" originally meant managing the resources of the *oikos*, the household, and was only extended to those of the nation as a whole by analogy during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

[62]*pour les retenir en devoir*, so François kept the bankers on his side by refusing to consummate the transaction as agreed and Thevet used the metaphor of debt to express their forced interest in his welfare; cf. Panurge's encomium of debt at the beginning of *Tiers livre* III–IV, esp. IV:14–34, and Pantagruel's response, V:4–41.

did then, it is impossible for the King to put money aside. He has so many [215v] officers who, having had to borrow money to till their estates, need to make money from them one way or another.[63] I am leaving several extraordinary charges aside, not claiming to account for the spending or currency of his majesty. To return therefore to the subject of our François, he hated the sale of offices as deleterious to the safety [*salut*] of the Kingdom, and wished that they be accorded solely on the merit of men of honor, like [ecclesiastical] benefices. And on this subject he was sorely vexed with the noblemen of his kingdom, because they did not devote themselves to the study and practice of good learning, regretting both their cowardice and the miserable discomfiture of the Kingdom, which by this method remained bereft of judges who would seem likely to have more integrity, conscientiousness, and nobility than the others, supposing that they had been promoted to these offices; justice should have been more equitably administered, since they should be less inclined to misdeeds than people of lowly condition and poor material.[64] Alas! Had he ruled during our unhappy time, he would have had to sing a very different tune, inasmuch as most of those who call themselves noble make a virtue of ignorance and, supposing that they can scratch a few ill-formed letters they flaunt, consider themselves all too learned [*trop grands clercs comme l'on dit*]. I shall not deign to refer them to our fathers' day, they would not wish to burden their brains by searching through antiquity, I should simply like to leave them at the mercy of the discipline with which this Prince repressed the sloth of those who trample the excellence and worth of the liberal arts and sciences. I remonstrate with them all the more bravely because I know that unless they be deformed [*desnaturez*] they will consider themselves very fortunate to have received a warning from such a King. I see in addition that they have made a rule of what should not be taken as a consequence to serve in general. This King, having insulted [*dementy*] the Emperor Charles the Fifth by Heralds for words, which he had proffered to his dishonor, said one day in an assembly of the greatest nobles of his kingdom that he who had endured an insult was not a good man.[65] From this they drew an axiom that an insult deserved response by dagger or pistol,

Noblemen criticized for their contempt for letters

To wit: whether an insult carries any note of infamy

[63] *Veulent en tirer, comme l'on dit, plume ou aisle*, lit. "wish to take, as we say, either feather or wing."

[64] An early reference to the widening gulf between the landed nobility (*noblesse d'épée*) and the new class of the king's bureaucrats (*noblesse de robe*).

[65] "home de bien," meaning "worthy of being a nobleman," which meant of course that he was no longer considered noble in the eyes of the king (i.e., he was a felon); cf. Montaigne, *Essais*, "Du Démentir," 2.18.

though this is not to say that such precipitate vengeance had not already been stirred up, nor even that certain pedants had not passed their time determining whether a man who had been insulted was wounded and injured [*interessé & outragé*] in his honor, and as a result whether he should take it on himself to respond but, because they had the example and authority of such a magnanimous and prudent King, they decided, in order to assuage their insolent passions [219r],[66] to model their behavior on his, according to the common proverb.

Each governs himself on the model of the King

Since these men have done great violence to the words and deeds of this indomitable Prince in order to take license to stab and kill to defend their honor as soon as they feel offended, why do they not follow the instruction he left for them and addressed privately to them? They take great pleasure in flattering themselves in their preconceptions, even though there be no reason to but, if there is a good and wise teaching disadvantageous to them (in their view), or not so much to their liking, they turn a deaf ear. They cannot fail to know that the example of this Prince, pertaining particularly to his dignity and Royal estate, must not be expropriated by those who are not of the quality of Princes. And for this reason King Charles IX, seeing the murders and other nefarious consequences of having misappropriated the authority of his lord and grandfather, following the edict issued by King Henri his father forbidding duels and combats, declared that he would assume the insult felt by those who would have felt wounded had they not fought. I cannot deny that this is hard to swallow for those who hold honor so dear that they place it before modesty and piety but, if they be willing to take reason in payment, they shall have to vacate their suit and yield to an agreement to recognize with me that the paradox is quite truthful that an insult does not bring infamy, especially between nobles, even though between non-nobles [*roturiers*] it leads to a lawsuit, although one adds the words "unless I be mistaken" [*soubz-correction*] or, "with all due respect" [*sauf vostre reverence*], inasmuch as he who insults another wants to say no more than that he misspoke, or that he has not said the truth. If this be the case, he does no harm if he apologizes, for truth had already done as much by herself. Moreover, he is even less injured [*interessé*] if he has not lied, because a false accusation cannot convict us of a crime of which we are not besmirched.

Duels forbidden

An insult carries no injury

[66]This folio number should be 216r. The folio numbers continue in error for the remainder of this chapter. We have kept the original numbers in this edition.

And what is customarily said must be taken in the light of these distinctions that an apology [*dementir*] carries with it no injury to either party, according to what we just said. On this subject Socrates' response to a friend who was objecting to his enduring curses from a disreputable ruffian is very relevant. "Ha," said he, "he does me no harm, for nothing of what he says is true." He also took pleasure in the comedians writing about him because, said he, "if they notice some vice, which [219v] is in me, I shall take pains to cut it out but, if they accuse me falsely, why then it falls back on them." I am annoyed at having made such a long digression but the pusillanimity of some, who undeservedly claim nobility, threw me on this rock whence, casting myself off, I shall resume my trip toward our Apollo, who labored above all to ensure that offices and benefices fell into the hands of those who could acquit themselves so as to honorably discharge their obligation to their consciences and the public welfare [*salut*]. And they tried by this method to disprove Louis XII's saying that asses had an easier time than horses in France, for dunderheads went to Rome in search of the benefices with which many asses were already provided.[67] It was François who, singularly desirous of conserving and defending the Kingdom, raised and ordered a force of foot soldiers in the year 1533 in the form of legions in the provinces, on the Roman model, in order to be able to use these forces as he needed them. The King sent these forces into seven provinces: to wit one legion into Normandy; another into Brittany; another to Picardy; another into the Duchy of Burgundy, Champagne, and Nivernois; another to Lyonnais, Dauphinais, Auvergne and Provence; another in Languedoc.[68] Each of these legions was composed of six thousand foot soldiers, who were to be levied in the aforesaid provinces of his kingdom, so he had a force of forty-two thousand men with the stroke of a pen.[69] Conrad Gessner has prepared the list of the works of this prince, which I do not wish to repeat here, preferring to refer the reader there for several encomia, epistles, and responses

Ignorance of some who enjoyed benefices

Legionnaires

*Books of King François I^er^*

[67]This was an elaborate pun, for "chevaux de poste" was an idiom for "dunderheads"; Cotgrave, *Dictionarie*.

[68]In an effort to reduce his dependence on Swiss mercenaries, François established seven legions of foot soldiers. Under an ordinance of 24 July 1534, Normandy, Brittany, Picardy, Languedoc, and Guyenne were each to raise one legion. The sixth was provided jointly by Burgundy, Champagne, and Nivernais, and the seventh by Dauphiné, Provence, Lyonnais, and Avergne. Although Thevet says, correctly, that there are seven legions, he only mentions six, omitting the one in Guyenne.

[69]Thevet is correct about the figure of six thousand men, but the legions never met these goals. The Breton legion, for example, was never even formed. Moreover, the king's legions lacked discipline and training, so François had to continue to rely on foreign mercenaries while the legionnaires were assigned to guarding border towns and fortresses.

serving to justify his majesty's intentions with respect to those who, ill-disposed toward his happiness, wrote against both François and truth, but Gessner makes no mention of the treatise, which was very well written by this father of letters on the subject of military discipline, which he intended to be kept by the legionnaires.[70] One could specify an infinite number of other examples of rare virtues, which shine in the life of this mirror of excellence, if such an account did not excessively elongate the discourse of this life, which I shall bring to an end after having remarked how his body was constituted, and what his lineage and family were. He was a fine figure of a man, well-proportioned and carrying in his face alone the majesty, which [was] shown in his words, deeds, acts, and behavior: he had a high forehead, a sign of generosity, and a long and big nose (whence the nickname given him by the people [219r] of the big-nosed King), but appropriate for his face; his eyes were clear and shining; his head was so well made that one could deduce nothing but the maturity and wisdom of this King from it.[71] This was the Prince who, since he was the true support of good learning, also took remarkable pleasure in surrounding himself with learned people who had traveled to and seen foreign lands; he immersed himself in their discourse and, especially during his meals, took unparalleled pleasure in hearing them reach rare conclusions: from time to time he entered the discussions himself, and added to their reasons his own, so incisive that most of them were astonished by the nobility and subtlety of this Prince's mind.[72] His first marriage was, as I mentioned above, to Claude, daughter of Louis XII, a Princess as accomplished in virtues as any of her day. He had four sons by her, and as many daughters, to wit: François the Dauphin of the Viennois and

*Constitution of the body of King François I^er^*

*Wives and children of King François I^er^*

[70]In 1545 Conrad Gesner (d. 1565), a Swiss physician and naturalist, published his *Biblioteca universalis*, listing about 1,800 authors alphabetically, along with the titles of their works, annotations, and comments on the nature and merit of each entry.

[71]Cf. the descriptions of the English chronicler Edward Hall and the Welshman Ellis Griffith. The former described him as "stately of countenance, merry of chere, brown coloured, great eyes, high nosed, big lipped, fair breasted and shoulders, small legs and long feet." Griffith, who saw François in 1520 at the Field of Cloth of Gold, described him as "six feet tall. His head was rightly proportioned for his height, the nape of his neck unusually broad, his hair brown, smooth, and neatly combed, his beard of three months' growth darker in color, his nose long, his eyes hazel and bloodshot, and his complexion the colour of watery milk. He had muscular buttocks and thighs, but his legs below the knees were thin and bandy, while his feet were long, slender and completely flat. He had an agreeable voice and, in conversation, an animated expression marred only by the unfortunate habit of continually rolling his eyes upward." Quoted by Knecht, *Renaissance Warrior*, 105, but in that book there are no quotation marks around Griffith's description.

[72]Cf. Sir Thomas Cheney's opinion: "he is as good a man to speak to as I ever saw." Quoted in Knecht, *Renaissance Warrior*, 107.

Duke of Brittany and heir apparent to the throne, who was born the last day of February 1517 [1518], at around six in the evening, and was baptized at Amboise on the twenty-fifth day of April of the following year: he died at Tournon on the Rhone on the tenth day of August in 1535 [1536], poisoned while playing tennis by an Italian, who was drawn by four horses for this crime.[73] The second was Henri, who succeeded his father and was imbued with his virtues by means of a kind of metempsychosis. The third was Charles the Duke of Orléans, who conquered Luxembourg in the year 1542 and died, without heirs by virtue of never having married, of a pestilential fever on the ninth day of September in the year 1545 in the Monastery of Forest-Monstier near Abbeville, from which place he had been quickly transported to the Monastery of Saint Lucian les Beauvais.[74] The fourth was Louis, who died young.[75] Then he had four daughters, to wit: Magdalene, who was married the first day of the month of January 1536 [1537] to James King of Scotland, with whom she stayed very little time, dying the following July. The second was Louise, whom they planned to give to Charles the Archduke of Aragon in the year 1537, but the marriage was put off. The third daughter was called Charlotte, and she died at a very young age.[76] The fourth was Marguerite, the Queen of Navarre, the honor, excellence, and Phoenix of Princesses and Ladies in all wisdom, learning, virtue, goodness, and humanity.[77] The second spouse of this King and first François was Eleanor, daughter of Philip Archduke of Austria and elder sister of the Emperor Charles the fifth, who was crowned Queen [219v] of France the fifth of March in the year 1530 [1531]. She had earlier been married to Emmanuel King of Portugal, who died the thirteenth of December in the year 1521, leaving a

[73]Sebastiano de Montecuculli, one of the dauphin's squires, was suspected of poisoning François. He possessed a treatise on poisons and confessed his guilt under torture. Although he later retracted his confession, he was executed at Lyons on 7 October. Despite the fact that Sebastiano named Charles V as the instigator of the plot, many Frenchmen believed that Catherine de Médicis was responsible for François' death. For more detail, see Knecht, *Renaissance Warrior*, 337–38; and Baumgartner, *Henry II*, 31.

[74]"Tavannes, Charles' companion, reported that Charles, while with the army in Picardy, was advised that several persons had died of the plague in a certain house. Charles entered the house, arrogantly declaring that no prince of royal blood had ever died of the plague. He died four days later"; Baumgartner, *Henry II*, 38.

[75]There is no record of François having a son named Louis, but he had a daughter Louise, who died at the age of two years on 25 September 1517. Thevet says only that her marriage was "put off."

[76]Charlotte was born in 1516 and died in 1524.

[77]Thevet apparently has confused Marguerite d'Angoulême and Navarre, François' sister, one of the most learned women of the sixteenth century and author of the *Heptaméron*, with his daughter of the same name.

Death of King François Ier

daughter named Marie, to whom Queen Eleanor gave birth in Lisbon in June of the same year.[78] Having left infinite proofs of his prowess, virtues, and a fortunate lineage, he left this life on the last day of March 1547 before Easter in the Castle of Rambouillet, having reigned thirty-two years. Several epitaphs have been written in his honor, among which I have chosen the following:

Epitaph

Here lies François, the first King of the French by that name: You can learn more by common report. This marble, this whole ground, if they were endowed with sense, would have been profusely wet with tears. All the arts buried together with the King will be immediately restored by the generous aid of Henri.

[78]François' first wife, Claude, died in 1524.

Henri II, King of France

Translator's Introduction

Readers struck by Thevet's lengthy disquisition on the bitter rivalry between Emperor Charles V and the kings of France in the middle of this chapter on Henri II will doubtless wonder at the source of such an extended conflict. Like the Plantagenets of England, the Habsburgs/Burgundians sought to expand their power and resources in ways consonant with the pyramidal view of social organization prevalent since the High Middle Ages. French monarchs began expanding their reach as well, but they early detected a route to greater autonomy by consolidating their power over contiguous domains rather than reaching farther away to new ones. This led eventually to a vertical organization of political allegiance in what we have come to know as the nation-state.

When, early in the fifteenth century, a rich peasant girl in Lorraine told Robert de Baudricourt, the commander of the local town, that she wanted to go to "France" to rescue her king, Baudricourt understood what she meant and even furnished an armed escort so she could reasonably hope to make it there. What is remarkable about the episode is that Baudricourt understood that the maiden (now widely known as Joan of Arc, or the Maid of Orleans) saw herself as not being in France, even though he commanded the garrison loyal to the French king Charles VII. France, as an autonomous nation-state, was anomalous in the fifteenth century, but a century-and-a-quarter later, it was the Holy Roman Emperor's insistence on pan-European dominion that struck contemporaries like Thevet as overweening ambition, replete with the figure of the emperor disporting himself in eagle feathers.

Henri II of His Name, King of France

Book IIII Chapter 7

[fol. 220r]

All the regret I may feel at this moment is because I must put pen to paper to describe the life, acts, and sayings of the valorous and magnanimous monarch, and that I may not say what I would wish of him, and that the subject deserves all too well. It is not for lack of *memoires* about him, there being an almost infinite number of histories about this paragon of virtuous Princes: of whom, had I wished to select everything I needed, I would have been able to write a volume on that subject [220v] alone, even though I would have had [to] abridge most of it. Here, then, I shall solely touch on the principal points which have embellished[1] the memory of this virtuous and debonair Prince. Who, succeeding a great and

Nativity of Henri

[1] "fleur-delisé": "embellished" is not strong enough to render the pun.

magnificent King, did not deviate from the valor, prowess, and virtues of his father François the first of his name. He came into this world on the last day of March one thousand five hundred eighteen years [1519] after the incarnation of the Savior of the entire world, and he was given this name by Henry, the eighth King of England of his name.[2] He began to taste the miseries, annoyances, and discomfitures of this world during his Father's life. With his brother François, who was poisoned, and died at Tournon in the year 1535 [1536], he felt the sting left by the battle of Pavia. He had to bow to the orders of Charles the fifth, and was held hostage to ransom his father's liberty, and served as surety for the provisions of the treaty which obtained the King's release.[3] He succeeded to the Crown of this Kingdom, and was anointed and crowned at Rheims the twenty-sixth day of July, the year 1547, at the age of roughly nineteen.[4] His reign began in justice and piety, since the first Edict he issued prohibited and forbade anybody from swearing, denying, challenging, tempting, and making any other villainous and detestable oaths against the honor of God.[5] Afterwards he issued several ordinances, some reforming textiles and cloths of gold and silver, jewelry, lacework, and embroidery; others suppressing new offices

Coronation and consecration of Henri

Edict against blasphemers of the name of God

[2]Henri II, of course, was named *for* Henry VIII. Certainly England and France were drawing closer at this time (the Treaty of London was signed in 1518 and the celebrated meeting at the "Field of the Cloth of Gold" took place in 1520), but no evidence has shown that Henri was named *by* the English king.

[3]François was captured at the battle of Pavia (24 February 1525) and taken to Madrid. The Treaty of Madrid (14 January 1526) freed the king, but sent his two sons, François and Henri, to Spain as hostages. In the Treaty of Cambrai (3 August 1529), also known as the Peace of the Ladies, Charles V accepted a ransom of two million gold écus for the king's sons. For details of Henri's life as a hostage in Spain, see Baumgartner, *Henry II*, 10–25.

[4]Thevet's arithmetic is wrong. In 1547 Henri II was twenty-eight. In fact, François I died on 31 March 1547, on Henri's twenty-eighth birthday. The long delay before his coronation reflected the growing sense among French legalists that coronation was not necessary to confer royal power, since authority was transferred to the new king at the moment his predecessor died. Therefore, the rite of coronation did not confer the power of kingship but was seen as the last step in giving public and ecclesiastical recognition to the successor's right to rule.

[5]From the beginning of his reign, Henri worked to improve the effectiveness of the prosecution and prevention of heresy. An edict against blasphemy on 15 April reaffirmed the use of judicial torture, public whipping, and the cutting off of the tongue for such an offense. In October 1547, Henri created a new chamber in the Parlement [Court] of Paris, known as the Chambre Ardente because of its zealous pursuit of heretics, whose exclusive purpose was to hear heresy cases. A month later, the king reconfirmed the appointment of the Dominican Matthieu Ory as inquisitor for the realm. In December 1547, a new edict prohibited the possession of books on the Index of Forbidden Books and the publication of books on religion that had not been approved by the Sorbonne.

The King visits the cities of his Kingdom

that had recently been created and regulating his finances, waters and forests, and the poor.[6] Shortly thereafter his Majesty decided to visit the cities of his Kingdom, and made his entry with great magnificence and pomp, with no other aim but to cut away anything that might threaten the safety of the Kingdom.[7] At the same time the war against the English over Boulogne began to surface, but it was cut short, as we shall discuss more below. Many other wars followed quickly on its heels, which did no little damage to the stability of the Kingdom, insomuch as it was under assault from within and without. The Aquitaine rose in such fury over the Gabelle, or salt tax,[8] that the mutineers assaulted those on the King's side without observing any of the formalities of negotiation. Among others they murdered Captain Monneins [Tristan de Moneins][9] treacherously and against their sworn oath, and visited such strange and inhuman cruelties upon him that they would defy belief, if we did not know well that as soon as the fury of a populace heats up there is no law however holy, sacred, and inviolable that it does not violate.[10] It is entirely true that their fire moderated a great deal after the arrival of the Lord Constable [Anne de Montmorency], [221r] but all the reparations they undertook could not restore the life to this worthy servant of the King.[11] In whose honor

Riot in the Aquitaine over the Gabelle, or salt tax

[6]Shortly after he became king, Henri issued an edict restricting the use of silk to members of the nobility. He also eliminated the last vestiges of serfdom on the royal lands in the Bourbonnais in 1549 and in Burgundy in 1554. The expression Thevet used for the poor was "police des pauvres" which, in modern French, would mean the "policy towards the poor."

[7]These entry ceremonies were lavish and expensive, with the one at Beaune on 18 July perhaps the most extravagant. A large mock fort was built, and was defended by some 1,500 locals and attacked by a comparable number. The mock combat was real enough to result in numerous broken limbs and concussions. The king pronounced himself most pleased with the entertainment and the decorations in the town.

[8]The monarchy required all subjects above the age of eight to purchase salt at a fixed price. The price varied from one province to another. The salt tax was abolished during the French Revolution (in 1790).

[9]Tristan de Moneins was killed at Bordeaux on 21 August 1548.

[10]In 1543 and 1544 there were revolts in La Rochelle against increases in the gabelle. In 1546 the government issued a new edict imposing a gabelle at a uniformly high rate across the realm, but it did not go into effect until Henri confirmed it in 1547. The appearance of tax farmers (*gabelleurs*) in the southwest provinces intensified resentment towards the new tax, and in early April 1548 the first signs of revolt appeared in the province of Saintonge. By August the revolt had spread to Guyenne and Bordeaux. The king's absence from France delayed an effective response to the crisis. By the time Henri was fully informed of the situation in early September, the number of people killed and the damage done by the rebels were substantial. Henri d'Albret's lieutenant in Guyenne, Tristan de Moneins, had been killed while negotiating with the rebels. For more details, see Gigon, *Révolte de la gabelle*.

[11]On 7 September Henri ordered Anne de Montmorency and François de Guise, the

the following epitaph was placed on his tomb, which is in the Church of Saint Andrew in Bordeaux.

Epitaph of the Sieur de Monneins

> Tristani mondentii equitis, rege navarræ absente in aquitania pro regis ossa hic sita sunt: qui dum pro regis munere fungeretur, et seditionis accensas faces conaretur extinguere a burdegalensibus civibus perfidiosæ crudeliterque trucidatus, in ipsa trucidatione mortem oppetiit xiii. calend. septempt. anno a salute mortalibus per christum restituta M.D.XLVIII.

That is to say, Here lie the bones of Tristan de Monneins, Knight, Governor of Aquitaine for his majesty in the absence of the King of Navarre. While in the exercise of his functions as Governor and attempting to extinguish the lighted torches of sedition, he was perfidiously and cruelly assassinated by the inhabitants of Bordeaux: he died during the massacre on the twentieth day of August in the year 1548 after Christ's sacrifice for our salvation. The dreadful desolation that appears in the person of this worthy Seigneur de Monneins [Moneins] will suffice to bear witness [to] the pitiful state this Kingdom would have been in, if the vigilance and prudence of the Lord Constable had not cut short such internecine struggles. Outside the Kingdom there were two very powerful monarchs who never gave him a moment's peace: the King of England and the Emperor Charles V. He dispatched Gaspard de Coligny, Seigneur de Châtillon and nephew of Constable Montmorency, against the English. Coligny was a great warrior and wise general, and was called to the admiralty after the death of Claude d'Annebaut,[12] and was sent with troops to Boulogne, where he started to build and construct a new fort on the heights commanding the harbor of Boulogne-sur-mer, opposite the Tower of the Order [*tour d'Ordre*], whether the English liked it or not. Shortly thereafter it was well garrisoned and stocked with artillery and munitions, which displeased the English, so they tried to prevent it: from time to time they made raids on each other in the environs of Boulogne, Guynes [Guînes], and Ardres where several men were killed on both sides. Nonetheless peace was soon restored at the request

War against the English at Boulogne

constable's lieutenant, to crush the revolt. Hundreds of rebels were executed and Bordeaux lost its charter. Moneins' body was exhumed and carried in procession to be reburied in the cathedral. Within six months, however, an amnesty was granted and the fines and repression of civic institutions were rescinded. The salt tax revolt was the only significant popular uprising during Henri's reign.

[12] In the late medieval period, the admiral commanded the fleet, but in the sixteenth century he had become primarily a commander of land forces. The two admirals of Henri's reign were Claude d'Annebault and Gaspard de Coligny. D'Annebault died in 1552.

of the English, who did not think they had the upper hand, and who saw correctly that they would only reap misfortune from the skirmishing, as much because of the forts of Ambletueil [Ambleteuse], Mount Lambert [Le Mont-lambert], and other redoubts in the [221v] environs, which we had already taken from them,[13] as well as for the reinforcements, which had landed in Scotland in May[14] of 1548, under the command of the Seigneur [André de Montalembert] d'Esse, Colonel of Horse, François de Coligny, Seigneur d'Andelot (one of the most hardy and heroic warriors in France), Colonel of the French foot, the Seigneur Pierre Strossi [Piero Strozzi], Colonel of the Italians: of the Count of the Rheingrave, Colonel of the Germans,[15] of the Prince of Capouë [Capua], Colonel of the French Galleys. Feeling themselves so pressed on all sides, the English preferred withdrawal and trying for an agreement that would please his Majesty who was harassing them all the more vigorously, not in Scotland but right into England. And in fact they were not wrong, having been so rudely treated by the forces, which were dispatched into England on his Majesty's orders, to return Scotland to Mary Stewart [Stuart], who since became the wife of the Dauphin François, the second King of France of his name[16] who, I have no doubt, enjoyed the King's affection, but he was delighted to have the opportunity to torment the English on the other side of the Ocean, in order that they might not have the leisure to form the desire

[13]Henri regarded English control of Boulogne, in Picardy south of Calais, as a serious threat to French security, especially if the English allied with Charles V in a war against France. In 1549 Henri tried to take Boulogne by force. An abortive attack made on an English strongpoint in May, led by Coligny, cost the French two hundred dead and wounded. On 14 June 1549, Henri ordered 10,000 to 15,000 infantry to the region in an attempt to frighten the English into making concessions. By January 1550 both sides were willing to negotiate, and on 24 March terms were agreed upon, calling for the return of the Boulonnais to France for 400,000 écus. On 16 May, Henri made a triumphal entry into Boulogne, presenting himself as a conquering hero.

[14]In June, according to Baumgartner, *Henry II*, 68.

[15]Jean Philippe, Count of Salm.

[16]The marital agreement between the dauphin, later François II, and Mary Stuart dated back to 1548, but there had been a steady and powerful opposition to it. Montmorency, especially, saw the marriage as a means by which the Guises would secure a permanent and important place at court. In November 1557 the Venetian ambassador reported that Henri intended to hurry the marriage because he hoped it would give him a better claim to use Scottish forces against England the following summer. Moreover, the situation in England made the marriage even more attractive: Edward VI had died; Mary Tudor was not expected to conceive; and Princess Elizabeth might be kept off the English throne as a bastard, leaving Mary Stuart the successor to Mary Tudor. Even if Elizabeth were to become queen, Mary Stuart or her heir was in the line of succession immediately after her. On 19 April the formal betrothal took place, and the marriage followed on 21 April 1558. Baumgartner (*Henry II*, 208–9) gives details of the public and secret marriage contracts and a description of the wedding.

to cross into France and come [to] cause their customary chaos. I could unpack[17] several encounters in particular in which the French and others gave proof of their prowess and magnanimity, how many defeats they dealt the English near Edminton [Haddington], the thrashing so appropriately given Edminton's [Haddington's] troops by the Sieur d'Esse, to the point that, had fortune continued to smile on the French as it had begun by doing, Edminton [Haddington] would have been beyond the clutches of the English because of the exploits of the French before Dombarre [Dumbar] and finally the capture of the Isle Dieu.[18] But what point would there be in plunging into so long a story, which was told at significant length by the Sieur Jean de Beaugué,[19] who wrote the history of the war for Scotland. In addition to which, I have not undertaken to trace Scottish history: Also, the Kingdom of Scotland did not stay in the hands of this young Prince for long. After having been anointed King of France at Rheims on the eighteenth day of September 1559, he was afflicted at Orléans by a catarrh of the ear on Sunday, the seventeenth of November, and he endured the disease nineteen days, and died of it on Thursday, the fifth of December, 1560, at a quarter past ten at night, at the age of sixteen years, ten months, and seventeen days, and was buried at Saint Denis in France on Thursday, the nineteenth, at seven in the evening.[20] I wish, however, to return to the subject of Charles the [220r][21] fifth, to whom, as we can see from history, it seemed that the French crown existed only to give him an arena to show his prowess, which has earned him a great recommendation, and which would have earned him a much greater one if he had only known to measure his felicity by the yardstick reserved for human

Death of François the second of his name

[17] *dechiffrer*, lit. "to decrypt."

[18] This island, upon being recovered from the English, was named by the Queen Dowager, Eleanor of Austria, L'isle Dieu (the Isle of God), but formerly the French had called it L'isle aux Chevaux (the Isle of Horses).

[19] Jean de Beaugué wrote *L'Histoire de la guerre d'Ecosse*. An English translation is by Abercrombie, *History of the Campagnes*.

[20] Walter Anderson provided the following description of the king's death: "[on 17 November, the king] was preparing to go out a hunting; when, all at once, he was seized with a violent disorder in his head, which threw him into an epilepsy, that lasted for some minutes. Being recovered from his fit, he appeared for some days to have no further symptoms of danger, and the first attack was considered as a transient indisposition. A fistulous ulcer soon shewed itself in his ear; but, as it was attended with suppuration, and the physicians chose not to be hasty in declaring their judgment, he was thought to have attained, by this natural discharge, the cure of his distemper. … [O]n the fifth of December Francis II breathed his last, when he had not completed the eighteenth year of his age." *History of France*, 1:371–72, 375.

[21] This should be 222r. The folio numbers in the original printed text are in error for the remainder of this chapter. We have kept those original numbers here.

happiness, and in this manner he might have abandoned the presumptuous ambition by which he was so swollen that he considered no prince worthy of being compared to him. During the life of François the first of his name, King of France and father of the one who[se] portrait I am presently drawing, there were no events, of which he was aware, which he did not use to pick a quarrel with the Gallic Apollo, to the point that it seemed that the two Princes sought to do nothing but destroy the state of the other.[22] Charles did not content himself with the death of the father, but tried to keep the son captive under the eagle's talon,[23] but he found himself well short of his planned outcome, as the present discourse will be able to show. As soon as our Henri had put his affairs into the best order he could and in his desire to maintain peace and concord with neighboring Princes, he sent his ambassadors to this Emperor (who pranced about in his eagle feathers to let it be known that he alone could command Europe as its sovereign) in order to confirm the peace made with his father François the first of this name. And as he saw that the Emperor gave little appearance of paying attention to these proposals, he paid him in the same coin for his part as well: indignant principally because, in addition to several things over which his father used to complain, Charles sought to infringe upon the peace treaties and alliances François had made with several Princes and principalities: Charles labored so hard at this that he drew all the Swiss Cantons into confederation, who had long been allied to the French Crown:[24] it was for this reason that they pursued each other to the death [*à feu & à sang*]. Each took up the quarrels of the other, in order to do the most damage they could to the other. In fact the King took Octavia [Ottavio] Farnese under his protection as Pope Julius III was attacking him with the Emperor.[25] Similarly, he delivered Pavia

Charles the Fifth stiffened against the Kings of France

Reversals which Henri caused the Emperor Charles V to suffer

[22]The king of France was the chief obstacle to Charles V's plan to establish a universal monarchy. Hostilities between Charles and François I began in 1521 and lasted for twenty-seven years, interrupted by truces that were consistently violated. In 1526, 1528, and 1536, Charles challenged François to a duel, but these duels were always prevented from occurring. For details, see Knecht, *Francis I*, 211, 216–17, 278–79.

[23]Thevet may be referring to the future king Henri II as hostage under the provisions of the Treaty of Madrid. The Habsburg emblem, of course, was the double-headed eagle.

[24]Switzerland only existed at all because of the cantons' long-standing struggle with the house of Burgundy, begun over a century earlier against Charles the Rash.

[25]Henri had arranged a marriage for his legitimized daughter, Diane of France, then nine years old, with Pope Paul III's grandson, Orazio Farnese. His older brother, Ottavio, was married to Charles' natural daughter, Margaret, and Charles had promised to make him the Duke of Parma. In May 1551, Julius III declared Ottavio Farnese forfeit of Parma for signing an alliance with France. In the summer of 1551, the imperial army, under Ferrante Gonzaga, laid siege to Parma. For the remainder of 1551 the two armies fought in Italy without conclusive results.

from Charles' siege, and Mirandola from the Pope's, and restored Sienne [Siena] to liberty, chasing the Spanish from there. Henri pressed his foes so hard that he chased them to Villac [or Villach] and took Metz, Thou [Toul?], Verdun, Danvilliers [Damvillers], Bouvines, Mariambourg [Maríenburg], Dimant [Dinant?], Iouy [Ivoy], Cymay [Chiny?], Mont-medy [Montmédy], Astenay [Astenois?], and other places right under Charles' nose during this campaign, places Charles had earlier seized from the French.[26] Henri beat him up so badly at the battle of Renty that some say that at that point [220v] Charles sequestered himself from his secular holdings, and charged his son [Philip] with pursuing the unconquered Henri, due to the distress Charles felt at having been bested by one who he thought could not stand up to him.[27] What angered him most was that he had lost Metz, which gave him a key to enter France whenever he wished: so he camped an army before the city and equipped it with everything he needed and gave it more than one hundred thousand men:[28] He counted on taking it by assault, because of the absence of the King [Henri II], who had his forces in Italy, but he found a worthy interlocutor in Metz: for the Seigneur de Guise, who was there, gave him such trouble and worry that, in addition to the losses he suffered to the sally quickly made by my lord of Guise, one of the best known Seigneurs of the house of Broudembourg,[29] he was forced to lift the siege, not without great shame. But such discomfiture was nothing compared to the struggle, which the magnani-

Siege the Emperor laid to Metz

[26]Baumgartner describes this campaign as "one of the most successful military excursions in French history." He adds: "At very little cost in lives or property the French monarchy had established its control over three strategic positions on its northeast borders and gave itself a foothold in Lorraine from which it would never be dislodged." *Henry II*, 153.

[27]Charles abdicated his various holdings in 1555–56 and retired to the monastery of San Jeronimo de Yuste. Modern sources attribute Charles' decision to abdicate to an "overpowering desire for rest" and "melancholy thoughts of death." See Brandi, *Charles V*, 631. On Philip II, see Parker, *Grand Strategy of Philip II* and *Philip II*; and Kamen, *Philip of Spain*.

[28]In April 1552 Montmorency marched into Metz with 1,500 of his best troops. Shortly afterwards the king himself followed and appointed the Duke of Guise governor. Guise quickly converted Metz into a fortress. In marching on Metz, Charles was considering above all the interests of his own dynastic lands in south Germany, Franche-Comté, and the Netherlands. In January 1553 Charles raised the siege. Ambroise Paré, the celebrated surgeon, in his account of the siege, said that the emperor's army was 120,000 strong; cited in Sedgwick, *House of Guise*, 66. Baumgartner, who says that the army was only 80,000, opines that "The defense of Metz was one of the great feats in the annals of the sixteenth century." *Henry II*, 156. Thevet here has ignored the subsequent capture of Thérouanne and of François de Montmorency, the constable's oldest son, by imperial forces in June 1553.

[29]Perhaps Thevet means Brandenburg, but we have found no connection between it and the Guise family.

mous Henri caused for him when he gave succor to the Princes of Germany who were fearful of the subjugation and servitude into which they would fall had they allowed Charles to put his foot on their throat. He wanted to turn the German state [*l'estat d'Allemaigne*] into a hereditary kingdom, but the Princes turned to France, to request of his majesty that he deliver them from the misfortune, which would enslave all of poor Germany. Henri opposed this plan with such power and prowess that he was proclaimed the Protector of the Empire and liberator of Princes.[30] This Charles, on the other hand, never allowed an opportunity likely to do harm to the French cause that he could discover to go by without seizing it, and when I speak of the Emperor I mean his son [Philip] as well, not following the straight line of history here. I shall not stoop to widen the wounds he has inflicted on our France. Saint Lawrence's Day has been all too widely remarked for the loss of several French gentlemen and Seigneurs, who were imprisoned or killed there [at Saint-Quentin] in the year 1557:[31] among others the Duke of Anguyen,[32] of whom they tell an almost unbelievable story, to the effect that, born not far from the site of this battle, a burn mark [*marque du feu*] appeared on his side, as red as a burning coal, which continued to grow until the day of his death, when it disappeared without leaving a trace that anybody could find, and the Viscount of Turenne was killed with the elder son of the Seigneur de la Roche Dumayne [Dumaine] with several others who were honored by the death they received on that day. My lord Honoré de Savoy, Marquis of Villards[33] who succeeded to the Admiralty after the death of Gaspard

Problems Charles V caused for the French

Saint Lawrence's Day

Remarkable mark on the body of the Duke d'Anguyen

[30]For more information, see Brandi, *The Emperor Charles V*, 616–22; Baumgartner, *Henry II*, 146–59; and Pariset, *Relations entre la France et l'Allemagne*, 84–114, and "La France et les princes allemands," 229–301, esp. 259–81. Virtually from the first appearance of the Lutheran party in Germany, the French monarchy sought to use it to weaken Charles' authority. French propagandists attempted to show that the Germans and the French were cousins and should be united against the Latin Emperor Charles of Spain, while the Guises and the La Marcks served as symbols of a potential Franco-German union since they were feudatories of the empire who were serving the French king. On 15 January 1552 Henri's council formally ratified an alliance with the German Lutherans and issued a declaration of war against Charles. A few weeks later (12 February) Henri appeared before the Parlement [Court] of Paris to announce that Queen Catherine would serve as regent if he should need to lead the French army against the emperor beyond the borders of the realm.

[31]Thevet is referring here to the battle of Saint-Quentin (10 August 1557), a Spanish victory over the French. Contemporaries called it the Day of Saint-Laurent because it had been fought on the feast day of Saint Lawrence. Among the prisoners taken in the battle were many of France's most experienced captains, excluding those already serving in Italy. In addition, at least 2,500 French soldiers were killed.

[32]Jean de Bourbon, Count of Enghien.

[33]Honorat de Savoy, Count of Villars, the second son of René, bastard of Savoy.

de Coligny, was long numbered among the dead but, in the end, he escaped, much to the relief and comfort of the French crown. [221r] After this heavy defeat, the loss of San Quentin [Saint-Quentin], Ham and Catelet [Le Catelet] damaged the French badly,[34] inasmuch as these places constitute a key to the kingdom in case of war against the power who holds the lowlands. But they were returned to his most Christian majesty [Henri II] by the peace arranged the following year.[35] There was no place in Bresse that he [Charles] did not raid for food, and he had the Baron of Polleville [Baron Polwiller], whom some name Paul de Villiers (and who might have been under the command of the Duke of Savoy), lay siege to Bourg, the capital city of Bresse, hoping thus to seize Bresse and the Lyonnais with one blow, but he was chased off by the French companies returning from Italy, where his most Christian majesty had sent forces to defend the Pope against the Bolognese, who were at war with him, as well as by the seigneurs de la Guiche, Digoine, and Antas, who not only frustrated his plans by the repairs they made,[36] but also with the help of the Seigneur Vidame de Chartres and the sieurs de James and de Jours they so woke him up that he found it suitable to decamp without awaiting his own reveille, or the one our army had prepared for him.[37] When his majesty saw that the Spanish continued to play their games to disturb and torment our kingdom, he decided, even though it was not a propitious time of year, to raise an army under the command of that heroic warrior François of Lorraine, Duke of Guise, who waged war with such success that he carried Guines [Guînes] and Calais on the seventh day of the siege, even though they seemed invincible. But the importance of this city gave heart not only to this valiant Captain, but also to the Lord Duke of Nevers, the sieur de Cipierre,[38] Marshal [Piero] Strozzi, Captain Saint Stepht, and other such brave and bellicose Frenchmen who, at the

Siege of Bourg en Bresse

Capture of Calais

[34]After Saint-Quentin, Ham and Le Catelet blocked the road to Paris. Le Catelet surrendered on 8 September, Ham a week later.

[35]Thevet refers here to the Treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis, negotiated between England and France on 2 April 1559 and between France and Spain on 3 April. France restored the Piedmont and Savoy to the Duke of Savoy, and retained Saluzzo and the bishoprics of Metz, Toul, and Verdun; Spain retained Franche-Comté; England retained Calais temporarily; and France and England agreed not to interfere in Scotland. Baumgartner (*Henry II*, 227–30) puts the treaty in its historical context and historiographical perspective.

[36]Presumably repairs to fortifications, etc.

[37]Eventually a second invasion of France was organized—an ill-fated and badly planned attack against Bourg-en-Bresse, led by Baron Polwiller. The Duke of Guise, on his way back from Italy, stationed additional troops in the area.

[38]Philibert de Marcilly, seigneur de Cypierre.

height of winter and not without astonishing all of Europe, in view of the strong defensive position enjoyed by Calais and the stout hearts of her defenders, attacked it with such vigor that it returned under the scepter of his most Christian majesty, from whom the English had seized it during Philippe de Valois' reign after the unhappy battle of Crécy in the year 1347 [1346].[39] The Emperor Charles V raised and equipped the armies he led against this Kingdom at Thionville, using the natural strength of its site, which made it almost impregnable as well as convenient. Since the acquisition of Metz from the Kingdom of France, Charles had used it as the key to and arsenal of the house of Austria: the King wished to see to it and for that reason confided the execution of his plan to the late Lord of Guise,[40] who so amused the garrison, and broke [221v] the mines[41] that, the twenty-second of June 1558, the Seigneur de Capdecrebe, the Governor of Thionville, the Captain Major of Louvain, and other officers sent by his Catholic majesty to the defense of this city were forced to surrender to the aforementioned Duke of Guise and agree to terms quite advantageous to his Christian majesty, placing the city under his obedience, and even more so to the Duke of Guise, who gained great praise thereby.[42] If I wished to make a special point of listing all the specific defeats he administered to the Count d'Oye, I should have to use more than three notebooks of white paper, so I shall make bold to assure you that he returned the entire County d'Oye to his authority. After pursuing his enemy, he

Thionville returned to the King

[39]Although there is no hint of Henri's decision to attack Calais until November 1557, in hindsight it appears that he had, from virtually the first days after the battle at Saint-Quentin, thought of conquering Calais as a way to overcome the humiliation of that defeat and as a valuable bargaining chip in any future peace negotiations. The plan of the defenses of the town had been passed to the French sometime before November 1557, and they were given to Guise to plan his attack. Earlier in 1557, Coligny had drawn up plans for an assault on Calais. The English commander of Calais, Lord Thomas Wentworth, was convinced the French forces would not attack in winter. Calais surrendered on 8 January 1558, seven days after the attack began.

[40]François, Duke of Guise, died in 1563.

[41]The French dug trenches towards the walls. Blaise de Monluc wrote: "At every twenty paces I made a back corner, or return, winding sometimes to the left-hand and sometimes to the right, which I made so large that there was room for twelve or fifteen soldiers with their arquebuses and halberds. And this I did to the end that should the enemy gain the head of the trench and should leap into it, those in the back corner might fight them, they being more masters of the trench than those who were in the straight line." Quoted in Baumgartner, *Henry II*, 215–16. Baumgartner comments: "Thus was created the arrière-coin of the siegemasters that was perfected by Vauban 150 years later." *Henry II*, 216. On the importance of this military development, see Duffy, *Siege Warfare*.

[42]The fortress of Thionville surrendered on 22 June 1558, but the French suffered a serious loss when Piero Strozzi was killed by a musket ball fired from 500 paces while talking with François de Guise.

prepared the camp at Amiens, which came to nothing and finally, peace was concluded between these two powerful Monarchs who, harassed by the enemies they had given each other, swore peace by common agreement, which reunited them with each other. And, to make a more solid alliance, Henri gave his elder daughter Elizabeth to Philip the King of Spain, and his sister Marguerite to Emmanuel Filibert [Philibert], the Duke of Savoy, almost all conquests were returned to their former possessors, not without great discontent on the part of a few who had supported those who were supposed to be their new seigneurs. I shall not write of the emancipations from serfdom, which were specifically provided for by the treaty, which the Duke of Savoy was to maintain in the form and manner which his Majesty or his predecessors had devoutly [*fort sainctement*] prescribed, and which Christian Princes could not refuse.[43] I vastly prefer to touch upon the pomp and ceremonies, which took place at these weddings, not that I plan to make a point of dwelling for long over them, depressed as I am by the miserable and disastrous defeat, which brought France to perpetual mourning in the midst of all this rejoicing, inasmuch as the King found himself participating in a Tournament where he was one of the contestants and was accidentally wounded by a lance on the last day of June, from which he died on the tenth day of July, in the year 1559 and the thirteenth year of his reign and the forty-first of his life.[44]

Peace between their Most Christian and Catholic Majesties

Marriage of the King of Spain and the Duke of Savoy with the daughters of [the King of] France

Death of King Henri

[43]The Treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis provided not only for the marriage of Henri's sister Marguerite to Emmanuel Philibert, but also for the marriage of Henri's oldest daughter, Elizabeth (who had just turned fourteen on the day of the treaty). Throughout the discussions prior to the treaty, it was expected that Elizabeth would marry Don Carlos (Philip of Spain's only son with Maria of Portugal), who was the same age as she. But with the death of Mary Tudor on 17 November 1558, the widower Philip had the option of his marriage to Elizabeth inserted at the last minute. For an assessment of the consequences of the treaty, see Baumgartner, "Pax," chap. 14 of *Henry II*, 221–30. See also Ruble, *Traité de Cateau-Cambrésis*.

[44]Once it was firmly established that Philip would marry Elizabeth, Henri expressed the hope that his future son-in-law would come in person to Paris for his wedding. Philip, however, sent the Duke of Alba in his place, with "an enormous throng of nobles and courtiers, numbering over 1,000 horsemen." Baumgartner, *Henry II*, 248. They reached Paris on 15 June, the same day Emmanuel Philibert of Savoy left Brussels to claim his bride and a round of tournaments began in Paris. On 30 June, Henri himself entered the tournament. Although Henri had jousted frequently in the past and as recently as 17 June, the portents of misfortune had become alarming. In 1555 Nostradamus had published his *Centuries*, in which one verse was interpreted to refer to Henri's death. Luc Gauier, the astrologer of the Medici family, also predicted Henri's death in a duel, and Henri's wife, Catherine, had a troubling dream the night before the tournament. The king rode against Gabriel de Montgomery, sieur de Lorges, captain of the Scottish Guards. On the third course, Montgomery's lance struck Henri's visor, which flew open and the shattered lance drove several splinters into the king's forehead above his right eye. At first, Henri did not appear to have suffered a serious injury, but suddenly on the

I am well aware that those who wish ill on the Roman Catholic Church have the habit of saying that God steadied the hand of such a stiff adversary in order to rid the Church of persecution but, since they have the freedom of saying what they please, for my part I must believe what I think to be true, that France lost the pillar of its liberty, the stanchion of its peace, and finally the luster of its praise [*los*] when it lost this Henri. The regrets, plaints, and grief of French people will prove the truth of what I am saying, along with several elegies, vows, and Epitaphs [222r] raised to bear witness to the sadness the French people suffered to have lost such a good, valiant, and magnanimous Prince. I shall content myself with placing here the poster, which was placed on the doors of Notre Dame in Paris on the eleventh of August, 1559, at the time of the service for Henri.

Epitaph of King Henri II

Henri II.
Most excellent
king of the French.
The best prince, the
most liberal, and kind. The
strongest defender of piety, jus-
tice, and freedom. While he was
celebrating peace for the Christian
world produced by the marriage of his
most dear daughter and wise sister
to the applause of the people
in the sport of a tourney he
was cut and wounded
causing bitter tears
to be shed.[45]

evening of 4 July he developed a high fever. A splinter had pierced his brain and blood poisoning had set in. By 8 July his case was hopeless and he died two days later. The marriage of Marguerite and Emmanuel Philibert took place despite the royal tragedy.

[45]Thevet presents this epitaph in Latin.

[fol. 222v]

Epitaph of the Heart of the Late King Henri II

The heart of king Henri the second lies here,
vanquished neither by envy nor fear,
nor, whilst it beat in his chest,
was it troubled by anger, nor burnt by rancor.
Constancy and sweetness made their home there,
as did honest affection, and humane courtesy,
in addition to the vigor [*vertu*], supreme of all virtues,
by which he ravished all hearts.
I appeal for proof to the sighs and tears
which are shed today not merely by his followers,
but also by those who felt the force of his arms.
And if gold, and tears could soften
the hard heart of death, all would act so
that death would not refuse to return him to life.

The tomb chiseled in the brave appearance
of furious combats, where the wounded pride
of an unworthy enemy rapidly conquered
shall have to carry royal valiance to the skies.
The only thing that can resist time so strongly
is the virtue [*vertu*] conjoined to truth
of his most brave ancestors of invincible constancy which
Henri has always imitated.
If, therefore, his tomb can by itself encourage
a man of great soul to avenge himself by similar feats of arms
of the wrong done by time
how much more must the virtue [*vertu*] with which he was endowed
incite a heart to see itself admitted
to the ranks of the immortals admirable forever?

[223r] Of all the virtues of this Prince, the one is to be commended which pushed him to cherish, honor, and advance the good disciplines. To him must be attributed the occasion for my second trip, which I made to the Ocean sea toward the Antarctic Pole by his order with the Seigneur Nicolas de Villegaignon, Chevalier of Malta.[46] But since recalling his virtues only increases our grief, it is better that I represent

[46]Thevet described his 1549 trip to the Middle East in *Cosmographie de Levant* (1554, 1556). He recounted his 1555 trip to Brazil, in which he accompanied Villegaignon as chaplain to the expedition, in *Singularitez de la France antarctique* (1557), *Cosmographie universelle* (1575), and "Le Grand Insulaire et pilotage d'André Thevet" (unpublished, 1588). For information on Villegaignon and this colonial enterprise, see Heulhard, *Villegagnon*.

his posterity of several HENRIES who, following in the footsteps of their lord and father, have divinely embellished [*fleurdelizé*] our France with their justice and piety. Before I take up their subject, it seemed appropriate to me that I should recognize with her lord and husband the excellent and virtuous lady CATHERINE DE MEDICIS, daughter of Lorenzo de' Medici, Duke of Urbino, niece of Pope Clement the seventh, countess of Bologna, Clermont, and L'Avaragues, etc.[47] my most honorable Lady and Princess, who deigned to honor me with the position of chaplain to her household: one of the most virtuous, wise, and prudent princesses in all of Europe, as she has amply demonstrated by the care, diligence, and skill with which she has calmed the troubles come upon this Kingdom. Henri had the following children of this illustrious Lady. The eldest was named François, to whom she gave birth at Fontainebleau on Saturday, the nineteenth day of January 1543, between four and five o'clock in the afternoon. His godfathers were his ancestor, King François the first of his name, our Holy Father the Pope Paul the third of his name and of the lordship of Venice, and his godmother was Marguerite his Aunt, Duchess of Berry, who was also the wife of Emmanuel Philibert the Duke of Savoy.[48] After that virtuous lady gave birth at Fontainebleau on Friday, the second of April, the year 1545, to Elizabeth, queen of Spain, who died [in 1568], having produced a child who did not reach its full term.[49] Her godfather was Henry the eighth of his name of England, and her godmothers were Queen Eleanor and my lady the Princess of Navarre.[50] Again at Fontainebleau my most illustrious lady gave birth to Claude, wife of the Duke of Lorraine, on Saturday the twelfth of November, the year 1547, between seven and eight in the morning. Her godfathers were the Swiss; her godmothers, the Queen of Navarre and the Dowager [Mary of] Guise.[51] At Saint-Germain-en-Laye, Louis the Duke of Orléans was born of her on Sunday, the third of February, the year 1548 [1549], between three and four in the afternoon. And his godfathers were Lord

Catherine de Médicis, Queen mother of the King. Birth and baptism of the children of King Henri and Catherine de Médicis

1. 2. 3. 4.

[47]Catherine de Médicis' father, Lorenzo, Duke of Urbino, was the grandson of Lorenzo the Magnificent. Pope Clement VII (Giulio de' Medici) was the illegitimate son of the latter's younger brother, Giuliano.

[48]François II was named for his grandfather and godfather, François I. Henri II's sister, Marguerite, was François' aunt.

[49]Isabella "the Infanta."

[50]Queen Eleanor (of Castile), the second wife of François I, was also queen dowager of Portugal. The princess of Navarre was Jeanne d'Albret (later queen of Navarre from 1555 to 1572).

[51]Claude married Charles III, Duke of Lorraine. The queen of Navarre was Marguerite d'Angoulême, Duchess of Berry, the elder sister of François I and the wife of Henri II d'Albret, king of Navarre.

Constantine the delegate from King John of Portugal, and the Duke of Guise for Hercules [Ercole II] Duke of Ferrara; his godmother was the Dowager of Scotland, and the Duchess of Aumalle took the place of her sister-in-law. [223v] He died very young, in the castle of Mantesur-Seine, the twenty-fourth day of October, the year 1550. Their third *5.* male son was Charles Maximilian, who first carried the title of the Duke of Alençon and Angoulême, then Duke of Orléans, and then was King of France. He was born at Saint-Germain-en-Laye, on Friday the twenty-seventh day of the month of June 1550 at quarter past five in the morning. His Godfathers were the Archduke of Austria, Regent of Spain, and the King of Navarre.[52] His Godmother was my lady Renée, Duchess of Ferrara. At Fontainebleau at quarter to one in the morning *6.* on Saturday, the twentieth day of September, 1551, this virtuous princess gave birth to Alexander Edward, now Henri, first Duke of Orléans, then of Anjou and the Bourbonnais, and afterward made King of Poland, and now called to the French crown.[53] His Godfathers were Edward [VI] King of England and my lord de Vendôme.[54] His Godmother was my lady the Duchess of Mantua.[55] At Saint-Germain-en- *7.* Laye at quarter past four in the afternoon on Sunday, the fourteenth of May, the year 1553, was born my lady Marguerite, given in marriage to Henri de Bourbon the very illustrious King of Navarre on the eighteenth of August, 1572:[56] her Godfather was the Duke of Ferrara;[57] her Godmothers were Marguerite the Duchess of Berry and her aunt, the wife of the Duke of Savoy and the Piedmont.[58] At Fontainebleau at *8.* quarter to ten in the morning on Monday, the eighteenth of March, in the year 1554 [1555], the Queen gave birth to Hercules, now François, first Duke of Anjou and Maine, now Alençon, presently called by the representative Estates to the low countries, to the county of Flanders and the Duchy of Brabant. His Godfathers were the most reverend

[52]The Archduke of Austria was Ferdinand I of Habsburg, and the king of Navarre was Henri II. In 1550, Ferdinand's brother, Charles, was king of Spain, so Thevet's reference to Ferdinand as regent of Spain is unclear.

[53]King Henri III (r. 1574–89) was also king of Poland, and Grand Duke of Lithuania (1573–74) as Henryk III Walezy.

[54]Antoine of Bourbon was head of the house of Bourbon (1537–62) and, as the husband of Jeanne d'Albret, king consort of Navarre (1555–62).

[55]Catherine of Austria was the daughter of the Holy Roman Emperor, Ferdinand I. She was a widow in 1551; her husband, Francesco III Gonzaga, Duke of Mantua, had died in 1550. His brother and successor, Guglielmo I Gonzaga, did not marry until 1561.

[56]The Saint Bartholomew's Day Massacre followed this wedding on August 23–24.

[57]Ercole II d'Este.

[58]Thevet has this relationship backwards. Marguerite, Duchess of Savoy, was the daughter of François I. Marguerite, Duchess of Berry, was François' elder sister.

Cardinal of Lorraine and the great Anne de Montmorency, Constable and Peer of France. His Godmother was my lady the Duchess of
9. Guise. She gave birth yet again, to Victoria, at Fontainebleau at eight o'clock in the morning on Saint John the Baptist's day, the twenty-fourth of June, 1556. Her Godfathers were the most reverend Cardinal Charles Caraffa, the papal legate to France and nephew to Pope Paul the Fourth, and the Duke of Guise, Peer of France. Her Godmothers were the Duchesses of Montpensier and Saint Paul, and she lived very
10. little, for she died the same year at the castle at Fontainebleau. The last daughter was born the same day in the aforesaid place at six in the evening, and was named Julia [Jeanne]. She died the seventeenth day of August.[59]

[59]The Spanish ambassador, Simon Renard, described this birth, which nearly killed Catherine: "Victorie lay dead in her womb for six hours and her leg had to be broken to save her mother's life. Jeanne died seven weeks later." Quoted in Knecht, *Catherine de' Medici*, 34.

Charles IX, King of France

Translator's Introduction

Charles mounted the throne of France at age eleven, and died at the tender age of twenty-five. He was king during the Saint Bartholomew's Day Massacre, which claimed some thirty thousand lives throughout France at a time when the total population was not much over fifteen million. In terms of lives lost, the massacre was thus the equivalent of the simultaneous assassination of six hundred thousand people in the United States today. Readers will have already noticed that Thevet had little use for religious heterodoxy: for all his discomfort with the indiscriminate violence visited upon nonconformists, his refusal, even ten years later, to utter a judgment about the event is worth noting. Most intellectuals not directly involved in religious controversy reacted with great circumspection or reserve; Montaigne, for instance, started his *Essais* the year of the massacre, but never mentioned it by name.

Thevet's biography of Charles can be read as the narrative of the failure of a nation-state. Charles, like his mother, Catherine de Médicis, who as regent exercised a great deal of power throughout his reign, temporized and vacillated in the face of the passions unleashed by the Reform and was limited in part by his subjects' exhaustion and fury over ever-mounting levels of taxation. Thevet refers, but gives little credence, to rumors that witchcraft was the cause of the precipitous decline in Charles' health. It is tempting to ascribe witch-hunting to the ideological passions of the time, but the chronology of the continuing devaluation of the currency fits the situation better: France declared bankruptcy in 1557.

Charles the Ninth of His Name, King of France

Book IIII Chapter 8

[fol. 224r] If there be a Prince whose virtue has been proved in the crucible of quarrels, ruptures, and reverses, it is he whose portrait I represent here. His bells were rung from the cradle or, at least, from his tender childhood by the varied alarms of fortune. Since he came from good stock and a noble family, however, he proved to be so well anchored that there was no assault, which could make him lose ground but, like a great fat tree, the more he was shaken by storms of winds [224v] the more strength he seems to have gained: thus by the blows of fortune, however thick and violent, this Charles, stiffening himself in the encounter, took on more grandeur and puissance from it, as the remainder of the present discourse will be able to

Death of the King François the second

show. After the death of François, the second of his name, King of France and Scotland,[1] which happened on the fifth day of December 1561 [1560], Charles the ninth of his name, and third son of Henri, the second of his name, previously named Charles Maximilian, the Duke of Orléans, having barely reached the eleventh year of his age, began his reign.[2] Upon his accession to the crown, he found the kingdom full of troubles and divisions, such that some had already become embittered by the excess of severity which they had found in the deceased young Prince [François II] who, for all his wisdom, goodness, courtesy, and magnanimity, could not find support among all of his subjects, all the more since some particularly ill-educated took as cruelty the rigor with which he pursued his subjects whom he saw as ill-disposed toward his majesty.[3] I shall not research the cause of such troubles, it being outside our aim here, and since it would strike those who would take no pleasure in being thus publicly pilloried as unedifying and, finally, since I could only write about it following several who cackled on the topic as armed clerics. Suffice it to note that, in order to obviate a greater evil and put all these differences to sleep, it was decreed that the Estates-General of France would be held at Meaux, then they were moved to Orléans.[4] But

[1]François II married Mary Stuart, queen of Scotland, on 24 April 1558.

[2]Charles IX (Charles-Maximilian) was the third son, and fifth child, of Henri II and Catherine de Médicis. He was born on 27 June 1550. See the genealogical chart above, p. xxxiv.

[3]In 1559 the Guise family managed to exclude Anne de Montmorency from the royal government, although he remained constable. Now in control of the royal court, they had to deal with serious financial problems and the threat of heresy. Their policies in these areas deeply offended important vested interests in the kingdom. For example, rather than raise revenue through taxation, the Guises attempted to reduce expenditures by disbanding royal troops and deferring their wages, suppressing pensions for the nobility, and curtailing payment of interest on royal debts. They also tightened antiheresy laws: in September the government promulgated an edict ordering that any house used for an illegal Huguenot meeting be razed to the ground, and two months later the death penalty was prescribed for holding or attending such a meeting, or for anyone who knew about such a meeting but failed to notify the authorities. Such strong measures provoked a response from the Guises' enemies, who attempted to overthrow them by force early in 1560. The attempted coup (Conspiracy of Amboise, 10 March 1560), led by the Huguenot Godefroi, seigneur de La Renaudie, failed, and those responsible were either killed at the château of Amboise by royal troops (and hung after death from the battlements), or rounded up and executed later. The king, meanwhile, had issued the Edict of Amboise (2 March 1560) offering amnesty to all peaceful Reformers.

[4]When the government learned that disaffected nobles were determined to assemble in force at Meaux in order to influence the members of the Estates-General, François II transferred the meeting to Orléans. For a detailed account of these events, see Major, *Estates-General of 1560*, esp. 76; and Thompson, "The States-General of Orleans," in *Wars of Religion in France*, 69–90.

Parliament [États] held at Orléans

because the Parliament [États] needed to be authorized by a sovereign, and since the King was still a minor, there were some problems about the Regency.[5] Some of the delegations opted for the Queen mother of the

Difficulties about the Regency

King [Catherine de Médicis] and the others settled on the King of Navarre [Antoine de Bourbon]: all this was quickly settled by the wisdom of the Princes and nobles, who named the Queen governess and regent in France during the minority of her son, assisted by the Council of the Princes of Royal Blood and the Councilors of the Privy Council.[6] And the King of Navarre associated with the Regent was his Majesty's Lieutenant Général in all the lands and territories owing him obedience. Afterwards they journeyed to the Parliament [*États*] of Orléans, which were later adjourned to Pontoise, which caused those quarreling over the Regency to raise their horns once again. They had been satisfied by having seen the King of Navarre associated with the Regency of the Queen

Riot at Quercy

mother of the king.[7] Knives were nonetheless pulled at Quercy, and the Baron of Fumes [Fumel] was put to death. Several citizens of Cahors were angered, and attacked Huguenots and made a terrible flood of

Coronation of the King Charles

them.[8] Shortly thereafter the King was taken to Reims, to be anointed and crowned [*sacré*], and was anointed by [225r] Cardinal Charles of Lorraine, archbishop of Reims,[9] in the presence of the Queen mother, the King of Navarre, the Princes of the Blood, and the Peers of France. They immediately began the trial of Louis de Bourbon, Prince of Condé, whose arrest was proclaimed openly and in the assembled chambers of the Palace in Paris,[10] but none of this forestalled political dissention,

[5]The meeting of the Estates-General at Orléans opened on 13 December 1560, approximately a week after the death of François II.

[6]On 21 December 1560 the Privy Council appointed Catherine de Médicis "governor of the kingdom," and on 27 March 1561 it arranged that she and Antoine de Bourbon, king of Navarre, in the capacity of lieutenant general, should rule jointly (they each had one of the two different keys needed to open the coffer containing the royal seal). This solution allowed Catherine to avoid a commitment to either the Guises or the Huguenots, gave her exclusive guardianship of the person of Charles IX, and also assured her at least equal power in the regency.

[7]Members of the Estates-General questioned the legitimacy of the regency on the grounds that it could not be constituted without their consent. Finally, they accepted Catherine's regency only because of her attributes as a woman and mother—attributes thought to insulate her from the male tendency "to organize divisive plots." See Crawford, *Perilous Performances*, 23. The main business of the Estates-General was to find a solution for the financial difficulties that threatened to overwhelm the government.

[8]There were riots and bloodshed in the provinces during the winter months of 1562/63. The government defeated the Huguenot forces.

[9]There are two contemporary accounts of the coronation. Jackson described one account and published the other in "Little-Known Description," 289–96.

[10]Condé, reported to be raising troops against the king, was arrested at Orléans. Although

which blazed ever more hotly again. The famous Edict of July was announced in order to shut them up,[11] but it was no more efficacious than the assembly for the Colloquy of Poissy,[12] as much for the interdict announced by the Cardinal of Ferrara, sent to France as Papal legate in order to oppose the resolution of articles of Religion, as for the stupidity, contentiousness, and discord exhibited by some present at this august assembly. In order to extinguish the fire of sedition, which was burning with great heat in France, an assembly of two counselors from each Sovereign Court [Parlement] in France was called on this occasion at Saint-Germain-en-Laye. [They] deliberated and announced this Edict, known as the Edict of January[13] because it was produced on the seventeenth of January of the year 1562, and published in the Parlement [Court] of Paris on the sixth of March, in which several took no great pleasure, out of discontent over the favor it showed to the new Religion. Indeed, the Duke of Guise withdrew to his estates as did the Cardinal of Lorraine to the Council of Trent, and the great Anne de Montmorency had left the court as well, along with several Catholic lords, who formed leagues

Colloquy of Poissy

The Edict of January

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he was entitled to be tried by his peers in the Parlement (Court), the Guises set up a special tribunal, which found him guilty of *lese-majesté* (26 November 1560). Two of his judges (L'Hospital and du Mortier), however, failed to sign the death sentence. When the king died (5 December 1560), Condé was reprieved by Charles IX.

[11]Among its provisions, the Edict of Saint-Germain (11 July 1561) stipulated that cases of religious sedition were to be judged by presidial courts, reaffirmed the ban on mutual provocations, prohibited all Huguenot assemblies, made banishment the maximum penalty for heresy, and pardoned all religious offenses since the death of Henri II (1559). A complete list of edicts is in Sutherland, "Edicts of Religion, 1525–1598," in *Huguenot Struggle,* 333–72.

[12]In an attempt to settle the religious divisions that were tearing the country apart, Catherine de Médicis sought compromise through the Colloquy of Poissy. It opened on 9 September 1561 and was attended by the royal family, princes of the blood, the king's council, six cardinals, over forty archbishops and bishops, twelve theologians, and many canon lawyers. In addition to their party at court, the Huguenots were represented by twelve pastors who were assisted by twelve laymen. With the arrival (14 September) of Diego Lainez, Loyola's successor as general of the Jesuits and a strong opponent of theological compromise, the government changed the form of the colloquy. On 22 September it was reduced to a tête-à-tête between twelve Calvinist and twelve Catholic representatives. The resulting discussions were acrimonious and the colloquy dissolved itself on 13 October. For details, see Nugent, *Ecumenism*.

[13]In another attempt to restore order to the kingdom, Catherine convened a meeting of jurists at Saint-Germain. The result of their discussions was the Edict of January (17 January 1562). It reaffirmed the ban on seizures of church property included in the Edict of Saint-Germain (20 October 1561) and banned Huguenot preaching in all towns, but allowed unarmed Huguenots to worship in the countryside during the daytime. The Edict also prohibited all unauthorized synods or consistories, mandated the death penalty for a second offense by printers and distributors of placards, and forbade Huguenots from having their own churches. Catherine forced an unwilling Parlement (Court) to register the edict.

together so that they drew Antoine de Bourbon to their side, although his wife the Queen of Navarre Jeanne d'Albret was entirely devoted to the Party of the Reformed.[14] Bourbon's authority served as an impregnable rampart against their enemies, by virtue of the rank and dignity he held in France. It was at this point that they sowed the fetching rumors of the payoff, which the Catholic King [of Spain] was supposed to make to this Prince, for his kingdom of Navarre, usurped by the Kings of Castile on the house of Albret with no claim other than that of being on the ground.[15] They insinuated this rumor so skillfully that this noble Lord declared himself an implacable enemy of the Reformed who, when they suddenly noticed this abrupt change, contemptuously named the league of the King of Navarre, the Constable of France [Montmorency], and the Duke of Guise, the Triumvirate, borrowing the name of the three men in Rome who enslaved the Roman Republic under the authority and power of Caesar, Lentulus [Lepidus], and Mark Antony.[16] They wrong this Bourbon Prince by trying to make us believe that, with the others, he trampled on the preeminence of the French state [*l'estat François*], even though everybody knows that he had no part of any [225v] such ambition. Had he been struck by such ambition, we all know that he had the way so well prepared that he could have installed himself in the most

The Triumvirate criticized in France

[14]Following the dissolution of the Colloquy of Poissy, incidents of violence increased. In the southwest, Huguenot mobs killed priests and destroyed images of saints. In December there was a bloody riot in Paris involving Huguenots who had gathered to worship in a house near the Church of Saint-Médard. When Theodore de Beza found out that Antoine de Navarre had joined the Catholics, he wrote to Jean Calvin: "this wretch is completely lost and is determined that all should be lost with him. He is driving away his wife [who remained a Huguenot] and hardly dares look at the Admiral [Coligny] to whom he owes everything." Quoted in Knecht, *Catherine de' Medici*, 85.

[15]The Guises told the king of Navarre that Philip probably would be inclined to restore his lost kingdom. "[He] was alternately wheedled and cajoled, mocked and threatened, for more than a year; and all the time the pitiable weakling shifted and vacillated in his policy. … Time and again the prince of Condé told his brother he was a fool to be so wheedled, and Jeanne d'Albret sarcastically said that she would let her son go to mass when his father's inheritance was restored." Quoted in Thompson, *Wars of Religion*, 100–101.

[16]Thevet has confused the two ancient Roman Triumvirates. The First Triumvirate consisted of Pompey (Gnaeus Pompeius Magnus), Julius Caesar, and Marcus Licinius Crassus; the Second Triumvirate consisted of Mark Antony, Marcus Aemilius Lepidus, and Octavian. After Condé was acquitted on all charges and released from prison on 8 March 1561 and Navarre was confirmed as lieutenant general on 25 March 1561, Montmorency formed an alliance to defend the Catholic faith (7 April 1561) with the Duke of Guise and Marshal Saint-André. The immediate aim of this "triumvirate" was to gain the king of Navarre's support, but their long-term objective was the destruction of Protestantism throughout Europe with the aid of the papacy, the king of Spain, the Duke of Savoy, and the Holy Roman Emperor. The triumvirs won the allegiance of the king of Navarre in February 1562.

eminent seat there was in France without getting his toes wet. Whoever tried to specify all the various meetings between these lords against the reformed would never have finished. I shall therefore not speak of several assaults and captures of cities, the intrigues and ruses to which the two parties had recourse, because that could be said more conveniently elsewhere, and also because such a tale would only serve to reopen old wounds, which might do harm to the safety of the French nation [*republicque Françoise*] if we came to reawaken them. Passing above the past, I shall set sail directly for Le Havre de grâce held by the English who, even though they had been disavowed by authentic letters from the lords of the League, wished nonetheless to hold out against his Majesty. For this reason an army was raised, of which my lord Charles de Cossé, seigneur de Brissac and Lord Marshal of France, was declared General and commander. So swiftly was the Count [Earl] of Warwick, who was commander in Le Havre for the English, attacked that, having heard the wishes of the King from the mouths of the Constable of France and Lord Marshal of France, the twenty-eighth day of July 1563, he accepted the articles of surrender, and for hostages he delivered the Seigneurs Oliver Nauer, the brother of the Count [Earl] of Rutland, and Captains Pellehan [Sir William Pelham], [Sir Edward] Horsey, and Lethon [Leighton].[17] After his majesty saw his kingdom harassed by so many and such deep divisions, most of which dismembered his kingdom, and that the resolutions and reconciliations he did the best he could to effect could not repair the breaches caused by the clashes between these divisions, he decided to undertake a review of his entire Kingdom, in order to hear the requests, complaints, and grievances of his people, who complained of several exactions by which it was oppressed.[18] His majesty issued several orders well worth remembering, and among others had the Edict of Roussillon published,[19] which is so much in the mouths of those who

Le Havre kept by the English, but finally surrendered

Review of the Kingdom

[17]On 4 May 1562, Huguenot forces took Le Havre. In an attempt to regain control of Calais, Elizabeth I agreed to support the Huguenots. In September 1562, she offered to land six thousand troops to guard towns in Normandy, protect Le Havre and Dieppe, and receive Huguenot refugees there. On 4 October, under the command of Ambrose Dudley, Earl of Warwick, the English entered Le Havre. A plot by the inhabitants of Le Havre to murder Warwick led him to expel all French inhabitants of the city. Thereupon, French Catholics and Huguenots combined to attack Le Havre on 22 May 1563, and Warwick surrendered on 28 July. Sir William Pelham assisted at the negotiations for surrender and became a hostage for the fulfillment of its conditions.

[18]In an effort to impose the king's authority more effectively, Catherine took her son on a grand tour of France from March 1564 to May 1566. There were over one hundred formal entries into towns during this progress. The best accounts are in Champion, *Catherine de Médicis présente à Charles IX*; Graham and Johnson, *Royal Tour of France*; and Boutier, Dewerpe, and Nordman, *Tour de France royal*.

[19]The Edict of Roussillon (4 August 1564) prohibited both Catholics and Huguenots

make a point of leafing through the Royal Ordinances. Finishing his trip took him to Bayonne, where he had a conversation with his sister Elizabeth, wife of the Catholic King [Philip II], in the year 1565.[20] Which gave the Reformed pause for thought: in view of the capital hatred the Spaniard bore them, they imagined that this conversation was likely to lead to a disagreeable recipe for them, and for that reason they gave the Catholic King [Philip II] a pretty difficult bone of their own to digest in Flanders. They caused the Flemish to rise under the pretext of the public weal, because of some [226r] ill turns on the part of the Spanish. They so stirred things up that Cardinal [Antoine Perrenot de] Granvelle, Bishop of Arras, could think of nothing better to do than leave the country.[21] What so impressed the Reformed was that they learned that Don Fernando Alvarez de Toledo, the Duke of Alba,[22] was very welcome in the King's court, that he had long been with the King, the Queen, and the Lords of the Council. Now, while our King was traveling to Bayonne, the Sultan [of the Ottoman Empire] Suleyman sent a powerful army against the Chevaliers of Saint John of Jerusalem, who now have their stronghold on the island of Malta, as I have described in my *Cosmography*.[23] Suleyman had not less than two hundred forty sails, commanded by Dragut Raïs, the ruler of Aier,[24] and the general was Mustapha Bassa of

Interview at Bayonne

Aid for the Maltese Chevaliers

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from molesting one another or violating images or sacred objects upon pain of death. It enjoined magistrates to confine Huguenots' worship to previously specified places, and to prohibit them from holding any synods or other assemblies except in the presence of certain of the king's officers who were appointed to be present at them.

[20]Catherine came to Bayonne hoping to meet Philip II, her son-in-law, and arrange marriages for some of her children (Marguerite to Philip's son Don Carlos, and Henri d'Orléans to Philip's sister Juana). The Duke of Alba, who represented Philip at Bayonne, refused to discuss the proposed marriages. He had been instructed to try to persuade Catherine to accept the decrees of the Council of Trent and cancel the Edict of Amboise in favor of a policy of persecution of Huguenots. Later, after the Saint Bartholomew's Day Massacre, many Huguenots believed the incident had been planned by Catherine and Alba at Bayonne.

[21]Dutch "rebels" forced Philip II to remove Granvelle in 1564. From 1565 to 1579 he served in Italy and died in 1586. For more on the revolt, see Parker, *Dutch Revolt*.

[22]The most recent biography of Alba, the commander of Spanish troops in the Netherlands, is Kamen, *Duke of Alba*.

[23]In 1522 Süleyman the Magnificent drove the Knights of St. John from Rhodes, but in 1530 Charles V reestablished the order in Malta. For an account of the Ottoman siege of Malta (18 May to 8 September 1565), see Balbi di Correggio, *Siege of Malta, 1565*, trans. from the Spanish edition of 1568 by Bradford. Thevet refers to Malta in *Cosmographie universelle*, 1.12–14 (fols. 24v–30r); see esp. 1.14, "Du siege du grand Turk devant Malte" (fols. 28v–30r).

[24]Dragut Raïs, or Torghoud, the celebrated seaman, corsair, and governor of Tripoli, commanded the sultan's galleys. Bradford provides a brief biography in *Great Siege*, 89–91. Thevet's "Aier" may derive from Oea, an ancient name for Tripoli.

Natolie,[25] and Solbey [Mohammed Sokolli?] was in charge of the artillery. He put the Knights of Malta on such poor footing that they were obliged to have recourse to any aid our King might be able to give them. Charles did not refuse, in the name of Christian duty, even though the Turkish ambassador had admonished him at Bayonne to keep and maintain the alliance between the Kings of France and the Ottoman Empire.[26] After his quick tour of the kingdom,[27] he was led to understand that there were certain troublemakers who might eclipse the peace and tranquility of France. Therefore, in order to forestall such unhappy eventualities, he called the solemn assembly of Moulins, for the pacification of France:[28] and all the while this noble prince tried covertly to call together as many of his supporters as he had in his lands. And for this reason, in the year 1566 he allowed several conferences and debates between the theologians [*docteurs*] of the two Religions, who did little more than waste their time. Around this time Antoine de Crouy [Croy], Prince of Portien [or Porcien], died: he was one of the valiant noblemen of his time even though he was of a young age. He died of a fever shortly after the death of the Countess of Sengnan, herself a member of the house of Amboise. Several have written booklets about this death of Portien, by which they showed that he was carried off by madness. And the Münsterien chronicler[29] accuses him of ignoble attachments but, had he read the notes described by a certain anonymous author, he would have learned that he was skinned by poison. Now, to return to the narrative thread, whatever care and diligence his Majesty put into winning the hearts of his subjects, in order to get them to embrace peace, concord, and pleasure, he nonetheless felt the crazed outbursts of the ill-advised, who were so blinded by their folly and insolence, they dared an assassination attempt on the King's sacred person at Meaux. In order to escape their attempt, he was forced [226v] to withdraw posthaste to Paris. I know the pretext in which this undertaking was veiled was based

The Parliament [États] of Moulins

Death of the Prince of Portien

Conspiracy against the King at Meaux

[25]Mustapha Pasha commanded the sultan's army. "Pasha" was the Ottoman title for a general, admiral, or governor. For a brief biography, see Bradford, *Great Siege*, 51.

[26]Catherine de Médicis met a Turkish ambassador at Dax during the tour. See Thompson, *Wars of Religion*, 248.

[27]The tour lasted from early 1564 to mid-1566.

[28]Charles and Catherine stayed for three months (December 1565–March 1566) at Moulins, the former capital of the Dukes of Bourbon. The government planned to promulgate an ordinance capping its program of administrative and judicial reform, and to this end convened an Assembly of Notables.

[29]Thevet is referring to his great rival, François de Belleforest, who published *La cosmographie de tout le monde* in 1575, the same year that Thevet's own *Cosmographie universelle* appeared. Belleforest's work was based on the *Cosmographia universalis* (1544) of Sebastian Münster, hence Thevet's sobriquet.

on the petition, which was to be presented on Religion.[30] Such a disappointment caused the second troubles in this Kingdom for the King dispatched men everywhere on the instant, to raise levies of men, and the Reformed made their advance on Paris, after having seized several cities the very day the King escaped to Paris. As soon as they had the city of Saint Denis, they lost no time in letting the Parisians feel their arrival, laying such close siege to this great city that the Parisians had to give battle at Saint Denis in order to free themselves where the Great Anne de Montmorency, Constable of France, remained on the field of battle with sword blows to his face, which he wore unprotected, a club blow to the head, and a pistol shot in the loins.[31] The so-called Reformed [*pretendus Reformés*] pursued their advantage so closely that his Majesty, saddened by the distress of his subjects and the death of so many noblemen, made that beautiful peace of Chartres.[32] This accord truly calmed the second troubles, but could not delay the third troubles, which shook the Kingdom yet more profoundly than the preceding ones, particularly since a false rumor circulated of conspiracies and plots against the Princes of the Blood. Which caused them to take up arms and ravage the countryside, besiege and take cities and forts. Several battles took place, which cut down an infinite number of great lords who might have, had they been used otherwise than they were, done wondrous things for the safety, honor, and advancement of the kingdom. Among other battles, Bassac in Engoulmois [Angoulême?] took the valiant and generous Louis de Bourbon, Prince of Condé, who comported himself so valiantly in the encounter that led to his death (since he was one of the boldest of our day) that, wounded as he was, he nonetheless plunged so deeply into the melee that he was taken without even being recognized at first, and was finally killed by a handgun.[33] After several heavy losses of men and troops on the eleventh of August in the year 1570, the peace was agreed

The outbreak of the second troubles

The death of the Lord Constable of France

Third troubles

Death of Monsieur the Prince of Condé

[30]Thevet is referring to the so-called Surprise at Meaux (27 September 1567). When Huguenot leaders heard from a highly placed source at court that the government had decided to arrest Condé and Coligny and rescind the Edict of Amboise, they attempted (without success) to kidnap the king at a château at Monceau, near Meaux.

[31]On the night of 1 October 1567, Huguenots burned a dozen or more windmills outside Saint-Denis and tried to blockade Paris. Montmorency's troops, trying to bring provisions to Paris, fought Huguenot forces at Saint Denis (10 November). Montmorency was twice slashed in the face by a cutlass, then shot in the neck and the small of his back by Robert Stuart, a Scottish captain serving with the Huguenots.

[32]Perhaps Thevet means the Peace of Longjumeau (12 March 1568), which ended the second civil war, confirmed the Peace of Amboise (19 March 1563), and promised an amnesty for Condé and his followers.

[33]At the battle of Jarnac (13 March 1569), a decisive royal victory, Condé was wounded, then shot by an assassin.

to and published in the two camps, and received and promulgated in the Court [*Parlement*] in Paris: which brought peace to France for a while.[34]

Marriage of the King and My Lady Elizabeth of Austria

During this negotiation, the King also pursued his marriage with the My Lady Elizabeth of Austria, daughter of the Emperor Maximilian. He had his wish. And after the solemn engagement ceremony at Spire [Speyer], the Emperor deputed the Bishop of Strasbourg, the Marquis of Baden, the Count of Solern, and the Elector Archbishop of Treves [Trier] to conduct this good and chaste lady [227r] into France, with a very handsome and honorable company of great lords from the Court. Shortly thereafter our Charles, aged twenty years and five months, married her in about her sixteenth year. The marriage ceremony was celebrated by the Lord Cardinal of Bourbon on Sunday the twenty-sixth of November 1570. This queen served, and should still serve, those who wish to lead a Christian life as a model of modesty, prudence, and all virtues. They would learn a holy Christian humility from her which, to hear most of them tell it today, would diminish their greatness. I wish only to beat them with the example of this Princess who, instead of taking part in silly amusements, meditated day and night on the sacred books, as the King recognized full well when he responded to a Lord who was speaking one day to him about this paragon of a Princess, reminding him of the danger into which her pregnancy placed her if she was in the press of courtiers. To which he responded with gentle grace: her fruit can never be spoiled, unless Saint Augustin[e] causes her to abort. He said that because he always saw her hard at [*bandee a*] reading the books Saint Augustin[e] wrote on the heavenly city,[35] in which she bathed herself particularly. He had a daughter by her, who was baptized in the Church of Saint-Germain-l'Auxerrois in Paris, the second of February of the year 1573, Philibert Emmanuel [Emmanuel Philibert], Duke of Savoy, serving as Godfather and sending a deputy to hold her over the baptismal font. The Godmothers were my lady Marie of Spain, Empress of Rome and Queen of Hungary and Bohemia, the mother of this virtuous Queen. The other was that mirror of virtues Elizabeth, Queen of England. The Empress's Deputy carried the child to the christening, at which officiated the Princes of Royal Blood, to wit Louis de Bourbon the Mar-

Daughter of King Charles

[34]The Edict of Saint-Germain (8 August 1570) offered Huguenots the most substantial body of privileges they had yet received. Its provisions offered them limited rights of worship, freedom from discrimination in schools, universities, and hospitals, eligibility for all government offices, and some tax relief. In addition, all judgments against them since the reign of Henri II were suspended and they gained four surety towns [*places de sûreté*]—La Rochelle, Montauban, Cognac, and La Charité-sur-Loire—for two years. All royal officials had to swear to observe the edict.

[35]Thevet is referring, of course, to Augustine's *City of God* (ca. 410).

quess of Conty and Charles my lord de Bourbon, brothers. The one taking the place of the Empress gave the name Marie to the girl, and the deputy of the English Queen called her Isabelle, the name of his mistress.[36] This tranquility caused several French people to undertake marriages, Gaspard de Coligny, Admiral, widower of Charlotte de Laval [d. 1568], married the daughter of the Count of Entremont for his second marriage, then at the same time gave his daughter Louise de Coligny to the seigneur de Telligny [Téligny].[37] Later the question of the marriage of Henri de Bourbon, prince of Navarre, with Marguerite of France the sister of the King was taken up again, giving hope of a long-lasting peace. But the Admiral [Coligny], since he was astute, used all the means at his disposal to counter such a project, suspecting (perhaps) roughly what subsequently came to pass.[38] On the other hand, Odet de Coligny[39] brewed up the marriage of Monseigneur[40] Henri of Anjou, now[41] [227v] by the Grace of God King of France and Poland, with the Queen of England. Nonetheless, whether because this Monarch had no personal interest in such a marriage or because he had other ideas, the plans for this marriage went up in smoke.[42] But the Prince of Navarre was found much more attractive: all the more since the King so won the hearts of the so-called Reformed by sweetness, magnificence, and gracious advancements that they thought the Court was destined solely for them. In fact the Admiral [Coligny] was so welcome when he came to the Court at Blois that he [the king] replaced his estates and subsidies in his hands, introduced him into the Privy Council, gave him lots of money to recompense him for his losses, and the revenue for a year of all the priestly offices held by the late Cardinal de Châtillon [Odet de Coligny] who, upon his return from England, was seized by a fever (some say that it was

Marriages of Gaspard de Coligny and the Sieur [Charles] de Telligny [Téligny]

The idea of a marriage of Monseigneur with the Queen of England

Great welcome offered by the King to the Reformed

[36]Isabelle and Elizabeth are the Spanish and English variants of the same name.

[37]Louise later married William of Orange (William I).

[38]Coligny wanted Henri of Navarre to marry Elizabeth I to strengthen the ties between the Huguenots and the English at a time when the Dutch needed England's help in their struggle against Spain.

[39]Odet de Coligny (d. 1571), bishop of Beauvais and a cardinal, was the brother of Admiral Coligny.

[40]"Monseigneur" is the title traditionally given to the king's younger brother.

[41]Henri was not king of Poland when Thevet wrote this biography in 1584. He had been succeeded by Anna Jagiellon in 1575, and then by her husband, Stefan Batory, in 1576.

[42]The idea of a marriage between Henri and Elizabeth was controversial. Catholics considered her a heretic and a bastard—and she had been deposed, at least in theory, by the pope on 25 February 1570. Moreover, Henri, who knew of Elizabeth's affair with the Earl of Leicester, told his mother he would never take a "putain publique" as his wife. For details, see Knecht, *Catherine de' Medici*, 140. Thevet also might have been referring covertly to persistent rumors about Henri III's sexual preferences; see Jouanna, "Faveurs et favoris," in *Henri III et son temps*, 155–65.

poison) so that he died.[43] I might recall here many disorders brought on by the troubles, the death of the Queen of Navarre [Jeanne d'Albret], the marriage of Henri de Bourbon, King of Navarre, with Princess Marguerite, the Polish arrival in France to take Henri our present King into Poland and other events [*singularitez*], had they not been sufficiently recounted by our chroniclers.[44] I prefer to set forth the pitiful discomfiture of the Reformed, inasmuch as Friday, the twenty-second of August, as the Admiral was leaving the Louvre for his apartments, he was wounded by a musket ball fired from a half-timbered house, which carried off a finger and left him wounded in the arm, to the consternation of his followers.[45] Who, because they did not keep still as they ought to have done, were awakened on the twenty-fourth of August by a bloody morning bell, and one of the greatest and most worldly-wise warriors of his time, Gaspar[d] de Colligny [Coligny], was killed with several others in Paris and other places in France.[46] I do not wish to give my own account of the merits of such an execution, leaving such research to those who have more leisure to do it than I can manage. I shall simply grieve for the great number of innocent souls who knew nothing of this new Reformation but who suffered the rigors of such a day. I knew several good Catholics who were massacred for having been slandered by the name of Huguenot. The King resolved after such a dispatch to return Nîmes, Sancerre, Montauban, and La Rochelle to obeisance to him. Toward this end he raised a great army in the year 1573 and placed it under the command of Monseigneur: he dispatched the Lords of Fontaine and la Chastre to Sancerre,[47] and Lord Marshal Damville[48] to Sommieres in Languedoc. [228r] The Rochellois were so hard pressed

Death of Cardinal de Châtillon

The admiral wounded

Saint Bartholomew's Day

Sieges of La Rochelle, Sancerre, & Sommieres

[43]Odet de Coligny had fled to England in 1568. There, in a long discourse to William Cecil, he detailed the Huguenots' grievances since the Peace of Longjumeau. See Atkinson, *Cardinal of Châtillon*.

[44]Jeanne of Navarre died on 9 June 1572. She had been ill for some time with tuberculosis, and her death was a serious blow to the Huguenot cause. For contemporary theories about her death, and comments on her character, see Knecht, *Catherine de' Medici*, 151. For a biography of the queen, see Roelker, *Queen of Navarre*.

[45]Coligny was shot on 22 August between ten and eleven o'clock in the morning. He lost the index finger of his right hand and his left arm was fractured. For different accounts of the attempted assassination, see Crouzet, *Nuit de la Saint-Barthélemy,* 378–79; and Bourgeon, *L'Assassinat de Coligny*.

[46]The tocsin of Saint-Germain-l'Auxerrois gave the signal for the slaughter of Parisian Huguenots. There is a large bibliography on the massacre. See esp. Sutherland, *Massacre of St. Bartholomew*; Kingdon, *Myths about the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacres*; and Benedict, "St. Bartholomew's Massacres," 205–25.

[47]For a contemporary account of the heroic resistance of the inhabitants of Sancerre (3 January to 19 August 1573), see de Léry, *Histoire memorable*.

[48]Henri de Montmorency, sieur de Damville.

that, having lost their best soldiers they were on the point of giving up, as if in despair of being rescued, if the great Jean de Monluc, bishop of Valence, had not reported good news from his mission to Poland. To the effect that he was preferred in the Polish kingdom to the Emperor's son or the Princes of Muscovy, Sweden, and Prussia.[49] I shall eschew the magnificent welcome and ceremonies accorded these ambassadors, together with the discourse of the new King of Poland's trip, to return to my first subject of our Charles who fell very ill at Victry en Parthois [Vitry-en-Parthois] of the illness, which did not give him up until, after having made him languish a long time, put him in his coffin. He began to take heart again, of which he had great need for, having answered the complaints of the Reformed, he found himself obliged to conquer the Malcontents who began to show up around the kingdom, some of whom paid for their insolence on the gallows. King Charles was falling apart during this time; we saw him melt before our eyes. I should not dare attribute the causes to witches' spells, since this point has not been verified, even though several Magicians and cunning men were found who, having been found innocent of this deed, were then released. In addition, physicians were reported to have concluded that this sickness came from his lungs, from the excessive hunting in which he indulged night and day, in which he employed his time, taking pleasure only in exercises so violent that there was no man who could keep up with him, nor suffer the pain and labor this noble prince endured. After having been in such pain a long time, he died on Pentecost, the thirtieth of May in the year of our Lord 1574, in the twenty-fourth year of his life and the fourteenth of his reign. He was statuesque, so tall that he stooped a little. His complexion was mottled, his face a little pale, a slightly aquiline nose, a long neck, a high chest and overall very handsome. His hair was rare on his head but abundant in his beard, which was roughly the color of chestnuts. There was nothing sweeter or more temperate than his behavior. There was no one who bested him in sobriety, since he ate only to sustain himself, and voluntarily deprived himself of wine for his health. He was as decisive and hasty as possible in his undertakings, impatient, of marvelous judgment, diligent to recognize the humors and complexions of men, and overall a true disciple of King Louis XI, who used to say, [228v]

Henri King of Poland

The Leagues of the Malcontents

Death of King Charles

Charles' stature and bodily composition

[49]Catherine, who wanted her son to succeed Sigismund II Augustus of Poland (d. 7 July 1572), sent Jean de Montluc, bishop of Valence, to present the French case before the Polish Diet. Henri's election offered the government an honorable excuse for lifting the siege of La Rochelle, which had continued into the spring of 1573. The subsequent Peace of La Rochelle (2 July 1573) had, as one of its principal aims, an end to the conflict so that Henri might be able to go to Poland.

He has not learned truly to rule,
Who cannot accept to disguise himself.

Charles dissembled very well

Indeed, if it were a matter of hiding something in his heart, which might deserve not to be discovered, he walked with a prudence so great that there was no one who, after the execution of his plans, did not marvel at the exterior coolness covering the ardor of his heart. As proof of which the day after Saint Bartholomew he answered a lord who told him that they had not expected as much of him: "our night-shirt did not know either." For his part he was never at leisure, always in action, running, jumping, playing tennis, spurring his horse or forging arms, handling steel and fire as well as [the] Lord Marshal or armorer in France. Above all else he was so keen on falconry that he wrote a more knowledgeable book on the subject than anyone else had written before him.[50]

Charles a lover of good minds

As for the few good and learned men, I can testify that he loved them well: I acknowledge having received several courtesies and liberalities. His majesty often sent for me to clarify problems he was having with maps and foreign countries.[51] He was so ravished by poetry that he often took pleasure in writing verses he sent to French poets. He was no less well inclined towards those whom he felt to be rare and exquisite in the perfection of this art, but he refused to enrich them, saying that Poets were like noble horses, whom one had to feed but not fatten. I do not set forth the example of this King to dissuade Princes and Sovereigns from advancing those who can publish their glorious and heroic exploits with their pen, particularly since the generosity and liberality of many lords have become all too chilled, so much so that there is no need to discourage them from doing right by Poets, since they are generally disinclined to do so. But, since there is a danger in allowing these sacred trumpets to languish, stuffing their bellies is also to be feared, lest the cook fires' smoke stifle and constipate the nobility and sublimity of their imagination. The other danger is that they become so taken with counting their money that, instead of celebrating the greatness of their Princes, they just calculate their effort and expense, and go into ecstasies and wallow in their riches. For such reasons many Philosophers have refused presents offered them by great lords, and others have thrown their riches into the sea, saying that they would serve only as shackles, stopping them from philosophizing.

[50]Perhaps Thevet is referring to Charles' *La chasse royale composee par le Roy Charles IX… trés-utile aux curieux et amateurs de chasse*, which remained unpublished until 1625.

[51]Thevet served as royal cosmographer to Henri II, François II, Charles IX, and Henri III.

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Gaston de Foix, Duke of Nemours

Translator's Introduction

Gaston de Foix was the scion of one of the great families that made up the traditional aristocracy of France (the *noblesse d'épée*, or nobility of the sword). The French monarchy was able to concentrate power in its own hands only when it was able to resolve the tension between these aristocratic families and its own judges and bureaucrats (the *noblesse de robe*). This struggle reached its apogee in the time between the publication of *Vrais pourtraits* and Louis XIV's success a century later at sequestering the greatest and most troublesome nobles in his pleasure palace, built for that purpose at Versailles. It is still possible, however, to read seventeenth-century aristocrats' fascination with their forebears' swagger in the portrait of Foix's descendant, the Duke de Nemours, in Madame de La Fayette's *La Princesse de Clèves* (1678).

Thevet credits Foix with maintaining the autonomy of his domain, moreover, even though it lay on the frontier between the emerging nations of France and Spain. The combination of political unreliability as the aristocrats in that frontier region maneuvered between competing kings, and pretension as they fought to keep their privileged social position within France, posed a special problem for French kings of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. One result of the dependence of medieval monarchs on their feudal vassals was the violence visited upon their subjects: nobles paid their troops with the booty they seized from the towns and castles they captured. Thevet was struck, as most of his contemporaries were, by the carnage visited upon the rich towns of northern Italy by nobles schooled in the profits of ransom and pleasures of pillage during the Hundred Years' War. French kings were able to exercise full sovereignty only when they gained a monopoly over state-sanctioned violence.

Gaston de Foix, Duke of Nemours

Book V Chapter 35

[fol. 322r]

The greatness of the Counts of Foix

The County of Foix is a country situated near the Pyrenees Mountains, neighboring the countries of Languedoc and Béarn,[1] which is renowned as one of the surest and best fortified countries that can be found, as much because of its great age as the authority of rich, powerful, and well-connected [*bien alliez*]

[1]Foix, in southwestern France, corresponds approximately to the modern department of Ariège. Between the eleventh and fifteenth centuries, the Counts of Foix built up a quasi-independent state bounded by Languedoc on the north and east, by the territories of the Counts of Roussillon and the kings of Aragon on the south, and by those of the Counts of Comminges and Armagnac on the west. In 1290 the viscounty of Béarn passed to the Counts of Foix and, as a result of family alliances, Foix, Béarn, and Navarre passed to the house of Albret in 1484. The heiress Jeanne d'Albret married Antoine de Bourbon and passed her possessions to her son, Henri. When he became king of France (as Henri IV, "le Béarnais") in 1589, Foix became part of the crown lands.

Seigneurs, who have maintained their greatness against the Kings of France and Spain from time immemorial. And, to clarify the truth of the matter in few words, the Counts and Seigneurs who have held it were [322v] so strong that, taking little account of the friendship of the other Kings, Dukes, and Counts, [they] conserved their peaceful greatness. Those who had contracted an alliance with them and drawn them to their side counted themselves fortunate. They nonetheless always showed themselves friendly to the French Crown, with which they were almost always coupled with a strong bond of affinity. But, in order not to spend time in discourse too prolix, suffice it to say that this Gaston de Foix (whose natural face I represent here, taken from an oil painting, which I saw in the city of Milan),[2] came from Foixienne Fat and was grafted onto French stock. To wit, he was the son of Jean, Viscount of Narbonne, the second child of Gaston the fourth, one of the gallant servants whom the King of France had then, and who gave the English fits [*beaucoup d'affaires*].[3] This Duke Jean married Marie, daughter of Charles, the Duke of Orléans, of whom he had this stout Gaston, who was thus the nephew of Louis, the twelfth King of France of his name,[4] whom he resembled strongly both in appearance and in character. He was shortly seen to spread the glory of his name to all parts of the earth, making it frightening to his enemies, wonderful to his allies, and desirable to his family. For he was made Captain General almost before he had served his apprenticeship as a soldier, and received his triumphal crown before having been commissioned as a Captain. In short, it seemed a thing never before seen nor heard of, that he had performed such great feats of arms at such a young age, which was only twenty-four years or so. He had learned this skill under the old and valiant master Jean Jacques Trivulce[5] who, having trained him, sent him on many notable undertakings, as much to assail the enemy as to discover them. He continued until, having been awarded the title of vice-regent [*Lieutenant general du Roy*], burning with desire to show his valor [*vertu*], dared to stand against and give battle to a great number of Swiss, and finally force them out of the duchy of

Portrait of Gaston de Foix. His source and pedigree

First promotions of Gaston de Foix

[2]Gaston de Foix was buried in Milan. Girolamo da Codignola, who saw Gaston's corpse there, painted a portrait of him. See Müntz, *Histoire de l'art*, 2:550n1.

[3]Gaston IV, Count of Foix (1422–72), the grandfather of Gaston de Foix, was Viscount of Béarn and officially designated as heir of Navarre by the Treaty of Barcelona (1455). He fought against the English in Gascony in 1453.

[4]Marie was the sister of Louis XII. See genealogical chart (p. xxxiv).

[5]The Milanese *condottiero* Gian Giacomo Trivulzio (d. 1518) had served as governor of Milan under King Louis XII, and as marshal of France under François I. He fought at the battles of Agnadello, Novara, and Marignano during the Italian Wars.

Diligence and bravery of Gaston de Foix

Milan.[6] What he did during a rainy winter, by impassable roads and through ice difficult to break, without being seen nor even having his departure noticed was also unheard of, and an exploit worth remembering. He made a long night march, in spite of the tempestuous winds and snows, to enter Bologna, besieged and surrounded by Spaniards and papal forces, without the enemy Captains being aware of it, for they thought that such a large army could not enter a City surrounded by them by day by a main road [*chemin de Lome*].[7] They were thus forced to [323r] withdraw their army the very next night, and to leave the city to this indomitable Gaston who, after such a complete rout of the Duke of Urbano [Urbino?] who had been left in Bologna when [Pope] Julius [II] withdrew to Ravenna, turned it over to Bentivoles [the Bentivoglio].[8] He worked even harder to take Brescia for, leaving Bologna quickly to relieve the citadel of Brescia, he overtook Jean Paul Baillon [Giampaolo Baglioni] en route and defeated him without delaying the undertaking for Brescia.[9] For he entered the Citadel and fell upon the city occupied by the Venetians, who waited for him with great valor, in united and well-formed units. The battle was hard fought for a long time, one side fighting for its life and the other not only for glory, but also out of desire to sack and pillage a city so full of riches; the audacity of my lord de Foix stood out clearly among the soldiers. When the Venetians were finally chased out of the city with great carnage of their men, of whom few escaped, the aforementioned city was exposed to the soldiers' pillage, rape, effrontery, and cruelty for seven days. The name of the young chevalier became quite famous throughout all Christendom for these reasons,[10] and especially for having forced the papal and Spanish armies to withdraw from Bologna in two weeks, for having defeated Baglione [Baglioni], and having recovered Brescia with such a butchery of soldiers and people. So that all agreed that Italy had seen nothing of the sort with respect to warfare for a long time. This Seigneur de Foix, having left Brescia and having arranged some other matters, returned to the hunt for enemies, so burning was

Brescia taken by Gaston de Foix

[6]The French repelled a Swiss attack on Milan in 1511.

[7]French forces captured Bologna on 13 May 1511 and were besieged by a combined Spanish-papal army commanded by Ramón de Cardona, viceroy of Naples. Gaston marched his army to Bologna and defeated the armies of the Holy League. He then went north and defeated the Venetians at Brescia, which the French later captured (12 February 1512).

[8]Giovanni II Bentivoglio (d. 1508) ruled Bologna until he was expelled by Pope Julius II in 1506. His son, Annibale II Bentivoglio (d. 1540), a *condottiero*, reentered Bologna in 1511 with the aid of the French, but ruled there for only a year.

[9]Giampaolo Baglioni (d. 1520) was a *condottiero* from Perugia.

[10]This campaign earned Gaston the nickname Italian Thunderbolt (*foudre de l'Italie*).

he with the desire for combat to satisfy the orders of his King and increase his glory. And yet he was not so transported with this ardor that he intended to attack them rashly, but, approaching their camps, to try to see if they might not want voluntarily to give battle. He decided with his council of Captains to go camp before Ravenna, hoping that, in order not to diminish their reputation, the enemy would not wish to allow such a great and populous city to perish before their eyes and, for this reason, the opportunity would present itself for a battle on equal terms. With this intention he made his way there and camped near the walls and attacked them after having fired on them, not to take them but to draw the enemy camp, in which he was not disappointed, for they camped little more than a mile from Ravenna. They decided then to go attack the enemy in their camp upon leaving the city, as soon as day should dawn. And the next morning at sunrise, which was the eleventh of the month of [323v] April, a solemn day because of the memory of the Resurrection of our Lord, the French prepared for battle with great courage.[11] Once the orders were distributed and the squadrons were lined up, led by gallant officers, the Seigneur de Foix did not save a particular station or commission for himself but chose thirty of the most valiant gentlemen of the entire army, and decided to remain free in order to see and meet any need. The beauty and splendor of his helmet and armor made it easy to recognize him above all the others; he climbed on a levee of the river to show his blithe countenance and visage, and addressed a speech to the soldiers with more than military eloquence, in order to awaken and inflame every heart. After the exhortations the air resounded with the sound of brass and drums and the cries of joy of the entire army, and they began to march right toward the enemy. As the squadrons joined and mixed, a very cruel battle began, and doubtless one of the largest Italy has seen in these times, because Taro or Fornova were little more than a light skirmish between knights, and the feats of arms over the Kingdom of Naples were closer to riots or raids [*desordres ou temerities*] than pitched battles. Only a small part of the Venetian force had fought at Aignedel[12] but here, where everyone joined in the battle, which was fought in open country without the constraints of water or ramparts, the two armies fought with wonderful courage and obsti-

The battle of Ravenna given on Easter

Battles waged in Italy by the French

[11]On Easter Sunday (11 April 1512), armies commanded by Gaston de Foix and Ramón de Cardona, viceroy of Naples, fought each other on the banks of the Ronco River, about two miles from Ravenna. The French won a decisive victory.

[12]A decisive battle was fought at Agnadello, near Vailate, in the province of Cremona (14 May 1509). It ended in the complete rout of the Venetian army by a combined French-papal force.

nacy, determined to conquer or die, inasmuch as they were inflamed by danger, glory, and hope, but also by the mortal hatred of nation for nation. The enemy, however, unable to resist the victorious multitude of the French, began to withdraw and leave and, since the cavalry had already fled, the Seigneur de Foix turned to charge them with a great number of horse. As a result, the Spanish, withdrawing rather than chased from the field of battle, reached the road between the river and the levee with no disorder or breaking ranks at all, and they began to beat a slow retreat with the front of their battalion in tight order, which kept the French distant. Pierre de Navarre [Pedro Navarro], more willing to die than flee, was taken prisoner with Ferrand d'Avalo, marquis of Pesquiere and general of the army,[13] Colonel Fabrice [Fabrizio Colonna],[14] [the] Marquis of La Palude and several other Lords, Barons, and Gentlemen, from Spain as well as the Kingdom of Naples, who had shown the magnanimous courage and heroic prowess, which moved their truly generous and martial hearts to advance too far into the melee of Spaniards as well as Neapolitans. [324r] Now my lord de Foix could not bear that the Spanish Infantry was withdrawing almost victorious and in such good order, thinking that victory would not be complete unless they were defeated along with the others, he went to charge them furiously with a squadron of horse, but was promptly surrounded and thrown from his horse, or, as some say, as his horse fell underneath him as he was fighting on the banks of a little river, he was killed by a lance blow to his side after he had won such a glorious victory.[15] He died very young (as I have said), with singular renown all over the world, having obtained so many victories in less than three months. Since he was dead, the Spanish left without being disturbed or harassed afterwards, the rest of their army already [having] been routed, the artillery, baggage, and enseigns [ensigns] taken along with the Papal legate and several other lords and officers. The number of dead was great, but [the] loss of the victors was incomparably greater because of the death of their head, with whom fell the entire strength and audacity of the army, for no Prince ever died in war more bitterly

Death of Gaston de Foix

[13]Pedro Navarro, Count of Oliveto and one of the finest military engineers of his time, commanded the Spanish and papal infantry at the battle of Ravenna and was captured by the French. Ferdinand II of Aragon refused to ransom him, and he eventually entered the service of François I. Fernando Francesco d'Ávalos was the marquis of Pescara (1490–1525), and would later gain credit for the imperial victory over the French at Pavia (1525).

[14]Fabrizio Colonna, *condottiero*, general, and grand constable of the Kingdom of Naples, was the father of Michelangelo's close friend, the poet Vittoria Colonna. The French also captured Giovanni de' Medici (later Pope Leo X), the papal legate.

[15]Gaston de Foix's body was taken to Ravenna the following day.

wept [for] by his men than him, because he was sweet and gracious to everyone, which made him beloved by all.[16] There is no virtue whatsoever which makes officers so respected as graciousness in peace and audacity in war. Had the Duke of Nemours not been killed in the unnecessary pursuit of fleeing enemies, he would presumably have conquered the Kingdom of Naples, since Italy seemed already destined to accept the yoke.[17] What diminished the courage of these warriors yet more was that they saw the principal flower of nobility slaughtered before them, inasmuch as, in addition to the Sieur de Foix, the ill-starred misfortune of this battle had cut down the better part of the bold and gallant Lords who attended there and, among others, the Sieur Yves d'Alègre,[18] who was charged with leading the rear guard, in which there were four hundred men-at-arms. This lord, seeing the fierce skirmish in which the Gascons and Italians cut each other up, set on it with more courage than success. Because my lord de Vivarais, his son, was almost immediately killed before his own eyes, he felt unworthy to survive such a notable discomfiture, so he threw himself with his horse into the thickest enemy concentration, where he was killed after having caused a great number to die. After the battle the soldiers, infuriated by the loss of such a stout leader, entered Ravenna and sacked it, exercising much cruelty in spite of the losses they had received in the day. [324v] The French army, finding itself stunned by the death of Gaston de Foix and other losses, remained a long time at Ravenna without going any farther [or] doing anything while the soldiers grieved for Gaston de Foix with tears and lamentations.[19] A little while later his body was carried with those of other French lords who had been killed to the city of Milan, and interred the twenty-sixth day of April in the year 1513.[20] There was a gallant public show [*triomphe*]

The Death of Sieur Yves d'Alègre

Triumphal burial vault of Gaston de Foix

[16]François I ordered a splendid tomb to be erected in honor of Gaston de Foix in 1515, but it was never completed.

[17]Various monstrous births, reported to have taken place in Ravenna, were interpreted to indicate that God had sent the French into Italy as a punishment for the Italians' sins.

[18]Yves, Baron of Alègre, was a high-ranking French military commander and governor of Savona, then of Milan as well as Bologna. During the battle he saved Foix and Pierre Terrail, seigneur de Bayard, when they were surrounded by Spanish and papal forces.

[19]After the death of Gaston de Foix, Jacques de la Palice (or Palisse) took command of the French forces. Instead of pursuing the retreating Spanish army, he besieged Ravenna. The French sacked the city after it fell. Much of the French army was then withdrawn to France, and renewed efforts by the Holy League forced la Palice to leave Italy in August. He died at the battle of Pavia (1525).

[20]Giorgio Vasari, writing in 1568, said that Agnostino Buste, a Milanese sculptor, worked on the tomb, "which remains unfinished even now." See Vasari, *Lives*, 2:977. See also 3:1654 for Vasari's description of the deplorable condition of the tomb. For

at his interment, at which all the prisoners were led before his body and the ensigns of the adversaries were carried unfurled and all the prisoners were led before his body in token of victory. There is no doubt that all Princes and Lords have here a worthy mirror of their greatness in which those who see themselves reflected often with the eyes of understanding will be aware that God is the Lord of Armies, and orders Kingdoms and Victories according to his will. It is not credible that the greatness and magnificence of the stock, from which he of whom the present history is erected had come, maintained him in the glory, which accompanied him with great good fortune, not that I wish to belittle the excellence, wealth, and power of the Foixienne house, which (as I have touched on elsewhere) rattled the Duke of Burgundy who was so opposed to Gaston Phoebus, count of Foix,[21] that he held him to be the most vainglorious and haughty man in the world, who respected neither King nor anybody else,[22] and appeared only to hold his lands from God and his sword. Without lying, he did display great magnificence, when he went to visit king Charles the sixth of his name at Toulouse in the year 1389, inasmuch as his troop was of six hundred horse, defrayed at this count's expense. He chose two hundred Gentlemen from among them whom he had clothed in silk. As for the banquets and presents with which he favored [*caressa*] the Princes of the Blood, there is no treasury [*bourse*] that would not have felt a great lightening from them. It was he who founded and built the Cathedral and Monastery Church of L'Escar, and the Monastery and Castle of the nuns at Salenques,[23] and who had the Castles of Maseres, Montnaut, Gaunac, Fornez, Caylar, Ambres, Gonsanus, Ortais [Orthez], Sauveterre, Pau, Maulucun, Benque du Lac, the Square Tower of Cuyragut in Daumazan [Daumazon sur Arize], and the Castle of Mont de Marsan, and other edifices, which show the greatness of a Prince called to greatness [*de hault affaire*]. But what need is there for me to tarry so long on this Gaston, who was surprised by a sudden death at the Hospital d'Ouyron [Orion][24] near the city of Ortais [Orthez] when he decided to take his meal at noon, too soon after having hunted and trapped a

The Duke of Burgundy in bad odor with Gaston Phoebus, Count of Foix

Great magnificence of this Gaston Phoebus

Foundations and buildings of this Gaston Phoebus

Death of Gaston Phoebus

more details, see below, p. 65, "Sepulcher of the Sieur de Foix ."

[21]For a biography of Gaston Phoebus (1331–91), see du Sault, *Gaston Phoebus*.

[22]"lequel ne respectoit ny Roy ny roc"; cf. Cotgrave, *Dictionarie*: "sans espargner ny roy, ny roc."

[23]The Cistercian abbey for women of Salenques (Notre-Dame de l'Abondance-Dieu) was founded by Aliénor de Comminges and her son, Gaston Phoebus, in 1353.

[24]The abbey was a way station on the pilgrimage to the tomb of Saint James; see du Sault, *Gaston Phoebus*, 189.

Bear.[25] It is better that I return [325r] to him to whom the present history has been dedicated, who was made Duke of Nemours by grant of the King,[26] on the condition of the exchange of the Viscountcy [Viscounty] of Narbonne, which he left for this duchy, fallen [*escheu*] to the Crown by the death of Louis d'Armagnac,[27] who had the usufruct of it [*en don usufructuaire*],[28] as had the Duke his father.[29] One point remains here, on the sepulcher of this valiant Captain, which is well worth noting, is that the Cardinal [of] Sion en Vallay,[30] a committed partisan of Pope Julius [II], demolished the magnificent tomb, which had been raised in Milan in honor of the late Duke of Nemours the better to insinuate himself into the Pope's good graces. He based himself on this point, that it was not a fitting and reasonable thing that such an enemy of the state created by this armed Pope[31] should receive such a great honor, and that to do otherwise would be to mock the Papal anathema, fulminations, and excommunications. That was the reason that, contrary to the duty of all piety, he had the bier of this poor dead Lord overthrown. At the least, had he not had all national feeling repressed [*estoufé*], he ought to have recognized that the dead man's quarrel was not particularly with the Pope, but that his duty required him to pursue yet more vigorously all those who hated his majesty. The Cardinal should thus not have taken exception to Foix pursuing those who were ill-disposed [*mal-affectionnés*] to his Prince while in his Prince's service. Nonetheless he attacked this poor dead man so fiercely that, had it been possible for him, he would have denied him any right to burial and, toward this end, ordered that all the decorations that honored the tomb of this noble warrior be struck down. What he cited in support of his action was that there was a great number of standards, ensigns, and banners, which had been won from the Pope around his Chapel. It was as if he had decided to erect trophies,

Gaston de Foix, Duke of Nemours

Sepulcher of the Sieur de Foix torn down with permission of Pope Julius [II]

[25]Gaston Phoebus loved to hunt and wrote an important treatise on the subject, *Livre de chasse*.

[26]In 1507 Gaston de Foix exchanged his viscounty of Narbonne with Louis XII for the duchy of Nemours, which had reverted to the French Crown in 1504.

[27]Louis d'Armagnac (d. 1503) was Duke of Nemours and viceroy of Naples. He was killed at the battle of Cerignola.

[28]Usufruct was the right to enjoy the use of and income from another's property, so long as its value was neither destroyed nor diminished.

[29]Jacques d'Armagnac (d. 1477).

[30]Mathias Schiner's bishopric was in Sion, capital of the present-day Swiss Canton of Valais (or Wallis). He was one of the great pioneers of the Swiss confederal system, and hoped to create a powerful state embracing several Swiss cantons: Swabia, Burgundy, and Milan.

[31]Julius II, the "Warrior Pope" (r. 1503–13).

under Julius' nose and at his expense, for the victories he had obtained against him. For all that nonetheless we shall not stop revering the memory of such a redoubtable warrior, in whose honor the following Elegy was composed:[32]

Funeral torches singing remembrances, Ravenna destroyed,
Am I to hold back facts about thee, Supreme Leader?
As you marched across the huge heaps of bodies,
Cut down while already the conqueror, you fell in their midst.
The Italians, thinking that Gaul was showing greater virtue,
Avenged themselves by cutting him down. In imitation of
The young Decios,[33] dead in his armor in the flower of his youth,
And of Scipio, the scourge of Carthage.[34]

[325v] And because Italy served as [the] principal subject to this second Caesar to deploy his magnanimous feats of war, I wish to include here the elegy that was written in Italian, in order to make the praise of a Frenchman resound in the Italian coronet. It is but the translation of the Latin, but it might (in my opinion), better serve as illustration of his praise, since the conquered celebrates the renown, magnanimity, and audacity of the conqueror. Here, then, is the tenor of this elegy.

Who could ever tell in words
of the Ravenna war and your actions
that nowadays make you brighter than the sun:
winner first, then murdered? Spain then
witnessed the virtues at war that are typical

[32]The Latin here is full of errors—a mixture of pre- and post-classical vocabulary, and inconsistent morphology.

[33]Thevet is referring to one of the three ancient Roman statesmen and soldiers named Publius Decius Mus. The first died at the battle of Vesuvius (339 BCE). His son died at the battle of Sentinum (295 BCE), and his grandson died at the battle of Asculum (279 BCE). Although all three were famous for sacrificing themselves on the battlefield for Rome, Thevet is probably referring to the first Decius, who was celebrated by Livy and later by Peter Paul Rubens in a series of eight paintings.

[34]Thevet is referring to Publius Cornelius Scipio Africanus (d. 183 BCE), the Roman general who defeated Hannibal at the battle of Zama in 202 BCE. He is the hero of Francesco Petrarca's Latin epic, *Africa*.

of French heroes. You died fighting like ten,
and it appeared to me that you matched
up even to the two Scipios[35] in the army.

[35]The "two Scipios" are Scipio Africanus and Publius Cornelius Scipio Aemilianus Africanus Numantinus (d. 129 BCE), a Roman general and the adopted grandson of Scipio Africanus. The latter Scipio commanded the final destruction of Carthage in 146 BCE.

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Philippe Chabot, Admiral of France

Translator's Introduction

This chapter may be most remarkable for what Thevet omits: not only does he fail to mention Philippe de Chabot's role in mounting Giovanni da Verrazano's and Jacques Cartier's expeditions—which led to the exploration and foundation of French Canada—but he devotes scant attention to Chabot's character or the events of his life, instead focusing primarily on tracing his genealogy back to the time of Barbarossa. On the other hand, a compelling picture emerges here of the intensity of the rivalry among the great nobles for royal favor and, as Thevet makes clear near the end of this chapter, the riches that came with it. In his chapter on Gaston de Foix, Thevet notes the horrific violence visited upon captured cities, but puts it down to nobles' dependence on booty and ransom to finance their prince's military campaigns. This chapter contains more explicit acknowledgment of these men's avarice, likely to be slaked only by the loot seized by their vassals or by what they could skim from their sovereign's purse.

Philippe Chabot, Admiral of France

Book V Chapter 54

[fol. 382r]

Author's excuse

I very nearly passed over the memory of this magnanimous prince, and you see (Reader) that I have neglected his rank.[1] It is not that I am not duly informed of the merits of his virtues. But, since I noticed that he has fallen into some disfavor in our France,[2] I feared that, if I came to discourse on his deeds, I should either offend the ears, hearts, and affection of those I thought ill-disposed toward him, or, not daring to allow [382v] the coursers of my discourse to run

[1]In addition to his rank of admiral, Chabot also was seigneur de Brion and Count of Charnay and Buzançais.

[2]Chabot had many rivals at court and in the military, including Constable Montmorency. His enemies, especially Chancellor Guillaume Poyet, conspired to have him accused of peculation. He was sentenced to banishment, confiscation of his estates, and a fine of 1.5 million livres in February 1541.

free, I might succeed not only in encouraging the ill grace of his supporters, but also in disfiguring myself with the spots and wrinkles, which deform most Historians who, in order to ingratiate themselves with some and not displease others, do not scruple to twist truth's nose. For my part, since truth must be prized even in our greatest adversaries, I should have considered myself too far removed from my duty if I had pretended to be mute for this reason. I have found, moreover, that he returned to his Prince's good graces:[3] thus if Consalve is honored by the Spaniards, even by the King, who accorded him a similar funeral to the one customarily accorded to Kings,[4] why should I not recognize this courageous Admiral, who devoted such daring to the French Crown—descended as he was from a house no less ancient than illustrious and excellent, for the great alliances it formed with the greatest houses of the entire universe?

Origin of the Chabot house

I have no intention of pursuing the question further into the past than *Ferry Borstel SticKel* [?], also known as Chabot, Constable of the Emperor Frederick, named Barbarossa. The aforenamed Ferry married Adrianna, one of the sisters of the aforenamed Emperor, who had two children by her, Freben and Adrien, who were later sent by Henry, third of his name, son of Conrad, successor to Barbarossa, in support of King Philip the second against the English, whom they chased out of the Aquitaine and Poitou.[5] One was named Governor of Poitou on this occasion, and the other, Governor of Saintonge. This Freben married Radegonde, daughter of France; the union produced Philippe, who was later joined in marriage with Catherine de la Marche, sole heir, who, because she was born in France, abandoned the Teutonic name Stickel Borstel, which means stinging point [*Pointe poignáte*], and took the name of Chabot. The first member in France of this noble race was thus Philippe Chabot, who had two children, Brian, also known as Tristan, and Hugh. Gadiser was born

Philippe de Chabot

[3]The king's mistress, Anne de Pisseleu, Duchess of Étampes, intervened to have Chabot pardoned and reinstated to his offices and estates in March 1541. He was cleared of all charges against him in 1542, but the ordeal may have affected his health—he died soon afterward, on 1 June 1543. See below, p. 75, "Why the Admiral was a courtier" and p. 76, "Chancellor Payot [Poyet] attacked by Sieur Chabot."

[4]Despite Thevet's claim, Gonzalo Fernández de Córdoba (d. 1515), "el Gran Capitán," towards the end of his life did not enjoy a good relationship with Ferdinand II of Aragon, who repeatedly denied his request to return to his native Spain. After his death at Loja, his remains were transferred to the Church of San Jerónimo in Granada. See Valdecasas, *Fernando*.

[5]Thevet's genealogy is hard to follow. Frederick I, called Barbarossa, was Holy Roman Emperor from 1152 to 1190. His son, Conrad II (d. 1196), succeeded his father as Duke of Swabia and Rothenberg. Conrad's older brother, Henry, succeeded Frederick as Holy Roman Emperor Henry VI (r. 1191–97). Philippe II of France (r. 1180–1223), of course, spent much of his reign successfully battling the Plantagenet rulers of England. The editors have found no references to the other individuals mentioned in this section.

of Brian and Marguerite d'Angoulême, and married Bonne, daughter of the Count of Blois, and had among other children with her Pierre Chabot, the Lord Constable of France, who was married to Isabelle, daughter of the Count of Anjou, from which marriage were procreated Alban and Roblet Chabot and three daughters of the Count of Périgord. The marriage also produced Oliver who, with Anne, daughter of the Count of Castres, had several children: among others Boniface, who was joined in marriage with Agnes, daughter of the Count of Poitou, by whom he had Antoine and two daughters. From this Antoine and from Alix, daughter of the Count of Bigorre, was born [*est sorti*] Eustache Chabot, who later married Pernelle de Lusignan, from whom issued Pierre or Pernel Chabot, among others, who took Helen de Lalines to wife, from whom was born Guillaume Chabot, who [383r] was later married to Yolan, the eldest daughter of the Count of Flanders: from this marriage came another Guillaume, who married Jeanne de Craon, and had Thibaut and Regnauld Chabot. From this Regnauld and Isabelle de Rochechouart were born [*issus*] Louis, who left no heirs; Antoine, Chevalier of Saint John of Rhodes and Grand Prior of France, whose coat of arms I saw sculpted in stone on a house in Rhodes when I lived there;[6] François, abbot of Castres and Veigne; and Jacques and Robert Chabot. From this Jacques, Seigneur de Jarnac, Aspremont, and Brion, and Magdalene of Luxembourg, finally came My Lords Charles and Philippe Chabot, Admiral of France, whose lineage makes many noble houses shine today, like those of Alienor Chabot, who by his prowess and praiseworthy virtues has advanced to the noble rank of Grand Squire of France.[7] François his brother, Seigneur de Brion, Françoise, Lady of Barbezieux, and Antoinette, wife of the Seigneur d'Aumont, Marshal of France, as well as Anne Chabot, Lady of Pienne, and Jeanne, Abbess of Paraclyt, [were] all born [*sortis*] from our Philippe, Admiral of France, and Madame Françoise de Loy-vis, formerly of Giury. All very well, but why did I tarry so long on this genealogy, since I do not wish to base the excellence of this Seigneur Chabot, count of Buzancez [Buzançais], on the honor owed to his predecessors, but rather on the merit of his very worthy virtues. What duty did he perform with the army, which King François the first of his name gave him, to enter the Piedmont after the conquest of Savoy?[8] The King had made him his Viceroy [*Lieutenant*

Exploits of Admiral Chabot

[6]Thevet traveled to Rhodes in 1550, with the naturalist Pierre Gilles, to search for antiquities.

[7]The editors are unable to explicate Thevet's lengthy genealogy of the origins of the Chabot family.

[8]François claimed that his uncle, Duke Charles III of Savoy, unlawfully held lands that had belonged to his mother, Louise of Savoy. On 11 February 1536 he ordered his

general] in Italy. Nonetheless, as he [the king] was warned of the levies the Count of Nassau[9] was raising in the low countries, the King chose our Chabot to command the army he [the king] caused to enter the Piedmont, to wit eight hundred men-at-arms[10] commanded by the Admiral [Chabot], and the Seigneurs Jacques Galiot, Seigneur d'Acier and Grand Squire of France, Robert Stuart, Seigneur d'Aubigny, Marshal of France, and Captain of the King's Scottish Guard,[11] René de Montejan, [Francisco] the Marquis of Saluzzo,[12] and the Seigneurs d'Annebaut,[13] de Mont-pesac,[14] my lord Jean de Touteville [Estouteville], the Sieur de Ville-bon [Villebon] Governor-General of the Paris police [*Prevôt de Paris*], Gabriel Seigneur d'Allegre [Gabriel d'Alègre], of Charles Tiercelin, Sieur de La Roche du Maine, and of the Seigneur Paul de Ceri. In addition to these men-at-arms, the army was followed by one thousand light horse commanded by the Seigneurs d'Essé,[15] d'Termes, d'Aussun, and de Verets, and the infantry twelve thousand strong all legionnaires, of whom the Colonel was the Seigneur de Monte-jan, and the Captains were La Salle, Saint Aubin l'Hermite, Jean d'Anglure, Seigneur de Jour, the Sieur de Quincy, the Seigneurs de Bresieux, Maugiron,[16] and des Forges, and the Chevalier d'Ambres. In addition to the legionnaires, [383v] there were six thousand light horse,[17] two thousand Gascons, three thousand Italians, and a great number of artillery, the command of which was given to my lord Claude de Coucys, Seigneur de Burie: the entire camp amounting in all to some three thousand four hundred horse, light as well as heavy, and to twenty-three thousand foot soldiers, Germans, Italians, and Gascons as well as French. He would have made great progress on this conquest with his army, had Jean the Cardinal of Lorraine, the brother of the Duke Antoine and Claude de Guise, not

Army of the King François, in Piedmont, under the command of the Lord Chabot

army to invade the duchy, and Charles' outnumbered forces could offer little resistance. Chabot completed the conquest of Savoy in March when he captured Turin, capital of the Piedmont.

[9]Henry, Count of Nassau (1483–1538).

[10]Each man-at-arms was accompanied, at least in theory, by a mounted archer, a mounted squire, and an armor-bearer who also was expected to fight.

[11]Robert Stuart, Lord of Aubigny (d. 1544), was made marshal of France in 1514, an appointment that François I reconfirmed in the following year. Stuart fought at the battles of Marignano (1515) and Pavia (1525).

[12]On Saluzzo, see Montaigne, "Des Prognostications," in *Essais*, 1.11; and Du Bellay, *Mémoires,* 2:325–26.

[13]Claude d'Annebault, marshal and admiral of France (d. 1552).

[14]Antoine, seigneur de Montpesat.

[15]André de Montalembert, sieur d'Essé.

[16]Guy de Maugiron, sieur d'Ampuis.

[17]Thevet uses the German *Landsknechts*, which were light horsemen armed with pistols.

The Lord Admiral fortifies the cities of the Piedmont

stood in his way.[18] As soon as he was warned to get moving, however, he fortified the cities of the Piedmont, in order to block the designs of the Spaniard. The Seigneurs de Burie, d'Allegre, de Termes, d'Aussun, d'Essé, the Counts of Tonnere[19] and Sancerre,[20] the Seigneurs de Piennes[21] and de Listenay,[22] the elder son of the Seigneur de Iarnac [Jarnac],[23] Paul Chabot, the Sieur de Clervaux,[24] the Seigneurs d'Etcars,[25] de Brissac,[26] de la Chastegneray,[27] de Traves,[28] de Paulmy, d'O,[29] and other brave and valiant warriors were placed in Turin under the command of the Seigneur de Annebaut. The Lord Admiral of Brion [Chabot] retired to Pinerol [Pinerolo], with two hundred men-at-arms, who were in his company, and the companies of the Marshal [Robert Stuart] d'Aubigny and the Seigneurs de Villebon and de La Roche du Mayne. And in order that I might leave the Piedmont, do we not owe Marseille, that key to France, to this brave Admiral, to whose arm, among human factors, is due its remaining under French control?[30] It is well known, and the Histories will prove unable to give me the lie on this point, with what alacrity he opposed the rash emperor, who presumed to grasp the entire world under the talon of his Eagle. At Pavia he pushed so far into the melee that he was taken prisoner, like the French Apollo [François I] and the heart of the French nobility.[31] Who will speak in the future of the Treaty of

Marseille defended by the Sieur Chabot

[18]In April 1536, Chabot was ordered to establish garrisons in Pinerolo, Turin, Fossano, and Coni, and to bring the rest of the army back to France. Francesco, Marquis of Saluzzo, replaced him as lieutenant general in the Piedmont. The reasons for Chabot's recall are not clear.

[19]François du Bellay, Count of Tonnere.

[20]Louis de Bueil, Count of Sancerre.

[21]Antoine de Halluin, sieur de Piennes.

[22]François de Vienne, sieur de Listenois.

[23]Philippe's nephew, Guy Chabot, sieur de Jarnac, is celebrated for his defeat of François de Vivonne, sieur de la Châtaigneraye, in a famous duel (10 July 1547). He used the so-called *Coup de Jarnac*—cuts to the back of the knees—now a fencing term for a leg cut or, figuratively, a treacherous blow. On the duel, see Franklin, *Duel*.

[24]Paul Chabot, seigneur de Clervaux.

[25]Jacques de Pérusse, Baron of Cars.

[26]Charles I de Cossé, Count of Brissac.

[27]François de Vivonne, sieur de la Châtaigneraye.

[28]François de Clermont, sieur de Traves.

[29]Jean d'O, sieur de Maillebois and de Bleny.

[30]Charles III, Duke of Bourbon, besieged Marseille from 19 August to 29 September 1524. The city was protected by 4,000 troops commanded by Renzo da Ceri and Chabot, and by a citizen militia of 8,000 men.

[31]In addition to the king and Chabot, prisoners taken at Pavia included Henri d'Albret, king of Navarre, Louis, Count of Nevers, Anne de Montmorency, and the seigneurs de Florange, Lorges, La Rochepot, Annebault, and Langey.

Treaty of Madrid, which the Sieur Chabot attended

Madrid without exalting the fidelity and vigilance of the Seigneur de Brion, for the service he rendered to King François, his master. The latter, to tell the truth, rewarded him with many honors, and received him among the Chevaliers of his order.[32] But I beg you to weigh the merit of his virtues in the balance; you will see that, though the King's munificence was great, it did not approach recognizing what was owed to this brave Admiral for the service in which he risked himself. Since his death, France has learned only too well (to its cost) the valor and value of this personage. Burgundy, while it was under the supervision of this wise Governor, enjoyed total prosperity; the King was recognized and feared there as a sovereign Lord, though the treaty of Madrid seemed to dim his authority. Was he [Chabot] not chosen by the Duchess of Alençon to negotiate and obtain this lovely treaty, along with François de Tournon, the Archbishop of Ambrun [Embrun] and Bourges, Jean de Selva [Selve], lord [384r] Chief Justice of the Judicial Court at Paris, Squire Galiot, and others?[33] He was also one of the hostages for the king: they had to deliver either the two eldest sons of the King, or the Dauphin and, with him, the Seigneurs de Vendôme, d'Albanie, de St. Pol, de Guise, de Lautrec, de Laval, de Brittany, the Marquis de Saluzzo, the Seigneur de Rieux, the Lord High Bailiff [*grand Seneschal*] of Normandy, the Baron de Montmorency, our Chabot (Seigneur de Brion), and the Seigneur d'Aubigny. If I wanted to relate each and every point of the rest of his glorious and magnanimous exploits, I should have to write two full volumes. I shall beg the well-intentioned reader to refer to that which is learnedly written by the Historians of our time. Nonetheless, before I retire I should like to touch on two points here. Of which the first concerns the disgrace in which he fell with respect to his Prince, for having spoken of some more loudly and freely than he was asked to do: for which they were so angry at him that they did not cease until they had set up an underhanded [*moresque*] attack,[34] thinking to throw him off the precipice of misfortune. They so surprised him that they forced him to defend himself

Why the Admiral was a courtier

[32]After the negotiations for the Treaty of Madrid (14 January 1526), Chabot was made admiral of France, governor of Burgundy, and knight of the Order of St. Michael.

[33]On 28 April 1525, François de Tournon, archbishop of Embrun, went to Spain as Louise of Savoy's ambassador. Jean de Selve and Chabot, who had been sent to arrange a truce, soon joined him there. Thevet, however, says that the Duchess of Alençon (Marguerite, the king's sister) sent these ambassadors. In fact, Montmorency successfully requested that Marguerite be issued a safe-conduct to travel to Spain to negotiate a peace. For details, see Knecht, *Francis I*, 175.

[34]Cotgrave, *Dictionarie*, reports that "moresque" (Moorish) means black or underhanded. Montaigne used "Æthiopien" the only time he broached the subject of Black Africans, in "Sur des vers de Virgile," while du Bellay used "More" in a geographic, but not in a pejorative, sense.

immediately against the charge of mismanagement of finances. But the poor Chancellor Payot [Poyet], thinking to do the bidding of some, tried to destroy this Lord by a lawyer's trick which finally redounded against him, since this Admiral cleared himself from the false accusations leveled against him by an appeal he caused to be filed, and so imbricated Payot [Poyet] in this Tragedy that, after the conclusion of his trial, Payot [Poyet] found himself bereft of his office of Chancellor.[35] The other subject I wish to discuss is the emblem worn by this Lord: to wit, a ball lifted by the wind[36] on which the following was written: "Concusso surgo."[37] An emblem which made clear enough his plans that, however much trouble his enemies took to torment him, he would still raise himself above their noses, and never lie down no matter how great the affliction. I am well aware that those who hate him are accustomed to interpret his emblem otherwise, to reproach him that, just as the ball was lifted only by the wind, so the Seigneur Chabot's standing [*credit*] was even more flighty than the wind. But it is legitimate for them to satirize, since virtue is never unaccompanied by detractors. And it displeases me that there be some so witless that they dare say that the lord died in his King's bad graces. I appeal for witness to the contrary to his superb sepulcher, which the king made for him in the Celestine abbey in this city of Paris, in the Chapel of the house of Orléans, from which I had his portrait reproduced as I represented it for you. I should like very much to know, if the disgrace was as great as they made it, whether his monument would have been permitted to be created there. [384v] Now, because some might be tempted to guess what the whistle means that we have made the Admiral hold in the engraving here, I wish the reader to know that the Admiral has for his Scutcheons the anchor and the whistle, to show that all those on the high seas are his subjects and must, upon the simple whistle of the General of the Navy, approach him neither less nor more than the Captain's whistle (pipe) guides and pushes the oars to advance the ship's passage. In fact, this Admiral is the King's Vice-regent of the Navy, and commander of arms and enterprises in all places, cities, ports, and maritime beaches. Except by his leave, no vessel may depart, even at its own risk and cost, nor enter the ports and harbors of France. And such is the jurisdiction that he exercises judgment and direction over any crimes and misdemeanors committed on the sea, as well as over contracts signed and entered into, whether for war, commerce, or fishing, or for

Chancellor Payot [Poyet] attacked by Sieur Chabot

Emblem of Sieur Chabot

Where the Sieur Chabot is interred

Whistle and anchor of the Admiral

Charge and jurisdiction of the Admiral of France

[35]On 2 August 1542, Poyet was arrested and sent to the Bastille. For a discussion of the charges against him and his trial, see Knecht, *Francis I*, 412–13. For more on Poyet, see Porée, *Parlementaire*.

[36]"basle [or balle] de vent a iouer."

[37]"When attacked, I rouse myself all the more."

any other civil or criminal case, which takes place on the sea, and he places deputies according to his own will to decide. His office confers upon him the right to take and receive the tenth part of all seizures, booty, and profits, which are earned on the sea by whoever it might be. He gives leave and safe conduct according to his own will for fishing during the herring season or out of it, since without his express permission none may go to new lands to fish for herring and cod, nor may travel anywhere else for any purpose unless he has the Admiral's permission. To him also falls the task of drawing up and preparing the watch along the coasts, as necessity requires, on the part of those who are subject to such watch, and they say that he can make a truce with the enemy for a few days, which is a great privilege.[38] I am astonished that some have preached that the Admiral's office is continued in perpetuity, so that whoever is Admiral must be so for life, which he must lose before they can take the title or the office from him. I shall limit myself to pointing to the authority now exercised by the Duke of Joyeuse,[39] whom we know to have been honored by this Estate, even though the Duke of Mayne was provided with it who, by the grace of God, is still alive. France used to recognize three, one in Aquitaine, a second in Brittany, Normandy, and the French low countries [*Gaule Belgique*], and the third in the East, which we call the Mediterranean. Even today the King of Navarre,[40] following the example of his father and grandfather, includes the title of Governor and Admiral of the Aquitaine among his titles: the Seigneur de Brion of whom we are presently speaking was Admiral of the Aquitaine before being Admiral of France.

Various Admirals of France

[38]By the sixteenth century, the admiral commanded land forces. Officers with such titles as captain general of the galleys commanded fleets at sea.

[39]King Henri III made Anne de Joyeuse (d. 1587) admiral of France in 1582.

[40]Jeanne d'Albret's son, Henri III de Bourbon (the future King Henri IV of France), was king of Navarre in 1584.

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Guillaume du Bellay, Sieur de Langey

Langey's energetic response to the famine gripping the Piedmont—paid for out of his own pocket—clearly shows the lineaments of power exercised by the emergent nation-state. Thevet has made several references to the ways the great nobles enriched themselves during this time, but here one sees the clearest indication of the demands positions of authority put on nobles' wealth. At the same time, we see these men resorting to traditional notions of feudal honor, for instance when Langey tries to provoke the Marquis del Vasto into a duel over the assassination of a royal ambassador. Thevet is very explicit not just about Langey's humanistic learning but also about his personal experience of the events he recounted in his *Mémoires*. Thevet depended on his wits for his living and advanced the same claim of truth for his own writing, but Langey was one of the most powerful noblemen in France, so the combination of book learning with martial ardor and skill made him a unique member of the sword nobility. Thevet cites other late medieval histories written by noblemen about their adventures, and tied them to the birth of an historical consciousness coincident with the rise of the nation-state. Montaigne treated the same phenomenon very early in the *Essais* he started writing in 1572 and first published in 1580, but he came to the opposite conclusion about the value of personal experience in writing history. "Des Prognostications" (*Essais* 1.11) was a subtle but corrosive demonstration that Langey's direct knowledge of Charles de Bourbon's treachery did not enable him to make sense of it in his published account.

Guillaume du Bellay, Sieur de Langey

Book V Chapter 58

[fol. 398r]

Sciences and arms may be developed in the same person

It is not without good and sufficient reason that our elders (under the cover of fable) gave us Minerva, daughter of Jupiter, Goddess of sciences, armed with a breastplate and a helmet and with a lance in her hand and her shield nearby, wishing to denote that the sciences are, or ought to be, accompanied by arms for their defense, or rather that arms and learning can well agree with each other, not that I seek to imply that they must normally [398v] accompany and join each other but, if such graces find themselves in one person, he becomes truly wonderful,[1] well experienced in the ways of the world, inured to trickery, ready for any enterprise, and what is more

[1]"admirable," Cotgrave's (*Dictionarie*) first translation is "wonderful," which is used throughout this translation.

he sings his own praises. When I come to note carefully these perfections in this brave Angevin Chevalier and French historian, I am forced to admire and praise his virtues, and on the contrary to criticize those who are not led and awakened by his example to the same sort of praise, possibly thinking it unsuitable and unworthy of the estate of Nobility to apply oneself to letters.[2] Now, this Lord Guillaume du Bellay, beginning his military training (as is the custom and normal calling of the French Nobility) in the first blush of youth, and drawn to the court by his desire to learn, was well received by King François, who not only took him into his service and household, but also used him quite often in and outside of his Kingdom in several of his most important matters of state. So that he can speak truthfully of the prosecution and outcomes of wars, at which he was almost always to be found, on sea as well as on land, but he also had the means to know and understand their causes and ends. He finally became as guileful a Captain and experienced a Chevalier as there was of his age. The very name of Langey was known throughout the cities of France, Italy, Germany, England, and Spain; even foreign Kings esteemed him highly and helped themselves with his favor. Were it suitable to prove how welcome he was near their Majesties, we should now have to tell how he was sent as Ambassador to Henry King of England, fairly hostile to King François because he had not been called to the treaties over his deliverance.[3] As Langey mollified him by his eloquence, King Henry also hoped by means of the favor Langey enjoyed at the Universities that he could obtain dispensation from his marriage [to Catherine of Aragon]:[4] he granted the aforementioned Langey more on this occasion than the King of France was asking. The English King had long since written the King of France to send him a man whom he trusted, so that he could tell him something privately he did not wish to write at the moment, nor to communicate to any save to him [François]. The King then dispatched him the afore-

The first training of the Sieur de Langey

Du Bellay Ambassador to England

[2]See Krause, *Idle Pursuits*.

[3]Both the Treaty of Madrid (1526) and the Treaty of Cambrai (1529) placed severe financial burdens on François I, as did the reimbursement of Charles V's debts to Henry VIII. On 16 August 1530, François sent du Bellay to England to negotiate the reduction of his financial obligations. See Knecht, *Francis I*, 221–22.

[4]Henry wanted the University of Paris to support his case for an annulment of his marriage to Catherine of Aragon and expected François to lobby the university on his behalf in return for financial concessions. Du Bellay assured Henry of French support during his embassy in England and, with the help of his brother Jean, bishop of Paris, he obtained a decision favorable to Henry from the Sorbonne (2 July 1530). For an account of the resulting controversy at the university, which did support Henry's case, see Knecht, *Francis I*, 239–40. On du Bellay's three missions to England (1529–30), see Bourrilly, *Guillaume du Bellay*, esp. 77–91. For du Bellay's activities on behalf of Henry VIII's annulment, see ibid., 92–107.

Du Bellay sent to Germany

mentioned Du Bellay, who was the secret go-between for their private plans.[5] The Potentates of Germany and the Imperial Cities received the offers and heard the orations of this soft-spoken Martial Orator in such good part that, even though the King's affairs were thoroughly jumbled up, and entry was denied to his Ambassadors, nonetheless and at risk of his life, he managed to [399r] spread the truth across Germany of the things falsely imputed to the King, and completely to reveal the calumnies directed against him. He was deputed several times to the diet of German Princes, to negotiate and conclude alliances and leagues.[6] I do not wish to forget, on this subject, the duty he rendered in defense of the Princes of Wittenberg, chased from their Duchy by the Emperor and his brother, its occupiers:[7] speaking publicly in justification of them, he was able to soften the hearts of the judges and Officers of the Swabian league.[8] As for his other missions, Rome and Italy resound yet with his discourses and wise propositions proffered clearly to the full Senate.[9] So much for the first point of his excellence at letters and the conduct of political affairs. As for his experience in war, each will conclude that it was no less than the other. For, in order not to single out several of his encounters and acts of war in the wars in Picardy, Provence, and other places, I shall merely speak of his governorship of the Piedmont,[10] with which he was not lightly

Du Bellay Governor of the Piedmont

[5]Within a month of the election of Charles V's brother, Ferdinand, as King of the Romans (January 1531), Protestant princes appealed to François I for support. Du Bellay played a key role in the diplomatic maneuvering that followed. For details of his mission, see *Mémoires de Martin et Gillaume du Bellay*, ed. Bourrilly and Vindry, esp. 236.

[6]Du Bellay helped unite German Lutheran princes against Charles V through the treaties of Scheyern (May 1532) and Augsburg (January 1534).

[7]After defeating the forces of the Schmalkaldic League at Mühlberg (24 April 1547), Charles V captured Wittenberg and took Prince-Elector John Frederick into custody and sentenced him to life imprisonment. John Frederick was rescued on 1 September 1552, and removed the seat of his government to Weimar.

[8]The Swabian League was an association of more than twenty-six cities and members of the nobility and the church in southwestern Germany (1488–1534). The league had its own court, army, and formal constitution, and it supported the emperor. It used its military power to expel Duke Ulrich I from Württemberg (1519) and then sold the duchy to the newly elected Charles V (1520). It also played an important role in putting down the knights' revolt led by Franz von Sickingen (1522–23) and defeating the peasants in the Peasants' War (1525). Many of the league's Lutheran members joined the Schmalkaldic League in 1531.

[9]François, still hoping that Charles might release his sons, who had been taken as hostages following the release of the king himself after the battle of Pavia (1525), failed to aid his Italian allies against the emperor. On 18 July 1526, he sent du Bellay to Italy to reassure his allies.

[10]François sent du Bellay on diplomatic missions to the Piedmont in 1537 and appointed him governor of Turin (1537–39). Then he replaced Marshal d'Annebaut as governor of the Piedmont (1539–42).

charged by the King, as one might think, inasmuch as it was the country on which all the weight of the Imperial war tended to land, and where several adventures and stratagems were ceaselessly being tried.[11] We must not fail to mention an act worthy of a provident and caring leader. At the beginning of his governorship, the people were so desperate with famine that a sack of wheat, which was customarily sold at Turin for only a crown, was selling for ten or twelve and, if there was wheat at market, he had to mount a guard to prevent people from killing each other over it and thus leaving the lands uncultivated and useless. The Sieur de Langey, considering that this was the ruin of the country and, if the enemy took the field, he would be forced by the lack of supplies to surrender the forts, found a way through gifts and other ways to obtain leave of Andrea Doria to bring some by sea to Savona,[12] and from there by land to the Piedmont. Now there was grain in abundance in Burgundy, with which he had a sufficient number of boats loaded on the Saône river, and thence on to the Rhône, and then had it loaded on seagoing ships. He worked so hard at this that the wheat was shortly at Savona, then he split a mountain named Douillanne[13] and carried wheat by cart to all lands owing the King obedience for three crowns a sack, when it had earlier cost twelve. This provisioning is certainly all the more worthy of note, since the aforementioned Lord accomplished it at his own expense, but he did not care about the expense, so long as he served his Prince. With what prudence did he search for the authors of the infraction against the peace, the murder committed against the [399v] person of the Ambassadors of the King of France?[14] How did he insist on reparations, to the point of presenting himself for a single combat with the Marquis of Gast[15] for justification of the truth?[16] How many times did he render the enterprises of

Methods which the Sieur de Langey used against famine

Heroic exploits of the Sieur de Langey

[11]For details, see Bourrilly, *Guillaume du Bellay*, 226ff.

[12]Savona, an important port for the Piedmont, is southwest of Genoa.

[13]Perhaps Thevet means that du Bellay had a road built over the mountain.

[14]In May 1541 Antonio Rincon left the French court, bound for Venice. Cesare Fregoso, a Genoese in the service of France, accompanied him. On 4 July, they were murdered by imperial troops while sailing down the Po River near Pavia. Although the emperor denied responsibility for the crime, the French government retaliated by arresting the archbishop of Valencia, the natural son of Emperor Maximilian I (r. 1493–1519), as he was passing through Lyons. The best account of this incident is in Bourrilly, *Guillaume du Bellay*, 327–41, "L'Affaire Frégose et Rincon."

[15]Alfonso del Avalos, Marquis del Vasto (d. 1546), commander of imperial armies and captain general of the duchy of Milan, was blamed for the murders of Fregoso and Rincon.

[16]Thevet is referring to a judicial combat in which a person accused of a crime denied the accusation by calling his accuser a liar, forcing the latter to issue a challenge to defend their honor and reputation.

the Imperial forces vain and useless, availing himself only of his brain and his tongue, having been paralyzed by the long travails he had earlier endured? How prudently he was able to see his future opportunities, and anticipate how a campaign would go. Finally, Langey, seeing himself almost impotent from his endless travails, and no longer able to meet the demands of such an onerous charge, with the King's leave left Turin in a litter, to come to his Majesty and tell him many important things for his benefit before dying, something he did not wish to ask another to do, fearing to wrong those who had trusted in him. But it was impossible for him to get there: for the ninth day of January 1542 [1543], he died at Saint Saphorin [Saint-Syphorien-de-Laye] on Mount Tartare [Tarare],[17] to the regret of many gentlemen of knowledge and experience. His body was carried to France, and interred in the Cathedral church of Saint Julian in Le Mans, where I saw the sepulcher richly worked, and his image raised in white marble, which I represent here for you, not however with his long beard, but as he wore it while he was in the Piedmont, Vice-regent for the King, and as he is depicted on medals, of which I have several myself. It remains now to see his diligence, to wit, to write well of the memorable things which happened in his time. For, as to the particularities of this Kingdom, and the wars, which the late King of very praiseworthy memory, François the first of his name, was forced to undertake and support, none have been found who described them so amply and in such detail as the aforementioned Sieur du Bellay. He wrote seven Latin Ogdoades,[18] which he translated himself by command of the King, where one can see as in a clear mirror, not only the portrait of the occurrences of this century, but a marvelous dexterity. The following verses were written about him:

Death of the Seigneur de Langey

Sepulcher and portrait of the Sieur de Langey

> Here lies Langey, who with pen and sword,
> Vanquished Cicero & Pompey.[19]

And in addition to the fact that one can see as much knowledge as eloquence in him, he was also born in a learned century, and to a race naturally given to letters. For his brother the Cardinal Jean du Bellay, bishop of Paris, was a man as well versed in all [400r] knowledge as

[17]François Rabelais twice described Langey's death: *Tiers livre* xxi; and *Quart livre* xxi–xxvii.

[18]Du Bellay's most important work, it is a history of the rivalry between François I and Charles V (only fragments remain). The first part, covering the period from 1515 to 1521, is in Latin; the rest, in French, is incorporated in his brother Martin's *Mémoires* (1569). See *Fragments de la première Ogdoade*, ed. Bourrilly.

[19]This inscription was on du Bellay's monument in the cathedral in Le Mans.

any of his time.[20] And in order not to hide his light, he was used in several missions and affairs, and not only in this Kingdom. I shall not forget that he was an author responsible for persuading the King to institute the public readers,[21] paid by the King and the ornament of this Kingdom of France, who read at Paris in all languages.[22] Sieur Martin du Bellay, closely following the tracks of his brothers,[23] made himself excellent in one and the other, to wit, in arms and letters, as his style, his discourses, and his diction show him well versed in the affairs of which he writes. It was he who put pen to paper to repair the breach, which had been made in the Ogdoades of his brother, where one could see, as in a clear mirror, not only the portrait of the occurrences of this century but a marvelous dexterity in writing peculiar to him. His labors have remained fruitless and useless, however, from the knavery of those who stole his works, in their desire to bury the honor of their Prince and their nation, or counting (perhaps) on the passage of time to allow them profit, by changing the order and disguising the language a little.[24] It was he who gave birth to that divine History, which out of great modesty, he wished merely to baptize with the name of memoirs, even though we must recognize without flattery that it merits the name of History as fully as any that has been published. When all is said and done, it suits each one to treat the matter in which

Institution of the readers of the King at Paris

Martin du Bellay

[20]Guillaume du Bellay's younger brother, Jean du Bellay (1492–1560), was a cardinal and diplomat, an influential advisor to François I, and the holder of several key positions in government and the church, including the bishoprics of Bayonne and Paris and membership on the king's privy council. Between 1527 and 1534, he went on five diplomatic missions to England, and in February 1536 was appointed lieutenant general of the kingdom during the war (1536–37) between François and Charles. Du Bellay also helped his friend, Guillaume Budé, persuade the king to establish Le Collège de France. François Rabelais served as his secretary and physician, while other scholars (Etienne Dolet and Salmon Macrin) were indebted to him for assistance. His own writings include three books of Latin poetry and a defense of François I (1542). It is interesting that while Thevet includes brief sections in this chapter on Guillaume's brothers Martin and René, he does not do so for Jean.

[21]i.e.: Le Collège de France. "Readers" is a faithful but weak translation of "*lecteurs*," which also can be given as "lecturer."

[22]For more on the establishment of these "readers," see Thevet's biography of Budé below. On the foundation of the college, see LeFranc, *Histoire du Collège de France*, esp. chaps. 3–5; and LeFranc, *La Fondation et les commencements du Collège de France*.

[23]Martin du Bellay (1495–1559) was the third son in the du Bellay family. He succeeded his brother as Lord of Langey. A brilliant soldier, he was appointed lieutenant general of Normandy in 1531. He completed the *Mémoires*, an important source for the reign of François I, which had been left unfinished by Guillaume.

[24]Thevet is suggesting that other writers stole or appropriated Martin du Bellay's work and published it as their own, but does not give clues as to who did this. While this is not unlikely, the editors have been unable to confirm this statement.

he is well versed, that is why the *Histories* of Thucydides[25] are more highly prized and esteemed among the Greeks than those of Theopompe and Ephore,[26] because the latter were philosophers or Orators, but the former had carried out several missions for the Republic of Athens in peace and war, on which his judgment, which we can see in his discourse, bears sufficient witness. They say on this subject that the simplicity [*naifveté*] of the *Commentaries,* which Julius Caesar[27] wrote, was found such by Cicero[28] that he thought it impossible to add or take anything away, considering that he had written about matters of war not as a Phormion[29] but as a man who understood it. There have been few Captains who have deigned to set pen to paper to write what they did or saw done but, when there have been, their writing has been preferred to all other Chronicles of the times: witness the books by Seigneur de Joinville, one of the barons who accompanied the King saint Louis to the overseas wars [i.e., the Crusades], and by Olivier de la Marche and Philippe de Commynes.[30] Why may we not include the *Mémoires* of the Sieur de Langey, who was honored with several missions in this Kingdom, and thus was able to discourse not at all like a cleric [400v] about what happened but as one who was a witness and recorder of most of the exploits of warriors he offers us? He is prized for having been a truthful Historian for, just as he does not hide the praiseworthy acts of some, whether on our side or the other, so he does not shrink from noting their faults, speaking nonetheless reverently of lords and Princes, describing their plans and the execution of them not according [to] the reports that circulated at the time, often false and

[25]Thucydides (ca. 460–ca. 400 BCE) is the celebrated historian of the Peloponnesian War.

[26]Theopompus (b. ca. 380 BCE) and Ephorus (ca. 405–330 BCE) were students of Isocrates. Theopompus wrote the *Hellenica*, a history of Greece from 411 to 394 BCE, and the *Philippica*, a discursive chronicle of the life of Philip of Macedon. Ephorus wrote a universal history; by the sixteenth century, only fragments of his work preserved by others had survived.

[27]Gaius Julius Caesar (100–44 BCE) wrote *De Bellum Gallico* (*Commentaries on the Gallic War*), a detailed description of his military campaigns from 58 to 50 BCE. His political career, of course, also was significant.

[28]Marcus Tullius Cicero (106–43 BCE), orator and statesman, is generally considered to be Rome's finest Latin prose stylist.

[29]Phormio was the title character in one of Terence's best known comedies (ca. 161 BCE). By the sixteenth century, "Phormion" had become a common term of derision.

[30]Jean, sieur de Joinville (1224–1317), wrote a biography of King Louis IX, who died in 1270 while on a crusade and was canonized in 1297. The Burgundian courtier and writer Olivier de la Marche (1426–1501) is remembered for his *Mémoires*, first printed at Lyons in 1562. Philippe de Commynes (1447–1511), a diplomat and writer in the courts of Burgundy and France, also wrote *Mémoires*. His analyses of the contemporary political scene made his work unique in its time; see Blanchard, *Commynes l'européen*; and Blanchard, *Philippe de Commynes*.

changing, but as he had learned from having been there, or from the most certain reports received by the King, by whom he was uniquely favored and loved. In order that I do not deprive those who deserved to be prized from the honor due them, who is to be thanked for the treasure that has now been communicated to all France?[31] It must be the Lord Baron de la Lande who, although he was the sole heir of the Sieurs of Langey, nonetheless wished France to have one of the most precious jewels that fell to this inheritance. He did this in order that his majesty,[32] as he is scrupulous about all things worthy of praise, especially readings about great feats of arms, stratagems, and acts of virtuous Princes, have the pleasure of knowing how his ancestor the great King François maintained himself in his State [*Estat*], skillfully extricated himself from the dangers into which he had fallen, and carried himself magnanimously in adversity and modestly in felicity. Likewise in order that it serve as a spur to move the French toward virtue, inasmuch as the domestic examples we give our youth have so much more force to encourage them to do well [*bien faire*] than those we harvest from foreigners. What shall I say of this no less eloquent and well-spoken than ingenious and brave poet, Joachim du Bellay,[33] to whom the French would be all too obliged if he had done nothing else than undertaken the illustration and defense of the French language?[34] Do his poems not also render him wonderful? Prize the Tuscan Laura[35] as much as you like, I am sure that the Angevine *Olive*[36] cannot be much inferior to her. The "Musagenæmachie,"[37] the "Horn of Abundance,"

René du Bellay

Joachim du Bellay

[31]René du Bellay (1500–1546), the youngest brother of Guillaume, was bishop of Le Mans. Thevet may be confusing René with his older brother Martin, who completed Guillaume's unfinished manuscript on the history of the reign of François I.

[32]Thevet's reference here to one of François I's descendants is unclear.

[33]Joachim du Bellay (1522–60) was the second cousin of Guillaume du Bellay. In 1547, while studying at the University of Poitiers, he joined Pierre Ronsard and Jean Dorat to form the Pléïade, a group of sixteenth-century French Renaissance poets. The name derived from another literary group, the original seven Alexandrian poets and tragedians (3rd century BCE), corresponding to the seven stars of the Pléïades star cluster.

[34]Thevet is referring to du Bellay's manifesto, *La Deffense et illustration de la langue françoyse* (1549), which maintained that French (like the Tuscan of Dante and Petrarch) was a worthy language for literary expression and which proposed a program of linguistic and literary production, including the imitation of Latin and Greek genres.

[35]Petrarch's famous sonnets, collected in *Il Canzoniere* (Song Book), were inspired by Laura, either a real woman (Laura de Noves?) whom Petrarch saw in Avignon in 1327, or an idealized character—the name "Laura" suggests the poetic "laurels" Petrarch coveted. There is little specific information about her in these sonnets.

[36]The title of du Bellay's first sonnet cycle (published 1549, 1550), which follows the Petrarchan style.

[37]A description of the allegorical battle between the muses of poetry and ignorance. It is less well-known now than the *Antiquitez de Rome* (including the *Songe*) and the

the "Anterotica," and other works that come from du Bellay's desk are so illustrious that it is very difficult without too great misapprehension not to prize him who gave them life and pursued them to their completion.

Regretz.

François de Lorraine, Duke of Guise

Translator's Introduction

The most striking thing about Thevet's biography of one of the most violent men of the Renaissance is the vivid imagery he uses to describe François de Lorraine and his life. From the lance taken from his head and treasured by his mother to the disfigured face of his son, the Guises bore the marks of the bitterness of the Wars of Religion not merely with honor, but with defiance approaching delight. Thevet's imagery can be ascribed in part to the vehemence of his Catholicism, but it is also entirely characteristic of the age. Today we think of the Middle Ages as violent and imperial Rome as owing its prosperity to unfettered rapine, but modern Europe was born in violence yet more savage: witness the execution of Poltrot, pulled apart by four horses, or the walls of the castle of Amboise as the conspirators' bodies rotted away. Much of the violence of the Wars in Religion in Paris was doubtless due to the intensity of popular sentiment, carefully nurtured from the pulpit by the city's priests. But Thevet's final example, evoked in passing, was Emperor Charles V's punishment of the city of Thérouanne for his defeat at Metz; there is no evidence that Thevet was surprised or even distressed by this carnage. It is worth remembering as one ponders the intensity of such recent conflicts as those in the Balkans that the modern political system and sense of historical identity were born amidst searing pain, deliberately inflicted.

François de Lorraine, Duke of Guise

Book V Chapter 68

[fol. 427r] This little space I intend to fill with the name and natural effigy of the gallant warrior is not sufficient to sketch the least traits and lineaments of his virtues. For that reason, declining to hold forth here on the less personal, like Nobility, ancient line [*race antique*], wealth and size [*grandeur*], I shall not speak in this place of how he came from the Royal stock of the house of Anjou, Kings of Sicily and Counts of Provence, grafted onto the Lorraine branch, which ennobled him as well with all the graces [427v] one could wish in a great lineage.[1] I shall also keep silent on the virtues

[1]François' father was Duke of Lorraine and, through his mother, related to the house of Bourbon. He also was related to the king of Navarre, the Prince of Condé, and other princes of the blood. See the genealogical chart on p. xxxiv.

of his predecessors, by whose examples he might have been inspired not to degenerate from their vigor [*vertu*],[2] so well known and proven by centuries past. I am leaving aside the Godfreys, Baudouins, Renés, and others who have always been in great reputation for supreme and divine glory.[3] I shall begin with the first vigorous acts with which he acquired honor and immortal praise. The city of Boulogne, the strongest rampart of the Morins,[4] which had been taken by the English during the reign of François I,[5] bears witness to his invincible courage for, in its recovery, he was wounded by a blow from a lance, which passed through his head, and pulled from the melee as a dead man but, through a singular favor of God, he was saved for bigger things, which he has since executed for the conservation of the state [*estat*].[6] That good and virtuous Princess, my lady Antoinette de Bourbon, the old dowager Guise his mother, who is still living today at age ninety-five, keeps the head of that precious lance in her house.[7] Have you ever read in histories of a city attacked with greater forces and power than Metz was? Emperor Charles the fifth, being greatly angry that the road into France from Germany was closed to him by the conquests of the cities of Metz, Verdun, Toul, Damvilliers, and Iuoy taken from him, assembled all the forces of the Empire and laid siege to Metz with this huge army of one hundred thousand men determined not to leave until he had taken it and placed it in obedience to him. The King, warned of his designs, sent the Duke of Guise—whose hard work at the business of warfare, care to deliberate, magnanimity in danger, and speed in execu-

My Lord de Guise wounded at Boulogne

Metz besieged by Emperor Charles the Fifth

[2]The term *virtù*, of course, occurs in the works of Niccolò Machiavelli. Most translators render it as "vigor," "ingenuity," or "boldness."

[3]Thevet refers here to Godfrey of Bouillon (d. 1100), Duke of Lower Lorraine, one of the leaders of the First Crusade and the first Latin ruler of Jerusalem. In 1099 he assumed the title Advocatus Sancti Sepulchri (Defender of the Holy Sepulcher). His brother, Baudouin, or Baldwin (d. 1118), also held that title and was crowned king of Jerusalem in 1100. René d'Anjou, "Le bon roi René" (d. 1480) was, at various times in his life, Duke of Anjou, Bar, and Lorraine, Count of Provence and the Piedmont, king of Naples, and titular king of Jerusalem and Sicily.

[4]The area between the mouth of the Scheldt River and Calais, the Morins included the commune of Thérouanne.

[5]In 1544 Henry VIII sent a large army to Calais under the command of the Dukes of Norfolk and Suffolk. After penetrating France, the army divided into two parts. The first, under Norfolk, besieged Montreuil, while the second, under Suffolk, laid siege to Boulogne (19 July to 18 September).

[6]The wound the duke suffered in this battle gave him his nickname, Le Balafré (The Scarred).

[7]Antoinette de Bourbon, Duchess of Guise (25 December 1493–22 January 1583), may still have been alive when Thevet wrote this biography. She died at the age of eighty-nine.

tion he knew—to stand against Charles and relieve the city.[8] The Emperor, having furiously attacked and bombarded the city, was finally forced to lift the siege and retreat to Germany, accompanied only by heavy loss of his soldiers and hot shame.[9] Still, Guise showed great virtue and humanity toward his enemies who had stayed behind wounded and hungry in the camp, having food and money distributed to them, so it is impossible to say whether they feared his arms during the war or more admired and were inspired by his gentleness and mercy when they had been conquered.[10] Mariembourg [Marienburg], a very strong city because of its situation as well as its ramparts, and the fortresses of Ardennes, Bouvines, Dinan, and Bins, do they not bear witness to his virtues as well? Another witness is the battle of Ranty [Renty],[11] in which he defeated the vanguard of the Emperor, who was fighting in this battle and whom he chased and would have taken prisoner in this flight and led him back in triumph had the retreat not sounded as he was drawing near [428r] to make him turn back, the malice of a few covert enemies envying him this glory and honor. Some time later, he undertook the trip to Italy by order of the King, leading ten thousand foot soldiers and two thousand horse as His Majesty's Viceregent [*Lieutenant General*] in defense of Pope Paul the fourth of his name against an attack by the Duke of Alba, Governor of Sicily for the King of Spain.[12] At his coming the aforesaid Duke of Alba, who had

Battle of Ranty [Renty]

The Duke of Guise sent to Italy

[8]Henri II appointed François de Guise as his lieutenant general in Metz in August 1552. Piero Strozzi arrived a bit later as chief engineer. Baumgartner (*Henry II*, 157) called the defense of Metz "one of the great feats in the annals of the sixteenth century," and added that "François de Guise rightly has received much of the glory; he was the heart and soul of the French forces in the city."

[9]The imperial army, slowed by bad weather, reached Metz on 14 October 1552, and by 20 October the city was under full siege. The last two months of 1552, said to be among the wettest and coldest in memory, helped the French defenders. Charles V, who had arrived on the scene on 20 November, began his retreat on 1 January 1553. In revenge for his defeat at Metz, Charles besieged Thérouanne, then a French enclave in the Spanish Netherlands, in 1553. After he captured the city, he ordered it razed to the ground, the roads broken up, and the area ploughed and salted. Only a small commune that lay outside the city walls, then named Saint-Martin-Outre-Eaux, was left standing.

[10]François de Guise, who already had established his reputation as a great commander, established his reputation for humane treatment of enemy troops by his care for the wounded imperial soldiers who had been left behind. Indeed, contemporary sources emphasize Guise's solicitude for them. The most extensive and authoritative account is in the memoirs of the celebrated surgeon Ambrose Paré, who had been sent to Metz by Henri II during the siege. See his *Oeuvres*, 3:696ff.

[11]At the battle of Renty (12 August 1554), French forces led by the Duke of Guise defeated an imperial army attempting to invade Picardy. It is noteworthy that at Renty, Marshal Tavannes' troops were armored in steel, the first time such armor had been seen.

[12]Philip II appointed Alba viceroy of Naples in 1556. In the last phase of the war in Italy, he outmaneuvered the Duke of Guise and forced Pope Paul IV to come to terms

already seized several places and fortresses from the Church's domain, was forced to withdraw and finally to accord peace to the Pope. This done, Guise returned with great honor to France, held and reputed in all Italy to be the second Protector and Defender of the Church.[13] During his absence, the King of Spain [Philip II], to whom Emperor Charles his father had granted the entire government and administration of his public affairs, entered France with a powerful army and, having won a victory at Saint Laurens [Lawrence] in the month of August, a little while afterwards captured the city of San [Saint] Quentin. The affairs of France being thus reduced to such an extremity that it seemed as if all were lost, the aforesaid Sieur de Guise was recalled from Italy. The French took marvelous heart at the first news of his return, hoping quickly to recoup their losses, and they were not long frustrated in their hopes. For at his first entry he chased the enemy, who had moved on the city of Bourg-en-Bresse and the Lyonnais. In addition, having reassembled and joined a part of those who remained after the battle, against all advice he went straight to Calais. What Captain before him had tried to take this strong and impregnable city? But, seven days after having laid siege to it, he took it by assault and reduced it to obedience to the King, more than two hundred years after it had been taken and raped[14] by the English, who boasted that they carried the key to France on their belt, good for entry whenever they should wish.[15] On the same trip he destroyed Guines [Guînes], an extremely strong castle, and took Hames [Ham] and the entire county of Oye.[16] In short, he chased the English all the way out of France, and totally closed off their way back in. He also took Thionville,[17] something the Kings of France had never undertaken before or, at least, had never accomplished, not without great risk to his person, for my lord Strozze [Piero Strozzi], Lord Marshal of France, was killed at the same siege by an arquebus shot

My Lord de Guise recalled from Italy

Calais taken by My Lord de Guise

Capture of Thionville

with Spain.

[13]In early September 1556, Alba's troops invaded the Papal States. On 28 September, Henri II decided to send French and Swiss troops to Italy under Guise's command to aid the pope. The French king was known as the Defender of the Faith.

[14]"forcée"; Cotgrave (*Dictionarie*) reports that "violer," the modern French word for "rape," carried no such connotation in the sixteenth century.

[15]Guise took Calais on 7 January 1558. Edward III of England had taken it in 1347 after a siege of eleven months, following the battle of Crécy, and the English retained control of it after the Hundred Years' War.

[16]The Terre d'Oye was the district from which the English garrisons in Boulogne and Calais drew their supplies.

[17]After capturing Calais, the duke took Thionville and Arlon that summer. Guise was preparing to advance into Luxembourg when the Treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis was signed.

from the city as he was talking with Guise, leaning on his shoulder. We would never have done if we tried to put down all the wonderful things executed by his [Guise's] prudence and advice. Who could describe the battles, on foot as well as horse, along with all the victories he obtained? What man [428v] admireth not his gallant officer's speed and rapidity to end wars? Witness the host at Amiens which, under his command upon his return from the capture of Thionville, kept so close on the enemy's arse [*retint tellement sur le cul*] and pressed them so closely that they dared nothing more. This caused peace to be agreed upon with the Spanish and English, which France enjoys (thanks be to God) yet at present.[18] Everything we have told above is only a preamble to come to this point: which makes him judged and esteemed the most gallant warrior and wise Officer ever known to human memory. So even the prudent Quintus Fabius, known as the shield of Rome, who was wily enough to spend the valiant Hannibal's temerity and audacity with his delaying tactics, is not comparable to him in moderate wisdom. Marcellus, named the sword of Rome, who quickly and vigorously repelled and conquered the enemies of his Republic, should even less be compared to him.[19] But let us leave these discourses, and let us turn to his most famous and memorable deeds. The war being over in France, then, and peace agreed upon with all the Potentates of the world, everybody hoped to enjoy this felicity for a long time. But the Protestants [*les Reformés*], who had slyly [*subtilement*] insinuated themselves all over France without daring to raise their horns, thinking that the unexpected death of Henri II opened the door they had been looking at for so long, decided to put all their hateful plans into effect. The preamble to their tragedy was played out at Amboise but, their ambush and treason being discovered on the point of being realized, some of them were put to death.[20] The others, seeing that their undertaking was not succeeding according to their plans, tried to

Comparison of the Sieur de Guise to the old Roman Officers

Protestants set foot in France

[18]Thevet refers to the Treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis. French commanders, including the Duke of Guise, denounced it. Indeed, after listening to Henri II's defense of the proposals, Guise objected: "I swear to you, Sire, that there is evil in taking this road. For if you do nothing but lose for the next thirty years you would not give up as much as now at a single stroke"; quoted in Baumgartner, *Henry II*, 227.

[19]Thevet is referring to third-century Roman generals Quintus Fabius Maximus Verrucosus (d. 203 BCE) and Marcus Claudius Marcellus Cunctator (d. 208 BCE), both of whom fought against Hannibal. They were called the Shield of Rome and the Sword of Rome, respectively.

[20]In fact, the conspirators were massacred. In the following weeks, some 1,200 bodies were hung on iron hooks on the façade of the château and from nearby trees. Huguenot leaders, of course, were enraged, adding to the tensions that culminated in the Wars of Religion.

attain it by other means. Having subverted and drawn to their side some of the greatest personages of France, who by their spells [*ensorcellemens*] had rebelled against God, the Church, and the King, they seized Orléans, Tours, Poitiers, Rouen, and several other of the strongest and most beautiful cities of the Kingdom and, in addition, they ravaged and pillaged not only the King's treasury, but also the goods of the poor people. Overturning all laws, human as well as divine, in short, they lit a much more cruel and dangerous war (because it was civil and domestic) than the preceding ones against the enemies.[21] Among such great troubles and confusions, it remained only to pick a good leader who was willing to take command of the war. This decision gave the King, still young, and his council much to think about, inasmuch as, even though France had several valiant personages, there were very few who [were] manifestly innocent of the conspiracy [of Amboise] or who did not favor [429r] the conspirators. The others, though they be good men [*gens de bien*], were suspicious and fearful, thinking that there are various secrets and hiding-places in the hearts of men. This magnanimous Duke of Guise was finally chosen *in absentia* among the others to be the King's Vice-regent in this war, a commission he refused several times. But, overcome by the express command of the King and of the Queen his mother, whom he had learned to obey, he accepted it with two other great Lords who were very expert in military art, Antoine de Bourbon, the King of Navarre, and Marshal Saint-André. The King's army thus being pushed to take the field, he quickly recaptured the cities of Tours, Angers, Poitiers, Bourges, and other cities along the Loire river. This done, he made his way into Normandy to lay siege to the city of Rouen; the King of Navarre was killed at this siege.[22] Those of the reformed religion, seeing My Lord de Guise busy with taking Rouen, amassed many soldiers, notably Reistres,[23] and set out to lay siege to Paris.[24] The Duke of Guise,

The Duke of Guise made [the] King's Vice-regent

[21]On 2 April 1562, Condé captured Orléans. In effect, the Wars of Religion started at this point.

[22]The king's army began to recover lost ground, capturing Rouen and Bourges, then moving into Normandy and laying siege to Rouen.

[23]*Reistres*, a French term, indicated the same type of soldier as the German *Landsknechts*. These were light horsemen armed with pistols.

[24]After the capture of Rouen, the Duke of Guise wanted to advance against the English, who occupied Le Havre. He had to change his plans, however, when Condé suddenly left Orléans (which he had taken on 2 April 1562) and marched on Paris. When Guise beat him to Paris, Condé advanced on Normandy, hoping to link up with the English, but found his way barred at Dreux by Montmorency. In the battle that followed (19 December 1562), Saint-André and Montbrun [Montberon], Montmorency's son, were killed. The rival commanders, Montmorency (who was also slightly

The capture of Rouen

warned of their thinking, advanced the capture of Rouen, in which was the Count of Montgomery, who escaped by sea by dint of oars, then in great diligence Guise led his victorious army straight to Paris, where he arrived one day before his enemies camped before it. By which means, seeing themselves out of hope of being able to seize it after having laid siege for a while, they were forced to scram [*debusquer*] and turn toward Normandy, in order to join the English whom they had helped to seize Le Havre. But, as they were making their way through the Chartres region, they were pursued along the Eure river where, having trapped them not far from the city of Dreux, a battle was valiantly fought on both sides. At the first charge of the battle, there was a great slaughter of the King's men, and among others Marshal Saint-André, the Sieur de Montbrun [Montberon], son of the Lord Constable[25] of France, and the Squire of the aforesaid Duke of Guise, who was armed in his accustomed armor and mounted on his courser, and the aforesaid Constable were taken prisoner. The enemy, thinking that they had killed My Lord de Guise and had the better of this first charge, itching with avarice for pillage, began immediately to loot as if for a great treasure of gold and silver left by King Mithridates.[26] Seeing this from a nearby hill where he had withdrawn, the aforesaid Duke came down with the cavalry, which he had kept near his person, and let loose so fiercely on the enemy that he cut almost all the infantry into pieces. The rest being routed as a result, their artillery [429v] was taken, and the commander of their army as well. Those who escaped this battle fled flat out[27] into the city of Orléans, which [alone] remained among many others for their retreat: in which they were shortly besieged and pressed so closely that they were at their wits' end (as we say in a common proverb).[28] The Protestants, seeing themselves in such trouble and without hope of safety [*salut*], took the same decision against our invincible Lord that the Caiphe[29] took against our Savior: to wit that it was expedient that one single man die for the people, in

Le Havre captured by the English

Battle of Dreux

Conspiracy against the Duke of Guise

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wounded) and Condé, were both captured. Guise then assumed command of the king's army.

[25]On the office of constable, see above, p. 5, note 7.

[26]There were a number of famous rulers named Mithradates. Thevet may be referring to Mithradates II, called "the Great," of Parthia (d. 88 BCE), who reopened trade with China along the Silk Road.

[27]"à bride avallée," lit., "until their horses took the bits in their teeth."

[28]The battle of Dreux was fought on one of the shortest days of the year. The oncoming darkness saved the Huguenots from pursuit.

[29]Thevet is referring to Caiaphas, one of the Jewish high priests who interrogated Jesus and was believed to be responsible, along with other members of the Sanhedrin, for his crucifixion (John 18:12–14).

order that the entire nation [*gent*] not perish. In order to execute their plan, then, they suborned and won an assassin named Poltrot[30] over with money who left with a view to accomplishing his detestable commission. But touched by a crisis of conscience en route (as Brutus had been as he was getting ready to kill Caesar), he hesitated and thought to himself how many great wrongs would come to pass from the death of such a magnanimous and gallant Lord and, conquered in the end by his own judgment, he returned without doing anything to those who were the leaders and authors of this assassination. So great is the force of conscience in a person that when the person thinks about it, the conscience represses [*reprime*] the impetuosity of the troublesome passions and draws him or her back out of wickedness. So great, say I, that the conscience will reassure when a person is troubled in the mind and says these three words within him- or herself, "What am I doing?"[31] Even so, this blood spoiler, overcome and persuaded by the babblings of the most ill-advised, came at last to find My Lord de Guise and, one day as he was returning of an evening from Le Portereau, he approached and let a pistol shot fly at his shoulder.[32] The ball was poisoned, and he died from the wound a week later:[33] O wound painful to the King,

My Lord de Guise wounded in the shoulder

[30]Jean Poltrot de Meré was a Huguenot aristocrat.

[31]"Que fais-je?" The locution "him- or herself" is distracting, but Thevet began the passage referring to "une personne," so all the following pronouns are in the feminine. After reading Montaigne, the editors are no longer willing to assume that early modern writers were unaware of gender contradictions, though such awareness would certainly be more surprising in Thevet than Montaigne; see Bauschatz, "Gender of Genre." We thank Deborah Losse for this reference.

[32]Guise had gone to inspect his camp in the suburb of La Portereau, from which his forces were sapping and mining Orléans.

[33]The Duke of Guise was mortally wounded on the night of 18 February 1563 and died on 24 February. The assassination was a seminal event, for he had become a national hero following his capture of Metz (1552), his conquest of Calais (1558), and his victory at Dreux (1562). His death weakened the power and influence of the house of Guise, for his son Henri, Prince of Joinville, was only thirteen years old and his brother, the cardinal of Lorraine, was attending the Council of Trent. The duke's other brothers were relatively insignificant politically. His assassination also added a new dimension to the civil unrest in France by creating a savage and protracted aristocratic vendetta. His widow, Anne d'Este, and her family sought to avenge his death. They believed that Coligny had instigated the duke's murder. Jean Poltrot de Meré implicated him in his first confession but subsequently contradicted himself. While denying his complicity in the crime, Coligny freely admitted to Catherine de Médicis (12 March 1563) that he viewed Guise's death as the greatest good that could have befallen the kingdom, the Reformed Church and, in particular, his own family. Some blamed Catherine, too, for the duke's death. According to Knecht, she told Marshal Tavannes, "The Guises wished to make themselves kings, but I stopped them outside Orléans." To the Venetian ambassador she said, "If Monsieur de Guise had perished sooner, peace would have been achieved more quickly"; Knecht, *Catherine de' Médici*, 91–92. The best account of the duke's assassination and its consequences is Suther-

unfortunate for France, and full of grief for the Catholic army, but nonetheless salutary for him who endured it, and glorious and triumphant for the family de Lorraine. O miserable and unhappy condition of the most gallant officers, to whom it falls to be overcome by the sole victory of traitors and assassins which cannot be expiated! To see this valiant Lorraine wounded and slaughtered by the hand of a single traitor, he whom so many battles, a thousand armed forces, a thousand open tyrannies of Satan could not manage to bring down, feared of [by] his enemies wherever he went armed; this great Duke of Guise, say I, the scourge of the Protestants and adversaries of the Roman Catholic Church, the force, the right arm, and the father of France, the defender and champion [*propugnateur*] of the Gallican Church. What could we add to the enormity and pain of the crime? It is difficult to bear being fooled or killed by another: still, if that comes to pass in fighting him, one bears death more [430r] resolutely. But to lose your life at the hand of a servant who eats your bread, who has been in battle and bombardment under you, who took you by treachery in order that you not use your power, what man would not cry with David in the grip of pain at departing this life, "Death come to them, and let them go alive to Hell. O faithless traitor, worthy to be punished by every sort of torture!" God did not let him go unpunished for long for, wishing to punish the blood of this glorious Duke, he so dimmed this unfortunate Poltrot's wits that he was taken in the camp the next day, [though he would have been] even if he had wasted the previous night racing a fast horse to escape.[34] Later, by the order of the Paris Court [*Parlement*], he was pulled apart by four horses on the Place de Grève in front of the town hall [*hôtel de ville*] of the aforesaid city.[35] The Prince of Guise, seeing himself near death, showed the great affection he bore toward the King with a stately and beautiful oration, proven and confirmed by a last oblation of his own life. He also offered several Christian admonitions to his wife and children, still young, then rendering his soul [*spirit*] holy and uncontaminated to God his creator, earned that very day the right to join the number of the blessed Martyrs. It would be superfluous to itemize several other circumstances, which came to pass before the time of his death, which so softened Catholic hearts

Poltrot pulled apart by four horses

Death of My Lord de Guise

land, *Princes, Politics, and Religion*, esp. chap. 8.

[34]"encores que monté sur un cheval d'Espaigne il eust à bride avallée tracassé toute la nuict pour eschapper."

[35]Poltrot de Meré was executed before an enormous crowd on the Place de Grève in Paris on 18 March. The following day the city staged an elaborate funeral procession for the duke. For details and an illustration of the execution, see Diefendorf, *Beneath the Cross*, 71–72.

that they were forced to submit to peace, and give leave[36] to enemies who have since planted and extended throughout all France.[37] He was killed in the year 1562 [1563], leaving three male children by the most illustrious Princess My Lady Anne d'Este, daughter of the Duke of Ferrara [Ercole II d'Este] and Renée de France,[38] to wit Henri, Charles, and Louis,[39] in whom the parental vigor [*vertu*] shines bright. And as we see this young (but withal very wise and valiant officer) Seigneur Henri Duke of Guise sparing himself no more than his father had done in defense of the Church, his King, and the commonweal [*du public*],[40] likewise he made himself known as the true son of this François de Lorraine,[41] so renowned in all Europe, when he made his way to Hungary in 1566, to stand against the Turk Soliman [Süleyman], enemy of Christianity, who laid siege to and captured the city of Seghet [Sziget].[42]

Children of My Lord de Guise

Henri de Lorraine

[36]Leave to hold Protestant services (though not in public).

[37]Catherine de Médicis did not allow Catholic opposition to prevent the pacification that she so earnestly desired. The fact that she was now rid of the principal party leaders, except for Coligny, offered her the opportunity of reaching a settlement. Montmorency and Condé were temporarily released from captivity in order to negotiate it. The outcome was the Edict of Amboise (19 March 1563), which granted freedom of conscience to the Huguenots throughout the kingdom, but regulated their right to worship according to social status. Nobles with rights of high justice were allowed to worship freely on their estates, while those with inferior rights could worship in their homes. In addition, Protestant worship was permitted in all towns held by Huguenots before 7 March 1563 and in one town per bailliage. They were forbidden to hold services anywhere in Paris or the surrounding *vicomté* and *prévôte*. Property taken from the Catholic Church was to be returned.

[38]Renée was the daughter of Louis XII and Anne of Brittany. In Ferrara she became a Lutheran, and welcomed Lutherans to her court. Ercole, the pope's vicar in Ferrara, tried unsuccessfully to restrain her activities.

[39]Thevet refers to Henri, Duke of Guise (d. 1588), Charles, Duke of Mayenne (d. 1611), and Louis, cardinal of Guise (d. 1588). He does not mention the daughter of François and Anne, Catherine-Marie (d. 1590), who married Louis de Bourbon, Duke of Montpensier.

[40]Henri (b. 31 December 1550) was thirteen when the Duke of Guise was assassinated. He grew up with a passionate desire to avenge his father's death, for which he held Coligny responsible. He went to Vienna in 1566 hoping to gain military experience fighting against the Turks, but the war ended before he saw any action. On 24 August 1572 he personally supervised Coligny's murder. In October 1575 he was scarred in battle and, like his father, earned the nickname Le Balafré (The Scarred). In May 1576 he formed the Holy League of nobles to defend Catholicism and held a pension from Philip II of Spain from 1578. During the War of the Three Henrys he was assassinated on 23 December 1588. His brother Louis was murdered the following day. Thevet, of course, writing in 1584, could not know about these subsequent events.

[41]"François de Lorraine" also means "Frenchman from Lorraine."

[42]After failing to take the comparatively minor Hungarian fortress of Sziget (modern Szigetvár) in 1556, the Turks successfully besieged it again in 1566. Nicholas Zrinksi immortalized the battle, in which Süleyman I died, in the epic poem "Szigeti Veszedelem" (The Peril of Sziget) in 1664.

So these two Lorraine Princes can indeed compare themselves to the two Decii, father and son, who vowed themselves to death for the salvation of the Roman Republic. Should I make no mention of how he resisted by himself the efforts of the Protestants at the siege of Poitiers?[43] Shall I also leave off how he was wounded with an arquebus shot in the face in the Baccarat campaign as he was hunting the Reistres[44] entering that Kingdom? But, say [I], he deserves another place and another time, and his own private Historian [430v] to write of his chivalrous acts. As does the Duke's second son, Henri's brother the Duke of Maine [Mayenne], who found himself at the naval battle with Don Juan of Austria in which the Turk was defeated.[45] In addition, just a few days ago, he pacified the tumult [*les troubles*] in Dauphinais and Provence, returning the cities occupied by the improvident back to the hands of the King. As for the Prince Cardinal of Guise his brother, in addition to the virtues with which he is adorned, he is one of the most liberal Lords toward learned men who can be found today. Anyhow, the body of François de Lorraine was carried to Gainville and interred with great pomp in the prepared sepulcher, near which can be seen the following Epitaph.

Charles de Lorraine

He who surpassed the Princes of his age
In arms, prowess, in force, and in courage,
This François de Lorraine, descended from so many Kings,
Who among the greatest has alone a thousand times
Brought back victory from conquered enemies,
The honor of his ancestors, the glory of his lineage,
Magnanimous warrior, always victorious,
Ornament of France, and now of the heavens,
Rest here below, where this great column
Of Phyrygian[46] *marble surrounds the sepulcher,*
And where this conquering Duke, carved from life,
Sees himself raised high on a horse.
Faith, Piety, venerable virtue
Built this honorable tomb together,
With Christianity and the law of ancestors

[43]From 24 July to 7 September 1569, Huguenot forces under Coligny and fifteen-year-old Prince Henri of Navarre (the future King Henri IV) besieged Poitiers.

[44]Cavalry or *Landsknechts*.

[45]Thevet is referring to the battle of Lepanto (7 October 1571).

[46]Cotgrave (*Dictionarie*) gives "Phrygian" for "Phyrigien"; we think Thevet means "Trojan."

Tearing their hair out near this tomb:
Whom he loved, and for whose love
He died, supporting the right of their claims.
So proud fate and destiny decided,
When this Kingdom, polluted with vice and blood,
Chasing the ancient faith of peoples and cities,
Caused so many civil wars to rise against itself.

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Anne de Montmorency, Constable of France

Translator's Introduction

Montmorency was one of the great warriors of the first half of the sixteenth century in France, so schooled in the most traditional views of the warrior's role that he sought to decide the campaign in Picardy against the forces of Emperor and King Charles V by means of single combat—a duel between himself and the commander of the imperial forces. Thevet also recalls in this chapter, however, that the feudal view of governance, and kingship in particular, led François I to personally lead his troops into battle in Italy, exposing himself to capture at Pavia. The French monarchy was beggared for so many years by the ransom Charles V exacted that it was unable to provide the resources to retain the Italian conquests won at great cost over the previous years.

Montmorency also exhibited many of the characteristics of the traditional military aristocracy, such as generosity toward the men serving under his command. Other than that, however, Thevet tells little of his personality or character, restricting himself to events in the great man's life, specifically his military and political adventures. Interest in evolution of the individual consciousness over the events of a lifetime would have to await a later generation of writers. Montaigne, for instance, for all his fascination with the ideal of the traditional aristocrat,[1] searched in vain among such memoirists as Guillaume and Martin du Bellay for traces of development in the authors' understanding of their own natures and/or social roles.

[1]See Supple, *Arms versus Letters*.

Anne de Montmorency, Constable of France

Book V Chapter 75

[fol. 449r] Whoever will be willing to examine carefully and judge dispassionately the actions and faithful deportment of this brave lord and martial Constable,[2] Anne de Montmorency; I doubt not that he will assign him one of the highest ranks, not only among all those known to have served the French crown and scepter, but also among the bravest warriors who might be held to have proved their valor in wars foreign or domestic. [449v] Let us therefore see what sort of man he was already in his youth, in order not to ascribe his glory to his ancestors, such as

[2]On the office of constable, see above, p. 5, note 7.

Montmorency family devoted to the service of the French Crown

Bouchard and Matthew, both Constables of France.[3] Another was the My Lord Charles, Baron and Sire de Montmorency, field marshal of France in the time of King Philip de Valois, in the year 1343, whom king Charles the fifth, called the wise and an accurate judge of virtuous men, paid the honor of having him hold the eldest son Charles, later the sixth King of France of his name, over the baptismal font.[4] But far from having inherited glory that he then allowed to diminish, he further exalted the glory and nobility of his predecessors. Since he had been brought up from an early age in the Longueville house, he was chosen by King Louis XII and given by him to King François I, then duke of Angoulême, in order to serve him as page, by whom he was immediately loved and promoted over all others.[5] Later My Lord de Boisy,[6] Grand Master of France, loving him for his valor [*vertu*], made him his lieutenant in his company of one hundred men-at-arms, with whom he lived almost continually. And when the expedition to seize Milan was undertaken, Montmorency, only twenty years of age, led the aforesaid company into Italy, where he made himself noticed in the capture of Prospero Colonna, head of the Papal army, as well as in the battle in which the Swiss were defeated [Marignano?].[7] And for these actions he was given command of a company of fifty lances and, by the same measure, the castle and city of Novarra [Novara] in the duchy of Milan. The King, taking him in closer friendship, made him the Captain of the hundred Gentlemen of his own house. And he gave further proof of valor at the jousts, which took place at Ardres at the meeting between the king [Henry VIII] and the elected Emperor.[8] His

Louis XII gave Anne de Montmorency to King François I

The Sieur de Montmorency's first beginnings

[3]Thevet is referring to Bouchard "le Barbu" (d. 958), but it is unclear whether he means Mathieu I (d. 1160) or Mathieu II (d. 1230). While both were constables of France, the latter was called the Grand Constable. See Bedos-Rezak, *Anne de Montmorency*, 17–18, 338–39.

[4]King Charles V chose Charles I de Montmorency to be godfather to his son, the future King Charles VI. See Bedos-Rezak, *Anne de Montmorency*, 18.

[5]Knecht (*Francis I*, 5) offers this description of the playful activities of Montmorency and François I: "Another Italian game was played in pairs: Francis and Anne de Montmorency versus [Robert III La Marck, seigneur de] Florange and Philippe Chabot de Brion. A ball 'as large as a barrel and filled with air' was hit with a piece of tin lined with felt and strapped to the forearm."

[6]Artus, or Arthur Gouffier (1475?–1519), seigneur de Boisy.

[7]Thevet never gives a date for Anne de Montmorency's birth (15 March 1493). The remainder of the sentence, however, seems to refer to the French invasion of Italy that began in July 1515, when Montmorency was twenty-two. Prospero Colonna, who commanded the pope's cavalry, was captured by the French, together with three hundred of his men, at Villafranca in mid-August of that year.

[8]Thevet is referring to the Anglo-French negotiations that resulted in the Treaty of Ardres (June 1520). These included the celebrated "feat of arms" at the Field of the Cloth of Gold. Thevet's "elected Emperor" is François I, who unsuccessfully sought the

diligence and industry were no less remarkable in his undertakings in England. For this reason the King Henry VIII gave him his order of the Garter,[9] in recognition of his honor and valor. Let us press on, and see how this Seigneur de Montmorency, a young man of great courage, wishing to make clear to his master his desire to do him service, took himself to the city of Mezieres [Mézières], besieged by the Imperial army.[10] His arrival gave fresh heart to the soldiers in the city. What greater proof of his valor could he have given than to present himself as champion when the enemy sent word to the besieged to ask if there was a man who was ready to go lance to lance, and that the Count of Aiguemont would be ready on the Island of Mesieres [Mézières].[11] The Count of Aiguemont and the Seigneur de Montmorency ran at each other. [450r] Montmorency struck the Count's breastplate, unseated him, and broke his lance, without harming him otherwise: the Count, on the other hand, did not touch him at all, or very little. The King decided, when he heard about this, to use a chevalier of such admirable strength in his most important affairs: and, toward this end, notified of the revolt of the Duchy of Milan under the governance of the Sieur de Lautrec,[12] dispatched Montmorency to Switzerland to raise sixteen thousand men, of whom he was the general in command, and he led them diligently to the relief of the Milanese, where his warlike exploits included Gambelot [Gambolot], the capture of Novarra [Novara], and the assault on Bicocca.[13] He led the Swiss in foot from the front row on these sorties and, striking at the center of the enemy lines, he was thrown down and grievously wounded. When the King's army was broken, he withdrew to Venetian territory with the intention of persuading them to stay in the league [against the Emperor]: it was here that he was notified of the honor done him by the King in furnishing

Anne de Montmorency Knight of the Garter

Single combat between Montmorency and the Count of Aiguemont

Montmorency in Milan

Montmorency made Field Marshal

imperial office from 1516. At one point, François thought he could count on the support of at least three of the seven electors: the archbishop of Mainz, the margrave of Brandenburg, and the count palatine. For more details, see Knecht, *Francis I*, 71–77.

[9]King Edward III founded the Most Noble Order of the Garter in 1348. It was the highest military honor available in England.

[10]In August 1521, de Montmorency helped to command the defense of Mézières against the imperial army.

[11]Mézières, of course, is no island. Thevet sometimes referred to cities as islands in his geographical works.

[12]Odet de Foix, seigneur de Lautrec, marshal of France (1481?–1528), had disbanded his army for lack of funds. As a result, he could not resist an offensive launched by Prospero Colonna. When the imperial forces broke through Milan's defenses, Lautrec retreated first to Como, then to Cremona. The fall of Milan was followed quickly by the expulsion of the French from other cities in the duchy.

[13]Montmorency's Swiss troops were defeated in the battle of La Bicocca on 27 April 1522, but he was made marshal of France in recognition of his courage.

him with the office of Marshal of France, vacant due to the death of Marshal Castillon.[14] Shortly after the withdrawal of Constable Bourbon, as a second army was being created for the Italian enterprise, the Sieur de Montmorency was again charged with levying five thousand Swiss with whom he joined the army led by the Sieur de Bonnivet, lieutenant general.[15] Had his advice, which was to fall immediately upon the city of Milan, been followed in this undertaking, there is no doubt that the outcome would have been better. After the Sieur de Bourbon declared his enmity and invaded the kingdom in the region of Marseille,[16] command was vouchsafed to the Seigneur de Montmorency of four hundred men-at-arms and ten thousand foot soldiers, with whom he pursued Bourbon to the Piedmont, chasing and killing the Imperial army: and in the midst of this hunt surprised and seized the city of Milan, and secured its obedience to the King.[17] Now, since the enemy had taken refuge in Pavia, the King decided to attack it: and toward this end was the Sieur de Montmorency ordered forth with a handsome troop of soldiers. He attacked the bridge over the Thesin [Tessin] joining the city to its suburbs; he did not succeed, but he gave clear proof of his valor, withdrawing without heavy losses. Not content with this effort, though, he attacked the other side of the bridge the farthest from the town the next day and, when he had made himself master of it, he installed artillery there and bombarded and destroyed the mills that furnished the besieged with grain. Nonetheless, as bad luck befell the hapless French and all the great lords were dead or prisoners [450v] he was taken prisoner while fighting valiantly, and taken to Spain with the king, whence he was returned to secure the treaties for his deliverance. This treaty was diligently executed by his devotion and prudence, leading the King's children[18] to Spain to be exchanged as hostages in exchange for the King, in accord with the intention and wish of His Majesty. For these great and noble services, he was honored by the King with the title of Grand Master of France, vacant due

Pavia besieged

Montmorency made Grand Master of France

[14]Gaspard de Coligny, seigneur de Châtillon (d. 1522).

[15]Guillaume Gouffier, seigneur de Bonnivet (ca. 1488–1525), the younger brother of Artus Gouffier, seigneur de Boisy, succeeded Odet de Foix, Vicount of Lautrec, in 1523 as commander of the army in Italy.

[16]Bourbon had allied himself with the emperor. The arrival of the French army at Avignon forced Bourbon to withdraw to Italy.

[17]In October 1524 the French army, led by the king himself, took Milan and installed Louis II de la Trémouille as governor. The French then advanced on Pavia.

[18]The dauphin, François (d. 1536), and Henri, the future King Henri II (d. 1559). On François I's sons as hostages, see Baumgartner, *Henry II*, 15–25.

to the death of the Bastard [René] of Savoy[19] and, at the same time, named governor general of the Languedoc, toward which country he made his way and, assembling his forces and men-at-arms at Narbonne, saw to the needs and fortifications of his government.[20] I have a special regard, as an eyewitness, for the noteworthy and necessary buildings and fortifications, which he had built in the cities of Narbonne and Carcassonne, keys to France. Moreover, what enemy more victorious, powerful, lucky, and rash had the Roman Emperors and Generals to encounter than Charles V who, emboldened by his victory in Africa, in the kingdom of Tunis,[21] proposed to invade and, in short order, make himself lord of all France, hoping that none would be able to stand against and resist him? King François, under assault at this moment of perplexity from the four corners and in the middle of his kingdom by almost all the kings and potentates of Christendom, chose the Sieur de Montmorency, then Grand master and Marshal, to resist, and appointed him his Lieutenant General on the Italian as well as the French side of the mountains, with ample power and authority to do and command in the king's absence as he would have been able to do had he been present.[22] Toward this end he used the following language or something like it in addressing Montmorency: "You have," said he, "given sufficient proof of your bravery in the face of danger, and I hold myself to have been well and loyally served by your judgment and good counsel. That is why I wish you to undertake the responsibility I am giving you in this war." These words gave great confidence to Montmorency, thinking to himself how much honor and glory could accrue to him if he discharged this duty well. On the other hand he brought to mind the great number of enemies he had to fight, exceeding the number the French had ever had before; their reputation for prowess and

The Sieur de Montmorency Cisalpine and Transalpine Lieutenant general of the King

[19]François I's uncle René of Savoy (the half-brother of Louise of Savoy) died from wounds received at Pavia (1525).

[20]Montmorency was appointed grand master of France (superintendent of the royal household) on 23 March 1526. Upon his return to France, François rewarded courtiers who had demonstrated their loyalty to him during his captivity. The new appointments included those given to Montmorency described above.

[21]Charles V had been fighting continually with Suleiman for a number of years because Ottoman attacks along the Mediterranean coast threated Habsburg lands and Christian monopolies on trade in the Mediterranean. In 1535 the emperor won an important victory at Tunis, but in 1536 François I of France allied himself with the Turks against Charles (and did so again in 1542). In response, Charles allied himself with the Persians against the Turks.

[22]Montmorency was appointed lieutenant general "on either side of the mountains" on 14 July 1536. He had authority to assemble troops, direct military operations, appoint officers, and, if necessary, negotiate with the enemy. His rival, Chabot, retired to his *gouvernement* in Burgundy.

valor and their habit of vanquishing their enemies. And, quite to the contrary, he saw that he had more the name than the force of an army, and the men he did have were no more than mercenaries, unknown and untrained in arms. Nonetheless resolving on the means, which seemed necessary to him to govern well and obviate the obvious peril, [451r] he withdrew to Avignon and assembled his Captains and the experienced men-at-arms, laid the situation out for them and asked for the opinions of each one. And after hearing several views he finally decided to await the enemy and resist the temptation to attack, in order to defeat them without having to strike a blow, depriving him of the means to find victuals or to pass on.[23] Putting his decision into effect, therefore, he had his men assembled, to show the enemy the visage of boldness and confidence, and to array themselves against him as if drawn up for battle. He furthermore ordered men placed in the prairie between Avignon and the Durance river, where he drew up the form, the closure, and the perimeter of his camp, and assigned the positions, places, and quarters of his men-at-arms, often inspecting the fortifications, exhorting one and all, and seeing to the munitions. By which he gave evidence not only of his boldness, coming with a small troop as he had at the beginning to present himself before the enemy, but at least as much or more of his good foresight. I shall not omit a feat worthy of a brave captain, the affection he showed to the soldiers and Captains arriving in his camp from all over, each of whom he received, helped and favored, making them a present of gold chains, weighing 100 écus each. Again, I shall add this point worthy of note, that the My Lord the Dauphin Henri chose to serve his first apprenticeship under the guidance of this knight, and went to the camp at Avignon.[24] His father said these words to him before he left, "My son, you will find the Grand Master there, to whom you will say, in particular, how you go there not to command at present, but to learn to command in the time to come, and will pray him that he give you the means to do this." It would not be an easy thing to try in this brief compass to enumerate and specify

Montmorency's generosity

[23]Montmorency either could advance to engage the enemy or wait in carefully selected and fortified positions. Although some of his captains wanted to defend Aix, he preferred to remain near Avignon unless an irresistible opportunity to engage the enemy presented itself. Thevet also refers here to the "scorched-earth" policy that Montmorency used to defend Provence.

[24]As dauphin, Henri was determined to serve in the field as commander of the royal army. Eager to prove himself in battle, he persuaded his father to let him join Montmorency in Provence in 1536. During this campaign Montmorency and Henri forged the close relationship that endured until the king's death. As Henri wrote shortly afterwards, "Be sure that whatever happens, I am and shall be for my life as much your friend as anyone in the world." Quoted in Baumgartner, *Henry II*, 32–33.

the means he used to resist, draw out, surprise, pursue, and damage the Emperor, who had not thought to find such a shoe there for his foot. With the result that, to his shame and that of his men, the Emperor was forced to turn tail and withdraw, with great loss and defeat, from his camp.[25] There is nobody, whether friend or foe, who does not attribute this signal feat to the Sieur de Montmorency, who knew how to pick the time, place, and suitable means for such a resistance:[26] he pursued the Imperial camp and, by pursuing it, caused great losses. A little while later, the King, desirous of going to Picardy, made Montmorency his Governor [*Lieutenant General*], and shortly thereafter sent him into the Piedmont to take charge by his good judgment.[27] Then, since the king was at Moulins, and wanted to honor those who had worked to do him service in the previous wars, and among others Anne de Montmorency [451v] for the great and noble services he had rendered for thirty years, especially for those of fresh memory during the Emperor's descent into Provence and in the [*Pays de*] Suze, as well as in the wars over Picardy, as much in the capture of Hedin [Hesdin] as in relief of Thérouanne,[28] honored him in the month of February, in the year 1537 [1538], with the office [estat] of Constable, which had been vacant since the departure[29] of the Duke of Bourbon, which office and estate is the greatest of the Nobility, and alone after the King commands the armies.[30] Feeling himself thenceforth indebted to the crown, he gave himself ever more to its service even though, since the virtuous are customarily shadowed by envy, in order to strike his sails and counter the blow, he voluntarily retired from the court to his

Montmorency made Constable of France

[25]By early fall 1536 Charles V's army had retreated to Genoa and lifted the siege of Marseille.

[26]The 1536 campaign marked a turning point in French military strategy. Instead of advancing into Italy, French forces would await an enemy attack. Knecht (*Françis I*, 280) credits Montmorency for this change.

[27]In 1536 Montmorency again took up arms against the emperor, first in Provence, then in northern Italy.

[28]Early in March 1537 French forces marched north from Amiens. After capturing Auxy-le-Château, they besieged Hesdin. Montmorency and the dauphin were about to bring relief to Thérouanne when the regent of the Netherlands, Mary of Austria, asked for a truce.

[29]Thevet uses "partement," a decidedly neutral term for Charles de Bourbon's departure. After his treason was discovered, he was stripped of his offices and fled into Italy in 1523.

[30]On 10 February 1538, Montmorency was made constable of France, a position that had been vacant since Bourbon's treason. It was, symbolically, at Moulins, Bourbon's old capital, that Montmorency received the king's sword in the presence of the whole court. Two new marshals of France, Claude d'Annebault and René de Montejan, were created at the same time.

house.[31] In addition, his presence was not much needed at court, in view of the peace and tranquility he had procured among the enemies of the Kingdom.[32] But as soon as Henri came to the throne by the death of King François I, Montmorency was recalled to Court, and was given the principal direction of the government's business, the King relying on him because he knew him worthy of this charge, and well versed in the state of France, and above all because he knew the facts of war as well as any general of his time.[33] To tell the truth, this Lord's behavior was such while he lived that the envious dared attack him only from afar; the Kings used him so well that he will always be known as one of the most illustrious men of this century, and there is no foreigner with business in France who knows it not, nor any Frenchman who says the contrary. What can I add? Did not the gravity of this personage appease the troubles, which had miserably savaged all the Aquitaine, as much for the salt-pits [*salines*][34] as for the hearth-tax [*taille*],[35] to the point of killing the Seigneur de Monnins the King's Lieutenant (as I remarked in my discourse on the life of King Henri). Montmorency imposed law and punishment on the rebels according to their offenses, and ensured by the construction and fortification of the fortress [*fort Chasteau*] of Bordeaux that such movements would not awaken again in these maritime provinces.[36] He was the one who

The Sieur de Montmorency uniquely beloved by King Henri II

[31]As constable, Montmorency, against the prevailing attitude at court, wanted to arrange a peace with Charles V, and managed to persuade the emperor and his king to meet at Aigues-Mortes in July 1538. As part of the negotiations, François expected Charles to give Milan to one of François's sons, but the emperor gave it to his own son Philip instead. As a result of this diplomatic failure, Montmorency fell out of favor, losing his governorship of Languedoc and other offices. He retired from court in June 1541.

[32]In June 1538 François and Charles arranged a ten-year truce.

[33]Within the new court, Montmorency, the Guises, and Diane de Poitiers were closest to the king. François de Scepeaux, sire de Vieilleville, noted in his memoirs that "in the first days of the reign, the constable took possession of the king in such a way that he carried him off to all his residences and, wherever the prince was, no one could approach his person, save by his [Montmorency's] favor and introduction." These comments were supported by the reports of various ambassadors; Baumgartner, *Henry II*, 57–58.

[34]Cotgrave (*Dictionarie*) translates "salines" as "salt-pits." It seems highly likely that it refers to a tax on salt, though Thevet refers to the tax on salt elsewhere as the "gabelle."

[35]The *taille* was a land tax on French peasants and non-nobles in ancien régime France. Starting in 1484, the king set the amount of the tax each year and the amount was then apportioned among the various provinces for collection.

[36]Henri II gave Montmorency a commission to crush the revolt over the salt tax (7 September 1541). According to Vieilleville's memoirs, the constable noted that the region had revolted five years before, and he proposed that the population be completely removed or exterminated and replaced by a more docile one. Historians of the later sixteenth century, such as François de Belleforest, were particularly outspoken in their

led the forces of the Kingdom of France to succor the liberty of the Empire,[37] renewing the ancient military discipline to the point that Roman discipline was never better [*plus reformee*] than the French, while he conducted the business of the kingdom before France was assaulted by sedition and civil war, against which no man could see how to keep any order whatever. During this expedition the cities of Metz and Thoul [Toul] in Lorraine, which were being held by the Emperor, were surrendered to Montmorency.[38] I cannot imagine how to adequately explain the tactics, which he used in such a successful expedition; I shall say only that the [452r] French kingdom was not only maintained by him, but that it was also considerably augmented, recovering their ancient patrimony usurped by the Emperors. Hesdin, Dourlans [Doullens], Thérouanne, and Bapaulmes [Bapaume] learned how much this personage was capable of, accompanied by an unequalled number of valiant warriors formed by his hand and apprenticed and trained in his company, and had come from him just as surely as if from the Trojan horse. I cannot forget, on pain of ingratitude, his feats of arms in the Religious troubles, since he always showed himself to be a loyal servant of the Crown. Even less dare I fail to mention the love he bore his country, trying to pacify the civil and intestinal war inflamed in the entrails of a Kingdom formerly free from sedition, and pursuing those who disturbed the peace, sparing no travail to the detriment of his old age. Do we not know that, pushed by his zeal for the Roman Catholic religion, he persecuted the Protestants and all those who professed the Reformed Religion, as much by arms as by edicts and other means, causing the demolition of the houses where they held their meetings? Now, because it is commonly said that the end crowns the work, I say in conclusion, that the death of this Constable has not obscured a whit of the praise of his virtues, but has ennobled him all the more as one who exposed himself like a shield and impregnable wall to the offensive arms of the rebels for the defense

Metz & Thoul captured by Montmorency

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denunciation of what they considered Montmorency's unnecessary cruelty in putting down the revolt. Some contemporaries, however, such as Pierre de Bourdeille, abbé of Brantôme, thought the punishment had not gone far enough. See Belleforest's *Annales de France*, fols. 443–46; and Baumgartner, *Henry II*, 74–75, 75n30.

[37]Henri, who never forgave the emperor for the hardships he suffered as a hostage in Spain (1526–29), signed the Treaty of Chambord (15 January 1552) with the German princes Maurice of Saxony, William of Hesse, John Albrecht of Mecklenburg, and George Frederick of Brandenburg. By the terms of the treaty, Henri gained control of Toul, Verdun, and Metz. In return, the princes were promised military and economic aid against Charles.

[38]On 5 April 1552, the vanguard of the French army, under Montmorency's command, occupied Toul. Henri took possession of Metz later in April and Verdun in June.

of his King and his country. He chose to die on the field of honor [*lict d'honneur*], fearing that his absence might become a stain that his posterity could not have expiated by any means whatever. His fated destiny was that, trying to repel the enemies of the Catholic Religion, he gave them battle at the field of Lendit, between Paris and Saint Denis, in the year 1567. He was cruelly wounded by a treacherous Scotsman who had been in his service, with eight mortal blows, to wit four sword wounds to his face, three blows of a club to his head, and a bullet to the middle of his back.[39] Three days after his wound, he died in his Paris town house [*hostel*] at the age of seventy-six,[40] to the great regret of King Charles, of the Queen his mother [Catherine de Médicis], and of all the French Princes and Nobles. It was certainly a marvelous thing, that such an old body held so much courage and strength [*verdeur & gaillardise*]. Our French Pindar, Jean Dorat,[41] wrote the following eight verses, which I have inserted here, on his wounds:

Montmorency wounded eight times, of which he died

Anne had lived eight times ten years,
And by his hand had answered his spilled blood eight times
[452v] When Death finally conquered him with eight blows,
Say you seven and not eight well counted?
His enemy gave him seven external blows,
And the eighth he gave him in his body,
To his great regret killed treacherously
Without having accomplished the vengeance of his country.

[39]Montmorency was slashed twice in the face by a cutlass and then shot in the neck and the small of the back by the Scottish captain Robert Stuart, who was serving with the Huguenots. Montmorency, thinking his assailant did not recognize him, cried out, "You do not know me. I am the constable." Stuart replied, "Because I know you, I give you this!" See Thompson, *Wars of Religion*, 332. Montmorency's funeral is described in Bedos-Rezak, *Montmorency*, 257–59. His wounds were treated by the celebrated surgeon Ambrose Paré, who provided the following description: "The King commanded me by the request of the Lady high Constable, to goe to her house to dresse my Lord [Montmorency], who received a Pistoll shot in the middle of the spondills of his backe [his spine], whereby he presently lost all sence and motion of his thighes and legges, with retention of excrements, not being able to cast out his Urine, nor anything by the fundament, because that the spinall marrow (from whence proceede the sinews to give sense and motion to the inferiour parts), was bruised, broken, and torne by the vehemence of the bullet. He likewise lost his reason, and understanding, and in a few dayes he died." Paré, *Apologie and Treatise of Ambroise Paré,* 86–87.

[40]The battle of Saint Denis occurred on 10 November 1567. Most sources say that Montmorency died two days later (on 12 November) at the age of seventy-four.

[41]Jean Dorat (1508–88), a scholar of Greek and Latin classical literature, taught at the Collège de Conqueret in Paris (1546–56). Among his pupils were the poets Ronsard, Du Bellay, Baïf, and Belleau. He also was a member of the Pléïade.

Children of the Sieur de Montmorency

He nonetheless left the image of his virtue well enough imprinted in his twelve children, which he had of the Illustrious and excellent Lady Magdeleine of Savoy,[42] to wit five sons and seven daughters. He had no desire that any of his male children be provided with benefices [*Estats*] of the Church, even though he had the means to do so, but he saved them, as he often said, for the Kings Henri the second and Charles the ninth, to serve the crown of France, as they have since done, to wit, Marshal Montmorency, his elder son, Marshal Danville, Thoré [Thorey], Meru, & Mont-brun [Montberon], who was killed at the battle of Dreux while still a young man who promised great virtue.[43] Many other great lords also lost their lives in that battle, and the aforesaid Lord Constable was taken prisoner, and his horse was killed under him, as I have mentioned elsewhere in this work. The virtue of this young lord was so clearly observed by France that she based her hope on the successful use of such a resource. This would be an easy way, if prolixity did not disgust me, to cause the fame of these brave and hardy lords to resound far and wide but, since France is sown with a thousand monuments and remembrances [*tesmoignages*] reporting from life the memories of the merit of their worthy virtues, that would be lightheartedly entering into a discourse, which would excessively inflate this History. I would have equally great desire, were I permitted, to celebrate the excellence of the rarities, which embellish the management[44] of that no less virtuous than wise lady, Magdeleine of Savoy who, just as she had done during the life of the late Lord Constable her husband, showed herself very astute in her government. In her widowhood, she managed her affairs in such a way that those who might have been the least well disposed toward her should have to admire her skill, dexterity, foresight, and her insufficiently valued experience.

Death of the Sieur de Mont bru

Magdeleine of Savoy

[42]On 10 January 1527, Montmorency married Madeleine of Savoy, daughter of the king's deceased uncle, René of Savoy. He was henceforth addressed as "my nephew" by the Queen Mother Louise of Savoy and her daughter, Marguerite. Madeleine brought her husband a large dowry, which helped increase his already considerable fortune. For detailed information on Montmorency's children, see "Genealogie da la famille de Montmorency" in Bedos-Rezak, *Anne de Montmorency*, 338–39.

[43]Thevet is referring to François de Montmorency, Anne de Montmorency's eldest son, governor of Paris and the Ile-de-France, and marshal of France; Charles de Montmorency, seigneur de Méru and later Duke of Danville and admiral of France; and Gabriel de Montmorency, Baron of Montberon. Another son, Guillaume, was seigneur de Thorey.

[44]"mesnagement," meaning management of the resources of a household, what Xenophon meant by economy.

Michel de L'Hospital, Chancellor of France

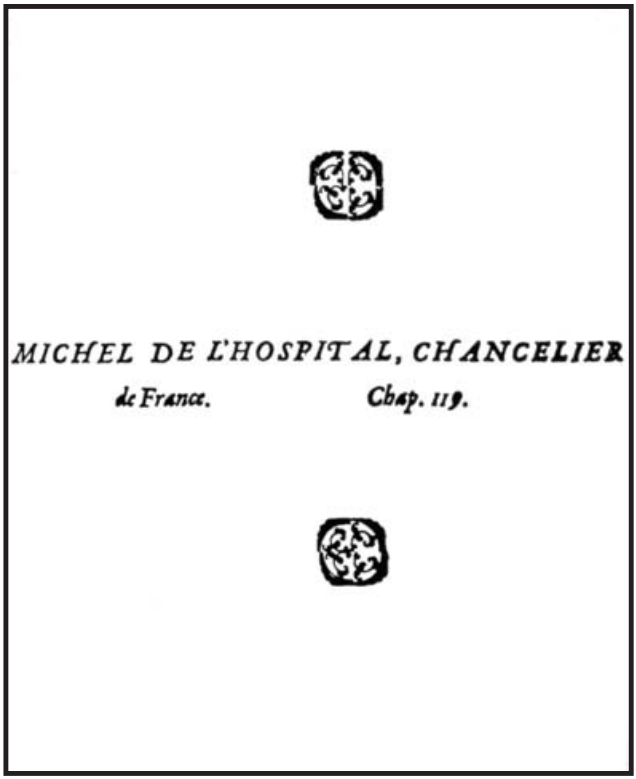
Translator's Introduction

In Thevet's biography of Michel de L'Hospital, we see contemporary reactions to the ascendancy of the king's judges and bureaucrats over the great nobles, who had been accustomed to ready access to the royal treasury in return for furnishing and leading royal armies. It is particularly worth noting the vehemence of Thevet's support for wresting control of the king's wealth from the sword nobility. L'Hospital was notable not merely for being a member of the *noblesse de robe longue,* but also for the depth of his learning at the University of Padua, perhaps the preeminent center of legal erudition in Europe at that time. He owed his judgeship, though, less to his learning and wisdom than to an advantageous marriage, and we see Thevet take careful note of the evolution of rules for the conservation and transmission of wealth—an evolution he portrayed as a return to tradition. L'Hospital's chancellorship was dominated, finally, by the ceaseless factionalism of the Wars of Religion, due in part to the competing ambitions of the leading families. The bitterness of this conflict was so intense that Thevet found himself unable to account for it in his text.[1]

[1]See Wanegfellen, *De Michel de l'Hospital à l'Édit de Nantes*.

Michel de L'Hospital, Chancellor of France

Book VI Chapter 119



[fol. 576r] Since he to whom the discourse of the present life is dedicated was one of the first and most exalted in Estates, honors, and dignities of the Kingdom of France, I may state without fear of flattery that he showed himself to be above the others in the excellence of his knowledge, prudence, and wondrous integrity. Else I should have seemed to envy him the praise, which I could not, without too great ingratitude, fail to voice. In addition, since all gentlemen must revere the [576v] memory of such a rare person, I in particular must honor him, having been seen, welcomed, and protected by this Patron of learned men so well that I recognize my obligation to him forever. One thing for which I must praise him is for taking plea-

sure in seeing antiques, old medals, and other *objets d'art,* and hearing the discourses of those who had seen the truth of the situation [*assiette*] of foreign countries, the customs of peoples, and the properties of distant countries. And on this occasion, since he had just heard that I had gone to and discovered several regions, he had to confer with me several times on the difficulties, which he had because of the disagreements between ancient Geographers [*Cosmographes*] and the modern ones. Now, even though I am very well disposed toward him, still do I protest that I wish to set here only what I shall know to agree with the truth. Very willingly should I have offered you his portrait, if the Seigneur de Besze [Beza] had not set it in his work of the portraits of Illustrious men.[2] I am angry that he put the candle behind his back, as if the light was not for his eyes.[3] It is not that I do not know full well that he wishes to tax de L'Hospital with not having taken sides over Religion but, if Besze [Beza] takes light for his Religion, I leave him, and shall confess to him that an infinite number saw de L'Hospital live as a Catholic.[4] One can hardly be sure whether he did so with his heart, that being a secret not revealed to men. And as for the resemblance, which he [Beza] pretends to find between Aristotle and our Chancellor, if he means the features and lineaments of his visage, there is no man who, making a comparison of the portrait I gave above of Aristotle[5] with the one he has drawn from life of his Auvergnat,[6] would not recognize at first glance that there is room for much discussion. If he

Portrait of the Sieur de L'Hospital

Relationship between Aristotle and the Sieur de L'Hospital

[2]Thevet is referring to Theodore Beza (1519–1605), author, translator, educator, and theologian who assisted and later succeeded Jean Calvin as the leader of the Protestant Reformation centered in Geneva. In 1580, four years before the publication of Thevet's *Vrais Pourtraits*, Beza published *Icones, id est verae imagines virorvm doctrina simvl et pietate illvstrvm* (Geneva: I. Laonium, 1580). A year later, Simon Goulart translated this work into French, under the title *Les Vrais pourtraits des homes illustres en piete et doctrine* (Geneva: I. De Leon, 1581). A modern edition is *Les vrais pourtraits des hommes illustres: avec les 30 portraits supplémentaires de l'édition de 1673*, introduction by Alain Dufour (Geneva: Slatkine, 1986). Beza's portrait of L'Hospital is above.

[3]Apparently Beza had a light placed behind L'Hospital to indicate that, while knowing the true light of Calvinism, he had not profited from his knowledge.

[4]L'Hospital was one of the founders of the Politiques, a moderate Catholic group that tried to bring peace to France during the later years of the Wars of Religion. As chancellor of France from 1560 to 1568, he played an important role in the French government's adoption of a policy of toleration for Huguenots.

[5]For Thevet's biography, and portrait, of Aristotle, see his *Vrais Pourtraits,* 1:63–68.

[6]L'Hospital was born near Aigueperse, in Auvergne (now Puy-de-Dôme). A native of Auvergne is an "Auvergnat."

wished to concentrate on the plans of each one, I would concede it with no difficulty: just as Aristotle gained his Alexander's heart for rebuilding the city of Stagire,[7] so the Lord Chancellor de L'Hospital put all the energy and authority he had into repairing the devastation of this Kingdom, which he was watching decline toward total ruin, as we shall learn in more detail from the narrative of the present history, which we have for the most part gathered from the testament he drew up at the age of sixty-eight or sixty-nine, the day before he died in the very year he died.[8]

Birth and father of the Sieur de L'Hospital

There this good Lord acknowledged openly that he had never been able to resolve the question whether he had been born before the war undertaken against the Genoans [*Genevois*] or when it was concluded by King Louis XII.[9] His father served Duke Charles de Bourbon not just as Doctor, but also as Counselor.[10] In fact he was so devoted that, upon the duke's adherence to the Emperor Charles,[11] leaving all his children [577r] in France, sons as well as daughters who, being of a very young age, could not tolerate the discomforts and risks of such a trip, our Michel was at Toulouse, aged eighteen and, even though he was there for no other purpose but to study, he was seized and placed in public prison on suspicion until the King ordered expressly that he be released and accorded his freedom to pursue his studies, since he was not found to be sullied by any presumption which might have rendered him guilty.[12] Afterwards occurred the miserable battle of Pavia, because of the capture of King François the first of his name, where the Seigneur de Bourbon acted all too valiantly, to the point that the Spaniards, envious of the honor accorded him, found a way to disgrace him with the Emperor because of the French Ambassadors, who purposely conferred and nego-

Sieur de L'Hospital prisoner

[7]Aristotle was born in Stagire (modern Stavros) in 384 BCE.

[8]On 12 March 1573 L'Hospital drew up his will, then died the following day. Most authorities say that he was born in 1505, but we do not know in what month. L'Hospital gives his age as eighteen in September 1523; see Atkinson, *Michel de L'Hôpital*, 7.

[9]L'Hospital admitted in his will that the exact date of his birth was uncertain, but the alternatives were before the war against the Genoese, who rose against the French in 1506, and at the time of their subjugation by Louis XII in April 1507. See Atkinson, *L'Hôpital*, 7; and Hértier, *Michel de L'Hôpital*, 13.

[10]Originally the medical attendant of Charles' mother, Claire de Gonzaga, Jean de L'Hospital became the duke's physician and confidant. The latter appointed him *bailli* of Montpensier (1515) and *auditeur des comtes* in Moulins (1522). In 1525 he received the domains and seigneurie of La Tour de La Bussière in Auvergne, together with the domain of La Rochelle and the villages of Beuzet and Croizet.

[11]The original French is a sentence fragment.

[12]In 1523 Jean de L'Hospital shared both Bourbon's exile and the sentence of banishment and the confiscation of property pronounced against his lord. Among other consequences, Michel was imprisoned for two years (1524–26) before being released by the king's command. Then he joined his father in Milan.

tiated with him in order to make the Imperials [*Imperialistes*] suspicious of him. That was the reason, along with the hope he had lost of having the Emperor's sister in marriage,[13] that de Bourbon took the road to Italy[14] where he found disorder and confusion, inasmuch as the King, having leagued himself with the Princes of Italy, had laid siege to Milan. And because all this was taking a long time,[15] this Doctor, fearing that his son might open a serious breach in his studies with too long a discontinuation, ordered some carters[16] to bring him. Michel left Milan with them disguised as a mule skinner and, not without great danger to his life, crossed the Abdua [Adda] river[17] and afterwards went to Padua, where the Study of Law flourished from time immemorial.[18] His father left him in this University for six years, then recalled him to Bologna and Rome. There he was honored with a judgeship, which they call the Magistrate of the great highway,[19] which he resigned upon the advice of his father because of the promises by the Cardinal de Grammont to advance him to loftier Estates. He was frustrated in his hopes from both sides, for the Estate of Magistrate was given to another, and the sudden death of the Cardinal de Grammont threw [*accula*] him from the hope, which had led him back to France.[20] This being the case, he began to follow the [king's] Court [*Palais*], where he lived for less than three years when he wed Marie Morin,[21] who had an appointment as Counselor in the Court [*Parlement*] as dowry and was the daughter of the Judge of criminal cases, Morin.[22] He exercised this office for nine years, then was sent by

Sieur de L'Hospital Magistrate of the Great Highway

Sieur de L'Hospital married, is Counselor to the Court, then Ambassador to Bologna

[13]Thevet may be referring to Maria of Austria, who married King Louis II of Hungary and Bohemia on 13 January 1522.

[14]Bourbon fled to Italy in 1523.

[15]"Et par-ce qu'il devoit prendre long traict."

[16]A carter was a charioteer who drove a light, two-wheeled vehicle pulled by one horse.

[17]The Adda River is in Lombardy.

[18]The University of Padua, founded in 1222, had sixteen chairs devoted to civil law and eleven to canon law.

[19]"Auditeur de la Rote"; Cotgrave (*Dictionarie*) translates this term as "Auditor or Magistrate" of the "great highway in a forest." Perhaps Thevet is referring to L'Hospital's appointment to a chair of civil law in 1531.

[20]Cardinal Gabriel de Grammont, one of the French envoys at the imperial court, had promised to find a position for Michel in Paris, but he died suddenly on 26 March 1534, after returning home.

[21]They married in 1537.

[22]After Grammont's death, L'Hospital hoped to become a member of the Parlement (Court) of Paris, but the government only sold these positions to the highest bidders (starting in January 1522). L'Hospital, nevertheless, achieved his goal by marrying Marie Morin, the daughter of Jehan Morin, *lieutenant criminel* of Paris. Her dowry included a position of *conseiller clerc* in the Parlement. Despite some opposition to

King Henri as Ambassador to Bologna, where a universal Council of all the Bishops had been established for some reform.[23] Even though he worked to pacify everything, seeing that enmities, discords, and divisions were flourishing, and that the piques and dissensions of the great Lords were making matters worse, after having stayed in this Ambassadorship for sixteen months, [577v] he found himself more thoroughly mired in the disorder than he might have wished.[24] During this time the Lady Marguerite, sister of King Henri and very virtuous Princess, duly notified of all the qualities of Counselor de L'Hospital, at whose heels some began to snap because of the beginnings they saw of his advancement, did not content herself with merely extricating him from his present danger, but also gave him a title [*estat*] of sovereign authority in her household, and great authority toward the Prince.[25] The more he labored to tend to the business of this Princess in complete fidelity, the more pleasure she took in employing him in great missions and honoring him with the most elevated titles she could. Thus was he by her goodness and favor soon thereafter appointed head and superintendent of the finances of the King in his Exchequer [*chambre des Contes*][26] and, after the death of King Henri elected to the Privy Council, and later chosen to conduct his mistress Marguerite to the house of Philibert

The Sieur de L'Hospital in the service of the Duchess of Savoy

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his admission to the Parlement in this office (due to his being married), Michel took his oath as *conseiller* on 3 August 1537.

[23]When a contagious disease broke out at the Council of Trent, killing the general of the Franciscans among others, the cardinal legates proposed to transfer the council to Bologna. As a result of tensions between Pope Paul III and Charles V, fourteen bishops remained in Trent, and the Council of Bologna (12 March–17 September 1547) accomplished little.

[24]In August 1547 L'Hospital was appointed one of three French ambassadors to the Council of Trent, then in session in Bologna. Upset by the intrigues of the cardinals and suffering severely at the time from the gout, L'Hospital left his post after sixteen months. His participation in the council, however, may have helped mold or confirm his views on religious toleration and reform.

[25]L'Hospital's reputation as a scholar of classical literature secured his appointment as chancellor to Marguerite de Valois, the king's sister, who presided over a small literary circle. L'Hospital himself declared, "When I was tossing to and fro, the prey of wind and wave, she alone, that blessed maiden Marguerite, the sister of our king Henry, rescued me." Quoted in Atkinson, *L'Hôpital*, 29.

[26]In February 1555, L'Hospital was appointed "premier président de la Chambre des Comptes" a new office created in 1554. In his new post, he zealously sought to reestablish financial order and to prosecute those who were enriching themselves at public expense. In 1559 he presided over a commission that brought to trial various contractors who had defrauded the government during the Italian wars. His behavior, no doubt, increased the number of his enemies. Although L'Hospital, in his will, said that his appointment came through Marguerite's influence, it is more likely that the key figure in his appointment was the cardinal of Lorraine.

Emmanuel [Emmanuel Philibert], Duke of Savoy, her husband.[27] I shall not specify how he served her, since the regret this illustrious Princess felt at leaving this Sun of prudence, wisdom, and dexterity, when he was summoned by the François the second of his name, would only prove my point all too well. Nonetheless this good Lady, since she was naturally concerned for the safety, prosperity, and advancement of France, could not refuse her [France] a Frenchman who, through his virtue and skill, might again raise in France that which would immortalize her in the midst of other nations. So, after the death of François Olivier, Lord Chancellor of France, who died at Amboise in the year 1560, a courier arrived in great haste from King François, who called this Chancellor of the Duchess of Savoy to be his Chancellor of France.[28] We may not doubt that such a summons tickled his fancy[29] since, being a man, it is impossible that he did not feel glory's allure. But, since he saw French affairs confounded, he feared that the eminence he was to occupy might lead to be less profit and pleasure than prejudice and envy.[30] Because of the desire he felt to take a chance for the good of his country, however, and the fact that he could not deflect the summons issued by his Prince, he came to the Court, where he had no sooner arrived than he heard loud rumors of war, because of the tumult at Amboise, and he then had great need to deploy the great treasure of prudence with which he was provided, inasmuch as he had to deal with people who gave him as much to do as he could handle. I shall not tarry here to specify who they were, why they moved, [578r] nor whether they were right or wrong to take sides, that not being my present subject. In addition, several have maintained that he was more favorable to one side than to the other. Which was the reason for his withdrawal from the Court, even though some, perhaps too curious, have made up others more rashly than soundly. Still am I well assured that, if ever there was a Lord Chancellor in France who took trouble to preserve Justice, it was the Seigneur de L'Hospital, who forces praise even from the mouths of those who opposed his side, that

S[ieu]r de L'Hospital, recalled upon the death of Chancellor Olivier to become Lord Chancellor of France

The Sieur d[e L]'Hospital a great justice

[27]As Marguerite's chancellor, L'Hospital, who had recently been appointed to François II's Privy Council, accompanied her to Savoy in April 1559. He was barely established there before being recalled to France to assume the chancellorship of France, which Olivier's death had just left vacant.

[28]François Olivier died on 28 March 1560. L'Hospital was named to succeed him on April 1. Historians credit the cardinal of Lorraine with procuring this appointment for his protégé.

[29]"ne luy chatouillast le coeur"

[30]At this time, the position of chancellor was especially difficult. A combination of religious, political, social, and financial difficulties afflicted the kingdom, while the Italian wars left a legacy of debt and discontent. Moreover, the monarch was still a youth, and the greater nobility was riven by faction and ambition.

he was an upright and sincere man who never wavered from right and equity for any acquaintance he had with the parties. Whence some felt very ill-used, for the severity with which he pursued the lewdness of their vices. He caused the best and most prompt justice to be done for the poor, miserable, and destitute, providing he perceived that they were aboveboard;[31] they did not have to beg for a hearing by importunate supplications and motions. He imposed such good order that poor parties had quick decisions on their suits, without languishing in fawning delays. Whenever and however he discovered some bad faith [*sinistre foy*], he let fly so harshly at pettifoggers' wrangling that they lost all desire of returning before him to flout a Judgment and torment their adversaries. He was always erect [*bandé*] against the thieves and leeches of the Kingdom's finances, so much so that the mice do not fear the cat more than the Court rats did the severity of this Chancellor. At the end of the introduction and narration of his testament, he maintains that he left the Court solely because he could not stand to authorize taking up arms without first, before any action, having the advice of the Courts [*Parlements*], who are the sovereign judges of any matter presented before them.[32] We all know full well, in fact, notwithstanding that arms were taken up four times while he was in charge,[33] that [he] always labored for peace, thinking there was nothing so damaging to a country as civil war, nor more profitable than peace, under any condition whatever.[34] He was not able to remonstrate effectively enough to stop civil wars from crawling all over this poor Kingdom, and all but totally defacing it, however. It was upon the solicitation of this Chan-

Occasion of the Chancellor's withdrawal from the Court

[31] "qu'ils marchassent droitement en besoigne."

[32] After the Surprise at Meaux (26–28 September 1567), L'Hospital realized he had lost the support of Catherine de Médicis. In May 1568 he petitioned to be discharged from his office. In his will, he declared, "When I perceived that my policy no longer found favor with the King and the Queen, and that the King was so powerless that he could not have his own way, nor even dare to express his own views, I thought it better to yield of my own accord to the exigencies of the state of the country, and to give place to new rulers, rather than to oppose and contend with those over whom I could not prevail." Quoted in Atkinson, *L'Hôpital*, 130.

[33] Between 1562 and 1573 (the year of L'Hospital's death), historians have counted four wars of religion in France: 1562–63, 1567–68, 1568–70, and 1572–73.

[34] One of L'Hospital's first acts after assuming the position of chancellor was to have the Parlement (Court) of Paris register the Edict of Romorantin (18 May 1560), which gave to the bishops criminal jurisdiction in cases of heresy, and to the secular courts the function of punishing those who attended or held Huguenot meetings. This was L'Hospital's first effort to distinguish between the religion of the kingdom and its police power. In August 1560, he suspended all proceedings against heretics pending the reformation of the church by a general or national council. For an analysis of L'Hospital's beliefs and behavior, defending his sense of "sound political realism," see Kim, "Dieu nous garde de la messe du chancelier"; and Kim, *Michel de l'Hôpital*.

Decrees issued upon the advice of Chancellor de L'Hospital

cellor that several Decrees, Edicts, and Statutes were written and published by our Kings of France for the relief of the people, and preservation of justice. Among others we have the Edict of King François, the second of his name, which restrains the second marriage by removing the right of any woman who remarries to bring more [property] to her second husband than to one of the children from her first marriage bed. The occasion [578v] for this edict was however that a woman of this Kingdom of great wealth fell in love with a young Lord who, because she seemed old to him, took no account of taking her to wife. She felt herself so head over heels in love that, since she knew him to have a taste for money, she made him a deed of gift of every one of her goods, of which she wished simply that they take everything that might belong to the legitimate portion for the children of her first marriage. In this way her children were left skinned [*panés*] out of the maternal inheritance, which was transported to the second husband, for a simple hunk of bread [*pain*]. In order to prevent such surprises, this Chancellor brought the decree of the Emperor Leon[35] into this Kingdom, mentioned in the law *hac Edictali 6,* at the title *de second nupt*. in the fifth book of Justinian's Code,[36] which prohibits that one give or leave to the second party more than to one of the children of the first marriage. I wanted to touch on this in passing, in order to disprove the mutterings of some grumblers who take pleasure in saying ill and detracting from what is the best and most devoutly ordered thing in the world, and would love to give, to those who listen to them rail, reason to believe that this Chancellor rented his knowledge to the highest and last bidder and that he might have made this Edict up, won over by some sinister and illegitimate means. I shall not deign to shield the integrity and sincerity of this person here; asking him to bend his arm to attack such clowns would be to debase him. I need only the book, and I shall show them the Decree, in the spot I cited above. As a consequence, I shall infer an utterly necessary conclusion, that they are ignorant, and have not yet leafed through the books of Law, where they would have learned that this decree was

[35]Thevet is probably referring to Byzantine Emperor Leo III "the Isaurian" (r. 717–41). In 726 he promulgated the *Ecloga,* a law code that represented a revision of Roman legal practices as embodied in Justinian's *Corpus Juris Civilis*. Consciously attempting to revise Roman law in accordance with Christian principles, Leo's code addressed the regulation of marriage and property rights.

[36]The *Codex Justinianeus* was a collection of laws and legal interpretations developed under the sponsorship of the Byzantine Emperor Justinian I (r. 527–65). This collection was not a new legal code; his committees of jurists provided two reference works containing collections of past laws and extracts of past legal opinions. The code also included an elementary outline of the law and a collection of Justinian's own opinions.

placed a long time ago, and that it remained only to put it into practice among us French. Which was done at the instigation of this wise and prudent Auvergnat who, since his mind was endowed with marvelous graces, was not at all villainous, niggardly, nor stingy with them, but spread them liberally to his country when he knew that the affair deserved it. Here I take the liberty of stopping short to praise the fertility of the territory of Auvergne, which was so happy in its saplings that the most sublime and sprightly minds, which flourished in France found their haunts there for the most part. I wish to choose but one among the infinite number, and to join with the Seigneur de L'Hospital only the great Chancellor Antoine du Prat[37] who, by his worthy knowledge and rare prudence exercised this office [*estat*], which is unique and the first Estate among those trained in the law [*gens de robbe longue*], so well that his memory will never be sufficiently renowned. [579r] To return to our Chancellor de L'Hospital, after he perceived that it was not healthy for him at court during such calamitous and inclement times, he retired to the countryside with his wife, family, and grandchildren, in order that, sequestering himself from public business, he could trick idleness.[38] In fact, it was then that, like Cicero, he began to compose the beautiful and excellent works, which have been brought to light,[39] and several others, which remain in his Library, as you will see in the succinct summary, which I have drawn up of the principal headings of his testament. By which he ordered that all his goods should go to those to whom they belonged by the Laws and customs of the country, making no special provision or prerogative for any. In addition, since his wife would administer the whole with singular piety, he forbade asking her for any accounting for her wardship or guardianship. Similarly, he ordered that his grandsons, born of his daughter, who were of the Hurault family,[40] would have a name added to their own, so that the eldest, named Charles, would

A[ntoine] du Prat, Chancellor of France

Principal headings of the testament of the S[ieu]r de L'Hospital

[37]Antoine du Prat (d. 1535) was chancellor of France, bishop of Valence, Meaux, Albi, and Die, archbishop of Sens, a cardinal, and a papal legate. One of François I's most trusted advisors, he negotiated the Concordat of Bologna.

[38]"tromper l'oiseveté." The papal legate, Hippolytus d'Este, had been arguing for L'Hospital's dismissal for some time. L'Hospital retired to his estate at Vignay, from which he did not return until the Pacification of Amboise (19 March 1563). He remained chancellor, however, until February 1568.

[39]L'Hospital's works included speeches, memoranda ("Sur la pacification" and "Si j'estois personne privée"), a few letters, *Mémoires d'état*, his will, Latin poetry, and the treatise *Sur la Réformation de la Justice*. His writings were published by P. J. S. Duffey in five volumes titled *Oeuvres complètes de Michel de L'Hôpital* (Paris, 1824–26). Atkinson, however, writing in 1900, says the Duffey edition is out of date and incomplete (*L'Hôpital*, 182), and Knecht calls it "an unsatisfactory edition" (*Catherine de' Médici*, 283).

[40]One of L'Hospital's daughters married Robert Hurault de Bellébat.

thus write his name Charles Hurault de L'Hospital, in order that this added name serve to distinguish the families of the Haults, who are numerous. This used to be the practice in Rome, and similar examples can be found in our France. And he wished that some memory of his name might remain in this family, to which he brought the greatest offices [*Estats*] of the Republic, in particular the Office of Chancellor. That would encourage them to follow the tracks and footsteps of their grandfather, in order to come into similarly high honors. He made Madeleine de L'Hospital the inheritor of each and every one of his goods. He left and bequeathed all his library and study to Michel Hurault de L'Hospital, who seemed more suited to and fond of good learning [*bonnes lettres*] than the other young ones. He wished his wife and daughter to keep the library, however, so that no one could remove anything from it, and for them to give it to Michel, on the condition that it be open for the convenience of family members along with servants and others who often visited the house, instead of which[41] he wished that each of the grandsons be given five hundred livres tournois [42] for an equal share, so that there might not be one who could complain that another had been preferred to him. As for the ancient money, of gold, silver, and copper and the rest in his lodging, he left it to the discretion of his wife and daughter to dispose of, but he still wanted it kept undivided in his house, with four beautiful vessels of German workmanship and that medal of the bull, which had been given to him by My Lady Marguerite, Duchess of Savoy, his mistress. He asked [579v] the Seigneur de Belesbat [Bellébat] to watch over and take care that the books on Civil law, which he had reduced to articles by method,[43] not be burned or ripped apart, but that they be given to the most capable of his grandsons, who might peradventure finish them, in imitation of his grandfather. There were some other Headings of this Testament, which I shall not set down here, fearing to weary the Reader with too great a prolixity. It was however necessary to discourse so long on this matter, not that I have any desire to lay bare the private details of the house of this Chancellor, but to bear witness for posterity to how much he loved good learning, since his will might serve as [a] model to the best testamentary disposition that one might wish. He did me the honor in the old days of showing me some rarities from his office [*cabinet*];[44] I can testify that they were marvelous singularities. One

Distinguishing between the Hurault families

The library of the S[ieu]r de L'Hospital

Civil law began to be reduced to a method by the Sieur de L'Hospital

[41]Presumably, instead of breaking up the library.

[42]According to Cotgrave (*Dictionarie*), a "livre tournois" was worth two shillings.

[43]"methode": Cotgrave (*Dictionarie*) translates this as "a short, readie and orderlie course for the teaching, learning, or doing of a thing."

[44]Thevet, who supervised the royal collection of curiosities at Fontainebleau, also brought several items from Brazil back to France that ended up in museums. See

thing do I regret, that the press of business he had on his hands has deprived us of the collection of Civil Law he gathered in his books.[45] That should awaken the hearts of those who have the good fortune of sniffing the flowers scattered in these books, so they should conserve such a precious treasure dearly, and use all the means they have (as we say) in addition to their five natural senses to bring such a worthy and excellent enterprise to fruition. The model is made, the path cleared, all that remains is to follow the route. They will be feeble indeed if the love of the public does not win them over to the point that, stealing a few hours, they do not speed the completion of a method so devoutly desired by the good Minds and lovers of virtue, among whom it can only be welcome, coming from the principal stem of the house of de L'Hospital, and woven by him who, being appointed guardian of the Laws as chief of the Justice of France, must have known everything, which was required and necessary for the compilation of a work so excellent. Here, even though I have not decided to erect a list of all the acts, sayings, and writings of the Chancellor, still am I obliged to represent the great good, which the Academy of Bourges received by means of the Seigneur de L'Hospital who, possessing the ear of his good Lady and mistress, gave himself less to increasing his revenues with great wealth than to restoring the endowment [*fondemens*] of that University.[46] After having, in the manner that you have heard, passed the course of his life to the great contentment of all good people, he left this mortal life in order to aspire to the Kingdom of heaven and died the third [thirteenth] day of March in the year 1573.

Academy of Bourges rebuilt by the Chancellor de L'Hospital

Death of the Sieur de L'Hospital

Feest, "Mexico and South America in the European Wunderkammer," esp. 241, 243. For more on the history of cabinets of curiosities, see Lugli, *Naturalia et Mirabilia;* Lugli, *Wunderkammer;* and Davenne, *Modernité du cabinet de curiosités*.

[45]Among L'Hospital's unpublished works is *Mémoires recueillis par l'Hospital des droits des rois de France au duché de Bar*. These are probably very similar to the collection of *Mémoires de l'Estat*, which are papers, documents, and memoranda of a miscellaneous character, dealing with a wide variety of affairs of state from peace treaties to sovereign rights and homages. They probably came into L'Hospital's possession when he was chancellor.

[46]As chancellor to Marguerite, L'Hospital had a position of influence and authority at the University of Bourges, which he used to encourage the study of law. He devoted himself to strengthening the university by choosing eminent scholars (François Duaren, Hughes Doneau, Jacques Cujas, and François Hotman) to fill vacant chairs. Together with his writings on law and legal reform and with his achievements as chancellor, this enlightened use of his patronage is witness to his concern for the condition of justice in France.

Charles de Lorraine, Cardinal

Translator's Introduction

There are many illustrations of the power of blood ties in the chaotic conditions that prevailed in early modern Europe, among them the Medici earlier in the Renaissance or, in France, Guillaume du Bellay and his brother John, Bishop of Paris. At a time when economic change was undermining the power of the sword nobility, it was difficult for political actors to find others in whom they could have absolute confidence. The cardinal of Lorraine had an immense advantage in having such a confidant in the Duke of Guise, but they had the misfortune of living and working at a time when the divisions within their own class ran so deep that their enemies finally found a way to bring them down. The house of Guise favored continued adherence to the Church of Rome, so Thevet naturally portrayed their careers in very positive terms, and it is easy to read this chapter as a narrative of the dissolution of the society of orders the French had been accustomed to seeing in their kingdom.

Charles de Lorraine, Cardinal

Book VI Chapter 120

[fol. 580r]

Nativity of the Cardinal of Lorraine

Inasmuch as the subject of the memorable acts of Charles, Cardinal of Lorraine, is so ample that this little paper I intend to fill with them is insufficient to contain them, I assure myself that the Reader will not take it amiss if I pass over them more lightly than they seem to merit. And, with this assurance (without tarrying over the origins of his house, neither how he is descended [*extraict*] from the Royal stock of Anjou and Bourbon),[1] I shall begin with his nativity, which was [in] the year [580v] 1524 [1525?],[2]

[1]Charles was the second son of Claude, first Duke of Guise, and Antoinette de Bourbon.

[2]Thevet later says that the cardinal was forty-nine years old when he died on 26 December 1574. The date is substantiated by the cardinal's epitaph (below). That would place his birth in 1525 rather than 1524.

the seventeenth of February, at the time when a few German provinces received Luther's doctrine. When this Lord reached the age of six, he was sent to Paris to the Royal College of Champagne, known as the Collège de Navarre,[3] to be taught (as is the ancient and praiseworthy custom with children of this age) in the liberal and humane sciences, which he began forthwith to love so much that the vivacity of his mind was quickly recognized.[4] With the result that in little time he surpassed all the other schoolchildren of his age in learning, whether in composing verses or in ordinary disputation. Endowed with such excellent accomplishments, in the fourteenth year of his age, by the will of the King and dispensation of Pope Paul the third of his name, he was designated Archbishop of Reims, vacated by the death of Robert de Lenoncourt.[5] In which office [*dignité*], notwithstanding that he was of a young age, he behaved so wisely that he served as an example, even to the oldest of his status [*estat*]. For this reason King François the first of his name (the father and restorer of letters and all sciences) gave him to his son Henri, then the Pretender [*Dauphin*] and since the second King of France of his name, to serve him as counsel and guide in his affairs.[6] Even though the delicacies and pleasures that abound at Court most often corrupt the first good upbringing of youth, nonetheless, as soon as he returned from the Collège, abhorring the pastimes and pleasures of the Court,[7] he used the time he had to listen to the most excellent Doctors of Philosophy, Laws, and Theology to be found there, whom

Charles Archbishop of Reims

[3]The College of Navarre, one of the colleges of the University of Paris, was founded in 1304.

[4]Charles studied theology at the College of Navarre. One scholar of the period described his intellect thus: "All were in awe of him. His intelligence enabled him to move quickly to a degree in theology at the Collège of Navarre, and he was a noted orator and preacher, moving Theodore Beza to say that 'If I had the graces of the cardinal of Lorraine, I should hope to convert half the people of France to the religion [Calvinism] that I profess.'" Quoted in Baumgartner, *Henry II*, 50.

[5]Robert de Lenoncourt died in 1532. Jean de Lorraine, the son of René II, Duke of Lorraine, succeeded him. Charles then succeeded Jean as archbishop of Reims in 1538. No doubt Charles' rise to church power depended on the credit his father and uncle, Cardinal Jean de Lorraine, had with François I as well as on the excellence of his accomplishments. His appointment gave him one of the most remunerative and prestigious church offices in France, since French kings were crowned there with the miraculous oil of Clovis.

[6]Perhaps because of his eloquence before the king, Charles was invited to the court in 1540 and in February 1547 was named chief of the council of the dauphin and governor of the household.

[7]Although he had at least one illegitimate child, Charles' moral austerity at the French court caused Cardinal Alessandro Farnese to call him "un santarello" (one without sin). See Baumgartner, *Henry II*, 50; and Evennett, *Cardinal of Lorraine and the Council of Trent*, 4–5.

he sought out, welcomed, and followed willingly; in this way, he became one of the most excellent Philosophers and Theologians who had been for a long time. So that, as long as he lived, he was felt to hold the same place (if I may be permitted to make the comparison even though it be very dangerous as a consequence of the inequalities that one might find between two things brought together) in France that Cicero used to hold in Rome and Demosthenes in Greece,[8] on whose eloquence and prudent counsel their supporters depended for support against their oppressors. The same place also that Saint Paul[9] held at the beginning of the Church, since it was he [Charles de Lorraine] who was continually solicitous of all the Churches of France. I am well aware that those who wish only bad fortune to the house of Lorraine will not grant me such qualities, but will rather disfigure him as the most loathsome, dirty, and dishonest of all the French[10] but, if we had to put our cards on the table, we would see many abashed. In the year 1547, and the twenty-third of his life, he took a trip to Rome, where he was made Cardinal by Pope Paul, the third of his name.[11] Now, King Henri, the second [581r] of his name, having come to the throne, did not at all lessen the good will he used to bear him during his father's lifetime,[12] but rather increased it a great deal, making him the first member of his privy Council, sure that one whom God had granted so many accomplishments and such good nature could only continue to improve. He carried this charge so sagely and with such discretion that the King relied on him for all the affairs of the Kingdom. He alone opened the packages sent from Asia, Spain, Germany, England, Italy, Flanders, Scotland, and all parts of the world. He alone examined all the petitions and commissions; he alone answered them all.[13] When it came

Charles de Lorraine compared to Cicero, Demosthenes, and Saint Paul

Cardinal of Lorraine very well regarded by King Henri

[8]Cicero and Demosthenes (d. 322 BCE) were, of course, regarded as brilliant orators by sixteenth-century writers.

[9]St. Paul, originally Saul of Tarsus (d. ca. 67), an important interpreter of Jesus' teachings, was central to the early development and adoption of Christianity.

[10]Thevet may be referring to the works of the chronicler Pierre de L'Estoile and the biographer Pierre de Bourdeille, seigneur (and abbé) de Brantôme.

[11]For several years Henri had sought to raise Charles to the rank of cardinal, and on the day following the king's coronation (26 July 1547), at which Charles had presided as archbishop of Reims, the pope agreed to grant the request. Charles wanted to be known as the Cardinal of Anjou, but the French ambassador in Rome objected and he was known as the Cardinal of Guise. See Evennett, *Cardinal of Lorraine*, 5.

[12]A contemporary of Charles stated that from the beginning of their friendship, Henri loved Charles "as Jonathan loved David." Nicolas Boucher, *Caroli Lotharingii … Litterae* (1577), quoted by Evennett, *Cardinal of Lorraine*, 5; and Baumgartner, *Henry II*, 50.

[13]Upon Henri's accession to the throne, the Guises (François and Charles) moved to the highest levels of government and became serious rivals of the Montmorency and Bourbon factions. In the weeks after the death of François I, they were appointed to the

time to conclude a peace treaty between the French and Spanish at Amiens, after the capture of Calais and Thionville by François de Lorraine, the Duke of Guise, and his brother, this learned Cardinal was commissioned by the King to negotiate it.[14] The articles having been debated at length, peace was finally agreed to between these two princes formerly great enemies (thanks be to God); the two most powerful Kingdoms of Europe still enjoy this peace today.[15] What need is there for me to mention here very holy exhortations proffered by him in the Church of Reims upon the coronation [*sacre*] of King Henri, by which he made himself so wonderful that you would have said that he was no longer this Charles de Lorraine, but a second saint Henry, whose place he was taking?[16] What shall I say of that oration spoken in the presence of the King, in the assembly of the three Estates after the disaster in France of the battle of Saint Quentin?[17] Shall I allege that very learned and grave Oration, which he gave at the Colloquy of Poissy, the Protestants [*Reformés*] croaking of spite? What shall I say as well of an infinite number of learned and holy sermons [*predications*], which he preached at the cathedral Churches of Paris and Reims as well as other famous places? What good will it do to recite how he was

Charles deputed to conclude the peace by King Henri

Conseil des Affaires, along with their uncle Cardinal Jean of Lorraine. Charles was made "chief of the council as regards judicial affairs under the jurisdiction of the constable" and named chancellor of the Order of St. Michael. François de Guise was made chief of the royal hunt and reconfirmed in his governorship of Dauphiné. In November 1547, Henri informed the Chambre des Comptes, which had been slow to release the 4,000 écus due Guise as governor of Dauphiné, that he was one of those "whom I wish to exempt from the usual scrutiny and to be treated with all grace and favor." Quoted in Baumgartner, *Henry II*, 51.

[14]These negotiations, which led to the Peace of Cateau-Cambrésis, created "Peace Commissioners" on 6 October 1558. The French commissioners included the cardinal of Lorraine, Montmorency, Saint-André, Bishop Jean de Morvilliers, and Minister of Foreign Affairs Claude de L'Aubespine.

[15]Any conclusion to the Habsburg-Valois wars must have been welcome at the beginning of Henri's reign, but the French monarchy was already heavily involved in the Wars of Religion by the time Thevet published *Vrais Pourtraits* in 1584. "The troubles," of course, continued and escalated during the remainder of the 1580s and early 1590s.

[16]Henri was crowned at Reims on 25 July 1547. By the time Thevet was writing, there already were several individuals named Henry who either had been canonized or were regarded as having lived saintly lives, which makes it difficult to understand Thevet's reference.

[17]Henri, to meet the developing crisis over royal finances, called a meeting of the Estates-General in Paris for January 1558—the first full gathering of the Estates since 1484. The Estates of 1558 had a limited membership, however, so historians have been hesitant to call it an assembly of Estates-General, preferring the term Assembly of Notables. For more on this assembly, see Major, *Representative Institutions in Renaissance France*, 144–47, 176n.

beloved and cherished by the Kings François the second and Charles the ninth (whom God absolve), and by Henri the third presently reigning (to whom God grant long life)[18] for his prudent and wary counsel, which they used for their most urgent business as long as he lived? I shall say then, to keep it short, that his eloquence and exquisite knowledge were recognized not only in our France, but in all the nations of Europe, signally in four trips he made to Rome,[19] where he so deployed them that the Romans were astonished, and judged him one of the best spoken and most eloquent that they had [heard] since Cicero the father of eloquence, even though our France abounds in gallant and eloquent orators. He had the tongue so free, the words so well chosen and joined, and of such plenty, that his [581v] oration seemed like a vehement and raging flood. The elegances of his maxims and the grace with which he uttered them were so great that you did not tire of hearing them; you could never hear too much. What would you have me add to these accomplishments? The speech he made first in Latin, then in French, in the city of Vvic when as Bishop of Metz he held his deliberative Assembly [*Estats*], which was attended by several German Counts, Barons, and other Nobles who hold their fiefs from the Bishop of the aforesaid place;[20] the care and diligence he took to govern and police his diocese of Reims according to the decrees of the Council of Trent bear ample witness. I am well aware that a few malicious enemies of this Lord and his people have taxed him in their writings with great avarice and ambition, and that all his actions tended only to enrich him and those of his house. Nonetheless, the money spent by him during the troubles [*les troubles*][21] and the buildings and foundations created by him have finally demonstrated what zeal was pushing these slanderers. But, in order not to take time with all this discourse, let us come to the time when his accomplishments and graces showed themselves the most clearly. It was after the death of the King Henri the second, the civil wars being stirred up, and things being so mixed up in France that the common people argued the priesthood with the Bishop, and Princes all business and duty with the King, and [the]

Cardinal of Lorraine's eloquence and knowledge recognized by all

Justification of the Cardinal of Lorraine

Civil wars

[18]Henri III died in 1589 at the age of thirty-seven, only five years after Thevet's work was published.

[19]Charles traveled to Rome in 1547/48 (when he was made a cardinal), 1549 (for the conclave following the death of Paul III), 1555, and 1572 (for the conclave following the death of Pius V).

[20]When Charles' uncle Jean died in 1550, Charles took his title of Cardinal of Lorraine, as well as his numerous benefices, including the see of Metz and the abbeys of Cluny and Fécamp, making him easily the wealthiest prelate in France.

[21]The French term for the Wars of Religion.

Gentleman with the Prince, and the Bourgeois with the Gentleman. In short, this was when France was in such a state that she retained no trace of her first dignity and splendor, all the storms, whirlwinds, and waves of evils and calamities of the time fell principally on him, the hatred of enemies of the Church having turned primarily against him, as if the safety [*salut*] and maintenance of the Church lay solely in him. Inasmuch as he discovered all their intents and designs by his subtle mind, they did not even think anything that he did not know; for this reason, they began to lay ambushes, espying all means of trapping him, sure that nobody was causing greater impediment to their designs than he.[22] He was preserved from these ambushes by the grace of God. After the recovery by the late Sieur de Guise his brother of most cities, which had been seized by the rebels, the Lord Cardinal left for the Council of Trent, where he had long been expected and there, in the presence of the assembly, he made up for such a late arrival with a short but elegant Oration.[23] While he treats the business of the Church in this holy universal congregation, François Duke of Guise is treacherously killed before Orléans, whose death he learned rather from [582r] common rumor than from news from France. On this occasion, foreseeing the future losses and ruin of the Church as well as of the Kingdom of France, he withdraws from the King's presence.[24] This was the time that he was in continual danger for his life, neither more nor less exposed to his enemies than the fox to the hounds or the target to archers. Nonetheless, he prevailed over the ambushes and traps laid for him. Upon his return from the Council, then, he withdrew to the city of Reims, which he had determined to adorn as much as possible for him for, in addition to the care he took to police his diocese according to the edicts of the aforesaid Council, and the personal residence in their parishes he ordered for Curates, he worked to adorn it not only with ditches, ramparts, and bulwarks and other fortifications and supplies, but also with a University,[25] and the general study of Philosophy, Medicine, Rights and Laws, and Theology. In addition, the swamps by

Cardinal of Lorraine at the Council of Trent

Reformation of the clergy of Reims

[22]Pamphleteers, particularly in the early to mid-1560s, accused Charles of being responsible for the Wars of Religion, of trying to establish an inquisition in France, and of seeking to restore to the Holy Roman Empire the bishoprics of Metz, Toul, and Verdun, which had been conquered by Henri II.

[23]The Council of Trent reopened on 18 January 1562. Charles arrived on 13 November, accompanied by thirteen bishops, three abbots, and eighteen theologians.

[24]It was widely thought that the king or the Queen Mother, or both acting together, had ordered Guise's assassination.

[25]Thevet's reference here is unclear. If he means the University of Reims, which the cardinal of Lorraine founded in 1548, his chronology is incorrect.

Beautification of Reims by the Cardinal de Lorraine

which the city was surrounded toward the Vesle river[26] and which brought no profit to the Bourgeois were staunched and reduced to gardens and meadows for the great profit of the public, according to his plan and by the authority of the King. Furthermore, he erected a seminary, that is to say a College, to instruct the Ecclesiastical youth in the ministry of the Gospel and the Sacraments, at the most salubrious site in the aforesaid city.[27] More, he erected a University at Pont à Mousson,[28] in which today we see an infinity of students from Germany, France, and the surrounding cities and towns. He was well versed in Theology, Philosophy, and history, very eloquent in the Latin language, in which he wrote several sententious verses; French was very familiar to him, and he spoke proper Italian, in such a way that you would have thought he was from these foreign countries. Foreigners cherished him as if he had been their compatriot, born and brought up with them, so skillful was he at modeling himself and conforming to foreigners' customs and ways of living. He also wrote two books of King Henri's actions, but unable to pursue them because of his great public occupations, he passed them to Pascal the Historian[29] for him to insert them in his history. I shall not play at holding forth here on the dangers from which he escaped after his return from the Council, at Paris[30] and Meaux as well as other places, nor on the reputation he earned during the reign of five Kings whom he served faithfully as prime minister [*premier Conseiller*],[31] even though his adversaries try to give us to understand the contrary, to the great prejudice of the truth, casting unto him the principal blame for the troubles, revolu-

University of Pont à Mousson

[26]The city of Reims stands on the Vesle.

[27]The Council of Trent (1545–63) required the creation of diocesan seminaries with the canon *Cum adolescentium aetas*, adopted during its twenty-third session in 1563. It became compulsory for every diocese to erect a seminary to train the local clergy. Charles founded a seminary in Reims in 1567. His adherence to the requirements enacted at Trent was uncommon in France. The Wars of Religion, financial difficulties, and competition with universities offering chairs in theology made compliance difficult. Between 1580 and 1620, only sixteen seminaries were founded in a kingdom that counted 108 dioceses.

[28]This university, which was founded in 1572, became the intellectual center of Lorraine in the later sixteenth century.

[29]Thevet's reference is unclear, but he may mean Etienne Pasquier (1529–1615), a minor member of the Pléïade and author of *Reserches de la France*. The standard edition of his work is *Les œuvres d'Etienne Pasquier*, 2 vols. (Amsterdam: Compagnie des libraires associez, 1723).

[30]In 1566, François de Montmorency, eldest son of Anne de Montmorency, royal governor of Paris and a personal enemy of Charles, prevented the cardinal from entering the capital with an armed escort. The ensuing conflict, in which the governor forcibly dispersed Charles' escort, forced the cardinal to retire to his diocese for two years.

[31]Charles served four kings in this capacity: Henri II, François II, Henri III, and Charles IX.

tions [*remüemens*] and discontent, which thundered in this Kingdom during the disastrous misfortune of our civil wars. I shall also keep silence (to avoid prolixity) on the warnings [582v] he gave both the King and his nephews[32] during his illness, as well as its cause (which has not been free from suspicion of poison), in order not to seem too prolix and eager to publish his praises. The King having returned from Poland and arrived at Lyons (where the Lord Cardinal had gone to meet his Majesty upon his arrival), the Cardinal decided to pass through Languedoc and the other provinces that bordered on it, in order to quiet the tumult of civil war. Toward that end, he left Lyons for Avignon. At which place on the eighth day of the month of December he was taken with a headache and fever; he died Sunday, the twenty-sixth of the aforesaid month of December at four o'clock in the morning, in the year 1574, aged forty-nine years ten months eight days and four hours,[33] to the great regret of the King, the Queen his mother, all the Princes, Seigneurs, and people of France. His body was carried to the city of Reims and interred behind the great altar in the Choir of the Cathedral Church, in a sepulcher long since prepared by him for this purpose. The following epitaph is written on the tomb.

Death of the Cardinal of Lorraine

Sepulcher of the Cardinal of Lorraine

> To God, the best and greatest Charles, priest of the Holy Roman Church, Cardinal of Lotharingia [Lorraine], Duke of Reims, first among the peers of France, legate of the Holy Apostolic See. From his birth thinking of death and resurrection, while living he set up [this tomb] in the year 1573, the thirty-fifth year of his pontificate.[34] He lived forty-nine years, ten months, eight days, and four hours. He died in the year of Our Lord 1574 on the seventh day before the Calends of January [26 December]. May he rest in peace. Amen.

and around the borders of the aforesaid tomb are written the following words.

> I believed that You are the Christ, Son of the living God, who came into this world.[35]

[32]Cotgrave (*Dictionarie*) gives no hint that "neveu" could refer to anything other than nephews, but the Latin meaning "descendant" may be appropriate here.

[33]With the exception of the cardinal's age, Thevet simply repeats here the specific information about the cardinal's death included in his epitaph.

[34]In 1573 Charles had been archbishop of Reims for thirty-five years.

[35]Thevet's text includes both the Latin inscription and his own translation to the French. To avoid redundancy, we have included only our English translation of Thevet's French version.

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Blaise de Monluc, Marshal of France

Translator's Introduction

As seen in Thevet's biography of the Duke of Guise, contemporaries read the violence of early modern warfare on the bodies and even the faces of the warriors who led the armies. Modern readers will probably be struck by the endless campaigns in which these men engaged, and by their apparent delight in warfare and violence, which was by no means limited to foreign territory. Even French cities like Béarn suffered the depredations of victorious French armies, just as those of northern Italy had done. Thevet also shows, most particularly in the chapter on Phillipe Chabot, marked interest in the noble ancestry of these men coupled with the frank acknowledgment of the lure of money for them. In this biography of Blaise de Lasseran-Massencôme, seigneur de Montluc, Thevet affects ignorance of his subject's fortune, but his ignorance did not prevent the author from understanding the envy felt by Monluc's contemporaries and rivals.

Blaise de Monluc, Marshal of France

Book V Chapter 78

[fol. 460r] Having described the heroic virtues of such brave French warriors, it will only be good, it seems to me, to add to them one of the most renowned that the Aquitaine has ever produced. For if we scrutinize his behavior closely, we shall find that by a special grace particular to him, whether because of simple good luck or other cause, this Gascon gentleman was never defeated in a place where he was in command, and he never attacked his enemy without beating him, even though [460v] he was not equal in the number of men. This was so obvious that he was not ashamed to boast modestly about it.[1] It will further be found that no man alive

[1]In addition to Monluc's military exploits, which Thevet describes in this chapter, Monluc is also an important historian of the period. His famous *Commentaires de Blaise de Monluc* is an autobiography and reflection on the art of war, which King Henri IV called "the soldier's bible." He began writing in 1570 and first published the

today in Europe has been in so many combats, battles, and skirmishes, undertaken night and day, assaults, seizures, and defenses of cities as he has. The duties he fulfilled at the battles Pavia, Bicocca, and Cerisola [Ceresole or Cérisoles], where he commanded the entire musketry, render ample witness to the inestimable virtue of this Lord.[2] The sieges of Bayonne and Fontarabie [Fuenterabía], where the Seigneur de Lautrec[3] personally saw him fight very valiantly, bear witness as well: the aforesaid Sieur de Lautrec held him in high esteem for this duty and since for having followed him with the command of the foot soldiers in the campaigns he led into Lombardy and the Kingdom of Naples, receiving four musket wounds in the assaults and skirmishes where he had always found himself.[4] There are still a great number of honest and valiant men[5] who know the duty he fulfilled when the land and country of Oye were taken, since he was then the Master of the Host of all the French companies. Some of them, having heard that I was drawing up the estate of Illustrious men, sent me

Heroic exploits of the Sieur de Monluc

Portrait of the Sieur de Monluc

work in 1592. See Courteault, *Blaise de Monluc, historien;* Courteault, *Un Cadet de Gascogne au XVIe siécle*; Roy, *Blaise de Monluc*; Michel, *Blaise de Monluc*; Sournia, *Blaise de Monluc*; and Knecht, "The Sword and the Pen."

[2]Blaise de Monluc was captured at Pavia, but since his status did not command a significant ransom, he was released. The battles of La Bicocca and Cerisola (Ceresole or Cérisoles) were fought on 27 April 1522 and 11 April 1544, respectively. Monluc was knighted on the battlefield at Cerisola, and in September 1544 he was promoted to camp-master (roughly the equivalent of a brigadier) while engaged in the siege of Boulogne, which had recently been captured by Henry VIII.

[3]Lautrec (Odet de Foix) commanded the French forces opposing the Spanish troops active around Bayonne in 1523.

[4]One of Monluc's most serious wounds occurred in February 1528 at Forcha di Penne. He gave the following description: "I therefore remained all alone within [a hole] fighting at the door that went out into the street. But from the roof of the parlour, which was unplanked and laid open for that purpose, they peppered me in the meantime with an infinite number of arquebus shot, one of which pierced my target [a light rounded shield or buckler] and shot my arm quite through, within four fingers of my hand, and another so battered the bone at the knitting of my arm and shoulder, that I lost all manner of feeling, so that letting my target fall I was constrained to retire towards my hole, against which I was borne over by those who fought at the door of the parlour; but so fortunately nevertheless for me that my soldiers had, by that means, opportunity to draw me out by the legs, but so leisurely withal, that they very courteously made me tumble heels over head from the very top to the bottom of the graffe, wherein rolling over the ruins of the stones I again broke my already wounded arm in two places." Indeed, Monluc's arm was so seriously injured that it was going to be amputated, but either Monluc changed his mind or was talked out of the amputation. Quoted in Roy, *Blaise de Monluc*, 53.

[5]"gens de bien": Cotgrave (*Dictionarie*) makes a distinction between the adverb and the noun "bien." As a noun, it means wealth, and he locates the expression "gens de bien" among those having to do with the noun and translates it as "honest and valiant people."

the portrait of this heroic Seigneur from Bordeaux,[6] as I represent it to you, having two bullet wounds in the face.[7] With this command of Master of the host he followed all the wars in the County of Roussillon and in the Piedmont, found himself at the battle of Cerisola, where he was captain of the shock troops,[8] having taken that command solely to encourage the soldiers, who had great faith in him.[9] If the Sieurs the Prince of Melphe and the Marshal de Brissac[10] were alive, they could bear witness to his virtue, for having seen him risk his life for the King's service night and day in Piedmont. As he also did in lower Boulogne the day of the battle where the French had the worst of it, in which he stayed alone in combat with a small number, and nonetheless when the late King Henri the second of his name thought all was lost, Monluc sortied in spite of the English and took back twenty-two of our banners, which had been taken, so that only one was lost.[11] Which caused the King Henri to give him the governorships of Alba and Moncalier [Moncalieri],[12] where he did his duty in such a way that the King made him his Vice-regent in Sienna [Siena] in recognition of his services.[13] All the old for-

The Sieur de Montluc in lower Boulogne

[6]Monluc was born near Condom, in the modern department of Gers. It is located in the heart of Gascony, between Bordeaux and Toulouse.

[7]In July 1570, Monluc was wounded severely in the face while leading an assault on the small but well-fortified Navarre stronghold of Rabastens, in the Pyrenees. He said that the surgeon who treated him "with his fingers (so wide were the orifices of the wound) pulled out the bones from my two cheeks and cut away a great deal of flesh from my face, which was all bruised and torn." Quoted in Roy, *Blaise de Monluc*, 221.

[8]"enfans perdus," defined by Cotgrave (*Dictionarie*) as "(ordinarily) gentlemen of companies, reserved for, and exposed unto, all desperate services." Monluc played a crucial role in this battle.

[9]Monluc was knighted at the battle of Cerisole, where he had served the Duke of Enghien.

[10]Thevet is referring to Jean Caraccioli, Prince of Melfi, and Charles de Cossé, Count of Brissac.

[11]Henry VIII's forces besieged Boulogne on 14 July 1544 and captured it on 13 September. A full-scale French counterattack failed to dislodge the English forces.

[12]Following his exploits before Boulogne and the accession of Henri II, Monluc was given an independent command in Piedmont in 1548. He remained there for most of the next six years, serving with distinction under Marshal Brissac, a commander he revered. Monluc was rewarded for his service with the governorship of Alba in 1553.

[13]Following Siena's revolt against its imperial and Florentine overlords in 1522, Pietro Strozzi, a Florentine exile and cousin of the French queen, was made commander of the French forces in Tuscany. Monluc was to be his deputy in Siena itself. He arrived there in July 1554. Shortly afterwards, however, imperial forces defeated Strozzi, and he and other representatives of France left Siena, entrusting the city, now surrounded by the enemy, to Monluc. In the siege that followed, Monluc's six-month heroic resistance—until sickness and starvation among the population forced his surrender—became one of the most famous chapters of his memoirs. Upon his return to court he was made colonel-general of the infantry and chevalier of the Ordre du Roi.

eign Captains from Italy, Spain, and Germany honor yet the memory of the duty he fulfilled at the siege of Sienna [Siena], which he endured for eight whole months,[14] and then in the same command of Vice-regent in Tuscany he was always victorious over his enemies.[15] In recompense of which the late King [461r] Henri the second, at his return from Sienna [Siena], honored him with his order, which was then an insignia of the great and noble services, which the Seigneurs had performed for his Majesty. He also gave him the County of Gorre, to enjoy all his life, which was nonetheless taken from him after the death of the King, at the instigation of a few envious of the good fortune of this martial Lord who, as the continuation of the present discourse will make manifest, was attacked as much or more than any other of his age by the envious, who made his road just as steep as they could, but he easily leveled it out, and most often forced them either to change tactics without declaring their role in the game, or simply to die of spite. If this valiant warrior of blessed memory, François de Lorraine, duke of Guise, were still alive, he would not conceal what he saw done to Monluc, who was then Colonel of Infantry at the siege of Thionville, nor how he took the Tower,[16] by which means he caused the loss of the city.[17] But let us leave these matters and come to those more recent and of fresher memory accomplished by him when, as Vice-regent of the King Charles the ninth of his name, he governed in the province of Guyenne [Aquitaine].[18] Civil wars existing in France, in the year 1561,[19] which have continued to this day under the pretext of Religion,[20] and having brought a strange change in the wills of the subjects of the King, both sides claiming to be taking his Majesty's side in the city of Toulouse, there was a three-day battle with gains on both sides, which were contesting which one would keep control of the city, but the sudden arrival of the Sieur de Monluc delivered it from this danger, routing those who had caused this disorder, some of whom were punished

Sieur de Monluc Chevalier of the order of the King, and Count of Gorre

Sieur de Monluc the King's Governor of Guyenne

Toulouse saved by the Sieur de Monluc

[14]The siege lasted from October 1544 to April 1555. The English account of the siege is in Roy, *Blaise de Monluc*, 138–75.

[15]Monluc was involved in campaigns in Piedmont and Tuscany from 1555 to 1558.

[16]Thevet is referring to the Tour-aux-Puces, part of the defenses of Thionville.

[17]Monluc planned the assault on Thionville (June 1558). Thevet refers to François, Duke of Guise, here because the duke also participated in this battle.

[18]Monluc was sent to Guyenne in December 1561. For details of Monluc's activities there, see Roy, *Blaise de Monluc*, 202–6.

[19]Historians agree that the Massacre at Vassy (1 March 1562) and the events immediately following, especially Condé's capture of Orléans on 12 April, started the Wars of Religion.

[20]If Thevet believes that religion was merely the pretext for the wars, he discusses nowhere in these biographies his opinion about their underlying cause or causes.

when they were captured as infringers and disturbers of the peace.[21] For which good deed the inhabitants of the city have always taken and take him today as the conservator of their lives, goods, and the honor of their wives, an honor that would have been in great danger if war's fury had ravaged this city. It is not that I wish to deprive the Seigneur de Terride, or the sage Lord Chief Justice Seigneur de Mansencal, and finally the Seigneurs de Bazordan, de Savignac, and d'Arné, of the praise they deserve for having helped this brave Monluc to defeat and chase the rebels.[22] Even though I am presenting the Sieur de Monluc as the defender and liberator of the inhabitants of Toulouse, I do not wish to imply he could have brought such a difficult and insufficiently prized enterprise to a successful conclusion all by himself, no matter how courageous he was. He succored the city of Bordeaux, besieged by the same divisions, with the same diligence; he made his way there from Toulouse in two days and two nights. The city delivered from danger, after just two days [461v], he crossed the river with only one hundred twenty knights to fight the Sieur de Duras,[23] of the ancient house of Durfourt and d'Agut, who led a few companies of horse and foot soldiers, thinking to find just the Sieur de Burie,[24] which he did, but only after four hours of combat, and after the aforementioned Monluc had defeated with his little troop, eleven companies of foot soldiers and seven companies of horse of the aforementioned Sieur de Duras. After this victory he laid siege to Montsegur [Montségur], a lovely little city, in Bazadois [Bazadais] on a foothill on the Drot river but which, from the direction of Aix, is dominated by certain hills, almost inaccessible from la Reole [la Réole] and S. Ferme, which he stormed, as he did Pevie d'Agevois and l'Estore.[25] From there, he pursued the Sieur de Duras so closely, without stopping day or night, that he forced him to deliver battle. The latter, being a hardy, valiant, and confident Cheva-

Sieur de Monluc defeats Sieur de Duras

Siege of Montsegur

[21]Monluc wrote, "I stayed there [St.-Germain] but five days, in which time news came that the Huguenots were risen at Marmande and had killed all the religious of the order of St. Francis and burnt their monastery. Immediately came other news of the massacre the Catholics had made of the Huguenots at Cahours [Cahors], with that of Grenade near unto Toulouse. After that came news of the death of Monsieur de Fumel, barbarously massacred by his own tenants who were Huguenots." Quoted in Roy, *Blaise de Monluc*, 203.

[22]Thevet is referring to Antoine de Lomagne, Baron of Terride, Jean de Mansencal, premier president of the Parlement (Court) of Toulouse, Hughes de Bazordan, sieur de Termes, François de Devèze, sieur d'Arné, and either Jean de Lambés, sieur de Savignac, or Jean de Lascours, sieur de Savignac.

[23]Symphonen de Durfort, sieur de Duras.

[24]Charles de Coucys, sieur de Burie.

[25]The editors were unable to identify these place names.

lier descended from a race of elders who had never learned to be daunted in warfare, did not deign to refuse the battle even though his foot soldiers had not yet arrived. The Seigneur de Monluc's undertaking succeeded so well that, with a handful of men, he defeated twenty-three companies of foot soldiers[26] and eleven companies of men-at-arms. So that by diligence and wise conduct of the brave lord (seconded by the Seigneur de Burie, I am troubled by the question of whether I should balance his valiance with an incredible prudence, with which he was magnificently endowed), Guyenne [Aquitaine] was purged for the moment of all troubles and seditions, and no man dared raise his head except in the service of the King, so much was he [Monluc] respected, feared, and revered by every man. He showed himself no less crafty [*advise*] in the second troubles in the year 1567, when people heard that Protestants[27] tried to seize the King Charles the ninth,[28] whom God forgive, than in the first. Even though he did not know of the undertaking by the enemies of his Majesty, nonetheless very wisely and the very day that the troubles started in Paris, he withdrew to the city of Estore, and he had no sooner done so than six hundred men came into the vicinity that very night who planned to enter the Citadel by the postern gate. By such means he kept the city in obedience to the King. Then, knowing that the king needed help, he put such diligence into assembling men that, twenty-nine days after Michaelmas,[29] he sent twelve hundred horse and thirty companies of foot soldiers, who were commanded by him as far as Limoges, and from there by the Sieur de Terride and Goudrin de Mensaley [Monsáles], against the Viscounts who had strong forces, and nonetheless his return stopped them from gaining anything from him, nor [462r] from the places where he commanded. He then left with the few men he could pull together for Saintonge where, upon his arrival, those who had arisen at Marennes were defeated by Madillan[30] and the seneschal of Bassedois [Bazadais],[31] and having joined with the Sieur de Ponts,[32] took Marennes, the isles of Ole-

Sieur de Monluc in L'Estore

[26]Thevet had just written that Duras' foot soldiers had not yet arrived. Presumably he meant those he had hired himself, or that he defeated the cavalry, then the infantry when it arrived.

[27]"ceux de la Religion reformée"

[28]Historians agree that the Huguenots' attempt to seize the king at Meaux (26–28 September 1567) precipitated the second War of Religion.

[29]Michaelmas, feast day of St. Michael the Archangel, is celebrated on 29 September.

[30]Louis de Madaillon (d. 1565), sieur d'Estissac, was governor of La Rochelle and lieutenant general in Poitou.

[31]Odet de Verduzan was seneschal of Bazadais.

[32]Antoine de Pons (d. 1586), Count of Marennes and governor of Saintonge.

Marennes, Ré, and Oleron brought back into obedience to the King

ron [d'Oléron][33] and d'Albert [Arvert].[34] The Isle of Ré[35] was reconquered with the same diligence by the Sieur de Ioberon,[36] the nephew of [the] aforementioned Sieur de Monluc, who had sent him there for that purpose. Had it pleased the King to send him money, artillery, and other supplies, as he had asked, there is no doubt that he should have taken La Rochelle and reduced it to obedience to him. As for the last troubles,[37] it is true that they happened during the time when he was sick, and he was just emerging from the danger of death: for all that his blood never stopped boiling for some exploit that would serve as much to perpetuate his memory as to bring down those whom he both hated and loved. The hatred he bore them was for the disorder and division they kept up in this Kingdom. The friendship he felt for them was founded on the fact that they served him as a pretext to exercise his valor and cause to resound across the entire universe feats by means of which he threw them on their tails [*les acculoit*] more often than they might have desired. Without apprehension of the weakness and debility that seemed to weaken his strength, he did not cease to take the field, and to assemble the most knights and foot soldiers he could and, warned that the enemy forces from Languedoc, Provence, and Dauphiné were approaching the Aquitaine, he went ahead to fight them, accompanied by the Seigneurs de la Valette, des Cars, and several valiant Captains.[38] But as he was eager to try to gain some advantage over them, his forces not being equal to theirs, the young Montsaley [Monsáles] brought him letters from the King, ordering him to have all the Captains march towards My Lord de Montpensier,[39] and him personally to return home, as much because of his sickness as to save the land, which had been entrusted to him. Which he fortunately did, as long as his forces were in his hands. Being at Cahors, where he had gone to fight the Viscounts, and warned that Captain Pilles[40] was in

[33]An island in the Bay of Biscay, off the coast, south of La Rochelle. After Corsica, it is the second-largest French island.

[34]Sources offer several variants: d'Arvert, d'Alvert, or d'Albar. It is a peninsula south of La Rochelle.

[35]An island in the Bay of Biscay, opposite La Rochelle.

[36]Antoine de Gélas, sieur de Leberon (d. 1579).

[37]The standard term for the Wars of Religion. For Thevet, writing in 1584, the "last troubles" would be what modern historians call the Seventh War of Religion (1579–80).

[38]Thevet refers to Jean de Nogaret, Baron of La Vallette and *lieutenant du roi* in Guyenne in 1574, and either Jacques d'Escars, sieur de Merville and *grand sénéchal* of Guyenne, or his eldest son François de Pérusse, Count of Escars.

[39]Thevet may be referring to François de Bourbon-Montpensier, Duke of Montpensier (1542–92).

[40]Thevet refers to the Huguenot captain Armand de Clermont, sieur de Piles.

Charge against Captain Pilles

Agenois[41] with a great number of cavalry, he made his way to this spot to combat him, which he should have done had he not been prevented by his son, Captain Monluc, and the Seigneur de Fontenaille[42] who, accompanied by a few horsemen,[43] met five or six companies of the aforementioned Pilles, whom they charged so hard[44] that they were forced to turn their backs, which was the reason that the aforementioned Pilles crossed the Dordogne river the same night, and withdrew into his camp. And as the father was courageous, so were the children full of prowess, as will be shown by, [462v] among other evidence, the undertaking of the second son of this Lord. A young Captain of great hope, seeing France in peace, fitted out a few vessels on the sea, and surrounded himself with a goodly troop of the Nobility of the Aquitaine, with which he intended to discover the secrets of Guinea and the Kingdoms of the Negroes.[45] But, having no water, and thinking to take on water on the Island of Madeira, they were welcomed by the Portuguese with cannon shots, and he was struck by a bullet of which he died shortly thereafter,[46] and was buried in the church of the Franciscans[47] in the Capital city of the country.[48] It would be too difficult a thing for me to wish [to] comprise all the generous deeds of this brave Lord in so little paper: I shall thus end, to avoid prolixity, with one of the best known, which was when he was commanded by the King to go make war in the Béarn country and, even though it was difficult so quickly to find men for such an expedition, because they thought they had achieved peace, in less than two weeks, nonetheless, he took the field with forty-five companies of foot soldiers and fully six hundred horsemen with whom he decided to go to Béarn, to which he in fact laid siege and, even though it was the strongest fort in the Aquitaine, he still took it in a week. It was here that we can recognize his desire to serve the French Crown for, in order to approach the fort he served as

Young Monluc's trip to Madeira, where he was killed

Béarn taken by the Sieur de Monluc

[41]Thevet is referring to the area around Agen, an important town in Aquitaine, northwest of Toulouse.

[42]Pierre-Bertrand Monluc, son of Blaise de Monluc, monsieur de Fontenilles, was killed in 1566 on the island of Madeira. He also was known as Capitaine Peyrot. For more on him, see Gaffarel, "Le Capitaine Peyrot Monluc."

[43]"salads," which Cotgrave (*Dictionarie*) translates as "helmets" or "horsemen."

[44]"de telle roideur," meaning "so stiffly."

[45]Cotgrave (*Dictionarie*) translates "Negres" as "Negroes" or "Moors."

[46]In 1566.

[47]"Cordeliers," which Cotgrave (*Dictionarie*) translates as "Grey Friars." Thevet himself was a Franciscan.

[48]The Portuguese explorers Joao Gonçalves Zarco and Tristao Vaz Teixeira found their way to Madeira in 1419. In 1497 it was formally annexed to Portugal, and Funchal, on the southern coast, became its capital.

pioneer,[49] cannoneer, soldier, Captain, and Prince. And when the day came for the assault, seeing that those whom he ordered to lead it were not moving as fast as he wanted, he climbed into the breach himself, accompanied by Captains Gobias[50] and Vitcourt, with 100 or 120 gentlemen, of whom forty-two were wounded by musket fire, of whom one was the Sieur de Monluc. That nonetheless did not stop the city from being taken by assault, and sacked and pillaged. But the reward for so much service did not correspond to his desserts, for that cursed and detestable envy, which rules in the courts of Kings and Princes and which ordinarily lives there, having taken a hold of the hearts of a few who wished him ill, was the reason that, after such travails and pain suffered for the defense of the Kingdom and the land of Guyenne [Aquitaine], the King took his governorship from him.[51] And even had he been turned out in his underwear, as the common proverb has it, as long as the world lasts, he will still be clothed in honorable dress. Had he been the only one to be so poorly recompensed,[52] I should say that some star-crossed bad luck had struck him but, since there is a sufficiently large band of the underappreciated, and certainly larger than it need be, those who take after him shall have to take all the more heart [463r] against envy's efforts, recognizing that the stem from which they came cannot immortalize them no matter how beautiful and good it may be, unless they show by deed that they take part in the heroic generosity of this valorous Captain who, even though he felt himself to be grievously wounded by age and blows,[53] nonetheless had himself carried to the siege of La Rochelle,[54] saying that he wanted a trench or ditch

Poor recompense of the Sieur de Monluc

The Sieur de Monluc at the siege of La Rochelle

[49]Pioneers were foot soldiers who marched with, or in advance of, an army or regiment. They dug trenches, repaired roads, and did what was needed to prepare the way for the main body.

[50]Probably Jean de Biran, sieur de Gohas.

[51]Monluc's disabling wound at Rabastens was followed soon after by the Peace of Saint-Germain (August 1570). Monluc was dismissed from his position as lieutenant of Guyenne because it was thought that his strong devotion to Catholicism would make him unable or unwilling to carry out the terms of the peace.

[52]While it is true that Monluc obtained relatively little from the Crown for his commissions, including the governorship of Siena, he was well paid for other activities and enjoyed more than one pension. He also used his position as military commander in Italy and Aquitaine to get rich. He sold commissions, pardons, and exemptions, sold essential military supplies at great profit, and acted as a moneylender. His fortune, at the time of his death, was estimated at a quarter of a million livres. Perhaps Thevet meant that he was poor through lack of appreciation for his many accomplishments.

[53]Although Monluc recovered from his wounds, his face was so shattered that he had to wear a mask for the remainder of his life.

[54]When the second religious war broke out in 1567, Monluc was ordered to attack the Huguenot stronghold of La Rochelle and the islands off the coast of France.

for his sepulcher, and that he was happy to leave the comforts of home to die on the field of honor [*lict d'honneur*], as had the great Anne de Montmorency, the Constable of France, and several members of the house of Lorraine, to which he was quite devoted because he was brought up and educated [*civilizé*] as a page by the redoubtable Claude, Duke of Guise.[55]

Sieur de Monluc Lord Marshal of France

King Charles [the ninth] having died, Henri [the third] presently reigning, upon his return from Poland, made him Lord Marshal of France.[56] This is how he was advanced to great honors for his virtue and prowess. Afterwards, he retired to his house, where he died at the age of seventy-seven years.[57]

Death of Sieur de Monluc, and discourse on the complexion of his body and his habits [moeurs]

He was well-proportioned and upright, and robust as well, with a soldierly countenance so hardened to work and pain that, even as an old man, he did not mind sleeping on hard ground and enduring hunger, cold, and heat. Above all was he secretive in his enterprises, vigilant and active, extremely choleric, feared by each and everyone, harsh and cruel to his soldiers, yet he said he had often found that such severity had brought him more profit [*proffict*] than loss. He was eloquent although he rarely put his nose in books. There is no rumor that he ever frequented the ladies. In his old age, no longer able to train with Mars, he occupied himself with writing his memories of the things he had seen and done in his time, a work that would be worth communicating to the public.[58]

Children of the Sieur de Monluc

He had four male children,[59] of whom three died before him in the service of the King. The first died in Italy, in the breach of the wall at Ostia.[60] The second [Pierre-Bertrand], having planned some conquest in the Indies, was (as I said above) carried off by a cannonade at Madeira. The third died of a musket shot during the civil wars in Gascony, storming a barricade. The fourth [François Fabien], who was a Chevalier of Malta,[61] having rendered the King a notable service at the capture of Brouage, fell sick and died shortly thereafter from the

[55]Claude was Duke of Guise from 1527 to 1550. At about the age of fifteen, Monluc was apprenticed as a page at the Guises' court in Lorraine.

[56]Monluc was made lord marshal in 1574.

[57]Monluc died on 6 August 1577; most sources place his birth between 1500 and 1502.

[58]In addition to the editions of Paul Courteault and Ian Roy, scholarly editions of the *Commentaires* have been published by Alfonse de Ruble, *Commentaires et lettres de Blaise de Monluc*, 5 vols. (Paris: Mme Ve J. Renouard, 1864-72); and *Commentaires, 1521-1576* … Préface par Jean Giono. Édition critique établie et annotée par Paul Courteault (Paris: Gallimard, 1964).

[59]His sons were Marc Antony, Pierre-Bertrand, Jean, and François-Fabien. Thevet omits to mention that Monluc had six daughters (Françoise, Marguerite, Marie, Charlotte-Catherine, Suzanne, and Jeanne-Françoise). For details about their lives, see Sournia, *Blaise de Monluc*, 368–71.

[60]Monluc's eldest son, Marc Antony, was killed at Ostia, near Rome, in 1556.

[61]Monluc's third son, Jean, was a knight of Malta.

travails he suffered on the galleys, which he commanded. The second and third [sons] left children[62] who will not suffer any fall in quality from their place of origin but rather, sensible of the good place whence they started, will try all the more to raise the renown of their house by their prowess and imitation of this hardy Chevalier. I recall having heard it said that, in the fifty years that he had [463v] been under arms and at war, he had only been wounded twenty-four times, which he had nonetheless sold very dear to the enemy, and he had defeated those who had put holes in him even though they had done so. Among others he took account of a Spanish chevalier, named Dom Diego of Toledo, at the time the Governor General of Sicily, a brave warrior who, having wounded this Gascon Captain with a blow of his club on the head, made his escape so well, thanks to the courser[63] of Naples he spurred on so that, had he waited any longer he would have had to pay with his life for the trick he had just played on this warrior. The next day, this Spaniard, notified that our Gascon had not died, came with several of his men to reconnoiter the French camp. Monluc, even though he was badly wounded, threw himself so furiously [*avec telle roideur*] on my Spaniard that he used his lance to drop him quite dead on the ground, leaving the broken part of the lance in his body. Pursuing his attack from there, he chased the others so hard that the roads were bordered with killed and massacred Spaniards. I heard him say at Gadignat as well, in the presence of the late Seigneur de Candale,[64] that he had been at five pitched battles, seventeen assaults on cities, and eleven sieges in which he had been besieged, and more than two hundred skirmishes, where he had done his duty as a true and brave soldier, having been knocked to the ground only twice: the first time at the battle of Pavia when a *Landsknecht* had cut his horses' hamstrings, and the other near Milan where his horse suffered five wounds from pikes.[65] Many who have been treated more harshly than they would like will find it strange that I place this Gascon lord in the ranks of the most brave and resolute Captains of our age but, may it please them, they will take the fact that I prize him whose virtue is admired by the whole world in good part, to the point that if such a discourse is not very pleasing to them, then shall they have to be patient; it has been well viewed by several who were not so difficult.

Other exploits of Marshal Monluc

[62]Monluc's second and fourth sons (Pierre-Bertrand and François Fabien) had children.

[63]A large, powerful horse ridden into battle.

[64]Thevet is either referring to Fédéric, Count of Candale, or his second son, Henri, Count of Foix. Both were dead by 1584.

[65]The sixteen-foot infantry weapon, favored by the Swiss.

Guillaume Budé, Parisien

Translator's Introduction

Thevet favored members of the aristocracy of the sword for his capsule biographies: contemporaries characterized them by the short tunics they wore as *gens de robe courte*. Michel de L'Hospital and Budé, on the other hand, were *gens de robe longue*, who sought advancement in the king's bureaucracy and law courts, rather than by gathering titles to feudal domains and fighting in the king's armies.

Although Budé was offered the seat in the Parlement, or Judicial Court, which was the usual theater for the action of these urban, bourgeois families, he chose instead to devote himself to turning the new learning in ancient languages to the service of his king and the prestige of his nation-state. He labored successfully to found a new institution to acquire and preserve French preeminence in the humanities—the effort to appreciate the beauty and rhetorical power of the great texts of pagan antiquity, without apologizing for the absence of Christian doctrine in them. His royal readers eventually became the Collège de France, an institution that still serves to display what the eminent sociologist Pierre Bourdieu labeled "France's symbolic capital."

Guillaume Budé, Parisien

Book VI Chapter 110

[fol. 551r] Even though it would have been more suitable to abstain from discourse on the words and deeds of this personage, because the best-spoken orators who have yet been and who are yet today could not, though they used all their diligence and eloquence, closely approach the dignity our Budé has earned, so endowed was he with singularities, perfections, and graces.[1] In which I think not at all to decrease, debase, or remove the honor, learning [551v], and expressiveness of such eloquent orators but, since the truth is such, this is not a reason to disguise, palliate, or alter it in any way. Notwithstanding then, that silence on our Budé's virtues

[1]Thevet's attempt to mimic Budé's eloquence leads him to begin with a sentence fragment.

would be more to my honor, on account of my inability to bring this project to a satisfactory conclusion, having nonetheless adopted nonchalance toward such considerations, I have decided to show forth one to our nation who has so honored it that I should be considered entirely too ungrateful if I had not vouchsafed him a place here with the other illustrious men whom I have offered here. It would be a waste of time to expect the entire narration of his exploits, words, and deeds, for I could sooner empty the water from the Seine than acquit myself in this place of my charge according to his merits, if I left nothing aside. This will thus rather leave the Reader hungry than, satisfying him, do wrong to the honor and reputation of our Budé. If we research the stock from which he issued, we should not be surprised that he has acquired immortal praise for his industry, learned writings, and saintly conversation. He was native to Paris, procreated by a very honorable father of a very old and noble family [*race*], who tried all their lives through their prudence and magnanimity to achieve the aggrandizement and ornament not only of their country, but also to serve their lords and Princes our Kings.[2] So that it is not surprising if this divine seedling, which raised no resistance to being bent to the service of his fatherland was born of a stem given to the embellishment, greatness, and conservation of our France, since this quality was infused in him by honor of birth [*degrés de naissance*], which caused him to retain as if by inheritance the natural duty, in which he would devote himself to the advancement of his country. And in order to ready himself for this he devoted such diligence and assiduity to humanistic study that his father was finally forced to scold him, showing him the prejudice he was doing to his health remaining ceaselessly bent [*bandé*] to his studies.[3] For all this he was nonetheless not able to turn him from his continual reading, for which he was praised by certain great personages in the presence of King François the first. But what makes our Budé all the more commendable is that, already being aged, he did not refuse to place himself among schoolchildren to study the Greek language (imitating Cato in this, who decided in his old age to learn to speak Greek)[4] and for preceptor he had George Hierosme [Hermonymus], who claimed to be a Lacedæmonian [Spartan] and whom he kept for a long time at great cost in order to get the little Greek he knew naturally

Budé born to a rich and noble family

Budé's preceptors in the Greek language

[2]Budé's family included distinguished chancery and treasury officers.

[3]Most sources claim that Budé was indifferent to his studies until he was about twenty-four.

[4]Thevet is referring to Marcus Porcius Cato (234–149 BCE), a Roman statesman, orator, and an important author of Latin prose. Thevet's statement that Cato learned Greek in old age comes from Plutarch's biography.

rather than learning it.[5] In order to perfect his [552r] knowledge of this Greek language, therefore, he met the great and famous Lascare [Lascaris],[6] of whom he was only able to have twenty lessons in all, which however he turned to such advantage that Lascare [Lascaris] was forced to recognize that our Budé had brought learning and eloquence into France, which were native [*particulieres*] to Greece just as Cicero, having stolen them from Greece, took them to Rome. As for Mathematics, he understood more than the excellent Jean Faber could teach him, so that Faber was more tired of teaching, even though he received a good wage for it, than his disciple was of learning.[7] For Jurisprudence he was sent to Orléans, where he took such unimaginable pains and travails during the three years he stayed there,[8] to make himself familiar with the matter of this science, proper and specific to the administration and government of the Republic, that he took the prize not only among the French, but also among the Italians, Germans, and others in whatever branch of learning it might be. It would have been an enterprise of too great temerity to compose any panegyrics to him in the Greek language, inasmuch as he showed the dexterity and perfection he had acquired in this language to Lascaris, Longolius,[9] and other learned minds, by letters he wrote them as well as by books, which he brought to light to illustrate this language, in which one recognizes a style so sweet, flowing, and amiable joined to such gravity, decorated with such blooms and rarities that it is impossible to put his writings down the minute one has thrown them a sim-

Budé's Greek books

[5]"pour pouvoir de luy tirer ce peu de Grec qu'il avoit plus par naturel que non pas par art." Budé began his study of Greek around 1497, at the age of twenty-seven. George Hermonymus, his teacher, had been sent to London by Pope Sixtus IV to negotiate the release of the archbishop of York, who had been imprisoned by King Edward IV. Hermonymus stopped in Paris on his return to Italy. Erasmus, who also studied with Hermonymus, complained about his ignorance and obnoxious character; Budé said that he learned nothing from him; and the modern scholar Deno Geanakoplos referred to him as "the rather incompetent Spartan refugee." See McNeil, *Guillaume Budé and Humanism*, 9–10; and Geanakoplos, *Greek Scholars in Venice*, 4.

[6]Joannes (or Janus) Lascaris (c. 1445–1535), one of the most celebrated Greek scholars of his age, ultimately found a refuge, after various travels following the fall of Constantinople (1453), at the court of Lorenzo de' Medici. After the expulsion of the Medici from Florence (1494), he accepted the invitation of Charles VIII to come to Paris, where he offered public instruction in Greek. Budé was one of his pupils. In 1518 he was employed, along with Budé, by François I in the formation of the royal library at Fontainebleau.

[7]McNeil comments (*Budé*, 12n41), "There is no basis whatsoever for claiming, as many do, that he [Budé] studied mathematics under Jacques Lefèvre d'Etaples."

[8]Probably from 1483 to 1486.

[9]Christophe de Longueil (1488?–1522) was a distinguished Latinist and authority on Cicero.

ple glance. Among others his letter missives are stuffed with so many delicacies and rich conceits that the grand personage Tusan did not disdain to make himself their interpreter and commentator.[10] As for his commentaries on the Greek language,[11] I shall not set myself to discourse on the profit we may gather from them, since the simple assay [*essay*] can bear sufficient witness to the marvelous utility that can flow from them. As also with the translations he has done of books by Aristotle and Philo, treating the world,[12] and certain parts of the works of Plutarch.[13] Where he disported himself with such fidelity and industry that one may affirm, without fear of contradiction, that these authors did not describe what they claimed in their Greek and common language better than Budé represented their intention in the Latin language. But, if he was exquisite and commendable for the perfections he had in the Greek language, he deserves no less praise for the clarification he brought to Jurisprudence by his learned and elegant annotations of the *Digest*, where he not only made the [552v] Lawyers' great responses, which are contained therein, easy and intelligible but, after having cut out the discordances, contrarieties, and anomalies present there as much as he could, he corrected several words, which were vitiated, corrupted, and poorly understood there by the Interpreters. And in order that none may say that he was only interested by what some call Theory (improperly, since the science of law lies principally in practice, as Aristotle has well and learnedly shown),[14] after having explained the civil law of the ancient Romans, he gave us his commentary on the words and ways of speaking, which we use in practice with the interpretation of them in our French language, from which none who wish to apply themselves to political administration may deny we

Budé's works in jurisprudence

[10]Jacques Toussain (1490?–1547) published an edition of Budé's *Greek Letters* (*Epistolae graecae* [Paris, 1524, 1556]), with his own grammatical annotations added, in 1527. Josse Budius, Budé's printer, called Toussain Budé's "private auditor." See McNeil, *Budé*, 86.

[11]Budé's *Commentari linguae graecae* went through a number of editions in the decades after its initial publication (Paris, 1529; Cologne, Basel, Venice, 1530; Paris, 1548; Basel, 1556) and proved to be one of the most important contributions to the classical revival in the sixteenth century.

[12]In 1526 Budé published a translation of *De mundo* of the pseudo-Aristotle, written perhaps in the first or second century CE, and a treatise on the same topic attributed to Philo of Alexandria (20 BCE–50 CE).

[13]Budé's 1503 translation of Plutarch's *De placitis decretisque philosophorum naturalibus*, drawn from the same author's *Moralia*, was the first translation from the Greek ever prepared by a French scholar. In 1505 Budé translated Plutarch's *De tranquilitate et securitate animi, De fortuna romanorum,* and *De Alexandri fortuna vel virtute.*

[14]Thevet's reference here is not clear. Aristotle wrote about law in several works, including the *Politics* and *Nicomachean Ethics*.

Budé's book "De asse"

may draw a marvelous profit.[15] He wrote and composed many other works, as much prose as poetry,[16] which I shall pass over even though they deserve great praise, in order to come to the great and excellent work *De Asse,* where he showed the skill and divine industry of his mind.[17] Wherever one seeks an opinion of the work, it was on such a high list that many excellent personages never dared try it or, if they tried, were never able to pursue it to the end. I am not saying this to steal from Hermolae, Politian, and others the praise belonging to them,[18] but the better to uncover the nobility of mind of our Parisian, who would deserve to be immortalized with eternal praise even had he not put pen to any other work but this one, since he researched everything precise about weights and measures, and represented the value and price of moneys, both Latin and Greek, with such certitude that, had he lived at the time of the most ancient Romans and Greeks, he could not have figured with such assurance both the value of these currencies and their rules for counting them unless he had had permission [*credit*] to enter the offices of the greatest noblemen of these nations. Now if one wishes to know with what fidelity he proceeded in this discourse, one has but to compare what he has written about it with the long treatises that others have made on the subject, and one will find that some took pleasure in babbling in order to have others believe things they did not know themselves, while others let themselves flow into the breach and ruin of nonsense and imposture with which this matter was entirely obscured. It is no great wonder, then, if

Budé joins the Court

[15]Budé's *Annotationes in XXIV. libros Pandectarum* (Paris, 1508; many subsequent editions in the first half of the sixteenth century) consists of annotations and commentary to the first twenty-four books of the *Pandects* or *Digest* of Justinian. It increased the scholarly knowledge of Roman law and offered an interpretation of the contents and meaning of the classical text, but also amounted to an attack on traditional legal scholarship. Budé approached the *Digest* from a scholarly, rather than a legal, perspective; he was more interested in restoring the accuracy and understanding of the text as ancient literature than in using it for the practice of law. For more, see Kelley, "Guillaume Budé and the First Historical School of Law."

[16]"tant poëmes que harangues."

[17]Budé's *De asse et partibus eius* (Paris, 1515; many subsequent editions in the first half of the sixteenth century) brought him a greater reputation than any of his other works. Henceforth, he would be considered the premier French humanist and expert on antiquities. Ostensibly a study of ancient measures and moneys, *De asse* was a treasure trove of annotations on classical works and quotations from them. As such, it was widely used as a textbook.

[18]Angelo Poliziano, or Politian (1454–94), was tutor to Lorenzo de Medici's son Piero, one of the greatest textual scholars of his day and the author of Italian lyric poetry. "Hermolae" may be a reference to Ermolao Barbaro the Younger (1453–93), who pioneered the application of humanist philological techniques to the study of philosophical texts.

he was viewed so favorably by Charles the eighth King of France who, plucking him from his study, had him called with great honor to join his Court, since it was quite difficult to choose a person who was endowed with such graces and perfections as our Budé, who was held at Court for this reason, [553r] being retained there by King Louis the twelfth, who could not satiate himself of conferring with him and honoring him with great liberalities, munificences, and marks of his affection.[19] He sent him twice as an Ambassador to Italy,[20] where he executed his charge so felicitously that he was afterwards received among the number of Secretaries to the King and, had he wished to enter the Judicial Court [*Parlement*], he would have had one of the first and most honorable chairs, which was ordained for him. But, since he took no pleasure save when he could converse with the Ladies of his Library,[21] he refused the offer and left the Court[22] until the reign of King François the first who, being a lover of letters [*bonnes lettres*] and of those who gave themselves over to them, could not endure not having this pillar of the Muses in his Court, thinking it would be a dishonor for him, since he was a Prince who desired only to illustrate and elevate the dignity of letters. He did not wish to let Budé languish longer in the shadowy prison of his study—even though, truthfully, he could work there to the great advantage [*proffit*] of the Republic of Letters—it still seemed that, if he were housed at court, his excellence would be engaged among the walls of the office [*cabinet*] the king provided for him.[23] I say this without, however, wishing to favor those who try to lure those from their studies whom they wish to turn to the business of government,[24] so as to make them fly without wings, or with wings like Phaëton's.[25] So, in order to cause the fame and reputation of the Muses to be more widely seen and noticed, he recalled our Parisian to the Court in order that he might make the praise of good learning resound from there as from the summit and most prominent

Budé, having left the Court, is recalled by King François I

[19]Among other offices, Budé served as secretary to Louis XII.

[20]In 1501 Budé visited Venice, probably in some official capacity. In 1505 he made another trip, as part of a French delegation, to the papal court of Julius II, to whom he dedicated his translation of Plutarch's *De tranquilitate et securitate animi.*

[21]"courtiser avec les Dames de sa Bibliotheque" [the Muses].

[22]Sources differ on the date (either 1502 or 1506) of Budé's departure from the royal court.

[23]Cotgrave (*Dictionarie*) also gives "an arbor in a garden" for "cabinet." See Greenblatt, *Learning to Curse*, esp. "Resonance and Wonder," 161–83. In the Renaissance, cabinets of curiosities (*Wunderkammer*) were wide-ranging collections of objects, including ethnographic and archeological artifacts, relics, works of art, and antiquities.

[24]"lesquels ils veulent entremettre aux affaires."

[25] In Greek mythology, Phaëton, the Shining One, was the son of Helios, the sun god.

Budé master of requests of the King's Household

place in the Kingdom of France.[26] And he honored him with the position [*estat*] of Master of Requests of his household to keep him there.[27] This excellent personage used this position to increase and amplify the dignity of good learning, and pursued it more ardently than he had done in the past; he first persuaded this good Prince to establish a safe abode for it in his good city of Paris. He obtained this easily, as much because his request was more than reasonable as because he had the ear of his Prince, who was willing to grant what would be useful for the illustration of the Muses.[28] And in fact the King had the most famous Professors of Europe come, in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin as well as in the other sciences, for whom he provided good and ample wages. This action would have sufficed, if this lover of the Muses had not adorned his name by infinite other prowesses and exploits of war, to render the memory of his immortal praise utterly eternal, and after this Prince the Muses should revere our Budé, who advised, pushed, and led this Prince to such a heroic exploit. Finally, this learned Parisian, after having spent his days as we have set forth above, was [553v] grievously afflicted by a fever by the three Fates, enemies of happiness and the increase, which was daily happening to good learning [*bonnes sciences*] by means of his skill and vigilance. He finally died in Paris, the twenty-second day[29] of August, in the year 1540, at the age of seventy-three years, and was interred at night in Paris in the church of Saint Nicholas of the Fields, having for his funeral pomp just one lit torch, with a great and honorable company of his relations, friends, and the great nobles of the city.[30] And because there are some who cannot seem to mind their own business (as we say),[31] and who are scandal-

François I, at Budé's instigaton, orders wages to the professor[s] of the King

Death and funeral of Budé

[26]It is not clear when and in what capacity Budé first served François. Although Francesco Guicciardini placed Budé among an embassy to Pope Leo X at the very beginning of François' reign, it is more likely that Budé's first service to the new king did not come before 1518. For details, see McNeil, *Budé*, 45–46.

[27]François appointed Budé *maître des requêtes* in 1522.

[28]The royal service for which Budé is best known today is his connection with the establishment of Le Collège de France. In 1529, the year that François promised to subsidize the "royal lecturers," Budé wrote an impassioned plea for an endowment of some kind to promote the serious study of Greek and Latin. This exhortation serves as the preface to his *Commentary on the Greek Language*. By March 1530, five professorships—in Greek, Hebrew, and mathematics—had been created.

[29]Although most sources agree that Budé died on 22 August, some offer 20 or 23 August as the correct date. He was born on 26 January 1467.

[30]His request that he should be buried at night, and his widow's profession of Protestantism at Geneva (where she retired after his death), caused him to be suspected of leanings towards Calvinism.

[31]See Cotgrave (*Dictionarie*) for "se debattans (comme on dit) de la chappe à l'Evesque."

ized by the fact that his last rites were not more sumptuous, and not accepting as an explanation the will he drew up a year before his death, which expressly ordered that there be no other ceremonies at his sepulcher, I decided to add a few verses, which the Lord of Saint Gelais[32] a poet and compatriot of mine wrote on this subject, which will, perhaps, satisfy overly sensitive [*chatoüilleuses*] heads better than what we just alleged about the wishes of the deceased.

French epitaph of Budé

HUICTAIN

Who is this body, that so many follow?
Alas, 'tis Budé, laid out in his coffin.
Why are the bells not tolling more loudly?
His reputation is well enough known.
Why have they not spent more on Torches,
Following the accepted and holy custom?
In order that it be understood from the darkness,
That the light of the French is extinguished.

I think I have discoursed amply enough on the customs, sayings, actions, and writings of this rare personage, to give everyone to understand how mistaken were the few who, taking pleasure only in attacking people worthy of note without any reason, try to abase the praise of Budé. I shall take care not to take this in too high dudgeon, since I see that Budé himself never deigned to respond to the invective addressed to him by Erasmus, Georges Agricole [Agricola], and others who tried to lure him into such contentious debates.[33]

[32]Octavien de Saint-Gelais (1468–1502).

[33]Erasmus reproached Budé for the obscure Latin of *De asse*. There also was a charge, leveled primarily by Italians, that Budé had plagiarized part of this work from Leonardo Porzio. There is more on Budé's relationship with Erasmus in McNeil, *Budé*, chap. 6 ("Budé and Erasmus"). George Agricola also charged Budé with plagiarism; McNeil, *Budé,* 29n27.

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Guillaume Postel

Translator's Introduction

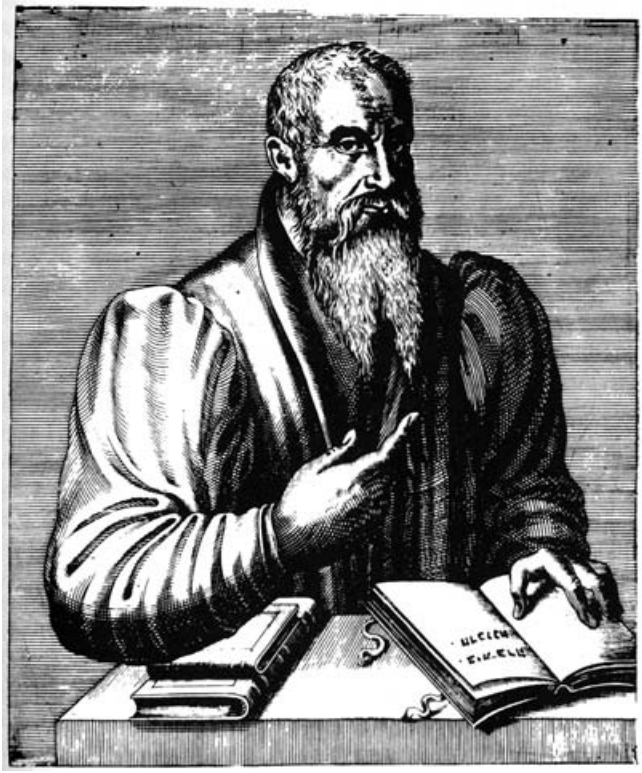
Most of the figures chronicled in this collection were members of the military aristocracy who traced their ancestry back more than the three generations required to be exempt from the hearth tax or *taille*. Thevet, however, was of humble birth, and he knew Postel personally and admired him, so even while chronicling Postel's fall from the high repute he enjoyed during the Renaissance, Thevet maintained his sympathy for the lowborn autodidact.

Thevet notes the subdivision of the bishopric of Angiers, a practice that was common with larger benefices during the ancien régime. Other biographies in this collection have demonstrated aristocrats' eagerness for access to the royal treasury and, as in the case of Langey in the Piedmont, the demands high office placed on nobles' purses. This subdivision of benefices suggests some of the ways nobles used their positions to persuade the lower born to work for them, and the degree to which all members of ancien régime society depended on its hierarchical structure to secure their livelihood.

Thevet appeared puzzled by Postel's indifference to stipends, but he understood and endorsed Postel's interest in expanding European horizons eastward, as well as back in time. Twenty-first-century readers will note Postel's search for grand theories as well as political unification and pacification: both ventures eventually led to his marginalization and, finally, incarceration as the Renaissance gave way to the standardization and codification of the Counter Reform.

Guillaume Postel

Book VI Chapter 123



[fol. 588r]

Postel's birthplace and parents

Guillaume Postel, born of poor parents and native of a little village in Barenton in Lower Normandy not far from Avranches,[1] was consumed in his most tender youth by such a desire for knowledge that, after the death from plague of his father and mother, having barely reached the age of eight and being in the care of his tutors, he often had the patience not to be distracted from his studies by extreme hunger from the morning to sunset. [588v] As much for the lack of means as for the little that remained to him of his inheritance, having been ruined after the plague, however, he was barely able to enjoy

[1]Postel's biographers disagree about the date of his birth, but 25 March 1510 is commonly given as the correct date. Thevet simply omits his birthday. The house where Postel may have been born is a few kilometers from Barenton, in the hamlet of Dolerie, not far from Avranches.

Postel deprived of resources

the liberty of his studies for two full years. Because either the iniquity of the times or the dearness of food was always so contrary to him that he had all the difficulty he could manage to last for three months before some calamity befell him. Nonetheless, at thirteen, already able to acquit himself adequately of the position of schoolmaster,[2] and having amassed a little money in the village of Sagi [Sagy?], beyond Pontoise, he came to Paris to study where, immediately meeting some cutpurses and out of his simplicity and lack of experience, he was separated from this money and his garments down to his shirt while he was sleeping of a night. Reduced to extreme famine and nudity, against the great reverses he endured, he fell into such a bloody flux,[3] what the Italians call Caquesangue, which they wish on their enemies as a curse and blasphemy, from which he suffered for eighteen full months. Because his great loss of blood during the first week would have been enough to lay low and kill the strongest and most vigorous horse in the world, he was so weakened that they expected death more than life for him.[4] And in fact his bodily strength was so weakened and lowered that for six months, which made two years in all, he had no appetite for any food or drink whatever but, whatever was offered to him or whatever he asked for himself, he came to it without appetite and unwillingly. Nonetheless, regaining his strength and getting out of bed little by little as he was able, he found himself forced by the great expense of food and lack of everything to go gleaning in Beauce. At which he showed such diligence that he took enough profit from it to clothe himself and pay his way right into Paris. Taking up his studies there, of which he truthfully had not established a very solid foundation, attracted by the reputation of foreign letters, he began to catch fire in the study of the Hebrew and Greek language[s], at which point a strange and wonderful but nonetheless truthful thing happened to him. For, having heard from a colleague that Jews were maintaining their estate, and that they still used Hebrew letters and kept them as a kind of pledge, he would not stop until he had recovered an Alphabet, which as a student he pursued and reviewed and transcribed so many times that, as soon as he heard of the letter yod for the first time (for he pounced on the one time he heard a reader say that there was a

Postel schoolmaster

Postel suffers from a long Hemorrhage

Postel pursues the Hebrew language

[2]Marion L. Kuntz, one of Postel's modern biographers, doubts his success as a thirteen-year-old schoolteacher. She cites a story, allegedly told by Postel himself, about two of his students who tried to kill him. For details, see Kuntz, *Guillaume Postel*, 7, 7n26. An older biography, still valuable, is Bouwsma, *Concordia Mundi: The Career and Thought of Guillaume Postel*.

[3]Cotgrave (*Dictionarie*) translates Thevet's *dysenterie* as "bloody flux."

[4]According to Kuntz (*Postel*, 8, 8n28), Postel may have suffered from ulcerative colitis.

Hebrew letter called yod, pronounced thus),[5] before he ate or drank and without the aid of any [589r] master, he learned to read [Hebrew] so well that, having found a [Hebrew] Grammar and a Latin version of the Psalms, he learned perfectly all the artifices of this language. In the same way he formed an acquaintance with the Greek language little by little almost [entirely] by his own efforts; because he was depriving his masters of the little bits of time that he employed in his studies, he did not have enough leisure to go hear the lectures and lessons, infrequent at this time and ignorant for the most part, moreover. Furthermore, he had to work hard to translate from Greek into Latin before Jean Gelidius, a very learned Spaniard (under whom Postel was accepted as a Master of Arts), a reading of Themistius' Greek commentaries on Aristotle every day before four o'clock, which, thereafter, the aforementioned Gelidius would read publicly in school.[6] Thus by continuous work he quickly acquired such a reputation that a Portuguese gentleman who conducted the business of the King of Portugal, promised and obligated himself in the King's name to give him wages of four hundred crowns to give two lectures a day for a year, provided that he be willing to leave his course and go to Portugal. But, though Postel had learned Spanish in a few months' conversation with the Portuguese gentleman at the College of Saint Barbara, preferring his studies to profit, he preferred to continue his course to hurrying it or teaching what he had not yet learned well. Having thus done his studies poorly equipped and in great need, it happened that, having formed a friendship with a very learned and good man named Jean Rocourt, the Lord High Bailiff of Amiens, he went with him to the aforesaid city, and lived awhile in his house. At this point they were preparing a magnificent Royal Entry of the queen Eleanor into Rouen, which Postel wished to see.[7] He went there well dressed and with a full wallet, where he met Jean Raquier, the Abbot of Arras,[8] and was retained as the tutor of his nephew at the University of Paris.[9] It was at this point that a light of blessed liberty presented itself to him for the first time for, in addition to the fact that the reverend father Abbot

Postel's practice under Gelidius

Postel called to Portugal to lecture, but he does not wish to go

Jean Rocourt lord Bailiff of Amiens

Jean Raquier Abbot of Arras

[5]*Yod* is the tenth letter of the Hebrew alphabet.

[6]Jean Gelidius (Juan de Gelida or Johannes Gelidius) was a learned Spanish Aristotelian, who translated from Greek into Latin Themistius' work on Aristotle, written in the fourth century.

[7]Leonora was the sister of Emperor Charles V and the new wife of François I. This entry into Rouen occurred in 1532.

[8]Kuntz refers to Jean Raquier as Abbot of Rouen (*Postel*, 11).

[9]Postel's association with Raquier and his nephew François must have been a happy experience. Twenty years later he dedicated his *Liber de causis sev de principiis* (1552) to his former pupil.

began to keep him quite well, he would have been able to come into very good Benefices several times, had he wished to allow it. And in fact when the aforementioned Abbot gave him one for five hundred pounds, he refused it, because he had no wish, said he, to take the responsibility for another in danger of damning himself, having enough to do to govern himself. This was about the time of great peril for Provence and all the part of Gaul, which borrows its name from the city of Narbonne,[10] because of the descent of the Emperor Charles the Fifth, who was returning from the [589v] Tunis expedition he had undertaken in order to break and defeat the pirate Barbarossa[11] to his satisfaction, which had prevented him from invading this kingdom.[12] In order to prevent him from doing so, the Sieur [Jean] de la Forest was thus dispatched toward the great Lord.[13] And for company he could choose no more capable man nor one whom he found more agreeable than Postel, whom he cherished and honored greatly.[14] In fact he was there another time, and he had a very honorable charge when King François the first of his name dispatched an Ambassador to Soleiman [Süleyman], the King [Sultan] of the Turks. It was necessary to send a man who was as skilled in the Greek language as was the Sieur de la Forest, the Ambassador in Chief, who was charged by the King with getting back the inheritance of Crusilion de Tours, the richest man of the time in India, who had died in Asia returning from Narsingue [Narsinghe].[15] The inheritance, worth

Postel in Turkey

The inheritance of Crusilion de Tours

[10]Narbonne was the capital of Gallia Narbonensis. It flourished until the end of the Roman Empire and the arrival of the Visigoths, who made it the capital of their kingdom.

[11]Khair ad-Din Barbarossa (1467–1546), an Ottoman-Turkish admiral and privateer who served in the Ottoman Empire and the Barbary Coast, was made admiral-in-chief by the Ottoman sultan Mulai-Hasan in 1533. A modern biography is Bradford, *The Sultan's Admiral*.

[12]When the Turks captured Tunis in 1534, the former sultan, Mulai-Hasan, fled to the court of Charles V and convinced the emperor to send a fleet of more than two hundred ships, commanded by the Genoese Andrea Doria, to reinstate him. In return, Mulai-Hasan ruled Tunis as Charles' vassal and agreed to end Christian slavery there. The resulting imperial protectorate lasted until the Turks recaptured Tunis in 1574.

[13]"le grand Seigneur"; Thevet must mean the sultan of the Turkish empire. Jean de la Forêt was sent to the Ottoman court in February 1535 to seek the sultan's help in a future war with the emperor. For details, see Bourrilly, "L'ambassade de la Forest et de Marillac à Constantinople."

[14]In 1536 Postel accompanied Jean de la Forêt on his mission to Süleyman's court. The famous Greek scholar Janus Lascaris, one of Florêt's teachers, recommended that Postel be included because of his knowledge of languages. François I, too, was eager for Postel to participate in the mission because he wanted him to bring back rare books for the library at Fontainebleau.

[15]One of Postel's charges in this mission was to recover the wealth of a citizen of Tours. Kuntz (*Postel*, 23–24) provides a detailed account, and identifies Narsinghe as

three hundred thousand crowns, had been left by the deceased in the hands of Ibrahim Bassa.[16] After the Sieur de la Forest, this charge and commission was passed to Postel with letters from the King, but it could not be executed because the murder perpetrated on Bassa's person intervened by the command of the Sultan, who had him strangled after he had lived some eighteen months in Constantinople. As soon as he had learned the common language of the Greeks and a good part of Arabic, he bought and brought into Christendom for the first time all the best authors in each profession he was able to find written in Arabic or Syrian. Then, two years having passed, partly in the trip he took to Africa and partly in skirting various coasts of our sea, he came back to France,[18] where he was welcomed and treated to all the favors of the court and, in particular, of King François and his two children Abdenago [Abednego?] and Henri (for François had earlier been poisoned in Lyons),[19] so that although Pierre Chastelain,[20] who prevented learned men from approaching the King, was opposed to him, the fact remains that, had he wished to join the Court or take Benefices, there was neither a man more welcome among the learned nor [a man] in higher esteem with King François. But he satisfied himself with receiving two hundred crowns of wages every two years for the Royal lecture. He spent several years thus, favored by all and receiving honorable wages every year from the Princess Marguerite, the King's sister until, invited by Chancellor Poyet,[21] of

Commerce[17] *in rare books by Postel*

Wages and lands of Postel

king of Cisqungetana, in India.

[16]Ibrahim Basciah, polemarch (master of war, or commander-in-chief) of the Turks; Kuntz, *Postel*, 24.

[17]"emploicte"; Cotgrave (*Dictionarie*) translates this as "Employ, businesse, occupying trafficke, trade, commerse; also a bargaine made, purchase bought; or a thing whereon money hath beene, or may be, well imployed; also, utterance of commodities."

[18]Postel departed for France from Venice on 9 August 1537.

[19]François I had three sons: François (1518–36); Henri (1519–59), Duke of Orléans, later dauphin and King Henri II; and Charles (1522–45), Duke of Angoulême, then Duke of Orléans. The eldest son, François, was dauphin at the time he died on 10 August 1536 at Tournus. Although modern historians believe he died of natural causes, contemporaries suspected that he had been poisoned. François I, of course, had no son named Abednego. Perhaps Thevet is trying to be clever, naming the king's third son Abednego, rather than Charles, thus recalling the biblical figures of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego (Daniel 2:49).

[20]Petrus Castellanus (Pierre du Chastel) was a noted scholar, bishop of Mâcon and Grand Aumônier. For a brief biography, see Doucet, "Pierre du Chastel."

[21]Guillaume Poyet (1473–1548) represented Louise of Savoy in her legal battle against the constable Charles de Bourbon in 1521. Through the influence of the Queen Mother, he obtained the posts of advocate general (1530) and president of the Parlement (Court) of Paris (1534). He became chancellor of France in 1538. Together with the constable Anne de Montmorency, he attempted to ruin Admiral Chabot and procured his

whom she was not fond, to come to court more often and accept Benefices, he allowed himself to be persuaded by the aforementioned Chancellor, who arranged before anything else for Postel to be provided with a fourth of the Bishopric of Angers, which consisted of a Deanship of thirty-two parishes, in order that, if the King's wages failed him, he [590r] should still have that compensation.[22] For Poyet plotted this conspiracy without Postel's knowledge, like one who, unable to stand in learning against Castellan [Chastelain] before the King, could send Postel against him like his Achilles. The common opinion was that he was the only one who could stand against him. Whence, because of Chancellor Poyet, he came to incur the hatred and great enmity of the Queen of Navarre,[23] Doctor Despence, Castellan [Chastelain], and several others who took their side, so he could only regret having changed his mind. But what could he have done?[24] The entire disaster fell on Poyet. Nonetheless, Postel, supposing he still had some old favors and acquaintances at Court, took the chance of leaving Angers to go to the Pyrenees as an Ambassador to find the King and Queen of Navarre at Montmarsan [Mont de Marsan],[25] to put Poyet back in favor if he could. But not being well enough schooled in the dangers of Court life, he soon discovered that he, who had come to speak for and support Poyet, had great need of an intercessor himself. For he found everything against him in this mission, so that, in addition to the horses he lost, the scattering of his baggage train, and several other inconveniences, which happened to him, he was there in the greatest danger of losing his own liberty. Thus are Trojans wise too late.[26] But as he himself acknowledged somewhere in his works, the withdrawal forced on him by the disgrace of Chancellor Poyet did him more good than the advancement he had obtained in wealth and benefices, because this awakened him to securing his reputation through his writings. The hateful had piteously smothered, buried, and deformed his reputation with their Moorish carping, to the great regret of all those lovers of virtue who could do no less than regret the misery

Postel takes a benefice at Angers

Postel falls from favor because of Chancellor Poyet

condemnation in 1541, but after the admiral was pardoned, Poyet was imprisoned, deprived of his offices, and sentenced to a fine of 100,000 livres. He recovered his liberty in 1545 but died in April 1548.

[22]During the period of 1538 to 1540, Postel secured the friendship and patronage of Poyet, to whom he dedicated his *De republica* (1541). Through Poyet's influence, Postel enjoyed the patronage of Gabriel Bouvery, bishop of Angers and son of Poyet's sister.

[23]Marguerite d'Angoulême (d. 1549) was queen consort of Navarre and daughter of Louise of Savoy.

[24]"Mais qui eut-il faict?"

[25]Thevet refers to Marguerite and her husband, Henri II of Navarre.

[26]Thevet, of course, refers to the Greeks tricking the Trojans by hiding in a large wooden horse (Virgil *Aeneid*, bk. 2).

of this personage, who had created such great designs, the execution of which would have been a great service to Christianity. As for the books Postel brought from the East, some were held as a pledge by the Duke of Bavaria[27] for the sum of two hundred crowns, the others were left in safekeeping at the magnificent house of Antonio Tiepoli [Tiepolo][28] in Venice, and the Syrian New Testament he brought hence among others caused the Emperor Ferdinand[29] to have characters carved to print it, and to send a number of copies all the way to Syria. Now, he had carefully gathered all these foreign books, in order, with their help, to bring his undertaking concerning world peace to fruition, and to uncover the errors of the Koran, and finally to bring back more than the twelfth part of the world, in view of all that was known solely of Asia, Africa, and Europe.[30] [590v] Here I would have inserted the catalogue of his books, were it not for the fact that it should have inflated the discourse too much, and also that several might take pleasure in my parading some of his books, which have been censured for several things poorly digested as much about his mother Jeanne as other matters, which would not edify but serve only to mock. I should still not at all wish to allow or advise that we forget his other works, which can be very useful in clarifying the secrets shown and opened by Postel.[31] After having spent his life as you have heard, [he] passed from life to death in Paris at the Abbey of Saint Martin of the Fields [Saint Martin des Champs] (where he had been relegated[32] by decree of the Parlement [Court] of Paris) the sixth day of September, at nine o'clock in the evening in the year 1581, at the

Books sought out in the East by Postel, for what purpose and where they are kept

Why no catalogue of Postel's books is included here

Death of Postel

[27]Thevet is not specific about chronology here, but the context of this remark suggests that he is referring either to Wilhelm IV (r. 1508–50) or, more probably, Albrecht V (r. 1550–79). Postel returned from this trip in 1550 or 1551.

[28]Antonio Tiepolo was a Venetian diplomat in the mid-1570s.

[29]Thevet refers to Holy Roman Emperor Ferdinand I (r. 1558–64).

[30]"& finalment retirer plus que la douzieme partie du monde, eu esgard à ce qui estoit tant seulement cogneu en l'Asie, l'Affrique, & Europe." Except for this rather brief comment, Thevet has ignored Postel's advocacy of a world religion, best expressed in his *De orbis terrae concordia*. The meaning of Thevet's reference to the "Twelfth part of the world" is unclear.

[31]Thevet may be referring to Postel's Latin translations of texts of the Kabbalah (1548, 1552).

[32]In 1547, Postel met the Venetian mystic Joanna, whom he considered a "New Eve" who had come to save humanity from the sins brought into the world by the first Eve. In 1553, he published *Les très merveilleuses victoires des femmes du nouveau monde*. As a result of the scandal caused by his views, the Catholic Church condemned his writings and imprisoned him in Rome. However, he was freed in 1559 (upon the death of Pope Paul IV) only to be put under house arrest by the Parlement (Court) of Paris at Saint Martin des Champs again in 1563 or 1564 for disturbing the peace with his preaching. He remained there until his death in 1581. For more on Postel's theology, see Petry, *Gender, Kabbalah, and the Reformation*.

The author's statement [tesmoignage] for Postel

age of seventy six years, three months, nine days, and was buried the next day, Thursday, at Saint Martin in the Fields [Saint Martin des Champs].[33] I daresay that, on the peregrinations and trips, which I have taken, to Constantinople and elsewhere, I have always found him to be well-liked by the people, and shall bear witness that I knew him for a very good man and reputed to be one of the most learned of our age.[34] This was quite well recognized by a person devoted to preserving the good memory of this excellent Postel, who dedicated this Sonnet to him.

Whoever thou art who shall see his death mask
Know that you gaze upon a head which held
One of the most noble and sublime minds
That God placed on Earth in our time.
Everything Heaven takes under its cover
Was contained in such a little enclosure
Everyplace on earth or the seas written on the globe
Was written in him in live scripture
He saw the entire round world, with his own eyes or his mind's eye
He knew the varied languages of nations,
He dreamed in himself of universal concord:[35]
He was poor and hated, but not by good people,[36]
He had everything in him, and possessed nothing
Now he enjoys the wealth which abides in all goods.

[33]Thevet, who says Postel died at the age of seventy-six in 1581, obviously believed that he was born in 1505 rather than 1510.

[34]In the summer of 1549, Postel left Venice by ship for the Holy Land. In the fall of the same year, he joined the entourage of Gabriel de Luetz, Baron of Aramon, the French ambassador to the Turks. His other companions on the journey included Pierre Gilles and Thevet. Postel returned to Europe in late 1550 or early 1551.

[35]"la concorde du monde."

[36]"gens de bien," "good people" (Cotgrave, *Dictionarie*). Over the next century, this phrase would be supplanted by *honnête homme* (literally "honest man," but meaning something closer to "respectable man"). We can see the semantic slippage already at work in Cotgrave's translation of "deshonneste" as "dishonorable" in this definition.

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Epilogue

Thevet published *Vrais Pourtraits* in 1584, the same year that saw the death of King Henri III's younger brother, Hercules François, Duke of Anjou and Alençon, which sparked the start of the War of the Three Henrys. The duke's death left the Huguenot Henri of Navarre, the king's cousin and only remaining male descendant of King Louis IX, as legal heir to the throne. The Guises, led by the ultra-Catholic Henri I de Lorraine, Duke of Guise, tried to prevent the accession of a Huguenot king by forming alliances with other leading French Catholic families (the Catholic League), the king of Spain, who financed the League, and the pope.[1] King Henri III only joined the alliance in 1585, thirteen months after his brother's death. Although the king wanted to negotiate a settlement with the Huguenots, he yielded to pressure from the Guises and the League to revoke the privileges previously granted to them, confiscate their wealth, and exclude Henri of Navarre from the succession. Navarre reacted to these measures by forming foreign alliances with German Lutherans, the Protestant king of Denmark, and Elizabeth I of England; then he went to war with his enemies, Henri, Duke of Guise, and King Henri III.

The two Catholic leaders, however, failed to unite against Henri of Navarre. Indeed, King Henri saw the Guise family as a threat to his royal power, and after he lost the battle of Coutras to Henri of Navarre in 1587, he decided to strike first. On 23 December 1588, he lured the Duke of Guise and his brother the Cardinal of Guise to his château at Blois and had them both assassinated by his royal guardsman. Then, to ensure that no contender to the throne remained free to act against him, the king also imprisoned the duke's son. In retaliation, the Catholic League declared war against the Catholic king and the Parlement of Paris brought criminal charges against him. Henri III sought refuge and an alliance with Henri of Navarre. Some seven months after the murder of the Guise brothers, Jacques Clément, a Dominican friar, attacked and fatally wounded the king. On his deathbed, Henri III summoned Henri of Navarre, named him heir to the throne, and begged him to convert to Catholicism for the good of the country.

Henri of Navarre, however, did not convert to Catholicism before he

[1]For an analysis of Philip II's foreign policy, see Parker, *Grand Strategy of Philip II*.

took the throne in 1589 as King Henri IV, so political and religious conditions in France remained unstable.[2] Although some of the late Henri III's Catholic followers supported the new Protestant king, the forces of the Catholic League, funded by Philip II of Spain, took control of a number of French cities. They carefully monitored people's behavior and hanged those whose loyalty to Catholicism they questioned. Charles de Lorraine, Duke of Mayenne, a member of the Guise family and leader of the Catholic League, began a military campaign in northern France, but met defeat at the hands of the new king at Arques in 1589. Henri IV's army then swept through Normandy and defeated the League's forces at Ivry in March 1590. In the spring and summer of the same year, Henri's forces besieged Paris (no king could rule France without controlling the capital), but he withdrew when Philip II of Spain sent the Duke of Parma, one of the most talented military commanders at the time, to aid the city.

In 1593 two events occurred that helped bring peace to France. First, the members of the League failed to agree on a Catholic alternative to the king.[3] At about the same time, Henri IV gave up his Protestant faith. Although he probably never actually said "Paris is worth a Mass," his actions suggest that a desire for peace and unity lay at the heart of his conversion. Continued pockets of resistance throughout France, however, testified to the ferocity of the religious wars: members of the Catholic League still controlled key areas and cities such as Reims. Huguenots continued to live on the defensive, and Spanish troops still occupied parts of the country, including Paris. Indeed, Henri's coronation in 1594 took place at the cathedral at Chartres because the League still controlled Reims, the traditional site of royal coronations. While the king's conversion to Catholicism removed the chief objection of moderate Catholics to Henri, more ardent Catholics did not have faith in the king's rather sudden conversion, and devout Huguenots hoped that it was politically motivated and insincere.[4]

Less than a month after his coronation, Henri IV entered Paris, having bribed the Catholic leaders controlling the city. The king now controlled

[2]For more on the reign of Henri IV, see Buisseret, *Henry IV*; and Sutherland, *Henry IV and the Politics of Religion*.

[3]Eventually the League proclaimed Henri's Catholic uncle, Cardinal Charles de Bourbon, king as Charles X, but Henri held him prisoner. After the cardinal died in 1590, the members of the League could not agree on a new candidate.

[4]Henri's religious convictions changed several times during the course of his life. He was baptized as a Roman Catholic, but his mother, Jeanne d'Albret, declared Calvinism the official religion of Navarre and raised her son as a Protestant. After the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre, Henri was kept in confinement and again became a Catholic—until his escape in 1576 when he once again accepted Calvinism. For more on Henri's conversion, see Wolfe, *Conversion of Henry IV*.

the capital, and began a vigorous campaign to win over moderate Catholics, using force when necessary, but also offering pensions and positions in his government to various nobles and money to towns for their support. As early as 1592, Henri had entered into a war with Spanish forces along France's northeastern frontier and in Brittany, where the Catholic Philippe Emmanuel, Duke of Mercoeur, with Spanish support, had declared an independent state. As Henri's grip on France got stronger, his Catholic enemies invited Spanish and Italian armies to invade the kingdom. In 1595 Spanish forces took several towns in Brittany and also occupied parts of Burgundy. Another force (Spaniards, Italians, and Catholic Walloons) captured Amiens a short time later. In March 1598, however, Henri defeated Mercoeur at the battle of Angers and accepted his surrender. Two months later, in May, the Spaniards withdrew from France under the terms of the Treaty of Vervins.

One month before the Spaniards agreed to the Treaty of Vervins, Henri attempted to end the religious civil war with the Edict of Nantes (April 1598). At least one historian has argued that earlier widespread peasant insurrections, linked especially to winegrowers between 1593 and 1594, had convinced the king that state unity must be a high priority.[5] Indeed, the edict did not introduce a policy of religious toleration but rather a policy of appeasement designed to secure the loyalty of all parties.[6] While the edict emphasized the catholicity of the crown, it gave Huguenots freedom of worship and the control of a large number of fortified towns in southern and western France, what its critics called "a state within a state." Nevertheless, these Huguenot enclaves were never designed to be permanent. While the language of the edict points to religious unity, it says nothing about religious toleration, and the provisions allowing Huguenot cities to maintain troops of their own were intended to last only eight years. Moreover, the edict raised or debated no theological issues, upheld the Catholic Church as the official church, and required Huguenots to pay the tithe and return confiscated church property. French Protestantism was banned in Paris, and Huguenots were forbidden to print and sell books except in the areas they controlled.[7]

Henri IV, the first monarch of the Bourbon dynasty, and his great minister Maximilian de Bethuné, Duke of Sully, then worked to strengthen the economy and the monarchy.[8] Henri allowed no nobles to influence the royal council and lowered taxes paid by the peasantry. Among

[5]See Holt, *French Wars of Religion,* 157.

[6]Holt, *French Wars of Religion,* 153ff.

[7]The text of the Edict of Nantes is in Mousnier, *Assassination of Henri IV,* 316–63.

[8]For more, see Buisseret, *Sully and the Growth of Centralized Government in France*.

his successes, Sully reduced the royal debt that had accumulated during the religious conflict, encouraged trade, promoted education, and started a countrywide highway system. Henri also renovated Paris by constructing the Pont Neuf over the Seine to connect the right and left banks of the city, building the Place Royale (now the Place des Vosges), and adding the Grande Galerie to the Louvre.[9] The art and architecture of his reign were splendid enough to have become known as the Henri IV style.

Despite his success and popularity, Henri still had Catholic enemies. Twice he had survived assassination attempts, by Pierre Barrière in 1593 and Jean Châtel in 1594. In 1610, François Ravaillac, a Catholic schoolmaster, stabbed the king to death while he rode in a coach. His widow, Marie de Médicis, became regent for the young heir, Louis XIII (r. 1610–43). Although Marie favored moderate religious policies, confirming the Edict of Nantes for example, the monarchy and its Huguenot subjects were at war again within a few years. As early as 1616, the heir to the throne, Henri II de Bourbon, Prince of Condé, rebelled against the government. When Huguenot leaders supported the rebellion, the young King Louis must have concluded that they would never be loyal subjects.

In 1620 the monarchy sent an expedition against Huguenots who had disregarded several royal decisions in Béarn. The campaign's success—it reestablished Catholicism there—drove Huguenots elsewhere to rebellion. After indecisive military campaigns against Huguenots in 1621 and 1622, the government made peace with its rebellious subjects. The Treaty of Montpellier confirmed the Edict of Nantes, but Huguenot fortresses were razed and Huguenots retained control only of Montauban and La Rochelle. Another Huguenot rebellion followed in 1625, and Cardinal Richelieu, the king's chief minister, declared the suppression of the revolt to be the monarchy's highest priority. These hostilities concluded with a fourteen-month siege of the Huguenot stronghold of La Rochelle in 1627 and 1628. Under the terms of the 1629 Peace of La Rochelle, Huguenots were allowed to keep only their religious freedoms.

During the rest of Louis XIII's reign and the minority of Louis XIV, implementation of the terms of the edict varied from year to year. When Louis XIV assumed control of the government in 1661, he began to disregard some of its provisions entirely. In 1681 he instigated the policy of dragonnades to intimidate Huguenots to convert to Catholicism or

[9]At the time of its construction, the Grande Galerie, more than four hundred meters long, was the longest such structure in the world.

emigrate.[10] Finally, in 1685 Louis XIV formally revoked the edict and made the practice of Protestantism illegal in France. Ironically, Louis XIV revoked the Edict of Nantes to achieve the same state unity that had motivated Henri to issue the edict in the first place. It is also ironic that the Wars of Religion, which demonstrated the power of great feudal lords in the second half of the sixteenth century, should culminate in the development of absolute monarchy in the next century.

Thevet, of course, wrote about none of this. After 1584 he returned to writing geographical literature, the area in which he first made his reputation. These last, unpublished works included "Description de plusieurs isles" (1588), "Histoire d'André Thevet, Angoumoisin, Cosmographe du Roy, de deux voyages…" (1588), "Sur les Indes occidentales et le Mexique…" (fragments, n.d.),[11] and "Second Voyage d'André Thevet dans les Terres Australes et Occidentales" (1587–88).[12] Thevet died shortly after the conclusion of the War of the Three Henrys. One can only guess what he would have made of the religious policies of Henri IV and his successors.

[10]The policy involved billeting notoriously brutal *dragons* (dragoons) in Huguenot homes (recent converts to Catholicism were exempted from billeting). In fact, the behavior of the troops became so obnoxious that the policy's instigators were reprimanded. See Bernard, "Foucault, Louvois, and the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes," esp. 32ff.

[11]For more information, see de Jonghe, "Histoyre du Méchique, manuscript français inédit du XVIe siècle."

[12]These manuscripts are in the Bibliothèque Nationale, numbered BN MS fr. 17174, 15454, 19031, and 17175, respectively.

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Suggestions for Further Reading

Many of the most relevant and important works on sixteenth-century France, the Wars of Religion, the subjects of Thevet's biographies, and Thevet himself are cited in this volume; this list includes additional suggestions for further reading. While this list highlights works in English, it also includes important books and articles in French.

André Thevet

Most works on Thevet examine his geographical writing and maps; bibliographies of these works can be found in Lestringant's *André Thevet* or in Schlesinger and Stabler's *André Thevet's North America*. More general works on Thevet and those that provide context for his work as a biographer are listed here.

Adhémar, Jean. "André Thevet collectionneur de portraits." *Revue Archéologique* 6th ser., 19/20 (1942/43): 41–54.

Sheds light on how Thevet acquired the portraits that accompany his biographies.

Brun, Robert. *Le Livre Français Illustré de la Renaissance*. Paris: A. et J. Picard, 1969.

A detailed history of book illustration in France that places Thevet's use of copperplate engravings in a wider context.

Lestringant, Frank. *André Thevet: Cosmographe des derniers Valois*. Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1991.

The only full-scale biography of Thevet, by the leading authority on his life and works.

———. *Mapping the Renaissance World: The Geographical Imagination in the Age of Discovery*. Translated by David Fausett, with foreword by Stephen Greenblatt. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994.

Focuses on Thevet as an example of how French writers and cartographers transmitted knowledge about the New World in the sixteenth century; Lestringant's most important work that is available in English.

The European Context

There are hundreds of books and articles that provide a context for Thevet's world and the French Wars of Religion. The following selection includes surveys of the period, biographies, and histories of Christianity and war.

Blockmans, Wim. *Emperor Charles V, 1500–1558*. Translated by Isola van den Hoven-Vardon. London: Arnold, 2002.

Supersedes the older study by Karl Brandi, *The Emperor Charles V.*

Diefendorf, Barbara B., and Carla Hesse, eds. *Culture and Identity in Early Modern Europe: Essays in Honor of Natalie Zemon Davis*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1993.

Duffy, Christopher. *Siege Warfare: The Fortress in the Early Modern World, 1494–1660*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1979, 1996.

Hale, J. R. *War and Society in Renaissance Europe, 1450–1620*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1985.

Brings together various aspects of war, culture, and society.

Hillerbrand, Hans J. *The Division of Christendom: Christianity in the Sixteenth Century*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2007.

Kamen, Henry. *The Iron Century: Social Change in Europe 1550–1660*. London: Weidenfield and Nicholson, 1971. Rev. ed. London: Cardinal, 1976.

————. *Philip of Spain*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1997.

Uses newly discovered archival sources to reinterpret the king's behavior and policies.

Keegan, John. *A History of Warfare*. New York: Random House/Vantage, 1993.

For sixteenth-century developments, see chapter 5, "Fire."

Oman, Charles. *A History of the Art of War in the Sixteenth Century*. London: Methuen, 1937. London: Greenhill Books, 1999.

Essential reading for those interested in military history.

Parker, Geoffrey. *The Grand Strategy of Philip II*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998.

A detailed and erudite study, especially valuable for readers who already have some background in sixteenth-century history.

————. *Philip II*. 4th ed. Chicago: Open Court, 2002.

Rehabilitates the king's reputation.

Pettegree, Andrew. *Europe in the Sixteenth Century*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2002.

A synthesis of current scholarship on a number of topics; useful for readers without prior knowledge of the subject.

Richardson, Glenn. *Renaissance Monarchy: The Reigns of Henry VIII, Francis I, and Charles V*. London: Arnold; New York: Oxford University Press, 2002.

A good introduction to three of the most important sixteenth-century rulers.

Sixteenth- And Early Seventeenth-Century French History

For those who wish to learn more about the French context for the events described in Thevet's biographies, this section includes surveys of French history, studies of the monarchy, government institutions, economics, society, and the nobility.

Baumgartner, Frederic J. *France in the Sixteenth Century*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995.

Covers the "long sixteenth century" from the meeting of the Estates-General in 1484 to its last meeting before the French Revolution in 1614.

Benedict, Philip, ed. *Cities and Social Change in Early Modern France*. London: Unwin Hyman, 1989.

Bitton, Davis. *The French Nobility in Crisis: 1560–1640*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1969.

Analyzes changes in noble status in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.

Bonney, Richard. *The King's Debts: Finances and Politics in France, 1589–1661*. Oxford: Clarendon Press; New York: Oxford University Press, 1981.

Briggs, Robin. *Communities of Belief: Cultural and Social Tensions in Early Modern France*. Oxford: Clarendon Press; New York: Oxford University Press, 1989.

Deals with tensions between upper and lower classes.

———. *Early Modern France, 1560–1715*, 2nd ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998.

Bryson, David M. *Queen Jeanne and the Promised Land: Dynasty, Homeland, Religion and Violence in Sixteenth-Century France*. Leiden: Brill, 1999.

Buisseret, David. *Sully and the Growth of Centralized Government in France, 1598–1610*. London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1968.

Cameron, Keith, ed. *From Valois to Bourbon: Dynasty, State and Society in Early Modern France*. Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1989.

Nine essays.

Crawford, Katherine. *Perilous Performances: Gender and Regency in Early Modern France*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004.

Davis, Natalie Zemon. "Boundaries and the Sense of Self in Sixteenth-Century France." In *Reconstructing Individualism: Autonomy, Individuality, and the Self in Western Thought,* edited by Thomas C. Heller et al., 53–63, 332–36. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1986.

———. "City Women and Religious Change in Sixteenth-Century France." In *A Sampler of Women's Studies,* edited by Dorothy Gies McGuigan, 17–45. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, Center for Continuing Education of Women, 1973.

———. "The Reasons for Misrule: Youth Groups and Charivaris in Sixteenth-Century France." *Past and Present* 50 (1971): 41–75.

———. *Society and Culture in Early Modern France*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1975.

Essential reading; a collection of eight essays that address a wide range of topics using the tools of sociology, anthropology, and textual analysis.

———. "A Trade Union in Sixteenth-Century France." *Economic History Review* 19 (1966): 48–69.

Decrue de Stoutz, Francis. *La Cour de France et la Socété au XVIe Siècle*. Paris, 1888. Reprint, Geneva: Mégariotis, 1978.

Dewald, Jonathan. *Aristocratic Experience and the Origins of Modern Culture: France, 1570–1715*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993.

Diefendorf, Barbara B. *Paris City Councillors in the Sixteenth Century: The Politics of Patrimony*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1983.

Garrisson-Estèbe, Janine. *A History of Sixteenth-Century France, 1483–1598: Renaissance, Reformation, and Rebellion*. Translated by Richard Rex. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995.

Greengrass, Mark. *France in the Age of Henri IV: The Struggle for Stability*. 2nd ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 1995.

Analyzes the problems of the French government and society during the Wars of Religion and their resolution under Henri IV.

———. *Governing Passions: Peace and Reform in the French Kingdom, 1576–1585*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2007.

Holt, Mack P., ed. *Renaissance and Reformation France, 1500–1648*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2002.

———, ed. *Society and Institutions in Early Modern France*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1991.

A series of insightful essays by a prominent scholar.

Huppert, George. *Les Bourgeois Gentilshommes: An Essay in the Definition of Elites in Renaissance France*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977.

Deals with the rising gentry class.

Jouanna, Arlette. *La France du XVIe siècle, 1483–1598*. 2nd ed. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1997.

———. *L'idée de race en France au XVIe siècle et au début du XVIIe siècle: 1498–1614*, 3 vols. Lille: Atelier Reproduction des Thèses, Université de Lille III; Paris: Diffusion, H. Champion, 1976. Rev. ed. in 2 vols., Montpellier: Université Paul Valéry, 1981.

———. *Ordre social: Mythes et hiérarchies dans la France du XVIe siècle*. Paris: Hachette, 1977.

Kelley, Donald R. *The Beginnings of Ideology: Consciousness and Society in the French Reformation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981.

Knecht, Robert J. *French Renaissance Monarchy: Francis I and Henry II*. 2nd ed. London: Longman, 1996.

Brief, aimed at beginning university students.

———. *The Rise and Fall of Renaissance France: 1483–1610*. 2nd ed. Oxford: Blackwell, 2001.

The most authoritative and thorough survey of French history during this period.

Lloyd, Howell A. *The State, France, and the Sixteenth Century*. London: G. Allen and Unwin, 1983.

Major, J. Russell. *The Estates-General of 1560*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1951.

The American Historical Association recognized the importance of Major's research on French institutional history in 2000 when it began awarding an annual prize, named for this author, for the best book on French history.

———. *From Renaissance Monarchy to Absolute Monarchy: French Kings, Nobles and Estates*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994.

———. *Representative Government in Early Modern France*. New Haven, CT:

Yale University Press, 1980.

————. *Representative Institutions in Renaissance France, 1421–1559.* Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1960. Reprint, Westport CT: Greenwood Press, 1983.

Mandrou, Robert. *Introduction to Modern France, 1500–1640: An Essay in Historical Psychology.* Translated by R. E. Hallmark. London: Edward Arnold, 1975; New York: Holmes and Meier, 1976.

Analysis of society and culture, inspired by the "total history" approach of the *Annales* school of historiography.

Mousnier, Roland. *Études sur la France de 1494 à 1559.* Paris: Centre de Documentation Universitaire, 1964.

————. *The Institutions of France under the Absolute Monarchy, 1598–1789*, 2 vols. Translated by Brian Pearce. Chicago: University of Chicago Press,1979–84.

Neuschel, Kristen B. *Word of Honor: Interpreting Noble Culture in Sixteenth-Century France*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1989.

Parker, David. *The Making of French Absolutism*. London: E. Arnold; New York: St. Martin's Press, 1983.

Covers more than the sixteenth century.

Pettegree, Andrew, Paul Nelles, Philip Conner, eds. *The Sixteenth-Century French Religious Book*. Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2001.

Potter, David. *A History of France, 1460–1560: The Emergence of a Nation State*. London: Macmillan; New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995.

Roelker, Nancy Lyman. *One King, One Faith: The Parlement of Paris and the Religious Reformations of the Sixteenth Century*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996.

Salmon, J. H. M. *Renaissance and Revolt: Essays in the Intellectual and Social History of Early Modern France*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987.

————. *Society in Crisis: France in the Sixteenth Century*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1975; London: Methuen, 1979.

One of the best surveys of the period, with an excellent bibliography.

Schalk, Ellery. *From Valor to Pedigree: Ideas of Nobility in France in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986.

Argues that noble status was not based primarily on birth until the late sixteenth century.

Stone, Donald, Jr. *France in the Sixteenth Century: A Medieval Society Transformed*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1976.

By a specialist in French literature; assumes the reader is familiar with the political history of the period.

Sutherland, Nicola M. *The French Secretaries of State in the Age of Catherine de Medici.* London: University of London, Athlone Press, 1962. Reprint, Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1976.

Turchetti, Mario. "Religious Concord and Political Tolerance in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century France." *Sixteenth Century Journal* 22 (1991): 15–25.

The Wars of Religion

This section lists important works on the Wars of Religion. Specialized studies of religious groups, military histories and violence, the impact of the wars on particular religions, and the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre are identified in other sections.

Brown, Elizabeth A. R. *Jean Du Tillet and the French Wars of Religion: Five Tracts, 1562–1569.* Binghamton: State University of New York at Binghamton, 1994.

Provides extensive English-language summaries of these tracts.

Crouzet, Denis. *Dieu en ses Royaumes: Une Histoire des Guerres de Religion*. Seyssel: Champ Vallon, 2008.

————. *La Genèse de la Réforme Française, 1520–1562*. Paris: Sedes, 1996.

————. *Les Guerriers de Dieu: La violence au temps des troubles de religion, vers 1525–vers 1610.* Preface by Pierre Chaunu, foreword by Denis Richet, 2 vols. Seyssel: Champ Vallon, 1990.

Focuses on the religious mentality of both Catholics and Huguenots; an essential book for readers of French.

Garrisson, Janine. *L'Edit de Nantes*. Foreword by Jean-Pierre Babelon. Biarritz: Atlantica, 1997.

An edited text of the Edict of Nantes.

————. *L'Edit de Nantes: Chronique d'une Paix Attendue*. Paris: Fayard, 1998.

————. *L'Edit de Nantes et sa Révocation: Histoire d'une Intolérance*. Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1985.

————. *Guerre Civile et Compromis, 1559–1598*. Paris: Editions de Seuil, 1991.

Heller, Henry. *Iron and Blood: Civil Wars in Sixteenth Century France*. Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1991.

Holt, Mack P. *The French Wars of Religion, 1562*–1629. 2nd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.

An essential book.

Jensen, De Lamar. "French Diplomacy and the Wars of Religion." *Sixteenth Century Journal* 5 (1974): 23–46.

Jouanna, Arlette. *Histoire et Dictionnaire des Guerres de Religion*. Paris: R. Laffont, 1998.

Knecht, Robert J. *The French Civil Wars, 1562–1598*. New York: Longman, 2000.

More thorough than his brief surveys: *The French Religious Wars, 1562–1598* (Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 2002); and *The French Wars of Religion* (2nd ed., New York: Longman, 1996).

Parrow, Kathleen A. "Neither Treason nor Heresy: Use of Defense Arguments to Avoid Forfeiture during the French Wars of Religion." *Sixteenth Century Journal* 22 (1991): 705–16.

Potter, David, ed. and trans. *The French Wars of Religion: Selected Documents*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997.

Useful for students; includes English translations of the most important contemporary sources concerning communal religious violence,

political confrontation, and war.

Salmon, J. H. M. *The French Religious Wars in English Political Thought*. Oxford: Clarendon Press; Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1959.

Sutherland, Nicola M. *Princes, Politics, and Religion, 1547–1589*. London: Hambledon Press, 1984.

Collected essays on the nature and implications of the conflict.

Sypher, G. Wylie. "'Faisant ce qu'il leur vient à plaisir': The Image of Protestantism in French Catholic Polemic on the Eve of the Religious Wars." *Sixteenth Century Journal* 11 (1980): 59–84.

Thomas, Danièle, ed. *L'Edit de Nantes*. Commentary by Jean-Louis Bourgeon; preface by Jean-Marc Ayrault, and afterword by Philippe Plet. Bizanos: Héraclès, 1998.

Thompson, James Westfall. *The Wars of Religion in France, 1559–1576: The Huguenots, Catherine de Medici and Philip II*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1909. Reprint, New York: Frederick Ungar, 1957.

By one of the most respected American historians of his day; although now out of date, this work provides a wealth of detail not found in more modern books.

Wells, Charlotte C. "The Language of Citizenship in the French Religious Wars." *Sixteenth Century Journal* 30, no. 2 (1999): 441–56.

Traces the evolution of ideas about citizenship in the ideological conflicts of late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century France.

Catholics, Huguenots, and *Politiques*

Armstrong, Megan C. *The Politics of Piety: Franciscan Preachers during the Wars of Religion, 1560–1600*. Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2004.

Places the Franciscan order at the heart of the political and religious conflicts.

Barnarvi, Elie, and Robert Descimon. *La Sainte Ligue, le Juge et la Potence: L'Assassinat du Président Brisson (15 Novembre 1591)*. Preface by Denis Richet. Paris: Hachette, 1985.

Baumgartner, Frederic J. *Change and Continuity in the French Episcopate: The Bishops and the Wars of Religion, 1547–1610*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1986.

———. *Radical Reactions: The Political Thought of the French Catholic League*. Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1975.

Benedict, Philip. *The Faith and Fortunes of France's Huguenots, 1600–85*. Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2001.

———. *The Huguenot Population of France, 1600–1685: The Demographic Fate and Customs of a Religious Minority*. Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1991.

Bergin, Joseph. "The Decline and Fall of the House of Guise as an Ecclesiastical Dynasty." *Historical Journal* 25 (1982): 781–803.

———. "The Guises and Their Benefices, 1588–1641." *English Historical Review* 99 (1984): 34–58.

Buisseret, David. *Huguenots and Papists*. London: Ginn, 1972.

Carroll, Stuart. "The Guise Affinity and Popular Protest during the Wars of Religion." *French History* 9 (1995): 125–52.

———. *Noble Power during the French Wars of Religion: The Guise Affinity and the Catholic Cause in Normandy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

Uses archival sources in a groundbreaking study of the Guises and their followers.

———. "The Revolt of Paris, 1588: Aristocratic Insurgency and the Mobilization of Popular Support." *French Historical Studies* 23 (2000): 301–37.

Conner, Philip. *Huguenot Heartland: Montauban and Southern French Calvinism during the Wars of Religion*. Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2002.

Focuses on Protestantism in southern France and argues that the idea of a Huguenot "state within the state" in southern France is a myth.

Coudy, Julien, ed. *The Huguenot Wars*. Translated by Julie Kernan. New York: Chilton Book Co., 1969.

A collection of eyewitness accounts of the events surrounding the wars.

Davis, Natalie Zemon. "The Protestant Printing Workers of Lyon in 1551." In *Aspects de la Propagande Religieuse,* edited by Gabrielle Berthou, 245–57. Geneva: Droz, 1957.

Diefendorf, Barbara B. *From Penitence to Charity: Pious Women and the Catholic Reformation in Paris*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2004.

Received the 2004 J. Russell Major Award for the best book on French history.

Franklin, Julian H. *Jean Bodin and the Rise of Absolutist Theory*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973.

Analyzes the position of the *politiques*, as expressed in the writings of Bodin.

———. *Jean Bodin and the Sixteenth-Century Revolution in the Methodology of Law and History*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1963. Reprint, Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1977.

———, ed. *Jean Bodin*. Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2006.

———, ed. and trans. *Constitutionalism and Resistance in the Sixteenth Century*. New York: Pegasus, 1969.

A good summary of Huguenot political thought, including abridged versions of Hotman's *Francogallia*, Beza's *Right of Magistrates*, and the anonymous *Vindiciae contra Tyrannos*.

———, ed. and trans. *On Sovereignty: Four Chapters from the Six Books of the Commonwealth*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.

Garrisson, Janine. *Les Protestants au XVIe Siècle*. Paris: Fayard, 1988.

Greengrass, Mark. "Financing the Cause: Protestant Mobilization and Accountability in France (1562–1598)." In *Reformation, Revolt and Civil War in France and the Netherlands, 1555–1585,* edited by Philip Benedict et al., 233–54.

Amsterdam: Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1999.

Heller, Henry. *The Conquest of Poverty: The Calvinist Revolt in Sixteenth Century France*. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1986.

Holt, Mack P. *The Duke of Anjou and the* Politique *Struggle during the Wars of Religion*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986.

Examines Henri III's ambivalent relationship with the *politiques*.

Jensen, De Lamar. *Diplomacy and Dogmatism: Bernardino da Mendoza and the French Catholic League*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1964.

Mandrou, Robert. *Histoire des Protestants en France*. Toulouse: Privat, 1977.

Mentzer, Raymond A., Jr., and Andrew Spicer, eds. *Society and Culture in the Huguenot World, 1559–1685*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.

Includes essays by a number of excellent historians including Philip Benedict, Mark Greengrass, Alan James, Luc Racaut, and Penny Roberts, among others.

Nugent, Donald. *Ecumenism in the Age of the Reformation: The Colloquy of Poissy*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1974.

Considers the 1561 colloquy in its larger historical background and argues that it placed the participants at the final crossroads of the Reformation.

Racaut, Luc. *Hatred in Print: Catholic Propaganda and Protestant Identity during the French Wars of Religion*. Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2002.

Examines the battles that took place in print between Catholics and Huguenots.

Rothrock, George A. *The Huguenots: A Biography of a Minority*. Chicago: Nelson Hall, 1979.

Sedgwick, Henry Dwight. *The House of Guise*. London: Lindsay Drummond; New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1938.

A classic in its day, now somewhat out of date.

Sutherland, Nicola M. *The Huguenot Struggle for Recognition*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1980.

Wood, James B. "The Impact of the Wars of Religion: A View of France in 1581." *Sixteenth Century Journal* 15 (1984): 131–68.

Armies and Violence

Benedict, Philip. *Graphic History: The Wars, Massacres and Troubles of Tortorel and Perrissin*. Geneva: Librairie Droz, 2007.

Includes forty prints published in 1570 by Jacques Tortorel and Jean Perrissin that depict the horrors of the French Wars of Religion.

Carroll, Stuart. *Blood and Violence in Early Modern France*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2006.

A careful examination of violence among French nobles from the late medieval period to the mid-seventeenth century.

———. *Martyrs and Murderers: The Guise Family and the Making of Europe*.

New York: Oxford University Press, 2009.

———. "Vengeance and Conspiracy during the French Wars of Religion." In *Conspiracies and Conspiracy Theory in Early Modern Europe: From the Waldensians to the French Revolution,* edited by Barry Coward and Julian Swann, 71–86. Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2004.

Davis, Natalie Zemon. "The Rites of Violence: Religious Riot in Sixteenth-Century France." *Past and Present* 59 (1973): 51–91.

Analyzes recurring patterns of violent crowd behavior. An influential article, republished as chapter 6 of her *Society and Culture in Early Modern France*, and in Alfred Soman, *The Massacre of St. Batholomew.* Also see Janine Garrisson-Estèbe, "The Rites of Violence: A Comment." *Past and Present* 67 (1975): 127–29; and Davis, "The Rites of Violence: Religious Riot in Sixteenth-Century France: A Rejoinder." *Past and Present* 67 (1975): 130–35.

Greengrass, Mark. "Hidden Trancripts: Secret Histories and Personal Testimonies of Religious Violence in the French Wars of Religion." In *The Massacre in History,* edited by Mark Levene and Penny Roberts, chap. 3. New York: Berghahn Books, 1999.

———. "The Psychology of Religious Violence." *French History* 5 (1991): 467–74.

Lloyd, Howell A. *The Rouen Campaign, 1590–92: Politics, Warfare and the Early Modern State*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973.

Love, Ronald S. "'All the King's Horsemen': The Equestrian Army of Henri IV, 1585–1598.'" *Sixteenth Century Journal* 22 (1991): 511–33.

Lynn, J. A. "Tactical Evolution in the French Army, 1560–1660." *French Historical Studies* 14 (1985): 176–91.

Parrow, Kathleen A. *From Defense to Resistance: Justification of Violence during the French Wars of Religion.* Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1993.

A brief study on the legal theories used to justify violence.

Potter, David. *Renaissance France at War: Armies, Culture, and Society.* Rochester, NY: Boydell Press, 2008.

Ranum, Orest. "The French Ritual of Tyrannicide in the Late Sixteenth Century." *Sixteenth Century Journal* 11 (1980): 63–82.

Richet, Denis. "Sociocultural Aspects of Religious Conflicts in Paris during the Second Half of the Sixteenth Century." In *Ritual, Religion and the Sacred: Selections from the Annales*, edited by Robert Forster and Orest Ranum, translated by Elborg Forster and Patricia M. Ranum, 182–212. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982.

Roberts, Penny. "Calvinists in Troyes, 1562–72: The Legacy of Vassy and the Background to Saint Bartholomew." In *Calvinism in Europe, 1540–1620,* edited by Alistair Duke, Gillian Lewis, and Andrew Pettegree, 100–118. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994, 1996.

Wood, James B. *The King's Army: Warfare, Soldiers, and Society during the Wars of Religion in France, 1562–1576*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press,1996.

Analyzes the military experience of both the soldiers and the civilians of France. Detailed, with excellent illustrations.

———. "The Royal Army during the Early Wars of Religion, 1559–1576." In *Society and Institutions in Early Modern France*, edited by Mack P. Holt, 1–35. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1991.

The St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre

Benedict, Philip. "The St. Bartholomew's Massacres in the Provinces." *Historical Journal* 21 (1978): 205–225.

Bourgeon, Jean-Louis. *L'Assassinat de Coligny*. Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1992.

———. *Charles IX devant la Saint-Barthélemy*. Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1995.

———. "Pour une Histoire enfin de la Saint-Barthélemy." *Revue Historique* 282 (1989): 83–142.

Crouzet, Denis. *La nuit de la Saint-Barthélemy: Un rêve perdu de la Renaissance*. Paris: Fayard, 1994.

Sees the massacre as a last bid for the restoration of political and religious harmony in France.

Diefendorf, Barbara B. *Beneath the Cross: Catholics and Huguenots in Sixteenth-Century Paris*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1991.

One of the best studies of the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre and the social circumstances leading up to it.

———. "Prologue to a Massacre: Popular Unrest in Paris, 1557–1572." *American Historical Review* 90 (1985): 1076–91.

———. *The St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre: A Brief History with Documents*. New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2008.

One of the best accounts of the origins and aftermath of the massacre; the selected documents include royal edicts, popular songs, polemics, eyewitness accounts, memoirs, and paintings.

Erlanger, Philippe. *St. Bartholomew's Night: The Massacre of Saint Bartholomew*. Translated by Patrick O'Brien. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1975.

Garrisson-Estèbe, Janine. *La Saint-Barthélemy, 1572*. Brussells: Editions Complexe, 1987.

———. *Tocsin pour un Massacre: La Saison des Saint Barthélemy*. Paris: Le Centurion/Sciences Humaines, 1968.

Jouanna, Arlette. *La Saint-Barthélemy: Les Mystères d'un Crime d'État, 24 Août 1572*. Paris: Gallimard, 2007.

Kingdon, Robert M. *Myths about the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacres, 1572–1576*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988.

Shows how Protestants used the relatively new medium of print to shape reaction to the catastrophe as an early example of the printing press as an agent of social and political change.

Soman, Alfred. *The Massacre of Saint Bartholomew: Reappraisals and Documents*. The Hague: M. Nijhoff, 1974.

Sutherland, Nicola M. *The Massacre of St. Bartholomew and the European Conflict, 1559–1572*. London: Macmillan; New York: Barnes and Noble, 1973.

Examines the political and diplomatic origins of the massacre.

Venard, Marc. "Arrêtez le Massacre!" *Revue d'Histoire Moderne et Contemporaine* 39 (1992): 645–61.

Regional Studies

Benedict, Philip. *Rouen during the Wars of Religion*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981.

Argues that many of the patterns visible in Rouen's history also were characteristic of communities throughout France.

Cassan, Michel. *Le Temps des Guerres de Religion: Le cas du Limousin, vers 1530–vers 1630*. Paris: Editions Publisud, 1996.

Davis, Barbara Beckerman. "Reconstructing the Poor in Early Sixteenth-Century Toulouse." *French History* 7 (September 1993): 249–85.

Davis, Natalie Zemon. "Woman in the Crafts in Sixteenth-Century Lyon," *Feminist Studies* 8 (1982): 46–80.

Dewald, Jonathan. *The Formation of Provincial Nobility: The Magistrates of the Parlement of Rouen, 1499–1610*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1980.

Gal, Stéphane. *Grenoble au Temps de la Ligue: Étude Politique, Sociale et Religieuse d'une Cité en Crise, vers 1562–vers 1598*. Grenoble: Presses Universitaires de Grenoble, 2000.

Garrisson-Estèbe, Janine. *Protestants du Midi, 1559–1598*. Toulouse: Privat, 1980.

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About the Translator and Editor

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Benson and Schlesinger previously collaborated on *Portraits from the Age of Exploration: Selections from André Thevet's "Les Vrais pourtraits et vies des hommes illustres."*

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