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**‘Europe’ in Renaissance France:  
The word, its uses and contexts (c.1540-1620)**

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Thesis submitted for the degree of PhD  
School of Modern Languages and Cultures  
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## ABSTRACT

This thesis offers a study of the word 'Europe' in French Renaissance writing (c.1540-1620). It uses the technique of close reading to analyse how the word was used in a variety of contexts and how it related to issues of significant cultural, social and political import, including the Reformation and the Wars of Religion, the expansion of the Ottoman Empire, and the discovery of the 'New World'. In considering these contexts, the thesis moves beyond an analysis of the term Europe in order to examine instances where the word does not appear and to assess the significance of non-usage. The thesis contributes to the history of the idea of Europe in the sixteenth and early-seventeenth centuries by illuminating how Europe was a flexible term that could be adopted by different writers for different purposes. In turn, the focus on Europe gives rise to new interpretations of French Renaissance texts. Chapter One compares the use of geographical discourse in Rabelais's *Quart Livre* and Apian's *Cosmographie*. Chapter Two examines the representation of communities and their boundaries in Montaigne's *Journal de voyage* and the cosmographies of Thevet and Belleforest. Chapter Three considers the impact of the Reformation on thinking about Europe by analysing Léry's *Histoire d'un voyage* and d'Aubigné's *Histoire universelle*. Chapter Four investigates the impact of the Ottoman Empire on ideas of Europe through an examination of the poetry of Ronsard and the political tracts of François Savary de Brèves, French ambassador to Constantinople. Chapter Five explores Europe in relation to the New World, contrasting the differing uses of the word Europe in Thevet's *Les Singularitez de la France antarctique* and Montaigne's *Essais*.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>5</b>
Europe in the Renaissance	8
Methodology	14
Imagining community in Renaissance France	25
The hospitality of narratives	28
<b>CHAPTER ONE</b>	
<b>Imagining Europe: Rabelais's <i>Quart Livre</i> and Apian's <i>Cosmographie</i></b>	<b>31</b>
Rabelais's imaginary geography	34
Drawing boundaries	38
The uses of the word Europe	41
Images of depletion: The Old World in time	44
Conclusions	55
<b>CHAPTER TWO</b>	
<b>Delimiting Europe: Thevet's and Belleforest's cosmographies and Montaigne's <i>Journal de voyage</i></b>	<b>58</b>
Representing Europe's place in the world	58
Travelling Europe	69
Conclusions	78
<b>CHAPTER THREE</b>	
<b>Fragmenting Europe? The impact of the Reformation in Léry's <i>Histoire d'un voyage fait en la terre du Brésil</i> and d'Aubigné's <i>Histoire universelle</i></b>	<b>81</b>
Europe and Christendom	84
The politics of language	92
Imagined communities in conflict: Calvinist double discourse	97
Conclusions	103
<b>CHAPTER FOUR</b>	
<b>Reducing Europe? The Ottoman threat in the poetry of Ronsard and the political tracts of Savary de Brèves</b>	<b>105</b>
Pierre de Ronsard and the place of France in Europe	107
François Savary de Brèves and the Franco-Ottoman alliance	116
De Brèves in Rome: Diplomatic correspondence	126
Conclusions	128
<b>CHAPTER FIVE</b>	
<b>Expanding Europe? The New World in Montaigne's <i>Essais</i> and Thevet's <i>Les Singularitez de la France antarctique</i></b>	<b>133</b>
Europe as an ideology of empire	134
Europe, savagery and cruelty in the <i>Essais</i>	141
The costs of expansion	155
Conclusions	162
<b>CONCLUSION</b>	
<b><i>Nostre Europe?</i></b>	<b>164</b>
Boundaries and shapes	174
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>	<b>177</b>

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## INTRODUCTION

In 1623 when Francis Bacon wrote ‘we Europeans’ he was articulating a conception of Europe not simply as a continent but as a religious, cultural and political unit with which one could identify. It was the transformations that had taken place in society across the continent over the previous one hundred and fifty years – the period broadly construed as the ‘Renaissance’ – that had increased Europe’s status from a neutral geographical marker of place to an object of allegiance, a set of values. Greater knowledge about the world at large and a corresponding deepening of the sense of ‘us’ versus ‘them’ stimulated consciousness of being European. On the one hand, there was the fear of the Ottoman Empire which had taken the Christian lands of Constantinople in 1453, Belgrade in 1521, Rhodes in 1522 and Cyprus in 1570. And on the other hand, there was the discovery of the ‘New World’ and a people that were thought of as primitive or subhuman. At the same time, improvements in cartographic accuracy and the development of the printing press led to the circulation of maps of the continent, allowing people to visualise Europe, to see their place of origin – a place perceived as superior to the rest of the world, invariably described as ‘barbarous’. This ‘triumphal ideology’ was reflected in Cesare Ripa’s *Iconologia* (1603), which offered a personification of Europe as a queen with a crown, and in the increasing numbers of published histories of Europe, of which Piarfrancesco Giambullari’s 1566 *Historia dell’Europa* was the first.<sup>1</sup>

Or so the argument goes. Jerry Brotton has said that ‘the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries were the point at which Europe began to be defined as possessing a common political and cultural identity’.<sup>2</sup> John Hale has written of the ‘discovery of Europe’ in the Renaissance:

It was during the [Renaissance] that the word Europe first became part of common linguistic usage and that the continent itself was given a securely map-based frame of reference, a set of images that established its identity in pictorial terms, and a triumphal ideology that overrode its internal contradictions.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The phrase ‘triumphal ideology’ is John Hale’s: see *The Civilization of Europe in the Renaissance* (London: HarperCollins, 1993), p. 3. Ripa’s *Iconologia* was a handbook on how to depict allegories and abstract ideas in art: see Hale, pp. 12-13. For a study of Giambullari’s *Historia dell’Europa* see Francesco Vitali, *Pierfrancesco Giambullari e la prima storia d’Europa dell’età moderna* (Milan: FrancoAngeli, 2011).

<sup>2</sup> *The Renaissance Bazaar: From the Silk Road to Michelangelo* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 11.

<sup>3</sup> Hale, p. 3.

Hale's assertion is supported by Denys Hay's classic study of Europe which notes that the usage of the term 'Europe' increased significantly from the fifteenth century, having become associated with the emotive word 'Christendom'.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, the sociologist Gerard Delanty has concluded that the origins of European identity can be traced to the sixteenth century.<sup>5</sup> And the German historian Winfried Schulze has also considered the sixteenth century to be a formative one in the development of Europe, arguing that it gave rise to a notion of Europe as a cultural and religious system.<sup>6</sup>

Bacon's use of the phrase 'we Europeans' has often been cited as evidence of the existence of a European consciousness by the start of the seventeenth century. Hale writes that Bacon 'was assuming that his readers knew where "Europeans" were, who they were, and what, in spite of national differences, they shared'.<sup>7</sup> He further states that 'we Europeans' was 'a phrase, and an assumption, that could not have been used with such confidence a century and a half before'.<sup>8</sup> For Peter Burke the phrase 'suggest[s] that Europe was becoming a community with which people could identify'.<sup>9</sup> Mark Greengrass sees the phrase as an indication that Europe was becoming 'increasingly envisaged as a set of values, an identity given geographical extension'.<sup>10</sup> Anthony Pagden offers the phrase to support his assertion that 'only Europeans have persistently described themselves, usually when faced with cultures they found indescribably alien, to be not merely British or German or Spanish but also European'.<sup>11</sup>

What these scholars do not consider is the context of Bacon's remark. The phrase 'we Europeans' is a translation of the Latin 'nos Europaeos' found in the third chapter of the eighth book of Bacon's *De Augmentis Scientiarum*, an update of his 1605 *Advancement of Learning*:

At hodie, atque apud nos Europaeos, si unquam, aut uspiam, Potentia Navalis (quae quidam huic Regno Britanniae in Dotem cessit), summi, ad Rerum Fastigia, Momenti est, tum quia pleraque

<sup>4</sup> *Europe: The Emergence of an Idea*, 2nd edn (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1968), p. 73.

<sup>5</sup> *Inventing Europe: Idea, Identity, Reality* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1995), p. 37.

<sup>6</sup> 'Europa in der Frühen Neuzeit - Begriffsgeschichtliche Befunde', in *"Europäische Geschichte" als historiographisches Problem*, ed. by Heinz Duchhardt and Andreas Kunz (Mainz: Philipp von Zabern, 1997), pp. 35-65.

<sup>7</sup> Hale, p. 3.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>9</sup> 'Did Europe exist before 1700?', *History of European Ideas*, 1 (1980), 21-29 (p. 24).

<sup>10</sup> *Christendom Destroyed: Europe 1517-1648* (London: Allen Lane, 2014), p. 28.

<sup>11</sup> 'Europe: Conceptualizing a Continent', in *The Idea of Europe: From Antiquity to the European Union*, ed. by Anthony Pagden (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 33-54 (p. 33).

Europae Regna Mediterranea simpliciter non sunt, sed maxima ex Parte Mari cincta; tum etiam, quia Utriusque Indiae Thesauri & Opes, Imperio Maris, veluti Accessorium quiddam, existunt.<sup>12</sup>

Bacon is writing of the military importance of the sea to the countries of Europe and is therefore articulating a sense of Europe as distinct from the rest of the world in terms of its political organisation. How far he is attached to Europe as a cultural identity is debatable, however. When Gilbert Wats published his English translation of *De Augmentis Scientiarum* half a century later in 1674 he did not use the adjective European, opting for the formulation ‘with us of Europe’ – a less colourful rendering than ‘we Europeans’.<sup>13</sup>

Indeed, the relative paucity of the word European is perhaps more telling than the fact of its appearance. Might the sole instance of ‘nos Europaeos’ in *De Augmentis Scientiarum* be evidence of a lack, of an exception, rather than the rule? The frequency with which it is cited in the scholarly literature on the idea of Europe seems exaggerated in comparison to its status and meaning within Bacon’s text as a whole. If Europe was as important an idea to the society and intellectual culture of the Renaissance as Hale and others have argued then how do we explain the relative dearth of the term Europe in the works of the major thinkers of the period? The word is found on just ten occasions in the complete works of Shakespeare and makes only one appearance in the whole of Montaigne’s voluminous *Essais*. Neither Shakespeare nor Montaigne used the adjectival form.

This thesis is concerned with the problem of how to interpret words uttered in the past in order to analyse how Europe was understood in the early modern period. It will investigate the fortunes of the word Europe and the ideas the term signified and generated during the Renaissance in France (c. 1540 – 1620). Rather than take an approach of ‘distant reading’ and draw conclusions based on increases or decreases over time in the instances of words like ‘Europe’ and ‘European’, I understand such terms in relation to the contexts in which they were used, eschewing the temptation to consider phrases like Bacon’s ‘nos Europaeos’ as separate from the texts in which they were written.<sup>14</sup> I ask how writers engaged with developing ideas about Europe, and how and why they constructed and/or challenged different representations of Europe.

<sup>12</sup> Francis Bacon, *Operum moralium et civilium* (London: Edward Griffin, 1638), p. 271.

<sup>13</sup> Francis Bacon, *Of the Advancement and Proficiencie of Learning: Or The Partitions of the Sciences*, trans. by Gilbert Wats (London: Thomas Williams, 1674), p. 290.

<sup>14</sup> For more on distant reading see Franco Moretti, *Distant Reading* (London: Verso, 2013).



## Europe in the Renaissance

Before setting out the methodological concerns of the thesis it will be useful to consider in more detail how the idea of Europe in the Renaissance has been understood. Hay argued that in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, since it was felt that Latin Christianity was geographically confined to the continent of Europe, the term Europe began to become associated with the emotive, religious and cultural sentiments of Christendom.<sup>15</sup> He noted that the usage of the word Europe increased significantly from the fifteenth century, eventually eclipsing Christendom by the seventeenth.<sup>16</sup> The changes in the fortunes of the word that Hay and others have outlined have been associated with four significant transformations that took place in the culture and society of the continent during the Renaissance period: new humanistic methods of scholarship and education; discoveries and breakthroughs in science and geography; the westward expansion of the Islamic Ottoman Empire; and the Reformation of the Christian Church.<sup>17</sup>

The Renaissance humanist movement inspired a fashion for words of classical origin, like Europe.<sup>18</sup> Renaissance humanism is associated with the ‘rebirth’ of antiquity, referring as it does to a cultural and educational mode that placed an emphasis on classical languages, literatures and learning.<sup>19</sup> Accordingly, *Respublica Christiana* became a popular equivalent for the medieval Latin term *Christianitas*.<sup>20</sup> The word

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<sup>15</sup> Hay, pp. 56-61.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 73.

<sup>17</sup> Of course, the term ‘Renaissance’ has become somewhat unfashionable of late, since it is considered too simplistic to regard the period as a complete break from the past as if it were the antithesis of the Middle Ages. The chronology is another sticking point: when did the Renaissance begin and when did it end? 1400-1600 offers a rough timeframe. In truth, the transformations of the period took place at different rates in different places. Another objection is that the idea of the Renaissance is concerned solely with elite culture and ignores study of wider popular culture. For a thorough overview of the development of the idea of the Renaissance see Johan Huizinga, ‘The Problem of the Renaissance’, in *Men and Ideas: History, the Middle Ages, the Renaissance*, trans. by James S. Holmes and Hans van Marle (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1960), pp. 243-87. I regard the term Renaissance as useful for my purposes. If we understand the Renaissance to refer to a period of transition, of ‘a long succession of waves rolling onto a beach, each of them breaking at a different point and a different moment’, rather than a break, as Huizinga has argued (pp. 281-2), then we capture some of the sense that many of the people whose writings are examined in this thesis felt, namely that the world around them was changing in unsettling and unpredictable ways. The problem, as I see it, with the alternative designation ‘early modern’ is that it imposes a teleological view of history and that the period it designates covers about three centuries of history. I use ‘Renaissance’ in part to indicate that I am concerned solely with the early ‘early modern’ period, as it were, and not with the whole span. Furthermore, the limitations of the term are helpful: ‘early modern’ began life as a term in social history, whereas ‘Renaissance’ suggests literate and intellectual culture, a restricted stratum of society with which this thesis is concerned.

<sup>18</sup> Hay, p. 87.

<sup>19</sup> See *The Cambridge Companion to Renaissance Humanism*, ed. by Jill Kraye (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

<sup>20</sup> Hay, p. 87.

Europe, too, could be used as an alternative. The origin of the name of the continent has long been lost in time, so much so that in the fifth century BC Herodotus wrote that ‘no men have any knowledge whether [Europe] be surrounded or not by seas, nor whence it took its name, nor is it clear who gave the name’.<sup>21</sup> In the sixteenth century the mythical Phoenician princess Europa, who was abducted by Jupiter in the form of a bull, was considered the eponym of the continent, although the story was regarded as somewhat absurd: François de Belleforest insisted that it was ‘tout fabuleux, que ce qu’on dit de celle dame Tyrienne, que on dit avoir esté ravie par Jupiter: car ce seroit une trop grande absurdité, de donner le nom de ceste-cy au pays Européen, veu qu’elle n’y fut onc’.<sup>22</sup>

Given humanistic enthusiasm for ancient mythology, the association of the continent with the Europa myth spurred the development of the idea of Europe. Some classically-minded artists turned to the figure of Europa as a subject in their works. Titian’s *Rape of Europa* (c. 1560-2) is perhaps the most famous depiction of the abduction scene, but it is not the earliest; Liberale da Verona’s *Enlèvement d’Europe*, held in the Louvre collections, dates from around 1470. Not that Europa was confined to painting: Filarete included a bronze relief of Europa in the doors of the old Saint Peter’s at the Vatican (completed in 1445).<sup>23</sup> Culturally and artistically, then, the foundation myth of the continent was becoming more popular in the Renaissance.

Intellectual advances in geography also encouraged adoption of the word Europe. Since the time of the ancient Greeks, the world had been understood to consist of a single habitable landmass (*oecumene*), which was conventionally divided into the three parts of Europe, Asia and Africa.<sup>24</sup> Whilst the boundary between Europe and Asia was not always clear-cut, the eastern end point of Europe was generally assumed to be the river Don.<sup>25</sup> Christian thinking linked the tripartite division of the world with the

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<sup>21</sup> *The Persian Wars*, trans. by A.D. Godley, 4 vols (London: Heinemann, 1920-5), II (1921), 245. A thorough consideration of the history of the name is offered by Peter H. Gommers in *Europe: What’s in a Name* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2001), pp. 9-68. Etymologically, the word is considered to be a pre-Greek word borrowed into the language, but what it might have meant is unclear. There were several towns and rivers in Greece with the name Europe and it seems likely that the name for one of these was extended to encompass a wider area. The association with the goddess Europa was almost certainly made after the name of the region was already in place. In fact, Europa was a popular name in ancient Greece and so it is possible that the area was earlier linked to a different Europa.

<sup>22</sup> François de Belleforest, *La Cosmographie universelle de tout le monde, augmentée, ornée et enrichie par F. de Belle-Forest*, 3 vols (Paris: Michel Sonnius, 1575), I, p. 27. All later references are to this edition of the text.

<sup>23</sup> Gommers, p. 111.

<sup>24</sup> Hay, p. 2.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2. Martin Lewis and Kären Wigen have written of the ‘myth of continents’, arguing that the basic geographical divisions of the world are cultural constructs: *The Myth of Continents: A Critique of Metageography* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997).

three sons of Noah, positing that each continent was populated by the children of one of the sons.<sup>26</sup> The discovery of the New World destroyed the conception of the world as a single oecumene surrounded by water. The globe was reconceptualised as a division of four continents – Europe, Asia, Africa and America – not two landmasses.<sup>27</sup> As a result, the importance of the idea of continents increased.<sup>28</sup> Furthermore, the voyages of discovery in the Americas and the rediscovery of Ptolemy's *Geographia* fuelled interest in and development of geography and cartography.<sup>29</sup> There were more and more publications concerned with matters of geography and so the average reader would be more likely to encounter the word Europe.<sup>30</sup> Following the voyages, 'Europe,' writes Roberto Dainotto, 'was in everyone's mind'.<sup>31</sup>

The discovery of the New World helped to shape a sense of the superiority of Europe. The geographical divisions of the world had always had some cultural resonance. The ancient Greek rhetorician Isocrates wrote that 'Europe became stronger than Asia' (*Panathenaicus* 47).<sup>32</sup> And the first-century geographer Strabo described Europe as 'both varied in form and admirably adapted by nature for the development of excellence in men and governments, and also because it has contributed most of its own store of good things to the other continents'.<sup>33</sup> Asia became associated with values antithetical to those which supposedly represented Europe.<sup>34</sup> The peoples of Europe were said to be well-governed and to live in freedom, whereas the peoples of Asia were

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<sup>26</sup> The origins of the theory are biblical. After the Flood, God said to Noah, 'Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth' (Genesis 9. 1). Shem's children are supposed to have populated Asia, Ham's Africa and Japheth's Europe. '[T]he nations from the stock of Japheth [...] occupy the middle region of Asia Minor from Mount Taurus [in present day Turkey] to the north and all of Europe up to the Britannic Ocean,' (IX. 2. 37) is how Isidore of Seville put it in the early seventh century: *The Etymologies of Isidore of Seville*, trans. by Stephen A. Barney, W.J. Lewis, J.A. Beach and Oliver Berghof (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 193.

<sup>27</sup> This was not an inevitable conclusion to the discovery of America, given that the idea of the continents is a cultural construct. In *Les Trois Mondes* Lancelot Voisin de la Popelinière offered a tripartite division of the world: the 'vieil monde' consisting of Europe, Asia and Africa; the New World of the Americas; and the as yet unexplored 'terre Australe' to the south. See *Les Trois Mondes de La Popelinière*, ed. by Anne-Marie Beaulieu (Geneva: Droz, 1997).

<sup>28</sup> Numa Broc, *La Géographie de la Renaissance (1420-1620)* (Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale, 1980), p. 209.

<sup>29</sup> For an account of the importance of Ptolemy in the geographical thought of the Renaissance see Broc, pp. 9-19.

<sup>30</sup> Broc's *La Géographie de la Renaissance* provides a comprehensive overview of the geographical publications of the period.

<sup>31</sup> Roberto M. Dainotto, *Europe (In Theory)* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2007), p. 41.

<sup>32</sup> *Isocrates*, trans. by George Norlin and Larue Van Hook, 3 vols (London: Heinemann, 1928-1945), II, trans. by George Norlin (1929), p. 401.

<sup>33</sup> *Geography*, trans. by Horace Leonard Jones, 8 vols (London: Heinemann, 1927-1932), I (1927), p. 485.

<sup>34</sup> Federico Chabod, *Storia dell'idea d'Europa* (Bari: Laterza, 1961), pp. 15-16.

lethargic and subject to despotism.<sup>35</sup> The increasing prevalence of the word Europe in the Renaissance was accompanied by descriptions of the continent as superior to the other three parts of the world in terms of culture, religion and technology. Artists depicted personifications of the continent, visual characterisations of Europe as a person, usually a queen, which conveyed an image of superiority vis-à-vis the other parts of the world.<sup>36</sup> While the Romans had considered those peoples beyond the boundaries of their empire to be not fully human,<sup>37</sup> and medieval Christians had denigrated the non-Christian, pagan world as barbarous and uncivilised,<sup>38</sup> men of the Renaissance were, following the voyages of discovery, increasingly likely to think of themselves in terms of Europe when they referred to the differences between ‘them’ and ‘us’.

The fall of Constantinople in 1453 and the advance of the Ottoman Turks into the continent is said to have hastened the uptake of the term Europe. The idea of Christendom had been shaped in part by the spread of Islam after the seventh century in Asia and North Africa. *Christianitas* signified a cultural identity that was defined against the perception of other religions.<sup>39</sup> While Christianity had in theory an aspiration to universality, in practice Christendom was understood to be limited to particular areas, beyond which lay pagan lands.<sup>40</sup> In that way, the term Christendom had a spatial connotation. With the extinction of the Christian Byzantine Empire in 1453, a buffer zone between east and west had been removed. Ottoman expansion saw the Turks reach as far as the gates of Vienna in 1529 before their siege failed. War continued on and off between the Christian powers of Europe, the Habsburg dynasty above all, and the Ottoman Empire until they were rebuffed from Vienna a second time in 1683. The

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<sup>35</sup> Pagden, ‘Europe: Conceptualizing a Continent’, pp. 36-7. The terminology was not stable and Aristotle, for example, distinguished Greece from both Europe and Asia: ‘The nations inhabiting the cold places and those of Europe are full of spirit but somewhat deficient in intelligence and skill, so that they continue comparatively free, but lacking in political organization and capacity to rule their neighbours. The peoples of Asia on the other hand are intelligent and skilful in temperament, but lack spirit, so that they are in continuous subjection and slavery. But the Greek race participates in both characters, just as it occupies the middle position geographically, for it is both spirited and intelligent; hence it continues to be free and to have very good political institutions, and to be capable of ruling all mankind if it attains constitutional unity.’ See *Politics*, VII, 1327b in *Aristotle*, 23 vols (London: Heinemann, 1926-1960), XXI: *Politics*, trans. by H. Rackham (1932), pp. 565-7. Edith Hall has studied ancient Greek identity formation and the denigration of other groups as barbarians in *Inventing the Barbarian: Greek Self-Definition through Tragedy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991).

<sup>36</sup> Michael Wintle, *The Image of Europe: Visualizing Europe in Cartography and Iconography Throughout the Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 236-43.

<sup>37</sup> Pagden, ‘Europe: Conceptualizing a Continent’, p. 42.

<sup>38</sup> Chabod, p. 27.

<sup>39</sup> William Chester Jordan, ‘“Europe” in the Middle Ages’, in *The Idea of Europe*, ed. by Pagden, pp. 72-90 (pp. 74-5).

<sup>40</sup> Hay, p. 29.

challenge they posed – the challenge they had always posed – was one of culture and ideology; Christians and Muslims by definition held different, and potentially hostile, beliefs. And the challenge was political and territorial as the Habsburgs and the Ottomans fought for supremacy in the Balkans. The word Europe was used when invoking, with increasing regularity, the threat to the territory of the Christian princes. For instance, Enea Silvio Piccolomini, later Pope Pius II from 1458-64, wrote in response to the capture of Constantinople: ‘In times gone past we have been wounded in Asia and in Africa, that is to say, in foreign lands; now truly we have been stricken and felled in Europe, that is to say in our own fatherland, in our own house, in our seat’.<sup>41</sup>

The term Europe was further popularised as a result of the Protestant Reformation weakening the integrity of the notion of Christendom as a totalising, all-embracing entity. In medieval writings the word Europe tended to denote space and was confined largely to scholarly writings concerned with matters of geography.<sup>42</sup> The term Christendom was found much more often. A major frame of reference, it was a word with significant emotional impact and was held together as a coherent unity by the shared culture of Christianity, the common Latin language and the headship of the pope.<sup>43</sup> Christendom was, though, an ambiguous idea and could on occasion refer to eastern Orthodox and other communities besides the people, places and political units dominated by the Latin Christian Church.<sup>44</sup> It was also a robust idea, surviving challenges to the unity and collective identity that it signified. The schism of the western church in 1378 had led to decades of political infighting, with numerous rival popes elected simultaneously by competing factions, thereby severely weakening the power and symbolic unitary leadership of the papacy, as well as allowing kings and princes to extend their power over ecclesiastical structures in their domains. Even before, the church had been growing less transnational in character as monarchs had increasingly managed to gain control, at the expense of the pope, over church appointments within their realms so that by the fourteenth century there were fewer and fewer clerics from foreign lands across France, England, Spain and Germany.<sup>45</sup> Although battered and bruised, the theoretical unity of Christendom persisted. However, the Protestant Reformation, as Greengrass has recently argued, finally destroyed the

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<sup>41</sup> Quoted in Alex Drace-Francis, *European Identity: A Historical Reader* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), p. 15.

<sup>42</sup> Hay, p. 37.

<sup>43</sup> Pagden, ‘Europe: Conceptualizing a Continent’, p. 43.

<sup>44</sup> Hay, p. 56.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 61-70.

sense of an overarching Christian unity, replacing it with smaller senses of collectivity based on confessional and state lines.<sup>46</sup> The rise of the word Europe accompanied this loss in the faith of Christendom as the ‘symbol of the largest human loyalty’.<sup>47</sup>

Whilst these four factors (humanism, geographical discoveries, Ottoman expansion, the Reformation) contributed to making Europe a more common term, the word Christendom did not disappear by the end of the Renaissance. Instances of the word Europe were rising as the popularity of the term Christendom was waning, yet the two were often identified together. Both Europe and Christendom were considered to have spatial meaning and cultural meaning. With Latin Christianity largely confined to the continent, the two words could be used synonymously. Renaissance humanists were Christians, of course, and enthusiasm for classical culture, for favouring words of antique origin over those of the Middle Ages, did not preclude belief in a common Christian body. Thomas More, for example, could have chosen the word Christendom and avoided the word Europe when he wrote, ‘Etenim in Europa, idque his potissimum partibus quas Christi fides et religio possidet’.<sup>48</sup> The two terms could be distinguished, however, and the ambiguity of whether the terms signified the same object or not was a feature of the period. We shall see that many writers of the period use both terms, sometimes interchangeably and sometimes with different meanings. We shall also see that some writers prefer one word to the other.

This thesis will explore the extent to which, and the ways in which, thinking about Europe was affected by the four factors that have been highlighted as crucial by Hay, Hale, Greengrass and others. Accordingly, the sources examined herein have been selected on the grounds that they relate to the four themes, thereby allowing for an engagement with each of them. The works of Rabelais, Ronsard and Montaigne, humanists and enthusiasts for classical culture, are analysed. So too are geographical texts that assimilate the new knowledge gleaned from the voyages of discovery: the cosmographical works of Peter Apian, François de Belleforest and André Thevet. The writings of an ambassador to Constantinople, François Savary de Brèves, offer a perspective on Europe in the light of the Ottoman threat. The Reformation is examined through the lens of two Calvinist writers, Jean de Léry and Agrippa d’Aubigné.

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<sup>46</sup> Greengrass, *Christendom Destroyed*, pp. 17-21, 675.

<sup>47</sup> Hay, p. 116

<sup>48</sup> Thomas More, *Utopia: Latin Text and English Translation*, ed. by George M. Logan, Robert M. Adams and Clarence H. Miller (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 198.

## Methodology

In order to offer fresh perspectives on the status of Europe in the Renaissance it will be necessary to conduct the investigation in a manner different from that of existing scholarship. Studies of Europe as an idea tend to be governed by three factors: a *longue durée* timeframe; a pancontinental perspective eschewing national, or other, boundaries; and the use of primary sources which include the word Europe. The approach of this thesis is intended to differ from these three methods.

First, the historical timeframe considered is usually that of a *longue durée* perspective which attempts to trace the development of the concept of Europe. Such was the method of Lucien Febvre, one of the founders of the *Annales* school of history. His 1944-45 lecture course at the Collège de France, posthumously published as *L'Europe: Genèse d'une civilisation*, searched for the birth of a notion of Europe as a culture or civilisation, beginning with the ancient Greeks and tracing the idea to the contemporary period.<sup>49</sup> In his classic study, *Europe: The Emergence of an Idea* (1957, revised in 1968), Hay attempts to pinpoint when and how Europe took on more than spatial meaning, considering material from antiquity up to the seventeenth century. Another enduring work that commences its investigation with the classical world is Federico Chabod's *Storia dell'idea d'Europa* (1961). Based on a lecture series (1943-44) and published after the author's death, it is concerned with uncovering when and why people first understood themselves to be European (in the eighteenth century, Chabod estimates). More recently, Michael Wintle traced visual representations of the continent Europe from the classical period up to the end of the twentieth century in *The Image of Europe* (2009).

Such linear *longue durée* narratives can obscure complexities. In his 1995 study *Inventing Europe*, which traces the changing forms of Europe from the classical period to the end of the Cold War, Gerard Delanty emphasises that Europe is a protean idea which has 'forever been in a process of invention and reinvention'.<sup>50</sup> This thesis sheds light on the process of invention and reinvention by capturing it as it was happening in the given period (1540 – 1620). The thesis does not tell the story of the changing dominant idea of Europe, as Delanty does, but rather focusses on the tensions, disagreements and plurality of discourses about Europe that were circulating and

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<sup>49</sup> Lucien Febvre, *L'Europe: Genèse d'une civilisation*, ed. by Thérèse Charmasson and Brigitte Mazon (Paris: Perrin, 1999).

<sup>50</sup> Delanty, pp. 1-3.

competing for primacy in the Renaissance. The *moyenne durée* perspective favoured in this thesis allows for an analysis of the complexities of individual texts, seeing in them instances of both continuity and change over time, of transient *mentalités* that may be unique to one writer and *mentalités* which endure over centuries.<sup>51</sup> A debt is owed to the 2007 volume *Finding Europe*, the contributors to which rejected a teleological and linear view of the question of Europe while nonetheless acknowledging the importance of what they called ‘discursive traditions’, that is overlapping and intertwining discourses which persisted for centuries.<sup>52</sup>

Second, research into the idea of Europe has often been conducted with a pancontinental viewpoint, that is, by considering source material from all over Europe. Wintle, whose *Image of Europe* examines visual culture from across the continent, explains that his book:

is a study of the concept of Europe and European identity in visual images, and a study of *European* ideas. Those ideas of Europe were definitely not in any way exclusive to any one nation or region. There was a European view of the world, certainly from the Renaissance onwards, which was more distinguished by its shared features than by its internal divisions.<sup>53</sup>

Likewise, the sources examined by Febvre, Hay and Chabod are not restricted to any one language or geographical area. Writing more recently, Anthony Pagden, also considering the idea of Europe from a *longue durée* perspective, refers to figures as diverse as Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Edmund Burke, the Italian philosopher Carlo Cattaneo (1801-69) and the East German politician Lothar de Maizière (born 1940).<sup>54</sup> All of these works rely on a broad spectrum of writings in order to articulate what Wintle calls the ‘European view of the world’.

This thesis offers a different perspective by limiting its geographical and linguistic scope: the focus is not on the European view of Europe but on French views of Europe, largely drawing its source material from works produced in the French vernacular. Roberto Dainotto’s 2007 study of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century ideas of Europe, *Europe (In Theory)*, has demonstrated that as a dominant theory of Europe develops there are numerous competing ideas that offer a different vision. In particular,

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<sup>51</sup> For an examination of divisions of historical time and the conception of *mentalités* as theorised and practised by the *Annales* school of historians, see Peter Burke, *The French Historical Revolution: The Annales School, 1929-89* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1990).

<sup>52</sup> *Finding Europe: Discourses on Margins, Communities, Images*, ed. by Anthony Molho and Diogo Ramada Curto (New York: Berghahn, 2007). The methodology is outlined in the introduction by Anthony Molho, ‘A Harlequin’s Dress: Reflections on Europe’s Public Discourse’, pp. 1-17 (pp. 5-14).

<sup>53</sup> Wintle, p. 29.

<sup>54</sup> ‘Europe: Conceptualizing a Continent’, p. 43-52.



Dainotto argues that European identity has been constructed in opposition to an internal other, the south of the continent.<sup>55</sup> Northern Europe supposedly represents the idea of Europe, an ideal of rationality and civic-mindedness that Portugal, Italy, Greece and Spain fail to meet. Dainotto draws attention to attempts by writers from the south of Europe to challenge this paradigm. What his work highlights is the fact that what Europe looks like, what is thought about Europe, depends upon the viewing location. Europe as seen from Germany looks different to Europe seen from Greece, as recent Eurozone crises have confirmed. Equally, the United Kingdom's 2016 referendum on membership of the European Union demonstrates that there is no single national view on Europe. It is with this in mind that we will consider here the French specificities of thinking about Europe, dealing with the writings of individuals from a number of social, cultural and religious groups. In this way, this thesis has as much, if not more, to say about Renaissance France as it does about Europe per se.

Third, and related to the two previous themes, given the wide temporal and geographical frameworks of such studies of the notion of Europe, the evidence selected for analysis tends to be restricted to instances where the word Europe is found. Doing so may skew the conclusion that is drawn, as I suggested above in the context of Bacon's use of the phrase 'nos Europaeos'.<sup>56</sup> Elsewhere, where the term Europe was not readily found, the conclusion generally reached is that the concept was of little or no consequence. Chabod, for instance, understanding collective identities to be formed through opposition, considers the terms in which oppositions were expressed over time. He concludes that consciousness of being European was a product of the eighteenth century as until then identity had been constructed around different oppositions: Greek/barbarian, Roman/barbarian, Christian/pagan and so on. Hay's argument about the emergence of Europe through association with the notion of Christendom is based on a sample of instances where the two words are found. He highlights examples which indicate when the two terms started to overlap and other examples which point towards Europe having become a more popular term.

In contrast, the sources examined in this thesis have not been selected simply because the word Europe is prevalent within them or because the continent is their

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<sup>55</sup> See in particular his Introduction, pp. 2-10.

<sup>56</sup> Hayden White has famously argued that historiography does not offer an impartial account of history but a persuasive story, or representation, of the past based on the sources put together by the historian. See *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in the Nineteenth Century* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973).

primary focus. In her study of linguistic images in French Renaissance poetry Kathryn Banks suggested that writers might indirectly address questions about the relationship between the human and the divine in texts that are primarily concerned with other matters.<sup>57</sup> I make the same contention for questions about Europe. Indeed, I believe that a philological approach to a history of ideas of Europe can be geared towards making sense of absence, to ask why Europe is not found in a given context. The non-usage of the word Europe may in certain circumstances afford meaningful comment on the perception of Europe. An examination of the network of concepts and vocabulary which were sometimes related to the term Europe, and of the various genres, contexts and discursive fields in which these terms and ideas appear can allow for a better understanding of the word and an assessment of the non-appearance of the word where it might reasonably be assumed that it could have been used. André Thevet's *Les Singularitez de la France antarctique* is one of the primary sources included in the thesis due to the fact that the word Europe appears frequently. As a result, another account of a voyage to Brazil, Jean de Léry's *Histoire d'un voyage fait en la terre du Brésil*, is also included even though the word makes little appearance, precisely because that infrequency may represent an indirect reflection on Europe. Likewise, Montaigne is examined since he used Thevet's work in his writings on the New World, although the word is found just once in his *Essais*.

Each chapter of the thesis compares and contrasts two or more texts. Chapter One examines the implications for ideas about Europe of the different ways in which geography was represented in one of Rabelais's works of comic imaginative fiction, the *Quart Livre* (1552), and in Gemma Frisius's 1544 translation and adaptation of Peter Apian's *Cosmographia*. The latter was selected as it includes a description of Europe; the former because it offers a useful point of comparison since it draws on the style and language of cosmographies but includes the word Europe only once. I argue that Rabelais engaged critically and creatively with contemporary geographical writing, of which the 1544 *Cosmographie* provides a representative example, in order to unsettle the knowledge such works produced and to offer a different view of Europe, one that considers the potential futures of the continent. Two works of cosmography are analysed in conjunction with a travel journal in Chapter Two. The *Cosmographie universelle* of Thevet and the work of Belleforest, published in the same year (1575) and with the same title, represent developments in the genre of cosmography away from

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<sup>57</sup> *Cosmos and Image in the Renaissance: French Love Lyric and Natural-Philosophical Poetry* (London: Modern Humanities Research Association and Maney Publishing, 2008), p. 4.

the astronomical and mathematical concerns of Apian towards a focus on the descriptive. Like Apian's *Cosmographie* they include a description of Europe but they also describe the many regions of the continent and, in doing so, complicate the overarching narrative of Europe that they offer. The account of Montaigne's journey to Italy in 1580-1 provides a contrasting angle of vision, revealing how the divisions of the continent appeared from the point of view of a traveller.

The following three chapters explore in turn three major factors that are thought to have impacted upon thinking about Europe during the period in question, namely the Reformation, the westward military and political advance of the Ottoman Empire, and the discovery of the New World. The purpose is to assess the extent of the impact of each of these, asking how they reshaped conceptions of Europe. How far did the spread of the Protestant Reformation across the continent lead to a sense of a fragmented Europe? How far did the extension of the Ottoman Empire provoke a conception of a reduced Europe? And how far did the development of overseas empires in the Americas suggest an idea of an expanding Europe? In other words, what shape was Europe assumed to have?

Chapter Three tackles the question of the impact of the Reformation on the notion of Europe by asking if religious fragmentation inevitably led to the demise of the idea of a united Christendom and the further rise of the word Europe. The main sources compared here are works by two Calvinists, Jean de Léry and Agrippa d'Aubigné. I do this in order to reject the temptation to simplify historical complexity by positing the existence of a 'Calvinist view' on the subject and a 'Catholic view'. I flag the similarities and differences in perspective of the two authors who shared the same religious convictions. The writings of the moderate Catholic Michel de l'Hospital are brought in to widen the perspective.

Chapter Four asks how thinking about the Ottoman Empire shaped the meanings of Europe. Over the last two decades there has been an increasing scholarly focus on the movements – of people, goods, and ideas – and cooperation between the Christian powers and the Ottoman Empire during the Renaissance period.<sup>58</sup> There has not, however, been a reassessment of ideas of Europe that takes into account the porous worlds of travel and diplomacy; the secondary literature continues to emphasise conflict

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<sup>58</sup> See, for example, Lisa Jardine, *Worldly Goods: A New History of the Renaissance* (London: Macmillan, 1996); Brotton, *The Renaissance Bazaar*; and the essays in *Re-Orienting the Renaissance: Cultural Exchanges with the East*, ed. by Gerald MacLean (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005).

between Christianity and Islam in the shaping of Europe and European identity. Accordingly, this chapter considers the published works and diplomatic correspondence of François Savary de Brèves, French ambassador to Constantinople from 1589-1605 and to Rome from 1608-14. A fascinating figure – a scholar who set up an Arabic printing press, as well as a diplomat – he has received very little attention. He offers a fluid and pragmatic understanding of East-West relations, concerned above all with French interest, not Christian or European. Lest I give the misleading impression that the views of Savary de Brèves were emblematic of the period, the chapter also considers the more negative views of the Ottomans evinced by the poet Ronsard who, unlike de Brèves, never travelled to the Orient. I examine the divergences and convergences in their thinking, demonstrating how they both make use of multiple and shifting ideas of Europe in works that for different reasons assert the primacy of the French nation.

Chapter Five assesses the impact of the voyages of discovery on conceptions of Europe. I analyse Montaigne's *Essais* as a productive response to the meanings of Europe generated by discourses of expansion and conquest of the New World, of which André Thevet's *Les Singularitez de la France antarctique* is representative. Thevet relates a set of existing words and ideas – savagery, Christianity, civility and expansion – to the term Europe, thereby crafting an idea of Europe as an 'ideology of empire', to borrow Anthony Pagden's phrase.<sup>59</sup> Montaigne enacts a different interpretation of the world, and of Europe in particular, by unsettling the meanings of the vocabulary that formulate Thevet's ideas of empire.

Taken as a whole, the thesis aims to outline the different possibilities of thinking about Europe during the Renaissance in France, eschewing a neat linear view of history in favour of a messy picture of the period in all of its conceptual confusion, claim and counterclaim. Neil Kenny has written that 'in the Renaissance, the mentality of educated people is not a firm set of specific beliefs. Rather it is, like our own, a framework of finite possibilities.'<sup>60</sup> Following him, Banks has suggested understanding a conceptual paradigm 'not as a static configuration but as a gradually moving nexus of pathways or possibilities'.<sup>61</sup> This conception favours a notion of gradual emergence of new ideas

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<sup>59</sup> *Lords of all the World: Ideologies of Empire in Spain, Britain and France c.1500-c.1800* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1995).

<sup>60</sup> *The Palace of Secrets: Béroalde de Verville and Renaissance Conceptions of Knowledge* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), p. 241.

<sup>61</sup> Banks, p. 4.

about Europe, as opposed to a Foucauldian rupture.<sup>62</sup> Ian Maclean has pointed out that Foucault's model of the episteme – the relations that govern the conditions of possibility of all knowledge in a given period – cannot account for intellectual change as it denies human agency.<sup>63</sup> Whilst it may be reasonable to take a *longue durée* view and speak of a 'paradigm shift' from Christendom to Europe, this was a gradual and non-linear process, with variations existing within the given paradigms. The words existed – and continue to exist – concurrently; they could be deployed and redeployed – or rejected – to do different things, to signify new meanings. To investigate these diverse formulations of Europe – a task of intellectual history – the range of texts analysed, both literary and non-literary, allows me to bring the stylistic, aesthetic and representational concerns of literary studies to bear on historical study.

The object of analysis is the terms the writers themselves used. I ask how they described Europe, how they used the word Europe, what other words they used in association with Europe, and in what contexts the word is not used. In order to do this it is necessary to adopt a delicate understanding of the tricky relationship between words and concepts. Kenny has done much to illuminate the study of words and concepts, and it is his approach that I broadly follow.<sup>64</sup> He makes the case for writing word history, rather than conceptual history, on the basis that the history of a concept is far from linear, entailing *une histoire événementielle* of 'rapid twists' and a *longue durée* history of stable meanings persisting for centuries.<sup>65</sup> Since the meaning of a word such as Europe shifts – it is different in different contexts – it is difficult to posit the existence of a coherent concept.<sup>66</sup> To write the history of a concept, then, it would be necessary to determine a particular referent or referents and 'abandon the hazy, unstable borders produced by the period's signs', focussing on the idea of Europe as a superior culture, for instance, at the expense of alternative ideas.<sup>67</sup> In contrast, as Thomas Dixon,

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<sup>62</sup> In *Les Mots et les choses* (Paris: Gallimard, 1966) Michel Foucault argued that each historical period was governed by a different episteme, a framework of epistemological assumptions that determined the acceptable limits of discourse.

<sup>63</sup> 'The Process of Intellectual Change: A Post-Foucauldian Hypothesis', in *Cultural History after Foucault*, ed. by John Neubauer (New York: Aldine de Gruyter, 1999), pp. 163-76 (p. 166). Maclean has further examined Foucault's idea of the episteme in 'Foucault's Renaissance Episteme Reassessed: An Aristotelian Counterblast', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 59 (1998), 149-66.

<sup>64</sup> Kenny has produced two books on word histories which set out his methodological reflections: *Curiosity in Early Modern Europe: Word Histories* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 1998); *The Uses of Curiosity in Early Modern France* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

<sup>65</sup> *Curiosity in Early Modern Europe*, p. 15.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 26.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 26. See also Thomas Dixon, *The Invention of Altruism: Making Moral Meanings in Victorian Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008): 'a concept, unlike a word, must surely have a definite and specified meaning even to qualify as a concept' (p. 36).

following Kenny's work, argues in his history of the word 'altruism' in Victorian Britain, a focus on the word and not the concept increases the scope of the project, introducing themes and sources that a concept-based approach may have overlooked: 'Tracing the various uses of a single word or family of words allows an account to emerge which encompasses material from several different genres, theories, and disciplines without losing overall coherence and thus, hopefully, broadening the canon and contexts of intellectual history'.<sup>68</sup>

Word history as practised by Kenny and Dixon aligns with my aim of illustrating the varied and competing ideas of the period, and the lack of consensus about the meaning of Europe. To find the different concepts that were posited by historical agents, to grasp the conceptual complexities of the Renaissance, we have to read their words. When someone wrote the word Europe they were expressing, or even creating, a concept (or idea, or notion – I use these words interchangeably throughout) of Europe, which indicates what they thought Europe was or what meaning they wanted to use in a particular context in order, say, to persuade the reader of a particular viewpoint. This approach entails the analysis of what Kenny labels the 'ordinary language' of writers, with all its Wittgensteinian overtones.<sup>69</sup> As Wittgenstein put it, 'the meaning of a word is its use in language'.<sup>70</sup> We will examine instances of the word Europe within the wider context of the work in question. In this way, I follow John Pocock, Quentin Skinner and others who have adopted the speech act theory of J. L. Austin into intellectual history and stressed the need to consider surrounding contexts if the illocutionary force of an historical statement is to be understood by the present-day historian.<sup>71</sup> Where I stray away from the word Europe it will not be in order to analyse a hazy concept that I might deem to represent Europe, but rather to analyse the other words that some writers used alongside or in relation to the term Europe. It is by considering those words that I hope to judge the meanings of the absence of the word Europe in a given context.

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<sup>68</sup> Dixon, p. 38.

<sup>69</sup> *The Uses of Curiosity*, p. 3.

<sup>70</sup> *Philosophical Investigations*, trans. by G. E. M. Anscombe (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998), p. 20.

<sup>71</sup> J. L. Austin, *How to do Things with Words* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962). See, for example, Quentin Skinner, 'A reply to my critics', in *Meaning and Context: Quentin Skinner and his Critics*, ed. by James Tully (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988), pp. 231-88; and J. G. A. Pocock, 'Concepts and Discourses: A Difference in Culture? Comment on a Paper by Melvin Richter', in *The Meaning of Historical Terms and Concepts: New Studies on Begriffsgeschichte*, ed. by Hartmut Lehmann and Melvin Richter (Washington, DC: German Historical Institute, 1996), pp. 47-58.

This method of considering the vocabulary related to the term Europe follows the work of Raymond Williams. In *Keywords* he emphasised vocabulary as a ‘cluster’, a set of interrelations, connections and interactions.<sup>72</sup> In this work Williams was concerned with the variations in meanings and uses of words, and the processes through which people shaped and reshaped the meanings of what he called ‘keywords’, words which are caught up in crucial questions about culture and society: ‘they are significant, binding words in certain activities and their interpretation; they are significant, indicative words in certain forms of thought’.<sup>73</sup> He aimed to demonstrate that ‘some important social and historical processes occur *within* language’: new relationships and new ways of understanding relationships appear in the invention of new words, the shifts in meanings of older words, and the coexistence of older and newer meanings.<sup>74</sup> Key considerations of the chapters that follow will be the variations in meanings and uses of the word Europe, and the ways in which it was linked to other terminology.

A cluster of vocabulary was at the heart of Williams’s earlier work *Culture and Society 1780-1950* to which *Keywords* was designed as an appendix. In setting out to trace the developments of the word ‘culture’ Williams found himself repeatedly encountering other related words. As he put it:

I had originally intended to keep very closely to *culture* itself, but, the more closely I examined it, the more widely my terms of reference had to be set. For what I see in the history of this word, in its structure of meanings, is a wide and general movement in thought and feeling.<sup>75</sup>

In my research the central words I have come across are, in addition to Europe, ‘Chrestienté’ and ‘nous’ (and its cognates, the possessive adjectives ‘nostre’ and ‘nos’). Reading the ‘nous’ in a text allows us a particular insight into an author’s positioning of himself in relation to a topic or question, in this case Europe. Peter Burke has written that ‘whenever we say “we”, we are expressing a sense of solidarity with some others, a sense of belonging to a community, whether it is small or large, temporary or permanent, harmonious or discordant’.<sup>76</sup> Paying attention to how it is used in a text – and whether that is alongside ‘Europe’ or ‘Chrestienté’ or any other word – will illuminate the significance that a writer attaches to Europe. Other key terms that shaped the meanings of Europe through being used in relationship to the word, and that we

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<sup>72</sup> *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*, 2nd edn (London: Fontana, 1988), p. 22.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 22.

<sup>75</sup> *Culture and Society 1780-1950* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1963), p. 17.

<sup>76</sup> *Languages and Communities in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 6.

shall come across in the chapters which follow, include ‘barbare’, ‘Asie’ (and ‘Afrique’ and ‘Amérique’), ‘riche’ and ‘France’.

In recent years the approach of Williams’s *Keywords* has been taken up by scholars working in the field of Renaissance studies. The 2013 edited collection *Renaissance Keywords* takes Williams’s work as its starting point, but it diverges from it in ways with which this thesis accords. The contributors to *Renaissance Keywords*, as Richard Scholar states in the introductory essay, privilege ‘depth over surface coverage’, attending to seven words as they were used over the course of a particular historical period, as the title suggests, rather than tracing the meanings of over a hundred words from their first appearance to the present day, as Williams did.<sup>77</sup> Scholar commends the contributors for resisting ‘the existing historiography of the period when it has attempted to clear away the web of complexity surrounding a word’.<sup>78</sup> It is in this vein that my work is precisely geared towards foregrounding the complexity of the word Europe. I avoid, however, using the term ‘keyword’ because I believe that in the case of Europe to label it a keyword would actually be to diminish its complexity and the complexity of the lexical networks in which Europe was caught up. As the thesis will demonstrate, Europe was for some people writing in certain contexts an important keyword in their understanding of culture and society, whereas others did not use it in their attempts to make sense of the world. For example, the term is central to Thevet’s understanding of the New World but not to Montaigne’s exploration of America.

In conducting this history of the word Europe I – like Kenny, Dixon, Williams in *Culture and Society*, and the writers of *Renaissance Keywords* – rely on the technique of close reading. I do not study the instances of the word Europe and related terms in isolation but as they interact with other aspects of the texts in which they are found – the structure, contexts, and so on. Such an approach allows for an analysis of the complex interplay of three kinds of meanings of the word Europe: its definition or denotation (the neutral signifier of a geographical space); its connotation (the scope of meanings and uses of the signifier across a wide range of contexts); and its significance (what the term meant to an individual).<sup>79</sup> Through a series of close readings, we will see how the lexical anchorage point of Europe as a geographical space bordered by three seas and Asia is adopted, used, unsettled, reshaped, extended and given additional meanings in

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<sup>77</sup> Richard Scholar, ‘The New Philologists’, in *Renaissance Keywords*, ed. by Ita MacCarthy (London: Maney, 2013), pp. 1-10 (p. 3).

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

<sup>79</sup> I owe the tripartite division of definition, connotation and significance to Dixon, pp. 23-4.



support of or as a challenge to political, economic and cultural conditions. The result is a series of micro-narratives of Europe produced at the textual level, rather than one grand narrative of Europe emerging as the result of generalisations.

A major influence in the rejection of a *longue durée* linear account of the word Europe has been the method of pre-history proposed by Terence Cave.<sup>80</sup> His *Pré-histoires* advocates a method for reading literature in relation to intellectual history by understanding a literary text as a particular and individual response to historical phenomena, as an authentic testimony of past experience. We may encounter in such works the ‘signs of a future story’ – the emergence of the self and of sceptical thinking in Montaigne’s *Essais*, for example – but the pre-historical method cautions us to read these signs ‘without distortion’.<sup>81</sup> To do so one has to abandon a teleological model of history. A pre-history seeks not to uncover the origins of a certain phenomenon or concept; a pre-history seeks not to impose our hindsight, our knowledge of what happened later, on our readings of texts; a pre-history is attentive to comprehending literary works ‘in the present tense of their articulation’.<sup>82</sup> Scholar has used the method to recover the traces of the semantic force of the term ‘*je-ne-sais-quoi*’ in the work of Montaigne who does not use the phrase as a noun.<sup>83</sup> In doing so, Scholar does not suggest that the *Essais* are a foundational moment in the history of the *je-ne-sais-quoi* but rather argues that Montaigne’s work offers ‘a more faithful image of the *je-ne-sais-quoi* than its subsequent history’ in its shifting of terms, forms and rhetorical figures to express a certain inexplicable something.<sup>84</sup>

As well as the method of approach, the subject matter of the thesis is connected to Cave’s pre-histories project. As he notes, the early modern period seems particularly relevant for the method of pre-history since it is often assumed that much of what makes us today ‘modern’ began to emerge at this time: secular and scientific modes of thinking; vernacular languages; and, pertinent to this thesis, the conception of ‘une

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<sup>80</sup> See *Pré-histoires: Textes troubles au seuil de la modernité* (Geneva: Droz, 1999) and *Pré-histoires II: Langues étrangères et troubles économiques au XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Geneva: Droz, 2001).

<sup>81</sup> Terence Cave, ‘Master-Mind Lecture: Montaigne’, *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 131 (2005), 183-203 (p. 186). The formulation postdates Cave’s two volumes on pre-history, thereby testifying to the continued development and use of the method.

<sup>82</sup> Anna Holland and Richard Scholar, ‘Introduction’, in *Pre-histories and Afterlives: Studies in Critical Method for Terence Cave*, ed. by Anna Holland and Richard Scholar (London: Legenda, 2009), pp. 1-14 (p. 4).

<sup>83</sup> *The Je-Ne-Sais-Quoi in Early Modern Europe: Encounters with a Certain Something* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 225-36.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 227.

Europe composée de nations indépendantes'.<sup>85</sup> We will look for the traces of thinking about Europe and about nationhood but not assume that they are stepping stones in a linear path to a future notion of a Europe of nations. Hence Cave's focus on literary texts: their individuality offers a particular response to certain phenomena and, as such, they are more suited as sources to a study of variation and innovation that emphasises the unique over the general. He refers to 'troubles' to characterise the conceptual problems that could not be expressed explicitly but which are revealed in texts which foreground their own singularity. He compares such works with non-literary texts so as to illuminate their specificities. I examine non-literary works in order to understand better how a certain medium, genre or way of writing can affect the conception of Europe. Such an approach relates to the methodology of New Historicism, practised by Stephen Greenblatt and others, which considers texts as agents in history, documents of social reality, and as such tends to read literary works alongside non-literary ones.<sup>86</sup> Of course, the categories of the 'literary' and 'non-literary' belong to our present time and not to the Renaissance. The essential aesthetic dimension of literature is an eighteenth century conception. Not that 'literature' can be easily defined today; in a stimulating footnote Cave writes that literature 'is not a term to be defined but a category with blurred edges, a set of variously related cultural practices'.<sup>87</sup> What this means for my analysis is that it will be insufficient, and unnecessary, to flag a text as either literary or non-literary; grouping writers as diverse as Rabelais, Ronsard and Montaigne together as writers of 'literature' tells us nothing of *how* they explored questions of Europe. Rather I will pay attention to the more salient features that determine how a text generates meanings; for example, Rabelais's use of fiction. Genre, too, I understand loosely, following Rosalie Colie in regarding genres in the Renaissance not as a rigid system but as 'ideas of form, established by custom and consensus' which writers felt free to follow, reject or adapt.<sup>88</sup>

### **Imagining community in Renaissance France**

Thinking about Europe always operated in a wide range of contexts. To use the term Christendom in its spatial sense, for instance, was to comment on Europe, albeit

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<sup>85</sup> *Pré-histoires*, p. 17.

<sup>86</sup> See H. Aram Veesser, *The New Historicism* (London: Routledge, 1989); and Kiernan Ryan, *New Historicism and Cultural Materialism: A Reader* (London: Arnold, 1996).

<sup>87</sup> 'Epilogue: Time's Arrow', in *Pre-histories and Afterlives*, ed. by Holland and Scholar, pp. 135-46 (p. 145 n. 9).

<sup>88</sup> *The Resources of Kind: Genre-Theory in the Renaissance*, ed. by Barbara K. Lewalski (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), p. 128.

indirectly. In his introduction to the edited volume *Changing Identities in Early Modern France*, Michael Wolfe argues against the understanding of contemporary national identities as the result of linear *longue durée* developments.<sup>89</sup> The contributions are intended to foreground ‘the ineluctable patterns of conflict over French identity’ and the ‘perennial problems relating to the interplay of politics, religion, gender, class, and order’.<sup>90</sup> I argue that the idea of Europe – what Europe means, what it means to belong to Europe – was caught in this web of problems relating to politics, religion and so on. Discourses about Europe were related to other discourses of community, including reflections on Christendom, nationhood, and local identities.

Within Renaissance French studies there has been much recent interest in the cultural construction of national identities during the period. Works by Timothy Hampton and Marcus Keller have offered readings of literary texts which demonstrate how they engage with the issue of French national identity.<sup>91</sup> Hampton analyses a series of texts from Rabelais’s *Pantagruel* to Montaigne’s *Essais* and argues that attempts to get to grips with anxieties about the vulnerability of France and the breakdown of community gave rise to new literary forms. Keller’s focus is on what he calls ‘literary nation-building’ and how authors, from Joachim du Bellay to Pierre Corneille, imagine and figure France as a nation.

It must be acknowledged, though, that a writer never thought about only France; s/he (usually but not always a ‘he’ at this time) was always concerned also with communities that lay inside and outside, or overlapped with, the boundaries of France. This thesis is designed to build on the work of Hampton and Keller by widening the angle of vision from that of France to the nexus of competing allegiances – Europe, Christendom, Catholicism, Calvinism – which weighed on individuals and which were constantly understood in dialogue, negotiation or competition with one another. The existing scholarship on ideas of Europe in Renaissance France – a 1988 collection of essays entitled *La Conscience européenne au XV<sup>e</sup> et au XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle* and a collection published in 2006, *Conceptions of Europe in Renaissance France* – tends to limit the

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<sup>89</sup> Michael Wolfe, ‘Introduction: Becoming French in Early Modern Europe’, in *Changing Identities in Early Modern France*, ed. by Michael Wolfe (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1997), pp. 1-21.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 15-16.

<sup>91</sup> Timothy Hampton, *Literature and Nation in the Sixteenth Century: Inventing Renaissance France* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001); Marcus Keller, *Figurations of France: Literary Nation-Building in Times of Crisis (1550-1650)* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2011).

scope of the study to Europe.<sup>92</sup> This thesis aims to extend such work by placing reflections on Europe and on the nation in the interconnected and overlapping discursive contexts in which they functioned. Although the primary focus is Europe, thinking about France and Frenchness is necessarily also involved.

Framing the research around a loose notion of community allows for a broader look at the complexities of Europe's meanings. Karen Spierling and Michael Halvorson have emphasised the 'flexibility of community definitions and boundaries in early modern Europe', in particular the constant process of their negotiation, conflicts over exclusion and inclusion, the ability to belong to a number of, potentially overlapping, communities, and tensions between rhetorical ideals and everyday realities.<sup>93</sup> Their collection of essays, *Defining Community in Early Modern Europe*, gathered contributions from a range of disciplines to illuminate the study of historical community definition. My research builds on this scholarly interest in the problematic nature of community and community definition, focussing on how ideas about Europe relate to the negotiation of communities and boundaries.

In understanding such issues Benedict Anderson's notion of 'imagined communities' has proven useful.<sup>94</sup> The phrase is his attempt at offering a definition of the nation. For Anderson the nation is an *imagined* political community because 'the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion'.<sup>95</sup> The nation is not the only community that can be imagined. Anthony Cohen's work has indicated the symbolic nature of all communities in providing meaning to those who see themselves as members.<sup>96</sup> Anderson himself notes that 'all communities larger than primordial villages of face-to-face contact (and perhaps even these) are imagined'.<sup>97</sup> This thesis then will examine the works of a range of individuals in order to uncover the different communities that they imagine, how they represent them, and what meanings are ascribed to them. I follow Spierling and Halvorson's

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<sup>92</sup> *La Conscience européenne au XV<sup>e</sup> et au XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle: Actes du colloque international organisé à l'École Normale Supérieure de Jeunes Filles (30 septembre – 3 octobre 1980)* (Paris: Collection de l'École Normale Supérieure de Jeunes Filles, 1982); *Conceptions of Europe in Renaissance France: Essays in Honour of Keith Cameron*, ed. by David Cowling (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2006).

<sup>93</sup> 'Introduction: Definitions of Community in Early Modern Europe', in *Defining Community in Early Modern Europe*, ed. by Michael J. Halvorson and Karen E. Spierling (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), pp. 1-23 (p. 1).

<sup>94</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. edn (London: Verso, 2006).

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

<sup>96</sup> Anthony Cohen, *The Symbolic Construction of Community* (London: Routledge, 1985).

<sup>97</sup> Anderson, p. 6.

broad definition of community: ‘a group of people who perceived themselves as having common interests and, thus, a common identity or self-understanding’.<sup>98</sup> Anderson’s formulation of ‘finite, if elastic, boundaries’ is a useful way of comprehending the contingent nature of borders: necessary for community definition, they can always be shifted to accommodate or exclude people when the meanings of the community are reimagined.<sup>99</sup> In other words, a community is not a fixed and homogenous idea.

Questions of identity are bound up with these questions of community. To declare oneself a member of a community is to express a sense of belonging and of solidarity with others, to believe in a shared identity, culture or set of values. But conceptions of Europe do not always have to be about identity. Reflections on Europe may deliberately reject the notion as being anything to do with identity or even with community. Europe could be construed as a grand narrative, one which is explicitly rejected as a meaningful model of explaining society or human experience. In contrast to those scholarly works that take Bacon’s phrase ‘nos Europaeos’ as evidence of the existence of a European consciousness, this thesis is not directly concerned with ascertaining whether or not there was in the Renaissance what could be called a European identity. Europe may be identified by opposition to another entity – Asia or the New World, for instance – but equally oppositions may be considered to exist within Europe.<sup>100</sup> We shall see how some writers, such as Thevet, articulate a Europe defined against the rest of the world, yet we shall also see others, such as Léry, place much more importance on the divisions within the continent.

### **The hospitality of narratives**

It will be clear that the thesis aims to offer a new perspective on the literary and intellectual culture of Renaissance France, as well as a new perspective on ideas of Europe, by approaching the topic in a different way from the existing scholarship. The examination of literary texts alongside works of travel, geography, history, and politics is intended to offer an insight into the diffuse nature of thinking about Europe across a number of contexts. I do not present a record of every occurrence of the term Europe in Renaissance France. The focus is on the specificities of texts, on how individuals

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<sup>98</sup> ‘Definitions of Community in Early Modern Europe’, p. 2.

<sup>99</sup> Anderson, p. 7.

<sup>100</sup> John A. Armstrong’s study *Nations before Nationalism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1982) explored the emergence of ‘nations’ by focussing on the perception of group boundaries, underlining as he did the tendency for groups to define themselves by exclusion rather than by reference to their own perceived characteristics.

recorded their responses to Europe in writing. In an age of big data, when technology can produce quantitative word histories, the technique of closely reading a more limited number of sources, as I do here, reminds us of the unique, the individual, and adds nuance and complexity to our comprehensions of the past.<sup>101</sup> A different corpus would offer different views of history to those offered in this thesis, but attentiveness to their details would demonstrate what those analysed here will do: that there was no simple idea of Europe; that synchronic histories can contribute to a fuller understanding of a diachronic history; that the individuals of the past narrated different ideas and told different stories about Europe for their own purposes; that they shared, debated, and contested those ideas, and ultimately rejected some of them.

Several themes will emerge across the various sources and chapters. One is the status of grand narratives and their validity at a time of great societal change. We will see representations of Europe as a cultural system which is defined against the rest of the world and which connotes superiority. We will see Christendom posited as a cultural identity and a wide unity of peoples. We will see a political and cultural Europe/Christendom constructed in opposition to the Ottoman Empire. And we will see challenges to such grand narratives. A second theme is what I call the politics of language, that is, the use of the word Europe, and other terms, for political and rhetorical purposes, rather than to signify something value neutral. A final major theme is that of borders. I ask what kinds of borders were perceived, from the spatial to the cultural and the political. What sorts of places did these borders construct: real places, imagined places, ideological places? How did different borders overlap? What cultural and political meanings did geographical borders carry? Chapters One and Two give a wide consideration to the issue of borders. Chapters Three, Four and Five investigate them in respect of their respective concerns with the Reformation, the Ottoman Empire and the New World, focussing on the shapes of Europe – fragmented, reduced, expanded – that these ideas suggested.

In sum, the thesis is designed to let the voices of the sixteenth and early-seventeenth centuries speak for themselves. It has been written in the spirit of Cave's

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<sup>101</sup> Roland Greene has argued for the use of digital resources, such as full-text databases, in literary study in relation to his project on historical semantics: *Five Words: Critical Semantics in the Age of Shakespeare and Cervantes* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2013). My work also differs from his in that in his study of five words in the Renaissance (blood, invention, language, resistance, world) Greene advances arguments about the changing meanings of each of the words over the period. With regards to the word Europe, a distant reading approach to French writing would be complicated since *Europe* the continent and *Europe* the goddess share the same spelling.

*Pré-histoires* which advocates ‘un soupçon constant à l’égard de tout ce qui est projeté rétrospectivement sur les traces du passé’.<sup>102</sup> It is intended to offer the ‘hospitality of narratives’, giving space for a range of competing voices – for those who use the word Europe with some frequency and for those who do not; for those who write of Christendom and for those who do not; for those who deploy grand narratives and for those who reject them; and for those who imagine Europe as a community and for those who do not.<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> *Pré-histoires*, p. 14.

<sup>103</sup> I have borrowed the phrase from the current President of Ireland, Michael D. Higgins, who commended the events commemorating the centenary of the 1916 Easter Rising for presenting a diversity of opinions – what he called a ‘hospitality of narratives’: ‘Easter Rising: Irish President Michael D Higgins hopes NI people “approach commemorations generously”’, BBC News <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-35899900>> [accessed 16 May 2016].

## CHAPTER ONE

**Imagining Europe: Rabelais's *Quart Livre* and Apian's *Cosmographie***

Chapter 45 of Rabelais's *Quart Livre* opens with a brief description of the once prosperous, now depleted island of the Papefigues: 'Au lendemain matin rencontra mes l'isle des Papefigues. Lesquelz jadis estoient riches et libres, et les nommoit on Guillardetz, pour lors estoient paouves, mal heureux, et subjectz aux Papimanes'.<sup>1</sup> There is said to have been 'une pestilence tant horrible que pour la moitié et plus, le pays estoit resté desert, et les terres sans possesseurs' (p. 643). This technique, used throughout the *Quart Livre*, of offering a picture of a particular area resembles geographical writing of the sixteenth century. Paul J. Smith detects the style of contemporary geographical writing in Rabelais's use of temporal markers – 'Au lendemain matin', for example – and his descriptions of exotic animals, and regards the *Quart Livre* as a parody or a pastiche of contemporary *récits de voyage*, especially that of Jacques Cartier.<sup>2</sup> For Michael Heath, the descriptions of the islands recall the style of cosmographies.<sup>3</sup> This chapter argues that the stylistic features of geographical writing detected in the *Quart Livre* have broader implications than have thus far been noted and that they offer a means of examining the functions and meanings of the word Europe.

In 1544, eight years before the appearance of the *Quart Livre*, Gemma Frisius published *La Cosmographie de Pierre Apian*, a translation of the Latin *Cosmographia* by Peter Apian which, based on Martin Waldseemüller's *Cosmographiae introductio* of 1507, was published in 1529.<sup>4</sup> In this work, Apian describes Europe, 'la premiere partie du monde', as a sort of paradise:

La terre excessivement fertile ha attrempance naturelle, et le ciel assez bening, non pas a postposer a aulcune aultre, d'abondance de toutes sortes de grain, vin, et arbres: mais a comparoir aulx meilleures regions, beaucoup plus excellente de vertu des peuples et nations que Asie et Africque. Elle est la plus excellente et belle, et ryche, et plus ornee des villes, chasteaulx, et villaiges, toutesfois la moindre des aultres parties de la terre.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Rabelais, *Œuvres complètes*, ed. by Mireille Huchon (Paris: Gallimard, 1994), p. 642. All references will be to this edition.

<sup>2</sup> *Voyage et écriture: Étude sur le Quart Livre de Rabelais*, Études Rabelaisiennes 19 (Geneva: Droz, 1987), p. 40.

<sup>3</sup> *Rabelais* (Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies: Tempe, 1996), p. 97.

<sup>4</sup> Tom Conley, *An Errant Eye: Poetry and Topography in Early Modern France* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011), p. 56.

<sup>5</sup> *La Cosmographie de Pierre Apian, livre tresutile, traictant de toutes les regions & pays du monde par artifice Astronomicque, nouvellement traduit de Latin en François. Et par Gemma Frison Mathematicien & Docteur en Medicine de Louvain corrigé* (Antwerp, 1544), fol. 30<sup>v</sup>. All references will be to this edition. Spelling has been regularised.



With a beautiful landscape and a wonderful moderate climate, the Europe represented here is a sort of *locus amoenus*.<sup>6</sup> It is far removed from Rabelais's isle of the wretched Papefigues. Both passages feature the adjective 'riches'/'ryche' but, whether of people or place, for one the richness is in the present tense, whereas for the other it has gone, a memory confined to the imperfect tense. Both of these texts are concerned with geography; both provide a descriptive overview of a given space; and both of these extracts, by making reference in their invocations of place to the inhabitants, link a geographical site with a community of people who live there.

However, the two texts represent different approaches to geographical writing. Apian's *Cosmographie* marshals contemporary developments in cartography and astronomy to present 'une description universelle du monde' (fol. 3<sup>r</sup>). Cosmography, the word having derived from Pliny, is closely linked to geography through the title of the first Latin translation of Claudius Ptolemy's *Geographia*, namely *Cosmographia*.<sup>7</sup> The genre, which offered an ordered description of the world and its many regions, was popular until it suffered a marked decline towards the end of the 1500s.<sup>8</sup> Frisius's translation of Apian was the first cosmography to appear in the French vernacular and was reprinted in several editions after 1544.<sup>9</sup> While the work offers some description of the 'quatre parties' (fol. 1<sup>v</sup>) of the world, 'Europe, Affricque, Asie, et America [*sic*]' (fol. 2<sup>v</sup>), the bulk is taken up with an account of the 'science d'astronomie' (fol. 2<sup>v</sup>) and, following the primary concern of Ptolemy's text,<sup>10</sup> lists of the lines of latitude and longitude of 'Regions, Provinces, Satrapies, Ducheez, Marquisatz, Contez, Citez, et Villes, Montaignes, Fluves, Fontaines, Lacz, Isles, Peninsules cogneues' (fol. 32<sup>v</sup>). A map of the world is also included.

By contrast, Rabelais's comic tale does not set about the task of describing the real world. Nonetheless, the *Quart Livre*, structured as a sea voyage to a fictional world that is depicted in some detail, is at its heart geographical. It is, in Frank Lestringant's words, 'une géographie imaginaire',<sup>11</sup> a phrase that needs to be distinguished from

<sup>6</sup> For more on the *locus amoenus* topos and the literary depiction of the idealised landscape more generally, see Ernst Robert Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, trans. by Willard R. Trask (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1953), pp. 183-202.

<sup>7</sup> John M. Headley, 'Geography and Empire in the Late Renaissance: Botero's Assignment, Western Universalism, and the Civilizing Process', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 53 (2000), 1119-55 (p. 1120).

<sup>8</sup> Frank Lestringant, 'Le Déclin d'un savoir: la crise de la cosmographie à la fin de la Renaissance', *Annales: Histoire, Sciences Sociales*, 46 (1991), 239-60 (pp. 240, 255-6).

<sup>9</sup> Conley, *An Errant Eye*, p. 56.

<sup>10</sup> Broc, p. 70.

<sup>11</sup> 'L'Insulaire de Rabelais ou la fiction en archipel (pour une lecture topographique du *Quart Livre*)', in *Rabelais en son demi-millénaire: Actes du colloque international de Tours (24-29 septembre 1984)*,

Edward Said's 'imaginative geography', which refers to the *perception* of the East in the western imagination.<sup>12</sup> Imaginary, or fictive, geography better describes the self-consciously fictionalised nature of the Rabelaisian narrative and its geographical framework. This does not mean, though, that the *Quart Livre* bears no relation to the referential world. In the opening chapters, for instance, reference is made to both the fabled Northwest Passage connecting the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific (p. 539) and to Canada (p. 540). Like the *Cosmographie* of Apian, then, Rabelais's text is part of a wider reflection, prevalent from the middle of the century, which took stock of the globe following the voyages of discovery.<sup>13</sup>

It is my suggestion that in the *Quart Livre* Rabelais recalls the language and features of contemporary geographical writing in order to problematise its meanings and to unsettle the geographical knowledge it produces. This approach to the text differs from that of Tom Conley who analysed Rabelais's *Pantagruel* and *Gargantua* as examples of what he calls 'cartographic literature', that is, writing which engages in plotting space within printed discourse.<sup>14</sup> He shows how the first two of Rabelais's books are productively influenced by contemporary works of cartography, especially those of Oronce Finé, whereas this study will argue that the *Quart Livre* works largely against, not with, geographical writing.<sup>15</sup> The different modes of geography utilised by Apian and Rabelais represent two different ways of seeing the world. Our focus will be on the conception of Europe in both texts. Reading Rabelais alongside Apian's *Cosmographie* highlights how the latter disciplines and normalises the world, forcing a rigid image of Europe upon the reader. Through the medium of fiction Rabelais is able to offer a different conception and to explore not only the present but also the potential futures of Europe. Those who write geography, to borrow Conley's words, 'present their interlocutors, their listeners, or their general public with choices that cannot be made, thus diminishing their powers of judgement or response'.<sup>16</sup> In the *Quart Livre* we see Rabelais reclaiming his power of response.

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Études Rabelaisiennes 21, ed. by Jean Céard and Jean-Claude Margolin (Geneva: Droz, 1988), pp. 249-74 (p. 256).

<sup>12</sup> For Said's use of the term 'imaginative geography' see his *Orientalism* (London: Penguin, 1978), pp. 49-73.

<sup>13</sup> Broc, p. 37.

<sup>14</sup> For Conley's discussion of cartographic literature see *The Self-Made Map: Cartographic Writing in Early Modern France* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), pp. 3-7.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 135-66.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.

We shall begin by considering the nature of the imaginary geography of the *Quart Livre*, before comparing the *Cosmographie* and the *Quart Livre* along three lines: first, how the two texts delimit space; second, their use of the word Europe; and third, the images of depletion and abundance in the spaces they describe. Apian's *Cosmographie* is illustrative of an approach to geography with which Rabelais must have been familiar.<sup>17</sup> Read together, the texts demonstrate two different ways in which geography was understood in the middle of the sixteenth century. Whilst Apian engages directly with the meaning of Europe and Rabelais only indirectly, the latter's use of the medium of fiction offers a more speculative and reflective account of what Europe might have meant to an individual of the Renaissance.

### **Rabelais's imaginary geography**

What is the world described in Rabelais's *Quart Livre*? Where is it? These questions have been dealt with most thoroughly by Frank Lestringant in a 1988 essay in which he synthesises attempts to locate the islands of the text in the Atlantic and the Mediterranean.<sup>18</sup> He argues that what begins as a voyage to the west, marked by references to Canada and the Northwest Passage, actually comes to resemble a journey around the Mediterranean.<sup>19</sup> This assertion is reinforced by his reading of the *Quart Livre* as a fictional example of the *isolario* genre, a book of maps and descriptions of islands which originated as a guide for travellers in the Mediterranean.<sup>20</sup> For Lestringant it follows from the echoes of both the Mediterranean and the Atlantic in the text that the *Quart Livre* lacks unity and narrative coherence.<sup>21</sup> He sees the *isolario* form as a 'fiction en archipel', which makes the work fragmentary, the emphasis placed on topographical descriptions of individual islands at the expense of a global and unified perspective.<sup>22</sup> Conley follows Lestringant in regarding the work as an *isolario* and foregrounding its fragmentation.<sup>23</sup>

These interpretations of the geography of the *Quart Livre* fit into a wider debate about the structure of the text. Before Lestringant, Barbara Bowen argued that the *Quart*

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<sup>17</sup> A study of the geographical texts with which Rabelais is likely to have been familiar is James William Romer, 'François Rabelais and the New World: A study of geography and navigation in Rabelais's romance' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of North Carolina, 1977).

<sup>18</sup> 'L'Insulaire de Rabelais', pp. 249-74.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 260.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 254-60.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 274.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 249-260.

<sup>23</sup> *The Self-Made Map*, pp. 168-9.

*Livre* ‘has no evolution, no structure, and no end’.<sup>24</sup> More recently, Michel Jeanneret stressed its ‘structure modulaire’,<sup>25</sup> and Floyd Gray calls it a work ‘qui ne va nulle part’ since regular narrative digressions serve to defer meaning.<sup>26</sup> In contrast, however, other critics insist that the text has a more coherent architecture. Guy Demerson detects a symmetrical structure centred on the condemnation of evil as exemplified by the anatomical description of Quaresmeprenant.<sup>27</sup> Edwin Duval goes further, insisting on a ‘coherent epic design’ which takes the Physetere encounter as its central episode and holds the work together with the theme of *caritas*, embodied in the character of Pantagruel and defined against the *anticaritas* manifested in each island.<sup>28</sup> Such disagreements are framed by the wider context of scholarship into the degrees of transparency and ambiguity in the whole Rabelaisian oeuvre and the merits of literary-theoretical versus traditional approaches. M. A. Screech’s 1979 *Rabelais* has been very influential in promoting allegorical readings which regard the texts as pushing an unequivocal humanist and Evangelical agenda.<sup>29</sup> On the other hand, Terence Cave’s *The Cornucopian Text*, first published in the same year, has encouraged a hermeneutics of ambiguity, highlighting the role of narrative fragmentation and plurivocality in a constant deferral of meaning.<sup>30</sup>

My approach to the *Quart Livre* has been influenced by attempts to bridge the gap between contentions of transparency and ambiguity through the location of meaning in the discontinuities of Rabelais’s texts. André Tournon reads Rabelais ‘en sens agile’, deriving meaning from the interplay between contradictions in the text, that is, respecting the uncertainties that these generate and not privileging one univocal discourse over another as, say, Screech does.<sup>31</sup> Following him, Nicolas Le Cadet characterises Rabelais’s method as ‘évangélisme fictionnel’, an approach he finds also in Marguerite de Navarre’s *Heptaméron* and Bonaventure des Périers’s *Cymbalum Mundi*, whereby, in line with the anti-dogmatic nature of the religious views of these writers, an Evangelical reading is encouraged through the ambiguities in a self-

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<sup>24</sup> *The Age of Bluff: Paradox and Ambiguity in Rabelais and Montaigne* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1972), p. 84.

<sup>25</sup> *Le Défi des signes: Rabelais et la crise de l’interprétation à la Renaissance* (Orléans: Paradigme, 1994), p. 54.

<sup>26</sup> *Rabelais et le comique du discontinu* (Paris: Champion, 1994), p. 167.

<sup>27</sup> *Rabelais* (Paris: Balland, 1986), pp. 275-9.

<sup>28</sup> *The Design of Rabelais’s ‘Quart Livre de Pantagruel’* (Geneva: Droz, 1998), especially pp. 15-22, 65-9 and 81-107.

<sup>29</sup> *Rabelais* (London: Duckworth, 1979).

<sup>30</sup> *The Cornucopian Text: Problems of Writing in the French Renaissance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979).

<sup>31</sup> ‘En sens agile’: *Les acrobaties de l’esprit selon Rabelais* (Paris: Champion, 1995).

consciously fictional text which oblige the readers to participate actively in constructing meaning from the material.<sup>32</sup> The Rabelaisian *livres* thus represent ‘fiction comme enquête’.<sup>33</sup> David Quint too had earlier written of the text’s aim to ‘place itself within a continuing community of interpretation’, not imparting a certain message but inciting interpretation, especially along Evangelical lines.<sup>34</sup>

I argue that the incoherence of the world of the *Quart Livre* is in itself significant and meaningful. The plurality of the text enacts the plurality of the chaotic and divided world described. Rather than understanding the islands sequentially, as Lestringant and other critics have done, it would be better to consider them simultaneously. As chaotic as the world of the *Quart Livre* can seem, it is precisely that, a world: a world which is joined up and linked by the movements between islands – those of the Papimanes, Bringuenarilles, and of course the Pantagruelists. Emmanuelle Lacore-Martin has argued that ‘[u]ne fois l’île quittée, elle ne réapparaît plus dans le cours de la narration, elle se referme à jamais sur la situation qu’y ont trouvée les compagnons au moment de leur passage, et se fige ainsi dans le texte’,<sup>35</sup> but note the temporal marker ‘jadis’ used in the first quotation included in this chapter: that island and the many others that are similarly described with such a marker are explicitly presented as having a past before the arrival of the Pantagruelists and thus, presumably, a future. That is to say, the islands of the *Quart Livre*, the world of the text, exist independently of the main characters. As Smith has noted, the work has a coherence of composition since the islands are linked to each other, even if those connections tend to be conflictual.<sup>36</sup>

By describing more than one place, the *Quart Livre* moves beyond the topography form and becomes a sort of cosmography. Lestringant, on the other hand, argues that the work should be considered a topography due to the ostensibly unfinished nature of the text, which ends before the journey is complete.<sup>37</sup> However, I would suggest that it would be better to understand the *Quart Livre* in a manner similar to how Lestringant reads André Thevet’s *Les Singularitez de la France antarctique* (1557): he

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<sup>32</sup> *L’Évangélisme fictionnel: Les Livres rabelaisiens, le Cymbalum Mundi, L’Heptaméron (1532-1552)* (Paris: Garnier, 2010).

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 277.

<sup>34</sup> *Origin and Originality in Renaissance Literature: Versions of the Source* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1983), pp. 170-206 (p. 186).

<sup>35</sup> *Figures de l’histoire et du temps dans l’œuvre de Rabelais*, Études Rabelaisiennes 51 (Geneva: Droz, 2011), p. 78.

<sup>36</sup> *Voyage et écriture*, p. 128.

<sup>37</sup> ‘L’Insulaire de Rabelais’, p. 257.

has called it a literary hybrid since it is an account of a voyage that, describing a wide range of places, reads like a cosmography.<sup>38</sup> Like Rabelais's book, *Les Singularitez* does not describe the whole world. The incompleteness of the *Quart Livre* makes Rabelais's imaginary geography consciously no more than suggestive; it does not purport to deal with the complexities of the whole world.

If we consider the islands of the *Quart Livre* not as a jumbled assortment but rather as a fractured yet coherent fictional world in which there are potentially more islands for the Pantagruelists to discover, it is worth considering how that world relates to the real world in which Rabelais was writing. The *Quart Livre*'s dialogue with the referential world is different to that of Thomas More's imagined island of Utopia, which can be considered to be an imaginary location in the New World. Unlike that island, there is recognisability as well as difference in the places of the *Quart Livre*. On the island of Ennasin, 'Les hommes et femmes ressemblent aux Poitevins rouges, exceptez que tous homes, femmes, et petitiz enfans ont le nez en figure d'un as de treuffles' (p. 556). Extrapolating from this quotation, I suggest that Rabelais's world ought to be interpreted in line with the Pantagruelists' understanding of the people of Ennasin: it is akin to the old world, a distorted vision of it. Françoise Joukovsky reads the anecdotes told by the characters as a protective screen that helps them to deal with a hostile and unfamiliar environment, but I would ask if those anecdotes could not also be prompted by a sense of similarity.<sup>39</sup> The death of Bringuenarilles, for example, reminds the narrator of a host of strange deaths he had previously heard about (pp. 579-81).

Therefore, I read the world of the *Quart Livre* as an alternative Old World, not a new and separate world. It is not incommensurable otherness that the heroes meet when they land on each island; rather, it is sameness seen as through a distorting mirror. The pope-worshipping Papimanes – a distortion of the papists of the referential world – are an obvious example of the allusions to current events that many critics have found in the text. Margaret Broom Harp, for instance, has written that 'in each [island] Rabelais exaggerates an aspect of his own culture and presents it as a guiding principle'.<sup>40</sup> The lens of geographical writing adopted in this chapter allows for a reconsideration of the mimesis in Rabelais's work. In drawing on 'his own culture', the issues that he raises in

<sup>38</sup> 'Le Récit de voyage et la question des genres: L'Exemple des *Singularitez de la France Antarctique d'André Thevet (1557)*', in *D'encre de Brésil: Jean de Léry, écrivain*, ed. by Frank Lestringant and Marie-Christine Gomez-Géraud (Orléans: Paradigme, 1999), pp. 93-108 (p. 95).

<sup>39</sup> 'Les narrés du *Tiers Livre* et du *Quart Livre*', in Lionello Sozzi, ed., *La Nouvelle française à la Renaissance* (Geneva: Slatkine, 1981), pp. 209-221 (p. 217).

<sup>40</sup> *The Portrayal of Community in Rabelais's Quart Livre* (New York: Peter Lang, 1997), p. 80.

the *Quart Livre* are recognisably related to problems that faced France and the Old World more widely – what Apian and fellow geographers would have defined as Europe. His imaginary geography occupies a liminal space between reality and imagination, making room for a consideration of the societal challenges presented to him and his contemporaries. When read geographically, Rabelais's exaggerated portrayal of aspects of his culture – of extremists who cannot reconcile with one another – have implications for the conception of boundaries and divisions in society, as this chapter will set out.

### **Drawing boundaries**

A major concern in Apian's *Cosmographie* is the delimitation of geographical space. The boundaries drawn within the text privilege the unity and coherence of Europe, distinguishing it from the other three parts of the world as follows:

Du coste d'occident [Europe] est terminee de l'oceane Atlantique. Devers Septentrion de l'oceane Britannique et Germanique grande, de la partie opposite est enclose de la mer Mediterraine. Devers Orient a le fleuve Tanais. (fol. 30<sup>v</sup>)

With no obvious spatial marker – unlike the seas to the north, south and west – the eastern frontier of the continent is more of a cultural construct. Here it is presented, as it had conventionally been since the time of the ancient Greeks, as the 'fleuve Tanais', the modern-day Don River, which flows through what is now Russia. The frontier was regarded as having a deep historical consistency and consequently remained unchanged in the collective imaginary, in spite of political developments such as the Ottoman advance into the space conceptualised as Europe. Indeed, the boundary is not only insisted upon in writing but also visually emphasised in the map of the world, the sole map in the *Cosmographie*, in which the division between Europe and Asia is exaggerated, the Tanais widened, so that in the map the two continents are barely connected, sharing only what looks like a slender corridor of land. Far from a mere vehicle for the diffusion of information, this map, like all maps, has the power to shape the viewer's perception. As J. B. Harley has demonstrated, cartography is a discourse in the Foucauldian sense of a system of rules governing the representation of knowledge.<sup>41</sup> By selecting specific information to include and presenting a certain abstraction of the

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<sup>41</sup> 'Deconstructing the Map', *Cartographica*, 26 (1989), 1-20.

landscape, cartographers, whether consciously or unconsciously, discipline the world, determining what knowledge about it is made available.<sup>42</sup>

The knowledge constructed in Apian's *Cosmographie* by the text and the accompanying map is that of Europe as a precisely delimited unity. Internal boundaries are not represented. Instead, the towns and cities of the continent are listed alphabetically alongside their respective coordinates of latitude and longitude. Conley argues that the structure invites the reader to contemplate his location in relation to the wider world.<sup>43</sup> Such speculation is encouraged by 'the play of wholes and details'.<sup>44</sup> It is significant, though, that whilst the listed towns are located precisely in space, the countries are not, rendering the borders between them imprecise. This relative freedom on the part of the reader is not accorded when it comes to the level of the continents. The frontiers of the four parts of the world are enshrined in text and image.

Rabelais uses the medium of fiction to rethink the boundaries of the world. He gives geographical form to the issues he raises, reshaping, in an imaginative drama of delimitation, the boundaries of Europe according to cultural and ideological divisions. Take the lands of the Papefigures and of the Papimanes: the latter, as their name suggests, are obsessed with the Pope, whereas the former are characterised by one man who 'feist la figue' at a portrait of the Pope, a 'signe de contempnement et derision manifeste' (p. 642). These opposing religious ideas form the basis of two separate communities inhabiting two separate islands. The island form stands as a metaphor for the communities living there: their frontiers are fixed, inelastic; the islands are cut off from one another, isolated, separated by the waters between them, and, in the case of the Papimanes and the Papefigures, hostile to one another. As the Pantagruelists journey through the sea of islands, they create for the reader a vision of a reimagined, fractured continent, one that is composed of disparate and seemingly irreconcilable communities. The borders between the islands are not ones that can be seen on a map but are rather the edges of ideas – religious, political and cultural ideas.

What the characters of the *Quart Livre* travel through, then, as they sail from island to island is a set of ideas about the potential futures of the continent, for each island constitutes a different image of what Europe might become. The Papimanes represent a vision of unchecked extremist Catholicism, for instance. Later in this

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid., p. 13.

<sup>43</sup> *An Errant Eye*, p. 56.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., p. 79.



chapter I will conduct a series of close readings which unpack the anxieties about the future of the Old World that are communicated by the different island communities. The use of the island form to explore political issues would have been familiar to readers of More's *Utopia*, a connection to the *Quart Livre* which is strengthened by the travellers' first port of call at Medamothi, 'nowhere' in Greek, a name alluding to More's famous nowhere of 1516.<sup>45</sup> The mode of thinking in Rabelais's work is not utopian, however. The Pantagruelists sail beyond Medamothi, beyond nowhere, so that the rest of the narrative takes place *somewhere* – in a reimaged Europe. By moving beyond Medamothi, Rabelais indicates that his book is a different way of thinking about community: the world of the *Quart Livre* does not represent the ideal that Utopia does.

The fictionality of the *Quart Livre* is, therefore, a way of thinking through the problems and challenges facing society. The boundaries that Rabelais constructs challenge the geographical knowledge presented in Apian's *Cosmographie*. His conceptual redrawing of the map of Europe indicates that cosmography – a method of delimiting space, and organising and presenting knowledge – may not be the best way to represent society and human experience, or to explore problems. Hampton sees in French Renaissance literature, and the France of the time more generally, a 'series of ideological struggles over the meaning and limits of community' following the breakup of Christian unity early in the sixteenth century,<sup>46</sup> and it seems that Rabelais engages with these struggles in his fiction, at least in part, through the medium of geography. The fictional form is a marker of his intellectual uncertainties and a style which both allows him to test out ideas non-dogmatically and to encourage his readers to think about the political issue of boundaries. Through his study of monsters in the *Quart Livre* Wes Williams demonstrates that the Rabelaisian text is a quest not for knowledge but for 'reflexive understanding' about what we think and why we come to think that.<sup>47</sup> In what follows, we shall see how Rabelais's uses of geographical discourse within a fictional framework alert the reader to be wary of the assertions of cosmographers and the knowledge they produce.

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<sup>45</sup> The first vernacular French translation of *Utopia* appeared in 1550. It was known in France prior to that date through Latin editions. See *Thomas More's Utopia in Early Modern Europe: Paratexts and Contexts*, ed. by Terence Cave (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2008), pp. 14-31, 67-86.

<sup>46</sup> See his *Literature and Nation in the Sixteenth Century*, especially p. ix and p. 35.

<sup>47</sup> *Monsters and their Meanings in Early Modern Culture: Mighty Magic* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 69.

### The uses of the word Europe

The word Europe appears infrequently in Rabelais's oeuvre, twice in the *Tiers Livre* and not at all in either *Pantagruel* or *Gargantua*. The sole instance of the word Europe in the *Quart Livre* occurs in chapter 5 when the Pantagruelists happen upon a boat of merchants heading in the opposite direction, one of whom, Dindenault, insults Panurge immediately upon seeing him, branding him a cuckold. Panurge counters with a jibe about the merchant's nose. Dindenault then launches into praise of his wife and an invective against Panurge in a paragraph (as marked in the 1552 edition of the text):

Ouy vrayement, respondit le marchand, je le suys [marié]: et ne vouldrois ne l'estre pour toutes les lunettes d'Europe: non pour toutes les bezicles d'Afrique. Car j'ay une des plus belles, plus advenentes, plus honestes, plus prudes femmes en mariage, qui soit en tout le pays de Xantonge: et n'en desplaie aux aultres. Je luy porte de mon voyage une belle et de unze poulsées longue branche de Coural rouge, pour ses estrenes. Qu'en as-tu à faire? Dequoy te meslez tu? Qui es tu? Dont es tu? O Lunettier de l'Antichrist, responds si tu es de Dieu. (p. 549)

In this brief passage there is a close emphasis on place. The very questions Dindenault poses – 'Qui es tu?' and 'Dont es tu?' – interrogate the nature of Panurge's identity and origin. It is within this context that the word Europe is situated, deployed alongside other markers of place within a semantic field of geography. Yet at the same time it is undermined as a potential point of origin, or homeland, since it is used with hyperbole as an abstract concept, in the same manner as the word 'Africa', to designate a huge area, one unknown to the personal experience of the merchant. He is on safer ground with his use of the province of Saintonge to underline the qualities of his wife. It is used in a much more concrete fashion, born of a sense of direct involvement with the region. The term Europe is empty of meaning beyond a spatial designation of a large expanse.

The tone of the passage may offer an indirect reflection on the meaning of Europe. Dindenault's use of 'Antichrist' alludes to the religious strife of the Reformation which saw confessional groups accuse their enemies of heresy and which divided people in France and across the continent. Panurge and Dindenault may be kinsmen, both coming from France, but their whole interaction is deeply antagonistic from the start. Those questions about Panurge's identity that Dindenault poses, 'Qui es tu?' and 'Dont es tu?', are similar to those Pantagruel asks Panurge when they meet for the first time in *Pantagruel* (1532), although the mood is antithetical, loving rather than hostile:

Doncques dist Pantagruel, racomptez nous quel est vostre nom, et dont vous venez. Car par foy je vous ay ja prins en amour si grand que si vous condescendez à mon vouloir, vous ne bougerez

jamais de ma compaignie, et vous et moy ferons un nouveau pair d'amitié telle que feut entre Enée et Achates. (p. 249)

In this way, the *Quart Livre* is much more pessimistic about community and social relations than the earlier *Pantagruel*. The sole instance of the word Europe in the *Quart Livre* may be used only as a marker of vastness but its appearance is haunted by the spectre of contemporary conflict.

In contrast, the word Europe in Apian's *Cosmographie* is endowed with positive sentiment, as we saw above in the description of the fecundity of the continent. The term does have a spatial designation, one that is precisely defined, but it goes further than the *Quart Livre* by inscribing further meaning into the delimited space. The people of that land are said to be 'beaucoup plus excellente de vertu des peuples et nations que Asie et Africque' (fol. 30<sup>v</sup>), the strengths described relative to Asia and Africa, the comparison rendering Europe better than, not equal to, other continents. Europe, then, equates to superiority. Europe's landscape too is hailed as 'plus ornee des villes, chasteaulx, et villaiges' (fol. 30<sup>v</sup>), the verb 'orner' here connoting decoration, artifice and beauty. A positive affective response to the settlements of Europe is thus written into Apian's *Cosmographie*. Landscape is, in the words of Simon Schama, 'the work of the mind', which is to say that the world is imbued with cultural meaning and shaped according to perception.<sup>48</sup> The meaning and shape that Apian gives to Europe is one of superiority vis-à-vis the rest of the world in terms of its people, and its natural and built environment.

The structure of the *Cosmographie*, the way in which information is presented, emphasises the singularity of Europe, stressing its separation from the other three continents, which are inferior by comparison. Each continent is used as an organisational unit, the lists of latitudes and longitudes introduced as follows:

La table ou particuliere summation des Regions, Provinces, Satrapies, Ducheez, Marquisatz, Contez, Citez, et Villes, Montaignes, Fluves, Fontaines, Lacz, Isles, Peninsules cogneues, d'Europe, Africque, Asie et Americque, avecque leurs degredz, tant en longitude qu'en latitude. (fol. 32<sup>v</sup>)

All geographical features are classified as belonging to Europe, Africa, Asia or America, and they are grouped under these four headings, thereby creating a strong sense of the individuality of each of them. The lists of coordinates are further subdivided; for example, 'les parties et villes du royaume d'Espagne' (fol. 33<sup>f</sup>) and

<sup>48</sup> *Landscape and Memory* (London: HarperCollins, 1995), p. 7.

‘les pais et villes d’Allemagne’ (fol. 33<sup>v</sup>). They are nonetheless united under the rubric of a continent and not irreconcilably fractured as appears to be the case with the islands of the *Quart Livre*. The coherence allows for the reinforcement of the notion of a unified Europe which is distinguished from three inferior *parties* of the world.

The superiority of Europe is emphasised by the descriptions of the rest of the world. Neither the landscape nor the people of Africa can match Europe; there are said to be regions ‘ou qu’il ne pluyt aulcunement’ and others where there are ‘quasi nulz hommes, mais plus demisauvaiges’ (fol. 31<sup>v</sup>). Asia, whilst acknowledged as ‘fertille, et tempree’, is said to have a diversity that is not credited to Europe and be home to ‘diverses et merueilleuses facons de gens’ (fol. 31<sup>v</sup>), some of whom ‘mangent chair humaine’ (fol. 32<sup>r</sup>). This charge is also levelled at America: ‘En ceste les habitans vont quasi tout nudz, sont Antropophages, cest a dire, mengeans hommes, trescruelz’ (fol. 32<sup>r</sup>). Here all the people of the New World are conflated into one particular type, the cannibal, and condemned for cruelty. Conflation and generalisation are the strategies deployed to paint a picture of Europe as a geographical area exceeding the other continents in terms of the qualities of the people and the place. It must be acknowledged, however, that one of Frisius’s additions to the translation is to note the discovery of ‘la region Peru’, which is ‘ornee merueilleusement de fleuves, montaignes, et bois, vous la diries ung paradis terrestre’ (fol. 32<sup>v</sup>). Yet in spite of this, the portrait of the rest of America remains in the text, and besides, Peru is not perfect: the people ‘ne cognoissent pas Jesu Christ’ and so ‘on doibt labourer a tout engin, payne, et diligence’ to rectify this (fol. 32<sup>v</sup>). In other words, the world can be organised into a cultural hierarchy with Europe at the top.

The differing geographies of Rabelais and Apian indicate that Europe is a word whose meaning was contested. The cultural and political charge it carries in Apian’s *Cosmographie* is lacking in Rabelais’s work. The fact that the term is used only once in the *Quart Livre* may entail a dismissal of the kinds of ideas denoted by the word as Apian and others used it. Indeed, the work frequently warns its readers against the effacement of complexity and nuance, such as is on evidence in Apian’s definition of the continent. The ‘parolles degelées’ episode (chapters 55-6) highlights the slippery and contingent nature of words. In the Papimanes scene, we see how words are sites of conflict: ‘Dieu’ is a locus of disagreement about religious interpretation between the Pantagruelists and the Papimanes; the Papimane bishop Homenaz interrupts Rhizotome’s narration to challenge his use of the word, asking ‘du quel Dieu entendez

vous?’ (p. 662) as he recognises a god in heaven and the pope as god on earth, whereas for the Pantagruelists there can only be one God and so the word holds different meaning for them. We turn now to consider how the different fictional islands created by Rabelais offer a reflection on the referential world.

### **Images of depletion: The Old World in time**

Descriptions of loss, such as the quotation with which this chapter opened, are found not infrequently in the *Quart Livre*. The adverb ‘jadis’ is of particular significance in that quotation as it adds a temporal dimension to Rabelais’s geographical description. We shall see in this section that it is a common feature of the *Quart Livre* to insert markers of time in descriptive passages. Such temporal indicators draw the reader’s attention to change – invariably of a negative nature. Given the recognisability of the world of the *Quart Livre* these changes reveal anxieties about the culture and society of the Old World, and they pose questions about the present and the future. Rabelais uses the medium of fictional geography as a form of inquiry which explores, and encourages the reader to reflect on, the world in a manner that conventional geographical writing does not. This kind of speculative thinking is enhanced by the episodic structure of Rabelais’s text since the various island communities open up various perspectives on the world. Each time the characters set foot on land they see the world from a different position; the world looks different from the island of the Papefigues than it does from the island of the Papimanes. I shall conduct close readings of the images of change and depletion within three scenes: the Papefigues, the island of Ruach and the island of the Macraeons. These episodes problematise notions that other thinkers use to define Europe – unity, Christianity, the classical heritage – and they reveal uncertainties – about conflict, finance, decline, subjugation – that Apian’s *Cosmographie* effaces.

The Papefigues chapters of the *Quart Livre* (45-7) are invariably paired with those concerning the Papimanes (48-54), since the mutual hostility between the two groups of islanders resulted in the devastation of the Guillardetz. The Pantagruelists land on the isle of the Papefigues where they see the ruined land and hear that it was caused by the Papimane invasion, a response to a rude gesture towards the papal portrait by one of the Guillardetz. The group then travel to the island of the pope-worshipping Papimanes where they witness their idolatry. Jerome Schwartz has written that the ‘principal function of [the Papimanes] episode is satirical and served the cause of Henri II’s conflict with Rome in 1552’, and it is in this light that most commentators regard

these scenes.<sup>49</sup> In fact, Gérard Defaux considers the whole of the *Quart Livre* to be a parody of Rome and the papacy.<sup>50</sup> For Screech, the Papimanes represent a quintessential example of Rabelais's Gallican and Evangelical propaganda, conveying its message through the palpably perverse doctrine that Homenaz preaches and by provoking the reader's sympathy for the poor Papefigues.<sup>51</sup> Both Duval and Frank-Rutger Hausmann find them less worthy of sympathy: the former flags the rudeness of the gesture which provoked the unjustifiably violent ire of the Papimanes; the latter accuses them of rebelling against authority.<sup>52</sup> In addition to the degree of blame in producing their own misery, some critics have been exercised by the identity of the community to whom the Papefigues allude. Most agree with Screech, following Raymond Lebègue, that the episode represents the massacre of the Vaudois Protestants in 1545, but Marie-Luce Demonet has more recently speculated that the Papefigues might be Jews.<sup>53</sup>

For this study, the identity of the Papefigues is not under question. Indeed, it is the fictionality of the Papefigues – that is, the lack of specificity as to whom they might represent – which allows Rabelais's method of inquiry. The Papefigues occupy three temporal phases at once in that they can stand for past events, such as the Vaudois massacre, and also communicate present fears (in 1552) about violent intolerance and warn about what the future might look like. In adopting geographical discourse to express anxieties about religious conflicts Rabelais undermines the idyllic view of Europe epitomised in Apian's *Cosmographie*, insisting upon violence and loss.

The opening description of the island of the Papefigues establishes the dismal mood of the place: 'jadis estoient riches et libres, et les nommoit on Guillardetz, pour lors estoient paouvres, mal heureux, et subjectz aux Papimanes' (p. 642). Where once they were free, the people are now subject to the Papimanes; where once they were rich, now they are poor, economic resources having been transferred to the occupying power. The motivation for the attack is said to have been ideological rather than economic: the Papimanes wage war on religious grounds, avenging the insulting gesture made by one

<sup>49</sup> *Irony and Ideology in Rabelais: Structures of Subversion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 186.

<sup>50</sup> *Rabelais agonistes: du rieur au prophète: Études sur Pantagruel, Gargantua et Le Quart Livre*, Études Rabelaisiennes 32 (Geneva: Droz, 1997), pp. 507-13.

<sup>51</sup> *Rabelais*, pp. 401-10.

<sup>52</sup> *The Design of Rabelais's 'Quart Livre de Pantagruel'*, p. 73; 'Comment doit-on lire l'épisode de 'L'isle des Papefigues' (*Quart Livre*, 45-47)?', in Jean Céard and Jean-Claude Margolin, eds., *Rabelais en son demi-millénaire: Actes du colloque international de Tours (24-29 septembre 1984)*, Études Rabelaisiennes 21 (Geneva: Droz, 1988), pp. 121-9 (p. 125).

<sup>53</sup> *Rabelais*, p. 402; 'Raves, Rabbis et Raboulière: la persécution des Papefigues (Rabelais, *Quart Livre*, chapitre XLV)', in Jean-Michel Gouvard, ed., *Questions de littérature: Bérout, Rabelais, La Fontaine, Saint-Simon, Maupassant, Lagarce* (Bordeaux: Presses Universitaires de Bordeaux, 2011), pp. 33-59.

of the Guillardetz towards the portrait of the pope. The injustice of the invasion is expressed by the emphasis on the singularity of the provocative act, ‘L’un d’eulx [...] feist la figue’ (p. 642), which contrasts to the response of the Papimanes who ‘se mirent tous en armes, surprindrent, saccaigerent, et ruinerent toute l’isle des Guillardetz’ (p. 642; my emphasis). All of them paying for the actions of one, the Guillardetz ‘Feurent faicts esclaves et tributaries et leurs feut imposé nom de Papefigues’ (p. 643).

The scene has echoes of the contemporary discovery and conquest of the New World. The religious imperatives of the victorious army, the depletion of the occupied territory, the enslavement of the conquered peoples and the renaming of them by the Papimanes all call to mind the Spanish and Portuguese exploits in America (and the unsuccessful endeavours of the French in Canada) – not least because the *Quart Livre* in some respects resembles an account of a voyage to the west. However, the Papefigues are not a simple proxy for New World peoples since they are, like the Papimanes, Christians of a sort. Thus, Rabelais reimagines the dynamics of overseas conquest as the domination of one Christian confession by another. The point is made explicit in chapter 53, entitled ‘Comment par la vertu des Decretales est l’or subtilement tiré de France en Rome’, in which it is said that ‘France la Treschristiane est unique nourrisse de la court Romaine’ as ‘tirent par chascun an de France en Rome quatre cens mille ducatz, et d’adventaige’ (p. 662). A parallel is thereby created between the island of the Papefigues and the kingdom of France which serves to depict Rome as a warlike foreign power. Of ‘nos derniers Papes’, Panurge says, ‘tout l’empire Christian estant en paix et silence, eulx seulz guerre faire felonnie et trescruelle’ (p. 655), thereby damning the pope as a warmonger who would destroy the Christian commonwealth.

The switch in terms of representation from the pope as the head of Christendom to the pope as the head of an exploitative foreign power gives the spiritual considerations of the *Quart Livre* a political and economic edge. There was of course the precedent of the Church of England breaking with Rome. The French crown’s relations with the papacy hit a low during the Gallican Crisis of 1551 when Henri II withdrew French cardinals and diplomats from the Vatican and considered establishing an independent Gallican church.<sup>54</sup> In drawing on these themes, Rabelais offers a pessimistic view of the Old World, one far removed from the *locus amoenus* of Apian’s description of Europe. That said, the temporal marker ‘jadis’ confines the idyll to the past only for the Papefigues, not for the Papimanes. The contrast between the two

<sup>54</sup> Frederic J. Baumgartner, *France in the Sixteenth Century* (New York: St Martin’s Press, 1995), p. 146.

groups is brought out at the start of chapter 48 when the Pantagruelists travel from one island to the other: ‘Laissans l’isle desolée des Papefigues navigasmes par un jour en serenité et tout plaisir, quand à nostre veue se offrit la benoïste isle des Papimanes’ (p. 649). Although the adjective ‘benoïste’ is used ironically, it serves additionally to flag that the Papimanes have not suffered economic depletion as their religious enemies have. The unity seen in Apian’s strict delimitation of Europe is not matched in the divided world of the *Quart Livre*. Whether the fictional Papimanes or the French of the mid-sixteenth century, Rabelais presents Christian communities whose political enemies are fellow Christians and who are not united by religion but divided by economic exploitation.

Yet the Christian world as it is found in the *Quart Livre* is not only fractured but also reduced. Homenaz compresses Christianity into his own pope-worshipping doctrine which considers the papal decretals sacred: he says, ‘qui est ce (en conscience) qui a estably, confirmé, autorisé ces belles religions, des quelles en tout endroitz voyez la Christianté ornée, decorée, illustrée, comme est le firmament de ses claires estoilles? Dives Decretales’ (p. 664). His term of reference is Christendom and it is praised for its religious orders, the glories of which are hailed as the product of the decretals. The Papimane invasion of the island of the Papefigues was an attempt to impose a narrow definition of Christianity – the Papimane pope-worshipping understanding – on another community. Whereas contemporary travel accounts frame the voyages they describe as missions to spread Christianity, the movement of the Papimanes does not expand Christendom but rather contracts it, depleting one confessional grouping at the expense of another.

The image of a fractured and compressed Christendom communicates anxieties about the future of Rabelais’s world. Homenaz is not content with the destruction of the Guillardetz and preaches violent intolerance of other denominations: ‘O lors paix obstinée infrangible en l’Univers: cessation de guerres, pilleries, anguaries, briguanderies, assassinemens: exceptez contre les Hereticques, et rebelles maudictz’ (pp. 657-8). The temporal marker ‘lors’ indicates that the bishop of the Papimanes is here offering a blueprint for the future. Of Homenaz’s vision of Christianity Duval has written: ‘His utopia is a community not of tolerant inclusion but of terrorist exclusion and fratricide, a unity based not on the transcendence of differences but on the



elimination of all difference'.<sup>55</sup> Following the invasion of the island of the Papefigues, violence continues at the level of the signifier through Homenaz's repetition of his sectarian ideology. He offers a pretence at universality, an all-encompassing myth which cannot give meaning to diversity and which is actually a smaller Christian community that denounces perceived enemies as heretics. He dismisses a verse recited by Frère Jan as 'petitz Quolibetz des Hereticques nouveaux' (p. 662); his final adjective inserts a temporal marker into the notion of heresy. The labelling of deviant groups as heretics is not a phenomenon of the present only: the adjective alludes to a past and, therefore, a latent future. The fluidity of the concept of heresy – the signifier remaining the same but the referent changing – opens up the potential for future conflict, for one Christian community to categorise another as heretical and consequently wage war.

Looking at the reimagined Old World of the *Quart Livre* the reader encounters an interpretation of the state of Christendom in the middle of the sixteenth century. The antagonism of the Papimanes and the Papefigues allows the reader to view the fictional world from three different positions. From the island of the Papefigues it seems to be a much more limited and dangerous world than it did previously. The view from the isle of the Papimanes is more confident yet paranoid at the same time, with the spectre of religious enemies to be crushed. By moving through this world the Pantagruelists provide a third, cosmographical, perspective: to them it is a Christian world, fractured by different denominations. The diverse company that travels with Pantagruel provides a model of a pluralistic community whose members stay together in spite of disagreements, as Quint has argued.<sup>56</sup> Homenaz's outlook, by contrast, is much more reduced; his religious belief is an exclusionary vision of the future. In this way, the Papefigues embody the fear that religious intolerance will continue to harden and that diversity will be violently quashed. The comedy of the *Quart Livre* balances the gloom, offering a humorous way of thinking about people's worries. We laugh at the ludicrous Homenaz – a laugh that at once dismisses his extremist attitude and offers the reader some catharsis for the very real fears about the future of a Christendom that looks depleted.

Elsewhere in the *Quart Livre* an image of depletion is used to explore the relationship of the classical past to the present day. Following the storm the

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<sup>55</sup> *The Design of Rabelais's 'Quart Livre de Pantagruel'*, p. 74.

<sup>56</sup> *Origin and Originality*, pp. 194-206.

Pantagruelists land on an island whose aged inhabitants live amongst the ruins of antiquity and speak Ionic Greek. The old Macrobe's belief that the storm was caused by the death of a 'hero' provokes a discussion of this subject which progresses through an account of the death of Guillaume du Bellay, Rabelais's protector, to Pantagruel's interpretation of Plutarch's account of the death of Pan. Of the Macraeons episode it is the discourse around the death of heroes, and the Pan story in particular, that has received the most critical attention.<sup>57</sup> My focus here is on the significance of the topographical descriptions of the island. They function, as we shall see, to raise contemporary political and financial concerns, and to meditate on the relevance of the classical past to the present and the future.

Like the Papefigues, the Macraeons dwell on an impoverished island, long past its best. The vocabulary of Rabelais makes explicit the link between the two: the isle of the Macraeons was 'jadis riche, frequente, opulente, marchande, populeuse et subjecte au dominateur de Bretagne. Maintenant par laps de temps et sus la declination du monde, paouvre et deserte' (p. 599). Note that word 'jadis' which appeared in the description of the island of the Papefigues and note the further stress placed on change and time by the phrase 'par laps de temps'. Other lexical items ensure a parallel between the islands of the Macraeons and that of the Papefigues: the Papefigues are now 'paouvres' and their once rich island has become deserted. The difference lies in the cause and speed of decline. The Papefigues, as we saw, had fallen victim to an invasion, whereas there is no such single and sudden factor in the degeneration of the island of the Macraeons but rather a slow and natural process ('par laps de temps'). Ruins of the past stand as a testament to the formerly lively culture of the Macraeons:

par la forest umbrageuse et deserte descouvert plusieurs vieulx temples ruinez, plusieurs obelisces, Pyramides, monumens, et sepulchres antiques, avecques inscriptions et epitaphes divers. Les uns en lettres Hieroglyphicques, les aultres en language Ionicque, les aultres en langue Arabicque, Agarene, Sclavonicque, et aultres. (p. 598)

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<sup>57</sup> Many commentators have followed Screech who regards the scene as an attempt on the part of Rabelais at syncretism of classical culture with Christian belief: 'The Death of Pan and the Death of Heroes in the *Fourth Book of Rabelais: A Study in Syncretism*', *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance*, 17 (1955), 36-55. Duval, on the other hand, argues that Pantagruel is less concerned with theology than with behaving kindly towards his host in seeking common ground between them: *The Design of Rabelais's 'Quart Livre de Pantagruel'*, p. 101. More recent accounts of this episode have stressed the importance of ambiguity. Le Cadet, for example, rejects the notion of syncretism in favour of *transitus* from Hellenism to Christianity. Borrowing from Guillaume Budé's *De transitu hellenismi ad christianismum*, he outlines two ways of conceptualising the passage from pagan wisdom to Christian wisdom which are especially relevant to the Macraeons scene: first, the transition to Christianity represents a break with antiquity, the values of the two being incompatible, and, second, the cultural resources of the classical world are put to the service of Christianity. Of the two, Le Cadet asserts, Rabelais does not favour one, preferring to keep ambiguous the interpretation of the *transitus*. See 'L'île des Macraeons, ou les ambiguïtés du *transitus* rabelaisien (*Quart Livre*, ch. XXV à XXVIII)', *Réforme, Humanisme, Renaissance*, 61 (2005), 51-72.

With pyramids, hieroglyphics and ancient Greek inscriptions, the emphasis here is firmly on the classical world. Le Cadet has noted how all of these constructions are associated with death, thereby signalling the end of antiquity.<sup>58</sup> And so even though this vision of the classical past includes a wide range of civilisations, from the Arabic to the Slavonic, there is in spite of this rich diversity no hope for the future of the island. The ruins are ruins, not the symbols of a nascent classical culture and not the seeds of growth of something new.

Pantagruel's narration of the death of Pan, though, seems to be an attempt to salvage something of the ancient world, to plead for its relevance to the present. Screech's insistence on syncretism points towards this of course, but so too does a reading by Neil Kenny who, reacting against Screech, follows André Tournon's approach of locating meaning in the tensions of the text.<sup>59</sup> Rejecting Screech's idea that Pantagruel is a mouthpiece for Rabelais's syncretism, Kenny regards the giant's interpretation of Pan as Christ to be a personal decision, shorn of dogmatic certainty, the selection of one of the available options.<sup>60</sup> Pantagruel's attempt to extract a Christian truth from the writings of Plutarch bespeaks a desire to locate value for the modern world in antique culture. Le Cadet, however, suggests that the contrast between the dwindling Macraeons and the Pantagruelists restored after the storm, in addition to the episode closing with the image of Pan as Christ, leaves a symbolic space for a Christianity sundered from antiquity.<sup>61</sup> It should be noted, though, that the very end of the scene sees Pantagruel crying, a highly ambiguous gesture. For Screech the tears are for the tragedy of the Crucifixion and serve as marker of Pantagruel's 'greatness and goodness'; for Kenny the tears emphasise the personal nature of Pantagruel's interpretation and thus undermine the certainty of it.<sup>62</sup> The act betrays emotion, certainly, but the narrator cannot tell us exactly why the giant is crying. Whilst the emphasis appears to be on Christianity, the parlous state of which the *Quart Livre* goes on to depict, perhaps he is crying also for the loss of the classical heritage.

The theme of depletion is expanded during the Macraeons episode to incorporate the referential world directly. As the characters discuss the death of 'heroes', Pantagruel says of 'ces ames nobles et insignes':

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<sup>58</sup> 'L'île des Macraeons', pp. 66-7.

<sup>59</sup> 'Making sense of intertextuality', in John O'Brien, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Rabelais* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 57-72.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 67.

<sup>61</sup> 'L'île des Macraeons', pp. 67-8.

<sup>62</sup> *Rabelais*, pp. 363-4; 'Making sense of intertextuality', p. 67.

sus l'heure de leur discession, communement adviennent par les isles et continent grands troublemens en l'air, tenebres, fouldres, gresles: en terre concussions, tremblemens, estonnemes: en mer fortunal et tempeste, avecques lamentations des peuples, mutations des religions, transpors des Royaulmes, et eversions des Republicques. (p. 600)

Present here, as in other instances of change, is a temporal marker, 'sus l'heure'. The dire circumstances described can come about quickly – more like the island of the Papefigues than the isle of the Macraeons – as a result of the death of one individual. Epistemon cites Guillaume du Bellay, the seigneur de Langey, as one such example of a death that brought about devastating consequences: 'lequel vivant, France estoit en telle felicité, que tout le monde avoit sus elle envie, tout le monde se y rallioit, tout le monde la redoubtoit. Soubdain après son trespas elle a esté en mespris de tout le monde bien longuement' (p. 600). A marker of time, 'Soubdain', is used once again here to emphasise change. Langey, a diplomat associated with the policy of religious toleration and moderation at the court of Francis I, died in 1543. His time on earth is made to coincide with the collective time of the destiny of France.<sup>63</sup> The image presented of the country is one of sudden decline, of a once-flourishing community now suffering – a motif found throughout the *Quart Livre*. The repetition of 'monde' places emphasis on the shift in France's relation to the rest of the world from an object of awe to an object of scorn. This view of the world is not the static, atemporal unity of the Europe represented in Apian's *Cosmographie*. France has a particular place, yet it is subject to transience: past glories have not lasted forever; just one person can alter the destiny of the country. In the *Quart Livre*, then, the concerns of the past and the present fold into anxieties about the future.

The concern of Apian's *Cosmographie*, by contrast, is firmly with the present. The presence of antiquity in that text is limited to a brief account of the continent's mythological name: 'Europe (la premiere partie du monde) est appellee de la fille de Agenor Roy des Pheniciens, laquelle en Asie aymee de Juppiter fut transportee en Crete' (fol. 30<sup>v</sup>). On the other hand, Rabelais's dialogue with the ancient world – and with the question of time and change – is much more complex. Whilst depletion can occur suddenly or quickly, the *Quart Livre* offers little hope that it can be reversed. The classical world as it is presented in the isle of the Macraeons is far removed from the Renaissance dream of the restoration of antiquity. A group of islands of which only one is now inhabited, the Macraeons paint a picture of a formerly lively classical culture reduced to one sparsely populated island, antiquity not reborn but, on the contrary,

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<sup>63</sup> Lacore-Martin, p. 223.

dwindled, dying. The Pantagruelists turn their back on it, quite literally, by sailing away. For Harp this is due to Pantagruel's lack of interest in the island; 'it is literally a place of the dead whose lifelessness is alien to his own vitality'.<sup>64</sup> Alternatively, the departure could signal the rejection of a certain type of classical preservation, one that keeps it in fossilised form, as on the island of the Macraeons. What is certain is that the image of the depletion of this community does not make of antiquity a utopia. As Christian unity disintegrates, it is not possible to retreat to the classical heritage as a unifying ideal. Those in the Old World need to search for a new vision, a new narrative to understand themselves. This is precisely what the voyagers do, sailing away towards more islands and more questions about the past, the present and the future.

Further images of depletion are to be found on the island of Ruach (chapters 43 and 44), where the inhabitants live on wind alone, an existence made difficult by the annual visit of the giant Bringuenarilles to devour their windmills. The reader first hears of this fellow in chapter 17 when Pantagruel's company land at the islands of Thohu and Bohu to be told of the giant who had recently died from choking on a knob of butter. The Ruachites are generally considered within the context of the theme of moderation introduced in the prologue to the *Quart Livre*; they are monomaniacs, not moderate at all.<sup>65</sup> Bringuenarilles is often regarded as introducing the theme of death which then predominates throughout the following scenes – the storm and the narration of the death of Guillaume du Bellay – since the tale of the giant triggers the narrator to offer a catalogue of bizarre deaths. For Schwartz the 'trivial' death of Bringuenarilles frames the cosmic importance of Langey's.<sup>66</sup> Tournon treats the chapter somewhat more seriously, judging it to deal with one unimaginable aspect of death, its natural absurdity, while the death of du Bellay treats a second, its supernatural mystery.<sup>67</sup> I want to shift the focus to life – to the giant's impact on the living world of Rabelais's text – and consider Bringuenarilles and Ruach together. In his study of the theme of food in the *Quart Livre* Jeanneret considers the two as antagonists in a 'guerre des ventres' that links the islands and offers some structure to the journey.<sup>68</sup> But their 'guerre' is about more than food – it is about economics more widely; it is a competition for resources responsible for the images of depletion on the isle of Ruach. The scenes open up

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<sup>64</sup> *The Portrayal of Community*, p. 50.

<sup>65</sup> Heath, *Rabelais*, p. 67.

<sup>66</sup> *Irony and Ideology in Rabelais*, p. 174.

<sup>67</sup> 'Nargues, Zargues et le concept de trépas', *Réforme, Humanisme, Renaissance*, 64 (2007), 111-23 (p. 123).

<sup>68</sup> *Le Défi des signes*, p. 159.

additional perspectives on the nature of conflict, dramatizing non-ideological clashes and struggles within an island community, in an altogether pessimistic view of the future.

The vocabulary used to describe the isle of Ruach links this episode to those others in the *Quart Livre* that depict depleted communities. For the islanders, the arrival of Bringuenarilles is said to be ‘une annuelle calamité bien grande et dommaigeable’ which provokes ‘grande misere’ (pp. 640-1). The words ‘calamité’ and ‘misere’ are both used also in relation to the Papefigues. Thus, the impact of the movement of Bringuenarilles to Ruach parallels that of the Papimanes to the island of the Papefigues. The peculiarities of the two scenes are, however, as notable as the similarities. The hardship on Ruach comes about because the giant goes there ‘par le conseil de ses medecins’ (p. 641), since windmills, which he needs to survive, are in short supply where he lives (p. 578). Unlike the Papimanes, Bringuenarilles does not travel in order to subjugate a people; he leaves once he has eaten his fill, wishing to satisfy his appetite, not to impose his values. The windmill-eating giant and the Ruachites are not ideological enemies but conflict emerges between them due to their needs and the resulting competition for resources. In this ‘guerre des ventres’ the islanders, for self-defence, filled their windmills with chickens so as to harm the insides of Bringuenarilles (p. 641) – an act of violent conflict to which they were driven by economic desperation.

In addition to the conflicts between rival communities, these scenes draw attention to tensions within islands. Bringuenarilles must cause problems for those with whom he lives on the island of Thohu: ‘le grand geant avoit toutes les paelles, paellons, chaudrons, coquasses, lichefretes, et marmites du pays avallé, en faulte de moulins à vent, des quelz ordinairement il se paissoit’ (p. 578). A dearth of windmills has forced the giant to gorge himself on all of the cooking pots available in his land. The adjective ‘toutes’ is the critical word in this quotation, indicating that there are no more pots at all remaining on the isles and thereby raising the question of how the inhabitants will be able to cook. Heath has noted a similar problem: with all the windmills gone, how will the people survive without flour?<sup>69</sup>

In Ruach, too, there is competition for resources; during the short time they are there the Pantagruelists see and hear about such conflicts. It is an island of unequal wealth distribution: ‘Le peuple commun pour soy alimenter use de esvantoirs de

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<sup>69</sup> *Rabelais*, p. 101.

plumes, de papier, de toile, selon leur faculté, et puissance. Les riches vivent de moulins à vent' (p. 638). Inequality breeds tensions on Ruach as the poor take from the rich: 'un home [*sic*] de bonne apparence' beats his valet and a page boy for having stolen from him (pp. 638-9), and a bag of wind is pilfered from the king (p. 639). Wind is, as Duval points out, the source of all contention on Ruach,<sup>70</sup> but when the islander who gives the account of Bringuenarilles's annual windmill-eating pilgrimage ends with, 'Voyez là nostre malheur' (p. 641), we must treat the possessive adjective with some scepticism. Windmills are a sign of luxury: 'Quand ilz [les riches] font quelque festin ou banquet, on dresse les tables sous un ou deux moulins à vent' (p. 638). In other words, the rich of Ruach have a different relationship with windmills than the poor; they will be affected differently by Bringuenarilles. Whereas the speaker's utterance, 'nostre', aimed to articulate a united island, it actually represents one partial viewpoint, that of the rich of Ruach. In doing so, the speaker eradicates alternative ideas, collapsing the views of the wider community into one perspective. Just as resources can be controlled by particular individuals, so too can the definitions of words. The Ruachite whose ostensibly expansive 'nostre' obscures a partisan perspective is the same one who provides the reader with the image of depletion, of 'calamité' and 'misere'. This demonstration of a weakness of topographic description – the partiality of the author – is bound up in the *Quart Livre*'s play with geographical discourse. It can only undermine the confidence the reader can have in the veracity of accounts such as Apian's *Cosmographie* – a text that described Europe as 'riche' and does not, like the *Quart Livre*, reflect on the inequalities of the haves and the have-nots.

The topographic description of the isle of Ruach offers an image of depletion with a different focus from others in the *Quart Livre*. The central concern is economic anxiety, with threats to the wellbeing of the island coming from outside and inside. Bringuenarilles, the external threat, provides another means of thinking about the nature of community and a different angle of vision on the conflict. The individual scenes focussing on these enemies are not juxtaposed, contrary to the Papefigues and Papimanes chapters, so the antagonistic relations between the two appear to be contingent, not linked to a clash of values. The lack of ideology in the conflict is not a sign of hope, however. Whilst the death of the windmill-eating giant offers respite, there remains strife between the islanders. Economic struggles between, and within, communities seem to be an unavoidable feature of the world of the *Quart Livre*. This

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<sup>70</sup> *The Design of Rabelais's 'Quart Livre de Pantagruel'*, pp. 72-3.

reimagined Old World is a place of inevitable conflicts, arising from disputes over resources, as well as ideas.

These disputes over resources tie into the ideas of empire discussed above in the context of the Papefigures and the Papimanes. The Ruach/Bringuenarilles and the Papefigures/Papimanes episodes depict economic expansion from the viewpoint of those undertaking the expansion, Bringuenarilles and the Papimanes, and also from the perspective of those at whose expense expansion is taking place. Expansion, Rabelais demonstrates, leads to depletion in terms of destruction of habitats and extraction of resources. Thus, the expansion of the world actually contracts the world. Rabelais was writing at a time when capitalism was beginning to develop, when commerce and financial markets took on more significance, and when long-distance trade was becoming more important and commodities from the New World, especially precious metals, were flooding markets in the Old World.<sup>71</sup> Inflation had become a concern by the 1540s and was only to get worse in the second half of the sixteenth century as price levels rose unceasingly.<sup>72</sup> The *Quart Livre* offers the twenty-first century reader an insight into the human experience, the social anxiety, of the economic troubles of the Renaissance.

## Conclusions

The ways in which religious and economic conflicts are presented in the *Quart Livre* suggest a lack of hope for the future, a fear that clashes between communities will be unavoidable. Accordingly, the text exhibits the sentiment that a unified Christendom is either on the point of extinction or has already disappeared, and crucially it does not articulate any sense of an alternative unifying vision. The comedy of the text, however, does provide some catharsis and some hope that warlike violence need not prevail; the comical healing of the Andouilles, who represent Protestants opposed to the concept of Lent, by the application of mustard (p. 636) offers a less pessimistic outlook than the scenes examined in this chapter. In representing fears of a potentially nightmarish future, though, Rabelais borrows from the form, style and vocabulary of cosmographies and travel accounts. His geographical imagination is very different from that of Apian. The latter offers one overt narrative of what Europe means, whereas Rabelais provides

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<sup>71</sup> Robert DuPlessis, *Transitions to Capitalism in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p.5; Jotham Parsons, *Making Money in Sixteenth-Century France: Currency, Culture, and the State* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2014), p 2.

<sup>72</sup> Parsons, *Making Money*, pp. 107-8.



several competing visions of what the future could look like. Apian's imagined European community – he writes of 'nous en toute la Europe' (fol. 27<sup>r</sup>) – is one of unity, in contrast to Rabelais's world of imaginary communities where fragmentation reigns.

These effects are created by the contrasting forms of the two works. Cosmographical writing is a bookish method of organising and explaining the world which gives coherence and closed form to the continent Europe. It allows Apian to impose his meaning on the term Europe. The fiction of the *Quart Livre* is a method of thinking which depicts a series of communities recognisable as distortions of communities in the Old World. It allows Rabelais to challenge rigid geographical definitions, of which Apian's of Europe is an illustration, and to give his readers material so as to think about what Europe might mean. His focus is on the human and social dimension, thereby suggesting that the world cannot be divided as neatly as it is in Apian's *Cosmographie*. Rabelais is not dogmatic and his work opens up a space for thought, encouraging reflection on geographical issues. By mixing fiction with reality, he points the reader towards certain ideas, certain problems, rather than making direct assertions. Different groups of chapters make a point about the Old World in a different way. They offer different versions of Europe, each operating with its own temporal mechanisms; they do not all have the same dynamic, referring to the past, to the present, and to situations that might happen. The unfinished nature of the Pantagruelists' journey invites the readers to think of their own islands, of what other communities might constitute the Old World.

The image at the close of the *Quart Livre* of Pantagruel and his company sailing away is itself a reflection on the potential futures of the Old World. In leaving the sea of islands behind them, they reject the visions of the community that were offered at each landing. The text is reaching out towards something new, without knowing what that something new is or will be. The Pantagruelists themselves are one of the potential futures. They represent a community that is not held together primarily by hostile opposition towards outsiders. They are a diverse group of characters, united by friendship and laughter, who disagree but stay together.<sup>73</sup> They do not identify simply with the dominant national or confessional trends of the day; Panurge is hostile to fellow Frenchman Dindenault, for example. In this way, the Pantagruelists imagine a Europe that might be, a pluralistic and tolerant Europe.

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<sup>73</sup> Quint, *Origin and Originality in Renaissance Literature*, p. 195.

Of course, the word Europe makes just one appearance in the *Quart Livre*. What we have explored in this chapter is how a nexus of words that Apian linked to the term Europe – ‘belle’, ‘riche’ and ‘fertile’ – was deployed in Rabelais’s text. Examining this vocabulary and its related ideas within the context of the *Quart Livre* as a whole has demonstrated how Rabelais engaged creatively and critically with the geographical discourse of his day. Where the word Europe as it was used by Apian denoted unity and superiority, in the *Quart Livre* it indicates the sense of a vast area. The notion of unity that Apian refers to is rejected in Rabelais’s fictional work. It is rejected through the adoption of terms from geographical writing – ‘riche’ and so on – and the plotting of them temporally, not spatially. Apian uses the vocabulary in a spatial manner: Europe is ‘riche’ and the rest of the world is not, for instance. Rabelais, on the contrary, adds a temporal dimension so as to depict places that used to be ‘riche’. In doing so, he highlights the limitations of contemporary geographical writing, namely the simplifying present-tense description of a world that is changing and facing an uncertain future.

## CHAPTER TWO

### **Delimiting Europe: Thevet's and Belleforest's cosmographies and Montaigne's *Journal de voyage***

The previous chapter analysed the different ways in which Europe was imagined in the middle of the sixteenth century in a work of cosmography and in a work of fiction. Rabelais's redrawing of perceived borders posed questions about community definition which are taken up in this chapter through an examination of texts produced later in the century. The focus here is on the means by which boundaries external and internal to Europe were delimited and understood. We will ask what shape Europe takes in André Thevet's *Cosmographie universelle* of 1575, François de Belleforest's work published in the same year with the same title, and the *Journal de voyage* of Michel de Montaigne's trip to Italy of 1580-1. The three texts provide a window into the different ways in which early moderns understood Europe's place in the world, and into how they positioned themselves in terms of collective identity and defined the boundaries of people and place. The works of Thevet and Belleforest represent a different type of cosmographical writing from that of Apian that we encountered in the preceding chapter; they shun the mathematical approach in favour of descriptions of all of the areas of the earth, the peoples and their customs.<sup>1</sup> They both aim to delimit the world precisely and offer a stable notion of Europe. But the attempt to paint a picture of the world's many constituent regions opens up fault lines and new angles of vision, revealing bundles of competing ideas which inform and complicate thinking about Europe. The narration of travel in the *Journal de voyage* decentres the view of the world, exposing the diverse and changing conceptions of community that Montaigne encounters as he journeys through the continent. In doing so, Montaigne uses the word Europe only once. The term is not significant for him in the description of the world that he offers, whereas it is central to the view of the world offered in each cosmography.

#### **Representing Europe's place in the world**

With two folio volumes, each totalling over one thousand pages, Thevet's *Cosmographie* is a much larger work than Apian's. The lists of places with their

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<sup>1</sup> Adam Mosley provides a good account of the contrasting approaches to cosmography through an examination of how different cosmographers understood their practice. See 'The Cosmographer's Role in the Sixteenth Century: A Preliminary Study', *Archives Internationales d'Histoire des Sciences*, 59 (2009), 424-439.

latitudes and longitudes are not included, and in their place are found detailed descriptions of the customs, flora, and fauna of these places.<sup>2</sup> Thevet divides his endeavour into four tomes, one for each continent, which he further subdivides into their constituent regions. The work of Belleforest too is huge, consisting of 4,000 pages. Based on Münster's *Cosmographia* but 'radically altered', his *Cosmographie* consists of two volumes, bound as three.<sup>3</sup> He opens with a long section on the traditional cosmographical and astronomical material which is much reduced in Thevet's work, before embarking on a description of Europe that takes up the remainder of the first tome and continues into the second. Both differ from Apian's *Cosmographie* in taking a more descriptive and less mathematical approach to cosmography. But where Thevet in his text insists on the authority of his eyewitness observations, even if he does fabricate and incorporate the work of other authors, Belleforest is open about his reliance on the information of others, most obviously Münster who himself gathered his information from a wide variety of sources.<sup>4</sup> Both offer definitions of Europe. For Belleforest:

Europe est plus petite, que toutes les autres parties, si tu regardes les grandeurs des trois: mais pourtant elle n'est pas moindre que les autres en abondance de toutes choses: et pource qu'elle est naturellement temperee, elle a une fertilité excellente, et d'autant qu'elle a l'air plus doux et plus bening pour les froments, vins, et fruitages. (I, p. 28)

This is a pithy assertion of Europe's superiority vis-à-vis the rest of the world, similar to that in Apian. In this section we shall see how the cosmographies of Belleforest and Thevet represent a particular way of depicting reality, of imposing order onto the vast space of the known world. However, the focus on a descriptive representation of the world complicates the attempts to offer a neat summary of what 'Europe est', since additional perspectives are opened up. These perspectives offer indications of other narratives about the continent. When Europe is considered from the viewpoint of Muscovy, for instance, it looks different from Europe considered from the perspective of France. Behind the simple definition of Europe offered by Belleforest lurk unresolved contradictions: some places are regarded as both inside and outside Europe; and Europe is simultaneously coterminous with and separate from Christendom. We are left, then, not with one idea of Europe but with several strands of what Europe might be, emerging from a recurrent process of construction and reconstruction of Europe.

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<sup>2</sup> Frank Lestringant has studied Thevet's cosmographical practice at length. See *L'atelier du cosmographe: Ou l'image du monde à la Renaissance* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1991).

<sup>3</sup> Matthew McLean, *The Cosmographia of Sebastian Münster: Describing the World in the Reformation* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), p. 175.

<sup>4</sup> For an account of the research and composition of Münster's *Cosmographia*, see McLean, pp. 143-173. For a comparison of Thevet's and Belleforest's styles of composition see Conley, *The Self-Made Map*, pp. 178-204.

Thevet's cosmography attempts to fix the shape of Europe. The first book of the *Cosmographie universelle* opens with three chapters concerned with typical cosmographical material, namely descriptions of the celestial spheres, the habitable zones of the world (by then all of the earth was considered habitable),<sup>5</sup> the winds, and the seas. The description of Africa begins in chapter four, taking as its starting point the Straits of Gibraltar and commencing with the following point:

Les anciens Grecs, Mores, Arabes et Latins, ont tous d'un consentement reconnu, que le destroit de Gibraltar (dict des Ethiopiens *Gebbethon*, ou *Gebel-tarif* en langue Moresque, du nom de *Tarif*, ville qui luy aboutit) estoit celuy qui separoit l'Afrique d'avec l'Europe, par et avec ces deux monts fameux.<sup>6</sup>

What counts from the outset is that the start of Africa is also the end of Europe. Africa is defined as not Europe. Thus, when Thevet comes to the description of Europe in the third tome of the *Cosmographie*, the Straits of Gibraltar are positioned as the starting point of Europe (II, fol. 469<sup>r</sup>). The Straits are, as Thevet points out, what were known in the ancient world as the Pillars of Hercules.<sup>7</sup> For Thevet, crucial to the definition of Europe is the history and stability of the idea of the Straits of Gibraltar as the limit point of two continents. He stresses Asia's separation from Europe by alluding to both the ancient and modern names for the dividing river: 'Du costé donc de l'Ouest ou Ponent, elle a la riviere de Tanaïs, à present Don, ou Tane, qui la separe d'avec l'Europe' (I, fol. 465<sup>v</sup>). The distinction of each continent from one another is reinforced by the structure of the *Cosmographie universelle* which divides its description of the world into four parts, each one corresponding to a particular continent. Of Thevet's style of composition – what Lestringant labels a 'chaos encyclopédique' –<sup>8</sup> Frédéric Tinguely has written, 'Chaque description de pays, d'île ou de ville fait figure de petit recueil de singularités que l'on parcourt avec bonheur, certes, mais sans être en mesure d'en ordonner ou d'en hiérarchiser le contenu'.<sup>9</sup> The chaos at the level of description is not

<sup>5</sup> Jean-Marc Besse has outlined the emergence in the sixteenth-century of the concept of a universally habitable globe in *Les grandeurs de la Terre: Aspects du savoir géographique à la Renaissance* (Lyon: ENS Éditions, 2003).

<sup>6</sup> André Thevet, *La Cosmographie universelle d'André Thevet, cosmographe du roy, illustrée de diverses figures des choses plus remarquables veuës par l'Auteur, & incogneuës de noz Anciens et Modernes*, 2 vols (Paris: Guillaume Chaudiere, 1575), I, fol. 7<sup>v</sup>. All references will be to this edition. Spelling has been regularised.

<sup>7</sup> The image of the Pillars of Hercules was famously depicted on the device of the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V. Accompanied by the motto 'plus outre', Charles's impresa carried the message of the Pillars as a gateway from Europe to the New World. Thevet refers to the perceived 'impossibilité d'aller plus outre' as the 'simplicité des anciens' versus the moderns, without mentioning the Spanish imperial significance attached to the Straits of Gibraltar (I, fol. 8<sup>v</sup>).

<sup>8</sup> Lestringant, *L'atelier du cosmographe*, p. 11.

<sup>9</sup> 'Le Vertige cosmographique à la Renaissance', *Archives Internationales d'Histoire des Sciences*, 59 (2009), 441-450 (p. 447).

matched by the overarching unity of organisation: a neat division of the world into four continents, each of which is further subdivided into distinct *pays*.

Belleforest's *Cosmographie universelle* follows the same model of classifying the world according to the four continents. His approach is slightly different from Thevet's in that each continent is not the subject of a separate volume. Nevertheless, the continental model frames the text: first Europe and its constituent *pays* are described before Asia becomes the subject, then Africa and finally America. When the world is represented in geographical writing it does not have to be organised in this manner. For example, an anonymous seventeenth-century manuscript *Alphabet Géographique* consists of one list, organised alphabetically, of the various places of the world, with villages, towns, regions, countries, and rivers all alongside one another.<sup>10</sup> In this text, Africa, Asia, Europe and America are not systematising categories but mere elements in a list. By contrast, the textual designs of Thevet and Belleforest represent a choice to impose a particular structure on the world, one that privileges the four continents as significant organising categories.

Like Thevet, Belleforest grounds the geographical conception of the continent of Europe in a notion of stability. When outlining the boundaries of Europe he invites the reader to consult the text in tandem with a map of the world included in the *Cosmographie universelle*:

Afin donc que tu ayes en memoire la disposition de la terre, et des parties d'icelle, regarde la table ou figure du monde universel, et prens premierement garde à l'Europe, en laquelle nous conversons, qui est separee de l'Afrique par la mer mediterranee, et en partie aussi de l'Asie. Car ceste mer-là se retourne en Septentrion, là où elle obtient divers noms, à sçavoir, en l'extremité d'Aquilon, et est appellee Pont Euxin, ou mer majeur, où vient tomber ce beau fleuve Tanais, et separe l'Asie de l'Europe és parties d'Orient. (I, p. 28)

The plural pronoun 'nous' in the second line articulates a community of readers who, like the writer, are located in Europe, specifically in Europe, not anywhere in the world and not in any particular part of the continent. With the instruction 'regarde' and the reference to 'memoire', Belleforest appeals to the reader's memory as a place of stability for this fixed geographical concept of Europe. The emphasis is on the uniqueness of Europe, its geographical integrity and separation from Asia and Africa. References to stability and to historical tradition, such as Thevet's comment on the Straits of Gibraltar, make claims about space more authoritative. Cultural developments such as the westward Ottoman advance are not considered to have shifted the

<sup>10</sup> Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France (BnF), MS fonds français 24906.

geographical boundary of Europe, even though borders are cultural constructs: Belleforest writes, for instance, of ‘l’Europe qui comprend de nostre temps la Chrestienté, et aussi quelque chose de la seigneurie du Turc’ (I, p. 81).

However, the division Belleforest makes in this quotation of Europe into a Christian space and an Ottoman space points towards a sense that the continent has meaning beyond the spatial, a meaning that is elaborated, at least in part, in relation to the Ottoman Empire. He stresses that the Ottomans are outsiders, having originated in Asia and later come to Europe through Greece:

Je parle des Turcs l’origine desquels j’ay à deduire estant sur le païs, où ils regnoyent avant que passer en Grece [...] Les Turcs eurent leur premiere et naturelle demeure en la Scythie Asiatique, outre les monts Perichees vers le Nord: et fut une gent et nation cruelle et infame, et adonnee à paillardise. (II, pp. 521-4)

The Ottomans, according to Belleforest, do not belong to Europe; they have infiltrated the continent. He emphasises this point in the organisation of his material: whereas Münster discussed Turkey at the end of his section on Europe, Belleforest includes the Ottomans in the Asian part of the work. The Asian Scythians, from whom the Ottomans are said by Belleforest to descend, are described as cruel, dishonourable and lecherous – an image of the Scythians that was established by ancient Greek writers for whom they signified barbarity.<sup>11</sup> It is these adjectives which distinguish the civilised from the uncivilised and which distinguish Asia from Europe. In this way, the cultural forms a boundary as much as the geographical.

Thevet also emphasises cultural meaning and stresses that the Turks are Asiatic in origin. He dismisses the idea that the Ottomans descend from the Trojans:

c’est à fin de oster l’opinion de ceux qui disent, que ceste nation [des Turcs] aye prins source des Troyens, desquels tous les plus grands de l’Europe (ne sçay pour quelle raison) se disent estre descenduz [...] Selon l’opinion vulgaire des Grecs du païs, il est fait mention de certain peuple vivant de la chasse, et se tenant par les bois qui leur servoient de maisons, lequel estoit de fort modeste vie (jadis l’on appelloit ceste maniere d’hommes, Turcs, ou Thariches, ou Thiraces.) Mais si j’accorde cest article, vous verriez (qui est contre toute verité) que les Turcs seroient entrez d’Europe en Asie [...] Les Turcs donc sont Scythes, ou Tartares Levantins, lesquels vivoient en leur païs naturel plus de larcin que d’autre chose, peuple farouche et cruel, addonné à toute espece de paillardise (I, fol. 359<sup>v</sup>).

Trojan descent was a claim that the French made about themselves, as in Jean Lemaire de Belges’s *Les Illustrations de Gaule et singularitez de Troye* (1511-13) which sets out

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<sup>11</sup> ‘[Le Scythe] est le sauvage par excellence depuis l’Antiquité [...] pour les Anciens “Scythe” était synonyme de barbare’: Phillip John Usher, *Errance et cohérence: Essai sur la littérature transfrontalière à la Renaissance* (Paris: Garnier, 2010), pp. 71-2.

a line of descent from Noah to Priam, the king of Troy, and hails the Trojan Francus as the founder of France.<sup>12</sup> It was not only France; as Thevet indicates, ‘tous les plus grands [pays] de l’Europe’ alleged Trojan origins. Europe is a crucial word here since Thevet is keen to separate Asia from Europe, both historically and in the present day. The same set of adjectives used by Belleforest appears here (‘farouche et cruel, addonné à toute espee de paillardise’) so as to depict the Ottomans and their Scythians forebears as a benchmark for barbarity. Those adjectives are certainly not ones that would be regarded as applicable to the Trojans, nor, through Thevet’s insistence on placing the origins of Ottoman culture beyond a geographical boundary, to contemporary Europe.

Similar description is deployed to denigrate other peoples and places outside Europe in a manner that shapes the meanings of the continent. The inhabitants of the New World are labelled ‘sauvages’ and ‘barbares’ by Thevet and Belleforest. The latter describes them as ‘barbares sans nulle cognoissance de Dieu, ny de loy, ou police’ (III, p. 2037), thereby highlighting the characteristics that separate ‘them’ from ‘us’. The religious element is of particular importance; when writing of travellers to the New World Belleforest refers to them as ‘les Chrestiens’, articulating in this way a cultural identity applicable to French, Portuguese and Spanish voyagers. He also makes reference to ‘[les] Europeens qui sont pardelà’ (III, p. 2094). The use of the collective noun ‘Europeens’, while far from commonplace, as a synonym for ‘Chrestiens’ points towards an emerging sense that values other than religion might underpin a feeling of commonality across political boundaries – ‘police’ being one such conception.

Such values come to the fore in descriptions of less distant locations. Malta, for instance, provides an important test case for what Europe is. Thevet includes the island in his tome on Africa and writes:

Malte, comme chacun sçait, n’est pas de si fraische memoire, que les plus anciens ne la mentionnent, et qu’avant la venue du Sauveur en ce monde, elle ne fust habitee, et apres la passion d’iceluy elle ne receust bien tost la foy Chrestienne, par la predication de l’Apostre S. Paul: dequoy les Insulaires se vantent avoir memoires, comme gens qui n’ont point esté transportez de leurs maisons, ainsi qu’ont esté leurs voisins. Or ceste isle est comme une barriere entre l’Afrique et l’Europe en la mer Mediterranee, regardant d’un costé la Sicile, et d’autre la Barbarie: qui met les auteurs en doute, si elle doit tenir rang entre les isles Afriquaines. Mais ceux qui advisent de pres la description des lieux, et qui jugent les mesures celestes, verront que Malte, Lampadouze, Limouze, et autres voisines, sont comprises en Afrique, prenans leur

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<sup>12</sup> Bodo L. O. Richter has argued that the myth of the Trojan origins of Franks was a matter of debate until the last quarter of the sixteenth century when it was generally accepted as false: ‘Trojans or Merovingians? The Renaissance Debate over the Historical Origins of France’, in *Mélanges à la mémoire de Franco Simone IV: Tradition et originalité dans la création littéraire* (Geneva: Slatkine, 1983), pp. 111-34.



proportion au Cap bon [...] la nature du terroir ressent les humeurs d'Afrique, plustost que la douceur de l'Italie: et le peuple, qui y parle More de tout temps, et aussi un Grec corrompu, est, sauf la religion, de mesmes moeurs et complexions que les Mores, gens vivans de peu, et fort addonnez au travail (I, fol. 24<sup>v</sup>).

Malta is culturally somewhere between Europe and Africa. As Belleforest does elsewhere, Thevet appeals to 'memoire' as a source of authority for his statements. Here he stresses Malta's difference from Europe in terms of its climate and its people. He writes in his chapter, 'De l'Europe en general', that the continent is 'plus habitee et fertile, et a des hommes plus accorts et de meilleur esprit, comme j'ay aperceu l'ayant visitee, qu'en tout le reste des autres trois parties' (II, fol. 935<sup>r</sup>). He goes on: 'Quant aux Isles, qui sont en la mer Mediterranee, quelques unes participent plus de l'Europe, que de l'Afrique et Asie. Ce qui se voit en partie par les moeurs ou langages, qui sont Grec et Italien' (II, fols. 935<sup>v</sup> – 936<sup>r</sup>). Malta is not one of those islands. Its climate is not sufficiently moderate and the characters and customs of its people are akin to those of the Moors who are characterised as living in poverty with little or no leisure time. They are not, then, considered as unfavourably as the Ottoman Turks; they are not considered the antithesis of Europe. Indeed, the people of Malta are Christian. This point is crucial: the Maltese people belong to Africa even though they are Christian; therefore, Europe means something here other than the geographical limits of Christianity. Belleforest makes the same point, writing, 'le peuple y est assez farouche, et se ressentant des façons de faire d'Afrique, toutesfois bon Chrestien' (III, p. 1880). While 'farouche' is one of the terms he uses to describe the Ottomans, the Maltese are redeemed somewhat by being Christian.

The same cannot be said of the people of Crete. Like Malta, Thevet configures Crete as outside Europe, despite being under Venetian rule, but his description is much more condemnatory of the Cretans: 'si est-ce que de ma vie je ne veis entre ceux qui ont quelque familiarité à l'estranger abordant en leur païs, peuple si brutal, meschant et desloyal, yvrongne, corrompu, et addonné à tout vice, que sont les païsans et le populaire de Candie' (I, fol. 216<sup>v</sup>). These adjectives are related to those which Thevet uses to describe other cultures outside of Europe. However, his consideration of Crete is not a simple process of castigating outsiders; he continues his condemnation with reference to religious groups within the boundaries of Europe:

Ceux desquels je me suis plus scandalisé, c'est leurs Prestres Grecs, lesquels quelque mine de sainteté exterieure qu'ils ayent, et qu'ils facent plus de la chatemite qu'un moine Abyssin, si est-ce qu'ils sont plus corrompuz et meschans que tous les autres, sans qu'ils prennent exemple à la bonne vie des Latins qui vivent entre eux: et pouvez vous asseurer, que j'aimerois mieux

tomber à la mercy d'un Turc, ou d'un Arabe, voire d'un Sauvage des Indes, où j'ay esté, que du Candiot rustique. (I, fol. 216<sup>v</sup>)

What emerges here is a fault line between Greek Orthodox and Latin Christianity. Although the Greeks are within the geographical borders of Europe, they fail to exhibit the values of the continent as defined by Thevet. They might be Christian but they are not the right sort of Christian. Cultural groups outside Europe such as the Ottomans and the Americans are here placed in a cultural hierarchy – the latter regarded as inferior to the former since they lack recognisable governmental structures. The Orthodox Cretans are considered even lower than the Americans; they are the very antithesis of a Europe that sits atop the hierarchy. What Thevet is doing is constructing Europe from a particular viewpoint, from that of Latin Christianity, its ideals and self-image mapped onto the geographical expanse of Europe, thereby defining the continent in a manner which excludes marginal communities. In *Europe (In Theory)* Roberto Dainotto sets out to explain why the south of Europe – Portugal, Italy, Greece, Spain – is today often viewed as Europe's internal other, that is as within Europe yet at the same time the negative part of it. He traces the emergence of this idea of Europe as defined in opposition to its southern borders to the eighteenth century.<sup>13</sup> What we see in Thevet, however, is that the same process of constructing an image of Europe against a community within was at work in earlier conceptions of the continent.

This view of Greece reflects a sense that the history and the meaning of Europe have shifted westwards. In Belleforest's *Cosmographie universelle* Crete is located in Europe, unlike in Thevet's work, and is described within a section on Greece and the Greek islands. He writes that Greece 'a este une des principales, et plus insignes regions de l'Europe, et laquelle à present est, et vit souz la tyrannie du Turc, presque toute deserte, et solitaire' (III, pp. 1-2). He blames the Greek people themselves for the Ottoman advance:

ce qui a le plus avancé la ruine, et accablement de ce país tant excellent, et d'un peuple si puissant, et magnifique, n'a esté autre cas, que les seditions, et les trahisons, ne pouvants les uns compatir les humeurs des autres, et tout naturellement estants convoiteux de commander, et d'avoir puissance sur les autres: et ce-cy a esté cause, que tout le país est tombé en une miserable servitude, et telle, que de nostre temps nous avons (ou à tout le moins nos peres) veu, que la trahison Greque, et la sedition mutuelle des citoyens Gregeois a servy de pont au Turc pour passer en Europe, et se faire le successeur d'un Empire florissant, et le chef du país le plus-beau, et mieux renommé, qui fust sur la terre. (III, p. 25)

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<sup>13</sup> See especially pp. 47-51.

Belleforest's attitude towards the Greeks is ambiguous. On the one hand, there is much to praise about the 'magnifique' people and the 'excellent' place, the cradle of the greatest civilisation on earth. On the other hand, they are under Ottoman control and have the wrong religion. The Greeks are condemned in forceful terms ('trahison' and 'sedition') for allowing the Ottoman enemy through the gates of Europe. The positive, indeed superlative, features of Greece belong to the past, although it is a recent past, the fall of the Byzantine Empire having come in 'nostre temps' or the time of 'nos peres'. The cultural values they represented disappeared with the Ottoman invasion. The praiseworthy characteristics articulated in Belleforest's definition of Europe are the characteristics of western Europe, not Greece.

Muscovy, like Greece, is inside Europe's geographical borders yet outside of the cultural meaning of the continent. It is conceived of as an outsider on the grounds that the people follow the Orthodox church; Thevet calls Muscovy the 'ennemy de l'Eglise Latine' when writing about the Tsar's military conflict with Poland (II, fol. 877<sup>r</sup>). Indeed, it is in relation to Poland that Thevet's view of Europe as Latin Christendom is most clearly articulated:

Pologne est la plus grande partie de la region, que les Anciens appelloient Sarmatie d'Europe, et est ce Royaume le dernier de l'Europe, et qui sert de mur aux autres: de sorte que si le Turc, les Tartares ou les Moscovites le rompoient une fois, l'Allemagne et les autres Provinces auroient bien des affaires. Ce que nous avons veu quasi advenir de nostre temps, et en l'an mil cinq cens soixante et treize, lors que pendant les Estats, et que lon procedoit à l'election d'un Roy, ledict Moscovite n'a espargné tout ce qui estoit en sa puissance, pour parvenir au dessus de ses desseins, et jouir de ceste excellente Monarchie. (II, fol. 877<sup>r</sup>)

Whilst the bird's-eye view of Europe's borders offered elsewhere in Thevet's *Cosmographie universelle* encompasses Russia, the image of Europe appears different when the text zooms in to a particular area. Although the city of Moscow is said to be 'posee sur l'extremite de l'Europe' (II, fol. 877<sup>r</sup>), when seen from the vantage point of Poland, Europe excludes Muscovy. The Muscovites, characterised as 'cruels' (II, fol. 878<sup>r</sup>), are aligned with the Ottomans and the Tartars. They are thus positioned as a threat, against which stands Poland, envisaged here as the walls of Europe. It is in the textual engagement with Poland that a more cultural and less geographical definition of Europe emerges, one which, in seeing Poland as an end point, considers Europe as coterminous with Latin Christianity.

This sense of Poland's significance in the world was not uncommon. Indeed, these ideas of Poland were prevalent outside of the sixteenth century, as Norman Davies

has noted: ‘At any point between AD 1000 and 1939, quotations can be found to illustrate the conviction that Poland was, is, and always will be, the last outpost of western civilization’.<sup>14</sup> There is an obviously political bent to this conception of Poland. For example, in 1573, when in Poland to negotiate the election of the future Henri III of France to the Polish throne, the diplomat Jean de Monluc commented:

par une speciale grace et benefice de Dieu, la Poulonne a esté reservee comme un forme rempart et assure boulevard, pour soustenir, arrester et repousser les efforts et excursions des nations barbares tresaspres et tresfarouches, comme une forteresse inexpugnable pour couvrir et deffendre le reste des provinces de la Chrestienté.<sup>15</sup>

The significance of Poland expressed by Monluc in his speech to the Polish nobility is the same as that represented by Thevet in his *Cosmographie*, although the term of reference is different: Europe for the latter and Christendom for the former. The two words in these instances are interchangeable, designating the same concept: an imagined community with geographical and cultural boundaries, its cohesion based on adherence to the western Christian church.

The preeminence of Latin Christianity is a feature of Belleforest’s *Cosmographie universelle* as much as Thevet’s. He includes Muscovy within the frontiers of Europe yet condemns the people:

C’est un peuple fort addonné à paillardise, et yvrongnerie. L’yvrongnerie leur est vertu, et la paillardise leur est licite, ce disent ils, moyennant que cela se face sans offencer le mariage. Quant aux articles de la foy, ils suyvent les Grecs, ils accordent avec eux touchant les ceremonies, et la veneration des Saints. (II, p. 1823)

The vocabulary that Belleforest uses serves to liken the Muscovites to the Ottomans and the Greeks. As we saw above, he accuses the Turks of being ‘addonné à paillardise’, and elsewhere he accuses the Greeks of ‘yvrongnerie’ (III, pp. 24-5). The association with the Greeks is reinforced through religion; both cultures follow the Orthodox Christian Church. And this seems to be the root of their perceived inferiority. England, for instance, had become a Protestant country (Elizabeth was excommunicated by the pope in 1570), yet the English are not characterised as negatively as those that follow eastern Christianity: Belleforest writes, ‘leurs esprits sont subtils, prompts à vengeance, fiers et hardiz’ (I, p. 93); Thevet draws attention to their not too distant praiseworthy traits by declaring that ‘ce peuple a esté le plus devotieux du monde’ (II, fol. 659<sup>r</sup>).

<sup>14</sup> *God’s Playground: A History of Poland*, 2 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), I, p. 125. Another of Davies’s works refers to Poland as the ‘heart of Europe’, suggesting its importance to conceptions of Europe’s ideological and cultural meanings: *Heart of Europe: A Short History of Poland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984).

<sup>15</sup> Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France (BnF), MS fonds français 15495, fol. 22<sup>r</sup>.

What of France? What is France's place in the Europe conceived in these cosmographies we have been considering? In Thevet's cultural understanding of Europe, which sees Poland on the margin of the imagined community, France is at the centre. He identifies Europe with 'la Chrestienté', by which he means Latin Christendom:

Que jamais en la Chrestienté il ne s'est rien fait et entrepris de grand, ou les François n'ayent esté (ainsi que dit est) non seulement appelez, mais où ils n'ayent presidé comme le principal peuple, lequel seul et sans secours d'autrui est venu à chef de tresgrandes entreprises. [...] Ce que nos ennemis mesmes, forcez de la verité, ont esté contraints de confesser: comme ainsi soit, que plusieurs encoure aujourd'hui vivans, tesmoignent avoir ouy dire au bon et sage Empereur Charles cinquieme, qu'à bon droict la France estoit situee au milieu de l'Europe, comme le coeur de la Chrestienté. Les Grecs, les Persiens, les Moscovites, les Tartares, et les Africains m'ont autrefois dit, qu'ils trouvent dans leurs vieilles histoires, qu'il est souvent fait mention de la vaillance des anciens François. (II, fol. 508<sup>r</sup>)

France, for Thevet, is the heart of Christendom and thus of Europe. It is evidently a contentious view – not in France, probably, but elsewhere both Rome and the Holy Roman Empire, for instance, would think of themselves in this way. Accordingly, Thevet cites an array of support for his assertion, including the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V himself and a number of cultures outside of 'la Chrestienté' as he understands it. Listing 'les Grecs' and 'les Moscovites' alongside 'les Persiens', 'les Tartares' and 'les Africains' places those groups on equal footing. Unlike Charles V, they are not 'bon'. The very same story of Europe as a set of ideas associated with western Christianity that emerges in Thevet's consideration of Poland, the geographical periphery of those ideas, is written here at the perceived centre, France.

France itself, however, is not a fixed, unchanging entity. Its diversity is attested by the structures of Belleforest's and Thevet's works: the description of France in each text is broken down into portraits of the constituent towns and regions. Moreover, the country was in the midst of civil war when both cosmographies were published. Thevet refers to 'nostre France, affligee et tourmentee de guerres civiles et seditions' (II, fol. 580<sup>r</sup>). The crucial word there is the possessive adjective 'nostre', which articulates France as an imagined community, as a geographical, political and cultural notion held together in spite of religious conflict. To Thevet France is a place 'situee en climat et region temperee', whose people are 'adextres, agiles, prudents, et honorables' (II, fol. 507<sup>v</sup>). In other words, Thevet falls back on the sort of commonplace generalities that he uses to characterise Europe. Threats to the cohesion of early modern imagined communities were resolved in cosmographical writing by enshrining France, Europe and other communities with unifying meanings. There were ruptures in these

frameworks of meaning, as we have seen: Muscovy is at once inside Europe and outside; Malta is Christian yet not in Europe. These contradictions blur the edges of the continent. They result from the existence of competing ideas of Europe. The understanding that particular customs belong to Europe, but their failure to correspond exactly to the ancient boundaries of the continent, puts pressure on the geographical notion of Europe. Yet within the rigid structures of the cosmographies of Thevet and Belleforest, Europe, reinforced by the unyielding organisation of the world into four discrete parts, does not crack.

### **Travelling Europe**

Montaigne does not like cosmography: ‘Il préfère une topographie européenne à mesure humaine’.<sup>16</sup> The *Journal de voyage de Michel de Montaigne* reflects this preference in its mediation of a journey which treats the reader not to the universal scale of cosmography, the bird’s-eye view looking down on the world, but to a perspective on the world from ground level. We thus see how the traveller experiences geography. The focus in this section is the attempts by Montaigne and his secretary, who composed the first part of the *Journal*, to understand the world through the medium of a travel account.<sup>17</sup> As they move through time and space, how do they delimit place? How do they understand themselves, their community, and the other people they encounter? In the *Journal de voyage* there is no attempt to offer a definition of Europe, yet as a meditation on the topographies and peoples of the part of the world through which they travel, the text is embedded within the same debates as the cosmographies of Belleforest and Thevet. Europe is referenced only once, Christendom somewhat more, but the *Journal* is, like the cosmographies, engaged in the problematic of community definition, especially since Montaigne is interested more in people than in sites and monuments.

Though Philippe Desan has written that ‘Montaigne se considère citoyen du monde et voit l’Europe comme un seul espace’,<sup>18</sup> the *Journal* shows us that space through the lens of travel, of movement through and across boundaries. Whereas there

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<sup>16</sup> François Rigolot, ‘L’Instance narrative européenne du *Journal de voyage*’, in *Montaigne et l’Europe: Actes du colloque international de Bordeaux (1992)*, ed. by Claude-Gilbert Dubois (Mont-de-Marsan: Editions InterUniversitaires, 1992), pp. 73-85 (p. 75).

<sup>17</sup> The edition of the text used here provides an outline of the composition and history of the manuscript: François Rigolot, ed., *Journal de voyage de Michel de Montaigne* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1992), pp. v-xix. Craig Brush in particular has considered at length the secretary’s role in the writing of the first section of the account; see ‘The Secretary, Again’, *Montaigne Studies*, 5 (1993), 113-38.

<sup>18</sup> ‘Être Français à la Renaissance: L’Expérience de Montaigne’, in *Montaigne et l’Europe: Actes du colloque international de Bordeaux (1992)*, ed. by Claude-Gilbert Dubois (Mont-de-Marsan: Editions InterUniversitaires, 1992), pp. 47-59 (p. 58).

have been numerous studies of community formation in early modern cities,<sup>19</sup> the examination conducted here of the *Journal de voyage* – a narrative which takes the reader from town to town – will assess perceptions of collectivity across and between cities, as well as within. We will see that the major organising principle in the *Journal* is the town, but that the *pays* plays a central role in conceptions of space and community. Whilst Montaigne lauds the benefits of engaging with the unfamiliar, as Susan McWilliams has noted in her study of the role of travel in political thought,<sup>20</sup> for him the foreign is destined to remain other, a means against which he asserts his own perception of community. Crucially, however, the process of travel and movement brings to the fore a diversity of viewpoints from which the vexed questions of borders are considered. We shall see that conceptual boundaries shift according to varying circumstances and perspectives. The dynamics of communities operate across spatial and other boundaries, clashing with idealised visions.

The *Journal de voyage* narrates not only a journey and the experiences of the narrator(s), but also a conception of space, an understanding of how the world through which they move is organised. The narrative, in the words of Olivier Pot, ‘procède non par une quantification abstraite du temps ou de l’espace, mais par des remarques *qualitatives* concernant le corps’.<sup>21</sup> To give an example: ‘De Meaux, où nous disnâmes le mardi, nous vinsmes coucher à Charly, sept lieues’ (p. 4). The bodily acts of eating and sleeping here structure the temporal dimension of the travel account.<sup>22</sup> Spatially, it is the towns and villages where these bodily acts take place that are recorded; we are told that Montaigne sleeps in Charly, not an inn of Charly. The visible boundaries of a town or village – the walls and dwellings – and the sense of distance between each one, noted throughout the *Journal*, form the most basic unit of geographical delimitation. Each town is understood to belong to a particular *pays*: Plombières is said to be ‘assis aux confins de la Lorraine et de l’Allemagne’ (p. 9), and Thann is regarded as the

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<sup>19</sup> See, for example, Steven Ozment, *The Reformation in the Cities: The Appeal of Protestantism to Sixteenth-Century Germany and Switzerland* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1975); Thomas Brady, *Ruling Class, Regime and Reformation at Strasbourg 1520-1555* (Leiden: Brill, 1978); Natalie Zemon Davis, *Society and Culture in Early Modern France* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1975).

<sup>20</sup> *Traveling Back: Toward a Global Political Theory* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), pp. 61-2.

<sup>21</sup> ‘Lieux, espaces et géographie dans le *Journal de voyage*’, *Montaigne Studies*, 15 (2003), 63-104 (p. 65).

<sup>22</sup> The ostensible reason for Montaigne’s journey was to treat his gallstones by taking the waters at various baths. He describes these water cures with ‘meticulous attention’: Eric MacPhail, *The Voyage to Rome in French Renaissance Literature* (Saratoga, CA: Anma Libri, 1990), p.170.

‘Premiere ville d’Allemaigne’ (p. 14).<sup>23</sup> On a wider level, both ‘la Chrestienté’ and ‘Europe’ are used as geographical markers of place, albeit much less frequently: ‘ce canton de Souisse, d’où viennent les toiles à toute la Chrestienté’ (p. 35); ‘tutti li bagni famosi d’Europa’ (p. 174).

Location, though, goes only so far towards explaining the world. Pot has written that ‘la topographie du *Journal* signale toujours une présence humaine’, highlighting the text’s emphasis on the people who inhabit the places visited on the journey.<sup>24</sup> A community is defined by the people who inhabit the place and their cultural customs, as for instance at Basel:

Leur service de table est fort different du nostre. Ils ne se servent jamais d’eau à leur vin et ont quasi raison; car leurs vins sont si petits que nos gentilshommes les trouvoient encore plus foibles que ceux de Gascongne fort baptisés, et si ne laissent pas d’estre bien delicats. Ils font disner les valets à la table des maistres, ou à une autre voisine quant et quant eux [...] Et quant à la viande, ils ne servent que deux ou trois plats au coupon; ils meslent diverses viandes ensemble, bien apprestées et d’une distribution bien esloignée de la nostre. (p. 17)

The pronoun ‘ils’ and possessive adjective ‘leur(s)’ articulate a community which is experienced, through an observation of dining customs, as different to the writer’s, ‘nostre’. Margaret Visser has written of the rituals of meals: ‘we turn the consumption of food, a biological necessity, into a carefully cultured phenomenon. We use eating as a medium for social relationships: satisfaction of the most individual of needs becomes a means of creating community’.<sup>25</sup> In other words, a perception of practices, such as eating, as different from one’s own shapes an understanding of the perceived divisions between people and places in the world. The *Journal de voyage* records such comments as Montaigne and his company pass from one place to another, thereby noting localised senses of culture and identity which vary from town to town.

These local customs are a means of community definition. Montaigne often praises the foreign customs that he encounters on his travels; in Ronciglione, for

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<sup>23</sup> *Pays* is a complex word with multiple shifting meanings in this period and would benefit from a thorough study in its own right. ‘Country-dwellers might extend their horizons to include the *pays*, a group of perhaps ten or twenty villages associated by similar geographical features and local traditions’: Robin Briggs, *Early Modern France 1560-1715*, 2nd edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 46. Montaigne, better travelled than the typical country-dweller, had a wider conception of the *pays*, more aligned with our modern perceptions of countries. It is with Montaigne’s wider sense that I use the word *pays* here.

<sup>24</sup> ‘Lieux, espaces et géographie’, p. 73. MacPhail has written, ‘As a tourist Montaigne pays only cursory attention to the splendors of classical and Renaissance art’: *The Voyage to Rome*, p. 172.

<sup>25</sup> *The Rituals of Dinner: The Origins, Evolution, Eccentricities, and Meaning of Table Manners* (London: Viking, 1992), p. ix. Anthropological and social research has also noted the role meals in constituting community. See, for example, Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Le cru et le cuit* (Paris: Plon, 1985), and Deborah Lupton, *Food, the Body and the Self* (London: Sage, 1996).



exemple, he ‘se louoit de leur coustume de disner et de souper tard, selon son humeur’ (p. 89). For Rigolot there is ‘une remarquable réceptivité de la part d’un voyageur qui n’est encore jamais sorti de son pays natal’.<sup>26</sup> Indeed, Montaigne embraces different practices:

M. de Montaigne, pour essayer tout à fait la diversité des mœurs et façons, se laissoit partout servir à la mode de chaque païs, quelque difficulté qu’il y trouvast. Toutefois en Souisse il disoit qu’il n’en souffroit nulle que de n’avoir à table qu’un petit drapeau d’un demy pied de long pour serviette. (p. 23)

These actions on the part of Montaigne represent what Desan has called ‘le désir profond d’intégrer ces différences dans son propre mode de vie’.<sup>27</sup> Claude-Gilbert Dubois explains Montaigne’s ‘penchant à sortir de soi’ thus: ‘Mimer autrui, ce n’est pas pour se dépouiller de soi, mais pour s’en enrichir’.<sup>28</sup> The crucial aspect with regards to community is that the adoption of foreign customs does not overcome difference; they remain the practices of another group and a means of understanding the perceived distinctions between Montaigne’s community and another. Not all individuals are as open to bridging divides as Montaigne is. Desan argues that Montaigne’s ‘capacité à vouloir vivre comme l’autre représente une exception remarquable par rapport aux autres voyageurs de l’époque’.<sup>29</sup> At the baths of La Villa Montaigne writes, ‘Si fa qui come altrove, che quel che cerchiamo noi con tanta difficoltà, l’hanno gli paesani in dispregio: e ne vidi assai, che mai non avevano gustate queste acque, e ne facevano cattivo iudizio’ (p. 176).<sup>30</sup> And of Pisa he notes, ‘Uomini poverissimi, e non manco altieri, inimici, e poco cortesi ai forestieri, e particolarmente a’ Francesi’ (p. 192).<sup>31</sup> Surprise at, and hostility to, difference solidify the mental boundaries of community.

What we see in the previous quotation is that cultures and communities tend to be understood at the level of the *pays*, whereby *pays* signifies a country rather than a province or locality. Although travel allows for a focus on sites of local identity, towns and villages, those places are grouped into larger geographical units. Bolzano is described as ‘assez mal plaisante au prix des autres d’Allemagne; de façon que M. de Montaigne s’escria “qu’il cognoissoit bien qu’il commençoit à quitter l’Allemagne”:

<sup>26</sup> ‘L’Instance narrative européenne’, p. 74.

<sup>27</sup> ‘Être Français à la Renaissance’, p. 57.

<sup>28</sup> *Essais sur Montaigne: La régulation de l’imaginaire éthique et politique* (Caen: Paradigme, 1992) p. 138.

<sup>29</sup> ‘Être Français à la Renaissance’, p. 57.

<sup>30</sup> Meunier de Querlon’s eighteenth century translation is included in the Rigolot edition of the *Journal de Voyage*: ‘Ici, comme ailleurs, les gens du pays méprisent ce que nous recherchons avec tant de difficulté; j’en ai vu beaucoup qui n’avoient jamais goûté de ces eaux et qui n’en faisoient point de cas.’ (p. 245)

<sup>31</sup> ‘Les habitans sont très pauvres, et n’en sont pas moins fiers, ni moins intraitables, et peu polis envers les étrangers, particulièrement les Français’ (p. 264).

les rues plus estroites, et point de belle place publicque' (p. 57). As Montaigne passes from settlement to settlement he forms an understanding of what 'Allemaigne' is and what makes it different from other *pays*, from Italy and from France. To that end, the local customs that are commented upon in the *Journal de voyage* tend to be compared to France, not to a more localised site. The description of the lodgings in Rovigo provide an illustration:

Il n'y a point moindre foison de viandes qu'en France, quoy qu'on ait accoustumé de dire; et de ce qu'ils ne lardent point leur rosti, ne luy oste guiere de saveur. Leurs chambres, à faute de vitres et clostures des fenestres, moins propres qu'en France; les lits sont mieux faits, plus unis, à tout force de matelas; mais ils n'ont guiere que des petits pavillons mal tissus, et sont fort espargnants de linceuls blancs. Qui iroit seul ou à petit train n'en auroit point. La cherté, comme en France, ou un peu plus. (p. 74)

Pot refers to the *pays* as it is conceived in the *Journal* as 'une entité géographique plus abstraite [...] qui élabore rétrospectivement une fiction unifiante et généralisante'.<sup>32</sup> France is, in that sense, an imagined community. There was not one uncontested 'fiction unifiante' generating a sense of France as a community: genealogies and appeals to Trojan origins are, as we saw above, one such 'fiction'; racial or climactic theories popularised by Jean Bodin and Loys Le Roy another.<sup>33</sup> In the *Journal de voyage* references to France refer to customs and cultural practices which are grounded in a sense of affinity with a space that is taken to be 'France' and a people that are taken to be 'French'. Montaigne's secretary does not have to visit every village in 'France' to be able to write, 'Nous remerquions en Italie, et notamment à Rome, qu'il n'y a quasi point de cloches pour le service de l'Eglise, et moins à Rome qu'au moindre village de France' (p. 98). Montaigne does not have to meet every 'French' person to identify himself with them and write, 'noi altri Francesi' (p. 172).

The monarchy and the French language are two important symbols of this French identity. Montaigne meets an unnamed 'Seigneur Souisse, fort bon serviteur de nostre couronne' (p. 22) and mention is made of the French town Saint-Quentin which 'nous la perdimes' (p. 10), alluding to the successful Spanish siege in 1557. In both of these examples there is an identification – signified by 'nostre' and 'nous' – with the French monarchy, its emblem of the crown, its territorial possessions, its military defeats. Desan has stressed the significance of politics to definitions of Frenchness: 'À l'époque où Montaigne rédige ses *Essais*, être Français représente une prise de position

<sup>32</sup> 'Lieux, espaces et géographie', p. 79.

<sup>33</sup> Desan has contrasted Montaigne's thought on 'national' difference with that of Le Roy's 1575 *De la vicissitude et variété des choses en l'univers* in 'Être Français à la Renaissance', pp. 47-59.

politique'.<sup>34</sup> In the same essay Desan also indicates the importance of language: 'être français se résume à s'exprimer dans la langue française'.<sup>35</sup> Even though Montaigne can speak Latin and writes some of the *Journal* in Italian, he does refer to French as 'nostre langue' (p. 134) and to Italian as 'langage estrangier' (p. 227) – 'nostre' claiming a sense of ownership and collective identity, and 'estrangier' associating Italian with a different culture. Communities other than France are defined by the language spoken there; for example, Bussang is described as 'Petit meschant village, le dernier du langage françois' (p. 14). Language use is spatialised so that vernaculars have a geography as well as a community of speakers: 'Environ deux lieues avant que d'y arriver [à Trente], nous estions entrés au langage Italien (p. 58). However, the boundaries of language use and community do not always align since multiple languages are spoken in some towns: 'Cette ville [Trente] est my partie en ces deux langues' (p. 58).

When it comes to community definition, religious confession is even more problematic than language. Religion is a crucial marker of identity. Towns, defined as we have seen by the *pays* they belong to and by the language spoken there, are also defined by religion. Baden, for example, is said to be 'une ville catholique' (p. 20). However, religion is not a straightforward category of stability, but also a catalyst for change. Konstanz is regarded at the time of Montaigne's visit as 'Catholique' but 'elle a esté autrefois, et depuis trente ans, possedée par les Lutheriens, d'où l'Empereur Charles cinquiesme les deslogea par force' (pp. 27-8). The visitors can see the visible traces of the period of Protestantism in Konstanz before Charles V restored Catholicism in 1548: the comment, 'Les eglises s'en sentent encore aux images', alludes to the destruction of statues by iconoclastic reformers (p. 28). Whereas the cosmographies of Thevet and Belleforest emphasised stability, the *Journal de voyage* offers more space to change and diversity. In addition to defining communities, religion can also threaten their integrity. Meaux is described in the *Journal* as follows: 'Ce lieu estoit autrefois très-bien fortifié de grandes et fortes murailles et tours; mais en nos seconds troubles Huguenots, parce que la plupart des habitants de ce lieu estoit de ce party, on fit demolir toutes ces fortifications' (p. 3). The possessive adjective 'nos' refers here to France, an imagined community in peril, its coherence undermined by violence and fragmented allegiances. The Huguenots – 'ce party', a community within the larger community governed by 'nos' – threaten to rupture that larger community, the kingdom

<sup>34</sup> 'Être Français à la Renaissance', p. 47.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 48.

of France. In this way, communities overlap as individuals hold competing allegiances and participate in several communities at once.

Montaigne, who as we have seen identifies with France, the French monarchy and the French language, regards himself also as a member of a Catholic community that extends beyond the borders of France. Although the Wars of Religion were raging as Montaigne set out from France, the *Journal de voyage* lacks dogmatism and religious critique: ‘Le Voyage se situe hors des frontières de la polémique, voire de la discussion’.<sup>36</sup> Montaigne is curious about other religions, speaking to Protestants about theology (pp. 24, 33, 36) and visiting a synagogue (p. 65). But it is the differences that shape his sense of self and his place in the world. ‘M. de Montaigne y alla voir l’église; car ils n’y sont pas catholiques’ (p. 14.): the very perception of difference is here what stimulates Montaigne’s curiosity and provokes his action. Consequently, no matter how open-minded he may be, he views the world from a particular perspective that is framed, in part at least, by his Catholicism. Take his use of the word ‘Chrestienté’ in this comment on the Society of Jesus:

C’est merveille combien de part de ce college [l’ordre des jésuites] tient en la Chrestienté; et croy qu’il ne fut jamais confrerie et corps parmy nous qui tint un tel rang, ny qui produisit enfin des effects tels que feront ceux icy, si leurs desseins continuent. Ils possèdent tantost toute la Chrestienté. C’est une pepiniere de grands hommes en toute sorte de grandeur. C’est celuy de nos membres qui menace le plus les heretiques de nostre temps. (p. 121)

The deictic markers ‘nous’ and ‘nos’ denote here a Catholic collectivity based on adherence to the Church in Rome. The effect of this contextual framework is that the utterances are imbued with a Catholic way of seeing the world. ‘Chrestienté’ thus signifies in this instance not a universal Christianity transcending difference, but an exclusionary Catholic Christendom, a vision which precludes ‘les heretiques’ and which would reduce the wider Christian world to a narrowly conformist Catholicism.

This passage in the *Journal* reminds us that different communities interpreted words differently. Martin Luther, as Greengrass notes, wanted not to destroy Christendom but to save it from those he regarded as enemies within.<sup>37</sup> And we saw in the previous chapter that Rabelais’s *Quart Livre* dramatises disputes over religious meaning. As for Montaigne, Michel Peronnet has studied the status of Christendom in the *Essais*, arguing that it is used to signify ‘une identité supérieure commune’:

<sup>36</sup> Marie-Christine Gomez-Géraud, ‘Autour du catholicisme de Montaigne: perspectives depuis le *Journal de voyage*’, *Montaigne Studies*, 15 (2003), 31-41 (p. 41).

<sup>37</sup> *Christendom Destroyed*, p. 308.

‘Montaigne apparaît encore comme une bonne source historique pour jalonner le passage de la chrétienté à l’Europe des princes chrétiens, comme référence identitaire d’une communauté de foi transcendant toutes les différences’.<sup>38</sup> However, such an attempt to understand the development of an idea of Europe as a simple linear passage from Christendom to Europe as a marker of identity is flawed. It denies what Maclean in his study of intellectual change has called the ‘confused pattern of uptake’.<sup>39</sup> The meaning of the word ‘chrétienté’ was long contested before the notion fell out of common parlance. We saw in the *Quart Livre* that Christendom is much less a community transcending all differences than it is a symbol of exclusion, and an attempt to eradicate difference and enforce conformity. In the *Journal de voyage* Montaigne records an attempt to impose a particular definition of Christendom in a ceremony of excommunication: ‘un Chanoine de Saint Pierre lit à haute voix une bulle Latine où sont excommuniés une infinie sorte de gens, entre autres les Huguenots, sous ce propre mot, et tous les Princes qui detiennent quelque chose des terres de l’Eglise’ (p. 122). As MacPhail has noted, ‘the cosmopolitanism for which Montaigne admires Rome partakes of a sort of chauvinism, Catholic chauvinism’.<sup>40</sup> Through such rituals, a central authority – in this case, the Pope – attempts to delimit the boundaries and meanings of community, to determine who is inside and who is outside.<sup>41</sup>

The centre, though, does not always have its way. Social experiences and ideals do not always match up; a theoretical or idealised definition of community can in practice be redefined. The *Journal de voyage* provides a window into how different communities function. There are not only multilingual towns but also multi-faith towns. In Mulhouse ‘il y en [les Huguenots] avoit plus de cinquante de leur ville’ and ‘ils espousent indifferemment les femmes de nostre religion au prestre, et ne les contraignent de changer’ (p. 15). In Augsburg: ‘Les mariages des Catholiques aux Lutheriens se font ordinairement, et le plus desireux subit les loix de l’autre; il y a mille tels mariages: nostre hoste estoit Catholique, sa femme Lutherienne’ (p. 41). And Schongau is described as ‘exactement Catholique’ (p. 38), the adverb suggesting that this town is exceptional and that most places are mixed to a certain degree. Keith Luria’s work has illuminated how in France during the seventeenth century regulations

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<sup>38</sup> ‘Montaigne et l’Europe?’, in *Montaigne et l’Europe: Actes du colloque international de Bordeaux (1992)*, ed. by Claude-Gilbert Dubois (Mont-de-Marsan: Editions InterUniversitaires, 1992), pp. 61-71 (pp. 69, 71).

<sup>39</sup> ‘The Process of Intellectual Change’, p. 172.

<sup>40</sup> *The Voyage to Rome*, p. 179.

<sup>41</sup> On early modern ritual in general, see Edward Muir, *Ritual in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

imposed from above did not prevent people of different faiths from living together.<sup>42</sup> Rome itself, the home of the Pope, is culturally diverse. Montaigne writes that it is ‘la plus commune ville du monde, et où l’estrangeté et difference de nation se considere le moins; car de sa nature c’est une ville rapiecée d’estrangiers; chacun y est comme chez soy’ (pp. 126-7). A real melting pot of people and cultures, to be a foreigner in Rome is nothing remarkable. It is not, though, a case of *e pluribus unum*; there is no sense of cultural difference dissolving.

The interactions of different cultures in Rome open up additional perspectives on the world and on community definition. Montaigne’s stay in Rome coincided with the visit of an ambassador from Muscovy. He reports the diplomat’s audience with the pope:

On tenoit là que sa charge portoit d’esmouvoir le Pape à s’interposer à la guerre que le Roy de Pologne faisoit à son maistre, alleguant que c’estoit à luy à soustenir le premier effort du Turc; et si son voisin l’affaiblissoit, qu’il demeureroit incapable à l’autre guerre, qui seroit une grande fenestre ouverte au Turc pour venir à nous; offrant encore se reduire en quelques differences de religion qu’il avoit avec l’Eglise Romaine. (p. 111)

This voice from Muscovy provides a different view of his country and of Poland from the one offered in Thevet’s *Cosmographie universelle*. It is those ‘differences de religion’ that are here interpreted in a contrasting manner. Whereas Thevet and Belleforest emphasised the divergence of Orthodox Christianity from Latin Christianity, the Muscovite ambassador groups the two cultures into a common Christendom. Whereas Thevet and Belleforest placed the culture of Orthodox Christianity on a par with the culture of the Ottoman Empire, the Muscovite ambassador stresses their separation. He presents Muscovy, not Poland, as a bastion against the Ottomans. Their weakness would, he argues, have negative repercussions for western Christendom. Muscovy and Poland might be at war but they are less enemies than they are ‘voisins’ caught up in a transitory conflict, unlike that necessarily perpetual feud between the Ottoman Empire and the (Latin and Orthodox) Christian lands. The ambassador’s discourse writes Muscovy into an assembly of polities that may come into conflict with one another yet are ultimately bound by an absolute difference from and hostility to the Ottomans. The Muscovite diplomat is himself an image of Muscovy’s position within Christendom. He is inside Rome – ‘Il fut logé chez le Castellan, comme avoit esté l’autre du temps du Pape Paul, et nourri aux despens du Pape’ (p. 111) – whereas the

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<sup>42</sup> *Sacred Boundaries: Religious Coexistence and Conflict in Early-Modern France* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2005).

Ottomans are kept out: ‘Les Papes, et notamment celuy cy [Grégoire XIII], ont fait en cette coste de mer dresser des grosses tours ou vedettes, environ de mille en mille, pour pouvoir à la descente que les Turcs y faisoient souvent’ (p. 116).

As for Greece, Montaigne indicates a sense of affinity with the culture. He meets a Syrian Patriarch whom he describes as ‘très-bien versé en cinq ou six langues de celles de delà, et n’ayant nulle connoissance de la Grecque et autres nostres’ (p. 113).<sup>43</sup> Montaigne never visited Greece, yet when confronted with a Syrian Christian he conceptualises Greece, or the language at least, as part of his cultural heritage. The adverb of place, ‘delà’, constructs Syria and its environs as distant and foreign, whereas Greece is embraced by the possessive adjective ‘nostre’. It is the stark alterity of Syria that renders Greece more familiar. In this way, there is a sense that however diverse is the world through which Montaigne travelled, the local customs and practices to which he pays attention have more in common with each other than they do with the world beyond. That is to say, when compared with Asia there may well seem to be a transnational culture, or set of customs and practices, in Europe.

The *Journal de voyage de Michel de Montaigne* does not explicitly define an idea of Europe. Indeed, the word appears only once and in that instance it is used as a spatial marker. Yet on occasion the *Journal* presents a view on some of the components that in the cosmographies of Thevet and Belleforest form a conception of the continent: Christianity, the Orthodox Church, and the Ottoman Empire. The *Journal* is a plural text in that it records an array of voices and so it does not offer the reader one fixed conception of community or of geography. Montaigne himself is not bound by a set view and he understands the world and the people who inhabit it at different levels, at different moments, and for different reasons.

## Conclusions

In 1585 François de Pavie, the baron of Fourquevaux, set out on a journey through the Levant, returning home via eastern Europe. In the account he produced of his travels, he wrote of the approach towards Constantinople: ‘Le long de cestuy [destroit] de Trace, tant du costé d’Europe que d’Asie, dont il faict la separation, se voyent plusieurs grands

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<sup>43</sup> For information on Patriarch Ignatius Na‘matallah, see Pier Giorgio Borbone and Margherita Farina, ‘New Documents Concerning Patriarch Ignatius Na‘matallah’, *Egitto e Vicino Oriente*, 37 (2014), 179-189.

villages, et chasteaux'.<sup>44</sup> Later, as he describes his sailing away from Constantinople, he remarks: 'Aux deux chasteaux posez l'un en l'Europe, l'autre au costé d'Asie, qui servent de forteresse, et rempart à ceste emboucheure, ainsi que ceux de Seste, et Abide, cy dessus nommez, font du costé de l'Archipelague' (p. 202). Pavie's journey constituted movement away from Europe and then back and through the continent. Constantinople is an end and a beginning of the continent, and his arrival and exit is characterised by his use of the word Europe: of its eight appearances in the text, five relate to the capital of the Ottoman Empire. And yet its use is strictly confined to its spatial designation. Constantinople does not, for Pavie, signify a boundary between two different civilisations. Upon leaving, he journeys to Cracow and Prague, places he finds just as unusual and foreign as the Ottoman world. To Pavie, Europe is only a spatial marker.

This perception is true also of Montaigne's only use of the word in the *Journal de voyage*. Montaigne, like many of his contemporaries, took a great deal of interest in local geographies and customs.<sup>45</sup> There is a much more personal element to his *Journal* than to the cosmographies of Thevet and Belleforest and Europe is not a word he uses to express his observations of the world through which he travels. As a result, it is reasonable to challenge Claude-Gilbert Dubois's argument that Montaigne had a symbolic conception of a Europe of travel and circulation of people and ideas.<sup>46</sup> Undoubtedly, Montaigne, a lot more cosmopolitan in feeling than was typical of his time, did place positive value on cultural and intellectual exchange, but such sentiments were not to him necessarily associated with the term Europe.

The Europe constructed in the personal travel accounts of Montaigne and Pavie is a largely abstract concept, whereas cosmographers try to make Europe less abstract and more meaningful, culturally and politically. It is Christendom that carries these sorts of meanings outside of cosmography. Not that the definition of Christendom is fixed of course: like Europe, it is a protean, ambivalent notion, a site for contested meanings. Europe might serve as a lexical anchorage point to signify a place and Christendom might serve as a lexical anchorage point to signify a community of people, but the two terms can be unsettled by different individuals. In the works of Belleforest and Thevet we have seen how the definitions of Europe are challenged by competing ideas about the continent. As a result, Greece and Muscovy are considered to be both

<sup>44</sup> Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France (BnF), MS nouvelles acquisitions françaises 6277, p. 175.

<sup>45</sup> See Hale, pp. 30-1 on the enthusiasm for local geography and history writing.

<sup>46</sup> *Essais sur Montaigne*, p. 133.



European and non-European. Europe often seems to be regarded as synonymous with Christendom, and yet there is a suggestion that the two terms are not completely interchangeable: Malta is construed as outside the continent, despite being understood as Christian. In this way, we see that by 1575 Europe was coming to be thought independently from Christianity. The *Journal de voyage de Michel de Montaigne*, eschewing the global scale of cosmography, zooms in on individual communities negotiating their place in the world. From ground level Europe/Christendom looks different, especially given Montaigne's interest in the local and the particular over the general and the universal. Custom, for Montaigne, shapes community identity and provides a different meaning of the human from place to place. There are moments of an expansive vision of community incorporating Muscovy as a common enemy of the Ottomans, but on the whole the world appears smaller. Christendom looks reduced, exclusionary. Europe looks fragmented.

## CHAPTER THREE

**Fragmenting Europe? The impact of the Reformation in Léry's *Histoire d'un voyage fait en la terre du Brésil* and d'Aubigné's *Histoire universelle***

In his address at the opening of the 1560 meeting of the Estates General at Orléans Michel de l'Hospital, the chancellor of France, railed against religious division:

Nous l'experimentons aujourd'huy, et voyons que deux François et Anglois qui sont d'une mesme religion, ont plus d'affection et d'amitié entre eux, que deux citoyens d'une mesme ville, subjects à un mesme seigneur, qui seroyent de diverses religions: tellement que la conjunction de religion passe celle qui est à cause du pays: Par contraire, la division de religion est plus grande et loingtaine que nulle aultre. C'est ce qui separe le pere du fils, le frere du frere, le mari de la femme.<sup>1</sup>

It has been demonstrated in studies by Timothy Hampton and Marcus Keller that the sixteenth century in France was a period of highly charged ideological contestation over the meaning(s) of national community.<sup>2</sup> Confessional disputes in particular made their mark on the 'shifting contours of identity', forging new allegiances, shattering old ones.<sup>3</sup> The Estates General gave l'Hospital the opportunity to have his say on the shape of a country increasingly fractured by religious disputes. As his usage of the emotionally charged vocabulary of friendship and family life makes clear, he was acutely aware that religion had the power to make or break community bonds. From his appointment as chancellor in 1560 until his dismissal in 1568, French royal policy was aimed at religious accord.<sup>4</sup> A believer in the medieval maxim of 'une foy, une loy, un roy', l'Hospital's desire was to restore Christian unity in the kingdom of France, to bring all 'citoyens' together in the same faith.<sup>5</sup> He conceived of the state as one interdependent body, whereby the wellbeing of all members was necessary.<sup>6</sup> As such, he was opposed to violence, preferring to heal confessional disputes by persuasion, not by oppression.<sup>7</sup> To this end, he began to promote tolerance of the Huguenot minority and appeal to a model of citizenship separate from religion ('plusieurs peuvent estre

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<sup>1</sup> Michel de l'Hospital, *La Plume et la tribune*, ed. by Loris Petris, 2 vols (Geneva: Droz, 2002-13), I (2002), p. 399.

<sup>2</sup> *Literature and Nation in the Sixteenth Century; Figurations of France*.

<sup>3</sup> The phrase is taken from Michael Wolfe, 'Introduction: Becoming French in Early Modern Europe', p. 11.

<sup>4</sup> Olivier Christin, 'From Repression to Pacification: French Royal Policy in the Face of Protestantism', in *Reformation, Revolt and Civil War in France and the Netherlands 1555-1585*, ed. by Philip Benedict, Guido Marnef, Henk van Nierop and Marc Venard (Amsterdam: Koninklijke Nederlandse Akademie van Wetenschappen, 1999), pp. 201-14.

<sup>5</sup> Petris, *La Plume et la tribune*, I, p. 303.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 251.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 271.

*Cives, qui non erunt Christiani*'), but for l'Hospital this move was designed as a temporary strategy, religious unity remaining his ultimate goal.<sup>8</sup>

It has long been accepted that confessional strife tore not only France but also the whole continent apart. The notion of a divided Europe in the sixteenth century has become a paradigm in historical scholarship. John Elliott's 1968 contribution to the Fontana History of Europe series was entitled *Europe Divided 1559-1598*.<sup>9</sup> The sense that the fate of Christianity and the fate of the continent were bound together has been caught in the subtitle of Diarmaid MacCulloch's history of the Reformation, *Europe's House Divided*, and in Greengrass's 2014 volume for the Penguin History of Europe: *Christendom Destroyed: Europe 1517-1648*.<sup>10</sup> Greengrass argues that Christendom was gradually reconfigured as 'Europe' and understood less as a faith community and more as a set of values and a sense of superiority given geographical extension.<sup>11</sup> By 1650 though, where he concludes his narrative, the sense of unity once evinced by Christendom has vanished; Europe was politically, economically and socially fragmented.<sup>12</sup>

It is the purpose of this chapter to examine the notion of a divided and fragmented Europe from the vantage points of two Calvinist writers who lived – and suffered – through the tumultuous Wars of Religion in France, Agrippa d'Aubigné (1552-1630) and Jean de Léry (1536-1613). I ask what happened to the meaning of Europe when the related notion of a unified Christendom was challenged by the growth of rival religious confessions. The influential historiographical thesis of 'confessionalization' – the attempt to comprehend the long-term political and societal changes in Europe in terms of social disciplining and the confessional conflicts of the period – has received criticism for focussing interpretation on developments 'from above' at the expense of pressures 'from below'.<sup>13</sup> Accordingly, I conduct close analyses of two texts – d'Aubigné's *Histoire universelle* and Léry's *Histoire d'un voyage fait en la terre du Brésil* – in order to explore how two individual writers

<sup>8</sup> Loris Petris, 'Faith and Religious Policy in Michel de L'Hospital's Civic Evangelism', in *The Adventure of Religious Pluralism in Early Modern France*, ed. by Keith Cameron, Mark Greengrass and Penny Roberts (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2000), pp. 129-42 (pp. 140-2).

<sup>9</sup> *Europe Divided 1559-1598* (London: Collins, 1968).

<sup>10</sup> *Reformation: Europe's House Divided 1490-1700* (London: Penguin, 2004).

<sup>11</sup> *Christendom Destroyed*, especially pp. 27-31.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 675.

<sup>13</sup> A thorough survey of the disputes over the paradigm of a confessionalized Europe can be found in Ute Lotz-Heumann, 'The Concept of "Confessionalization": a Historiographical Paradigm in Dispute', *Memoria y Civilización*, 4 (2001), 93-114. For an introduction to the scholarship see *Confessionalization in Europe, 1555-1700*, ed. by John M. Headley, Hans J. Hillerbrand and Anthony J. Papalas (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004).

interpreted the world during this period and what the impact of confession building was on their lives and identities.

The two texts represent different types of writing. The *Histoire universelle*, an account of the bloody progression of the Reform movement in France published in three volumes from 1616-20, was one of the many literary projects of the Huguenot soldier Théodore-Agrippa d'Aubigné. The work differs from his more well-known tragic poem *Les Tragiques*: the latter is an 'impassioned vision', 'an effort by an ardent and committed Protestant to bring consolation to his religious party'; the former an attempt to offer an impartial historical account in which d'Aubigné's 'partisan feelings [...] are reduced to a minimum'.<sup>14</sup> The *Histoire* is *universelle* in space, not time.<sup>15</sup> It is a history 'de son temps' which aims to offer a perspective on events that took place throughout the world.<sup>16</sup> In that sense, the *Histoire universelle* is influenced by contemporary developments in history writing, such as that of Jacques Auguste de Thou who aimed for an unbiased account in his *Historia sui temporis*.<sup>17</sup> By contrast, Jean de Léry's *Histoire d'un voyage* of 1578 makes no attempt at impartiality. Léry offers a personal account of his journey to the New World of two decades previously and a passionate defence of his coreligionists.<sup>18</sup> His *Histoire* is a response to André Thevet's 1575 *Cosmographie universelle*, which condemns the Calvinist party for the failure of the French colony in Brazil (1555-67).<sup>19</sup> In setting down his testimony in print and countering the 'impostures de Thevet',<sup>20</sup> Léry gives voice to a community of Huguenots, living and dead, who travelled to Brazil, but it is an account that remains very personal, as much about the *je* as it is the Calvinist *nous*.<sup>21</sup> Given the centrality of

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<sup>14</sup> Keith Cameron, *Agrippa D'Aubigné* (Boston, MA: Twayne, 1977), p. 39. Jean-Raymond Fanlo has considered the similarities and differences of the two works in *Tracés, Ruptures: La composition instable des Tragiques* (Paris: Champion, 1990), pp. 243-88. He argues that both the *Tragiques* and the *Histoire universelle* were designed to justify the righteousness of the Protestant cause but using different means: the latter through reference to historical fact and the former through theology and imagination; the latter through wide dissemination and the former by narrow circulation to his coreligionists (pp. 245-7).

<sup>15</sup> On d'Aubigné's concept of 'histoire universelle' see Olivier Pot, 'Le concept d'«histoire universelle»: ou quand l'historien se fait géographe', *Albineana*, 19 (2007), 23-65.

<sup>16</sup> André Thierry, 'Agrippa d'Aubigné: de l'histoire aux mémoires et à l'autobiographie', *Cahiers de l'Association internationale des Etudes françaises*, 40 (1988), 23-38 (p. 23).

<sup>17</sup> On changing understandings of history see Claude-Gilbert Dubois, *La conception de l'histoire en France au XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle (1560-1610)* (Geneva: Slatkine, 1977), especially pp. 158-72. On d'Aubigné's *Histoire universelle* see pp. 185-95.

<sup>18</sup> Lestringant understands Léry's 1578 publication as part of a wider Huguenot literary project of refuting Catholic attacks: *Le Huguenot et le sauvage: L'Amérique et la controverse coloniale, en France, au temps des guerres de Religion (1555-1589)*, 3rd edn (Geneva: Droz, 2004), pp. 96-7.

<sup>19</sup> Tom Conley examines Thevet's account of *France antarctique* in the *Cosmographie universelle* in 'Thevet Revisits Guanabara', *Hispanic American Historical Review*, 80 (2000), 753-781.

<sup>20</sup> Jean de Léry, *Histoire d'un voyage fait en la terre du Bresil*, ed. by Frank Lestringant (Paris: Livre de Poche, 1994), p. 63. All references are to this edition.

<sup>21</sup> Lestringant, *Le Huguenot et le sauvage*, pp. 141-2.

the *je*, a consideration of L ry's *Histoire* provides a different perspective on the fragmentation of society from that afforded by d'Aubign 's *Histoire universelle*.<sup>22</sup>

The chapter will consider how the words Europe and 'Chrestient ' are used by L ry and d'Aubign  and how the deployment of this vocabulary fits within the aims of their respective texts. The imagined communities and the senses of cultural belonging that they articulate will be a key consideration. It will be argued that whilst the Reformation had a significant impact on the meanings of these two terms, it was not in the manner of simply eliminating the usefulness of 'Chrestient ' in favour of the word Europe. Indeed, the breakup of the unified Church threatened to destroy all sense of overarching unity. Both writers reject ideas of Christendom or Europe as grand narratives, but the word 'Chrestient ' was flexible, adaptable, and as it continued to serve a purpose it continued to be used.

### Europe and Christendom

We saw in the previous chapter how the meanings of the word Europe were elaborated in relation to the term 'Chrestient '. This section considers the two words as they are used in d'Aubign 's *Histoire universelle* and L ry's *Histoire d'un voyage*. We turn first to d'Aubign  who deploys the two terms with overlapping meanings but prefers 'Chrestient ' to articulate an imagined community. We will then analyse L ry's work in which the word Europe is found but 'Chrestient ' does not make a single appearance.

In choosing to write of 'toutes les parties du monde', d'Aubign 's *Histoire universelle* must organise the space of the world within the space of the text.<sup>23</sup> The geography of the *Histoire* has been the subject of studies by Claude-Gilbert Dubois, Jean-Raymond Fanlo and Olivier Pot.<sup>24</sup> Although d'Aubign  takes the whole globe as his object, France is at the centre of the text as the focus is on the development of the Protestant party in France over the course of his lifetime.<sup>25</sup> Within France, the emphasis is on the figure of Henri IV, as we shall see later. Each book of the *Histoire* concerns a

<sup>22</sup> In *Errance et coh rence* Phillip John Usher considers how L ry tries to make sense of a heterogeneous world, pp. 139-74. Whereas Usher's concern is the space through which L ry travelled, the focus here is on how L ry understood the Old World from which he had journeyed and to which he returned.

<sup>23</sup> Agrippa D'Aubign , *Histoire Universelle*, ed. by Andr  Thierry, 10 vols (Geneva: Droz, 1981-99), I, 76. All references are to this edition of the text.

<sup>24</sup> Claude-Gilbert Dubois, 'L'organisation de l'espace dans l'*Histoire universelle* d'Agrippa d'Aubign ', *Albineana*, 19 (2007), 131-43; Jean-Raymond Fanlo, '«Mettre en ordre des choses tant desordonn es»: Les enjeux politiques de la disposition dans l'*Histoire universelle*', in *Autour de l'Histoire universelle d'Agrippa d'Aubign : M langes   la m moire d'Andr  Thierry*, ed. by Gilbert Schrenck (Geneva: Droz, 2006), pp. 195-207; Pot, 'Le concept d'«histoire universelle»'.

<sup>25</sup> Fanlo, '«Mettre en ordre des choses tant desordonn es»', pp. 198-9.

given time period, first relating the affairs of France before giving some, yet notably less, consideration to the four ‘voisins’ of Germany, Italy, Spain and England – ‘nos voisins’, d’Aubigné writes, positioning France at the deictic centre of his remarks – and then the rest of the world, arranged according to the compass points, ‘Orient’, ‘Midi’, ‘Occident’ and ‘Septentrion’. Even as he surveys the world d’Aubigné never loses sight of France. Indeed, his accounts of the ‘voisins’ and beyond are designed to reinforce the story of religious conflict: he ‘veut fonder la cohérence historique des Guerres de Religion [...] sur une similitude d’effets qui se produisent et se propagent par contiguïté et métonymie, selon une concaténation localisée de causes opérant de pays à pays, voire de continent à continent’.<sup>26</sup> In doing so, d’Aubigné articulates a political identity for the Reformers,<sup>27</sup> at a time when transnational religious forces have divided nations into opposing parties.<sup>28</sup>

What is the place of Europe within the geographical framework of the *Histoire universelle*? Although it is not an organising principle, as it is in the cosmographies of Belleforest and Thevet, the word Europe appears not infrequently. It is used as a spatial term – for example, ‘[I]l faut voir ce qui touchoit tous les voisins et toute l’Europe’ (II, p. 157) – which can be divided into many parts: d’Aubigné refers to the ‘divers endroits de l’Europe’ (II, p. 163), and ‘l’Europe Occidentale’ (IX, p. 268). The boundaries of the continent are never explicitly delimited, however. There is a reference to the Iberian peninsula as ‘la teste de l’Europe’ (V, p. 298), which alludes to the anthropomorphic maps of the continent that tended to depict Europe as a queen with Spain as the head.<sup>29</sup> Nevertheless, d’Aubigné does not stress where the eastern end point of the continent is. We saw that the cosmographies of Belleforest and Thevet took a contrasting approach in that they both defined the boundaries of the continent, the eastern frontier being the River Tanais.

The *Histoire universelle*, therefore, points towards borders that are more cultural than spatial. Muscovy, for instance, seems to lie beyond a cultural boundary. From the perspective of Germany it is an enemy on a par with the Ottomans: ‘les Allemans disposés [...] à tourner leurs despences et forces vers le Turc et vers le Moscovite, qui faisoit de grands progrès en Livonie’ (I, p. 338). The conflict in Livonia from 1558-95 pitted German princes, Poland-Lithuania, Denmark and Sweden against the forces of

<sup>26</sup> Pot, ‘Le concept d’«histoire universelle»’, p. 29.

<sup>27</sup> Fanlo, ‘«Mettre en ordre des choses tant desordonnées»’, pp. 201-2.

<sup>28</sup> Dubois, ‘L’organisation de l’espace’, p. 142.

<sup>29</sup> On these maps see Wintle, pp. 247-51.

the Russian Tsar in a struggle for supremacy in the Baltic.<sup>30</sup> It is Poland that appears to be the end point of d'Aubigné's conception of Europe:

Les Polonnois se servent ordinairement vers la frontiere de Moscovie d'une sorte de gens de guerre qui s'appellent Cosakes, la plupart Polonnois de nation, et sont les gens de cheval les plus redoutez de tout le Septentrion, accoustumez à chastier les Tartares et brider les courses que sans eux ils feroient plus frequentes en l'Europe (V, p. 35).

Rather than an explicit assertion that Poland represents the eastern boundary of the continent, this statement contains the sense that it is Polish soldiers who police the borders and protect Europe from the threat of the Tartars. The cultural difference that the Muscovites betoken is a matter of religion. As we saw in the cosmographies of Belleforest and Thevet, the divide between Orthodox and Latin Christianity is considered to be a great cultural gulf. According to d'Aubigné, Catherine de Medici is supposed to have said, 'Si donc nous ne nous fions en notre Roi, serons nous pas pires que Perses, Turcs, Moscovites et Barbares, nous qui nous disons Chrestiens?' (V, p. 344). 'Moscovite' is a term equivalent to 'Perse', 'Turc' and 'Barbare'; it is a denigratory expression which is used to distinguish self and us from them. They are not like 'nous' because they are not Christian and because their political culture is different.

The words Europe and Christendom refer to similar ideas, therefore. The meanings of the two terms often overlap. Like Europe, the notion of Christendom is assumed to have a spatial dimension and d'Aubigné can write of 'les frontieres de la Chrestienté', for example (I, p. 86). The words are often used interchangeably to refer to the same geographical area, as in this comment on the Spanish Armada of 1588: 'Sa description imprimee à Lisbonne, fut traduite en François, en Latin, en Aleman et en Italien, et ainsi curieusement publiee par toutes les bornes de la Chrestienté; ce grand soin d'en espouventer l'Europe m'a donné celui de la descrire plus expressement' (VII, p. 210). Stylistic concerns seem to have motivated d'Aubigné to opt for the term Europe to avoid repetition of 'Chrestienté'. Although the referents of the two words here differ somewhat – Christendom signifies a geographical space only while Europe refers to the place and the people within – it is unlikely that d'Aubigné includes the Ottoman Europe within this particular utterance of 'Europe'. Rather, he takes the two to be geographically coterminous, limiting the scope of Europe to its Christian-ruled parts.

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<sup>30</sup> For an overview of the war, see Stewart P. Oakley, *War and Peace in the Baltic 1560-1790* (London: Routledge, 1992), pp. 27-41.

Thus, Europe in the *Histoire universelle* is made, in part, by its cultural identification with Christianity and by the perception of the world outside as non-Christian. On one hand, the *Histoire universelle* documents the failed attempts to spread the Reformed Church outside of the continent to Brazil and Florida.<sup>31</sup> And on another hand, the text features the word Europe within descriptions of earlier religious movements deemed heretical. Of the Waldensians, or Vaudois, d'Aubigné writes: 'ces peuples ruinez ont espandu par l'Europe les semences de ceux à qui plus ouvertement on peut attribuer la reformation' (I, p. 171). Of the dispersion of the Albigensians he writes: 'Les spectacles des feux et supplices publics envoyerent des messagers par toutes les parts d'Allemagne, de Pologne, et par toutes les parties des pays Septentrionaux, toutes ces parts de l'Europe ayans espousé ceste Doctrine' (I, p. 196). Marie-Madeleine Fragonard has argued that d'Aubigné is concerned with medieval 'heresies' so as to demonstrate the historical continuity of opposition to the Catholic Church, thereby countering Catholic claims to right religion on the grounds of sheer longevity and historical consistency.<sup>32</sup> He is not interested in the doctrines of the Waldensians or the Albigensians, nor in distinguishing between them,<sup>33</sup> simply the fact of their being opposed by the Catholic Church: for d'Aubigné, in Fragonard's words, 'où est la persécution, là est l'Eglise'.<sup>34</sup> As such, he includes a chapter 'De plusieurs martyrs jusques à l'an 1560' (I, pp. 207-38) in which he gathers together 'des martyrs dispersés dans le temps et dans l'espace' and emphasises 'la conformité des nouveaux martyrs avec les martyrs des premiers siècles'.<sup>35</sup> In his use of the term Europe when describing the Waldensians and the Albigensians, d'Aubigné identifies the Reformation and what he regards as its precursors with the continent. In this way, he imagines a transnational Reformed Christian community, limited to Europe, and he addresses his *Histoire*, as Thierry has suggested, to his coreligionists, presenting them with a series of examples to follow in the hope of a glorious future for his imagined community.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Marie-Madeleine Fragonard, *La pensée religieuse d'Agrippa d'Aubigné et son expression* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2004), p.534. Frank Lestringant has written extensively on Protestant missions to the Americas in *Le Huguenot et le sauvage*.

<sup>32</sup> *La pensée religieuse d'Agrippa d'Aubigné*, pp. 532-45.

<sup>33</sup> Daniel Ménager, 'Les origines de la Réforme d'après les premiers chapitres de l'*Histoire universelle*', in *Autour de l'Histoire universelle d'Agrippa d'Aubigné: Mélanges à la mémoire d'André Thierry*, ed. by Gilbert Schrenck (Geneva: Droz, 2006), pp. 257-67 (p. 259).

<sup>34</sup> *La pensée religieuse d'Agrippa d'Aubigné*, p. 533.

<sup>35</sup> Frank Lestringant, 'Le martyr entre histoire et fiction dans l'*Histoire universelle* et *Les Tragiques*', in *Entre Clio et Melpomène: Les fictions de l'histoire chez Agrippa d'Aubigné*, ed. by Olivier Pot (Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2010), pp. 83-110 (pp. 91, 100).

<sup>36</sup> André Thierry, 'Agrippa d'Aubigné, lecteur et traducteur de Jacques-Auguste de Thou', *Albineana*, 6 (1995), 193-205 (p. 205).



Nevertheless, there are instances in the *Histoire universelle* where d'Aubigné does make distinctions between Europe and Christendom. He can eschew a cultural association of the two and play upon a geographical difference between their boundaries to write of 'l'Europe Chrestienne' (IV, p. 112). In doing so he alludes to the expansion of the Ottoman Empire into Europe, a recurrent motif in the *Histoire*. For example, we are told that Suleiman I 'vint prendre en l'Europe Bellegrade, et depuis Rhodes' (I, p. 84), and that Pope Gregory XIII 'esper[ait] profiter sur la foiblesse des Turcs en Europe' (V, p. 296). The disparity in the geographical boundaries of the concepts of Christendom and Europe – downplayed elsewhere in favour of a cultural concurrence – is emphasised when d'Aubigné writes of the expansionist aims of the Ottomans or the desire for a crusade to combat them. He thereby indicates that whilst Europe and Christendom are different notions geographically, they are, or ought to be, the same culturally. The underlying idea is that the Ottomans should be pushed back to Asia in order to remake Europe and Christendom as one and the same.

It is in the face of the expanding Ottoman Empire that Christendom is imbued with its cultural significance, its overarching sense of unity. Of Europe in 1571 Diarmaid MacCulloch has said: 'It's a very divided Christian Europe that faced the Ottomans at this time [... but] this divided set of Christians can think of themselves as Christendom on occasions [...] People did think in those terms in times of crisis.'<sup>37</sup> The threat from the east runs throughout the *Histoire universelle*. 'Soliman eut lors un beau temps pour enfoncer la Chrestienté' (I, p. 88). The borders of Christendom, under constant peril, are fluid: 'une armee de cent cinquante mille Turcs combatans en Croatie, sous la charge du Bacha Assan, qui après un long siege prend Wittitski, metropolitaine, laquelle servoit de boulevard à la Chrestienté' (VIII, p. 325). It is this threat of the buffer zone moving ever closer west that shapes the sentiment of a unified Christendom: 'Le Turc [Murad III] [...] fit peur aux Venitiens et au reste de la Chrestienté par une très-grande armee' (V, p. 303). An Ottoman attack is not interpreted as a danger only to those on the front line but also to countries further west and north who feel a solidarity with the Venetians, a solidarity conceptualised as Christendom, a unity which includes Protestant and Catholic powers.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>37</sup> 'The Battle of Lepanto', *In Our Time*, BBC Radio 4, 12 November 2015.

<sup>38</sup> 'Ceste paix [de Stettin, 15 décembre 1571] repara la premiere, par autorité de l'Empereur, signee presque par tous les Rois et Souverains de la Chrestienté' (III, p. 271). The Treaty of Stettin ended the Nordic Seven Years War (1563-70), fought between Denmark and Sweden. See Robert I. Frost, *The Northern Wars: War, State and Society in Northeastern Europe, 1558-1721* (Harlow: Pearson, 2000), pp. 29-37.

This feeling of unity is given the name ‘Chrestienté’ and not Europe. The Grand Seigneur is ‘l’ennemi de la Chrestienté’ (v, p. 57), not the enemy of Europe. D’Aubigné can write of ‘la ligue des Chrestiens’ (v, p. 43), the ‘forces de la Chrestienté’ (II, p. 317) and ‘les progresz de la Chrestienté’ against the Ottomans (IX, p. 196). The failure of the 1565 siege of Malta by Suleiman’s Ottomans is greeted with ‘la joye du peril passé: laquelle s’estendit par toute la Chrestienté’ (II, p. 336). Habsburg attempts to expel the Ottomans from Hungary are widely supported:

L’Empereur [Maximilien II] ayant mis un ordre notable pour esmouvoir toute la Chrestienté par son exemple: se vid assisté de toutes les parts de la Chrestienté, Le Duc de Savoy y envoya quatre cens arquebusiers: Toute l’Italie contribua sous Adrian Balleon et Alphonse Castaldo. La Polongne defonça. Les François se desroberent sous le jeune Duc de Guise (II, pp. 312-3).

Given that the second appearance of ‘Chrestienté’ here signifies a spatial entity, it is conceivable that d’Aubigné could instead have written, ‘toutes les parts de l’Europe’. That he does not demonstrates the continued power of the notion of Christendom to articulate a collective consciousness. The battles with the Ottomans, invariably described in the chapters entitled ‘De l’Orient’ and ‘Du Midi’, see d’Aubigné write of ‘l’armee Turquesque’ against ‘l’armee Chrestienne’ (III, p. 237) or ‘l’armee des Chrestiens’ (I, p. 350). ‘Européen’ is a term missing from the *Histoire universelle*, despite the adjective existing in both Latin and vernacular languages by the seventeenth century.<sup>39</sup> The phrase ‘des Africains’, by contrast, is present in the text (I, p. 95).

We have seen that Europe and ‘Chrestienté’ are common terms in d’Aubigné’s *Histoire universelle*. The two words are used synonymously, both referring to the same space and people. But d’Aubigné also makes use of the distinctions of the terms, highlighting for instance the threat to Christendom posed by the Ottoman Empire’s encroachment inside the borders of Europe. On the whole, in order to signify an overarching cultural unity d’Aubigné prefers ‘Chrestienté’ to Europe. Such unity is not a ubiquitous feature of the text but rather comes to the fore at particular moments, namely as a sense of opposition to the Ottoman Empire.

Turning to Léry’s *Histoire d’un voyage*, we find that there are some differences, as well as similarities, from d’Aubigné’s usages of our two key terms. For a start, the word ‘Chrestienté’ does not appear even once in the text. Europe, on the other hand, is found eleven times. Léry uses the word to make explanatory comparisons with the New World for the benefit of his readership. In writing that in America that ‘il faudroit là

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<sup>39</sup> Hay, p. 107.

user de façons de vivre, et de viandes du tout differentes de celle de nostre Europe' (p. 111), he points to a sense of radical difference between the New World and the Old, Europe specifically. It suggests what Stephen Greenblatt has called the 'European practice of representation'; that is, the features shared by the early voyagers to the Americas who, in spite of profound differences of culture and religion, saw perceived differences between them fade in the face of the alterity of the New World.<sup>40</sup> Indeed, Léry's proto-ethnological description begins in chapter 8, and, with the very first point he makes, he offers Europe as a marker of comparison, declaring that 'les sauvages de l'Amerique [...] n'estans point plus grans, plus gros, ou plus petits de stature que nous sommes en l'Europe, n'ont le corps ny monstrueux ny prodigieux à nostre esgard' (p. 211). The natural world too is explained by reference to Europe, although, unlike the people, the flora and fauna are regarded as distinctive.<sup>41</sup> Léry writes of 'des chairs, poissons, fruicts et autres viandes du tout dissemblables de celles de nostre Europe, dequoy nos sauvages se nourrissent' (p. 246). Some animals are described as 'estranagement defectueux, eu esgard à ceux de nostre Europe' (p. 275). The birds are said to be 'different en especes à ceux de nostre Europe' (p. 286). And Europe is right there at the close of Léry's sketch of the flora and fauna of the New World: 'il n'y a bestes à quatre pieds, oyseaux, poissons, ny animaux en l'Amerique, qui en tout et par tout soyent semblables à ceux que nous avons en Europe' (pp. 333-4). Léry's preference for Europe over 'Chrestienté' can be explained in part by its use in comparisons: when writing of the continent 'Amerique' it is natural to bring in another term that signifies a continent, Europe, as a point of comparison.

Although in some of those examples Léry collocates Europe with 'nostre' and 'nous', any unity that the word Europe may be understood to signify is undone by the sense that the continent is fragmented. Europe is not at the root of all of Léry's interpretative analogies and, in fact, he makes more comparisons with France than with Europe. More specific localisation is also expressed, as in his noting that the scorpions of Brazil 'soyent beaucoup plus petits que ceux qu'on voit en Provence' (p. 294). As he describes his company's approach to Brazil he comments on the climate, relying on Europe again as a conceptual category to help make sense of it, but in a manner that downplays its significance:

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<sup>40</sup> *Marvelous Possessions: The Wonder of the New World* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1991), especially pp. 7-11.

<sup>41</sup> Michel de Certeau considers that in Léry's hermeneutics the New World / Old World binary is transformed into a nature/culture opposition, whereby the savages are not truly other but the natural world is: *L'écriture de l'histoire* (Paris: Gallimard, 1975), p. 260.

Nous commençâmes aussi lors de voir premièrement, voire en ce mois de Febvrier (auquel à cause du froid et de la gelée toutes choses sont si reserrées et cachées par deçà, et presque par toute l'Europe au ventre de la terre), les forests, bois, herbes de ceste contrée là aussi verdoyantes que sont celles de nostre France és mois de May et de Juin (p. 147).

Europe is here one of a number of lexical items deployed for the purposes of explanation. The adverbial expression 'par deçà' and the noun 'France' also serve to perform this illustrative function. In doing so, Europe is not the deictic centre of the statement, nor the central object of Léry's thinking; that role falls to 'par deçà'. The 'par deçà' is in this utterance an element within Europe and is alike, in terms of climate at least, 'presque [...] toute l'Europe', yet the two terms are not equivalent. The referent of the 'nous' shifts throughout the *Histoire d'un voyage*. Here it refers to the 'par deçà', which likely means either France or Geneva, or both, so that Europe in this instance lies beyond the community imagined by the 'nous'. Moreover, to situate Léry's usage of the word Europe in context it should be noted that the eleven appearances are not frequent when compared with the more than thirty occurrences in André Thevet's shorter account of a voyage to Brazil, *Les Singularitez de la France antarctique* (which will be considered in detail in Chapter Five of the thesis). And not all of the utterances construct a binary opposition between Europe and Brazil; a comment on the banana tree places Europe on an equivalence with the other two continents of the Old World: 'je ne croy pas qu'en Europe, Asie, ni Afrique il se trouve de si grandes et si larges fueilles' (p. 320). The effect of the word Europe here is rhetorical, used as it is more for hyperbole than to articulate any cultural meaning.

Léry does not, therefore, take Europe as a marker of identity. The word as it appears in the *Histoire* tends to confine its meaning to the spatial. Léry does not refer to people as 'européen'; the word is absent from the text, whereas there is mention of 'Afriquains' (p. 130) and 'Ameriquains' (p. 217). In *Le Huguenot et le sauvage* Lestringant places *entre guillemets* a quotation from the *Histoire* about the savages who 'ne doivent rien aux Européennes en beauté'.<sup>42</sup> In fact, Léry actually states that they 'ne doivent rien aux autres en beauté' (pp. 234-5).<sup>43</sup> He does not write about Europeans in the New World but that 'les François et Portugais ont frequenté ce pays-là' (p. 341) and 'les Chrestiens ont frequenté ce pays-là' (p. 363), indicating that religion and country of birth are considered much more significant markers of identity than a feeling of belonging to 'nostre Europe'. For example, in chapter 20, a performance of cultural difference in which Léry is staged in conversation with one of the Tupi, he defines

<sup>42</sup> *Le Huguenot et le sauvage*, p. 109.

<sup>43</sup> The wording remains unchanged in the five editions of the text Léry produced in his lifetime.

himself as ‘François’ (p. 479). Travel to the Americas does not, for Léry, dissolve differences between European cultures. If anything, the boundaries are solidified in the New World. The figure of Admiral Nicolas Villegaignon – a foil for Huguenot hopes whom Léry castigates for betraying, in Léry’s eyes, the Reformers – intensifies religious conflict. The menace of Portugal drives the building of the defensive Fort Coligny.

### **The politics of language**

Can Léry’s perception of differences between cultures in Europe allow us to generate a more thorough analysis of the non-usage of the word ‘Chrestienté’? Might the absence reflect Léry’s attitude towards the notion the term signifies? Consider how Michel de l’Hospital appealed to Christianity as a marker of overarching identity in 1560 when responding to the brewing threat of Civil War: ‘Ostons ces mots diaboliques, noms de parts, factions et séditions, luthériens, huguenots, papistes: ne changeons le nom de chrestien’ (p. 403). His rejection of such labels entails a refusal to accept confessional division.<sup>44</sup> Petris has written: ‘L’Hospital sait que nommer, c’est déjà désigner et juger. [... Il] veut désamorcer la charge émotionnelle et polémique des paroles en insistant sur ce qui peut rassembler’.<sup>45</sup> L’Hospital’s adoption or rejection of particular terms as part of a political project aimed towards bringing conflicting factions together might be termed a politics of language, that is, the use of particular lexical items in certain ways with the aim of promoting a political (however loosely defined) project. Read in this light, the absence of ‘Chrestienté’ from Léry’s *Histoire* may perhaps be understood as a rejection of the political and cultural significance of the term, appealing as it does to an overarching Christian unity which the Calvinist Léry considered illusory. This section examines the political uses of language in Léry’s *Histoire* and d’Aubigné’s *Histoire universelle*, focussing on the implications of religious division for the idea of a unified Christendom.

In the *Histoire d’un voyage* Léry highlights the contentious nature of the language of Christianity. In that sense, the text forms part of the war of words that was waged during the French religious crisis of the late-sixteenth century. Luc Racaut has argued that the success of Catholic polemical writing in shaping public opinion, portraying Reformers as monsters destroying social cohesion and poisoning

<sup>44</sup> Petris, ‘Faith and Religious Policy’, p. 140.

<sup>45</sup> *La Plume et la tribune*, I, p. 258.

Christendom, played a significant role in preserving France as a Catholic country.<sup>46</sup>

Léry uses the *Histoire* to attempt to establish his own representations of Catholics and Protestants. He makes the following comment about some birds that the company kill on an uninhabited island on their way to Brazil:

Tellement qu'encores que ce fust le jour qu'on appelloit les Cendres, nos matelots neantmoins, voire les plus catholiques Romains, ayant prins bon appetit au travail qu'ils avoyent eu la nuit precedente, ne firent point de difficulté d'en manger. Et certes aussi celuy qui contre la doctrine de l'Évangile a defendu certains temps et jours l'usage de la chair aux Chrestiens, n'ayant point encores empiété ce pays-là, où par consequent il n'est nouvelle de pratiquer les loix de telle superstitieuse abstinence, il semble que le lieu les dispensoit assez. (p. 158)

Léry's mocking, ironic tone here condemns the Catholic practice of abstaining from meat during Ash Wednesday. He mocks the Pope ('celuy') as a figure who dictates false doctrine to 'Chrestiens' yet whose rules have not spread to the New World. The inclusion of the word 'Chrestiens' within this context serves to illustrate its troublesome quality. Léry and his co-religionists would not subscribe to the Pope's views on alimentary prohibition but would equally lay claim to the title of 'Chrestien'. The term is an all-encompassing one which could, as Michel de l'Hospital wanted, unite Calvinists and Catholics, but its inclusivity is a chimera, obscuring the intractable differences between the two confessions.

Léry is consequently distrustful of such inclusive language. Christianity can be taken as a badge of identity by those who, in his eyes, do not merit it: 'ceux qui portent le titre de Chrestiens [...] lesquels ne s'estans pas contentez d'avoir fait cruellement mourir leurs ennemis, n'ont peu rassasier leur courage, sinon en mangeans de leur foye et de leur cœur' (p. 375). Léry portrays Villegaignon as a person who speaks the inclusive language of Christianity, referring to 'la Religion Chrestienne' (pp. 72, 172) in both his reported letter to Calvin and in a reported prayer but nonetheless '[il] se fust revolté de la Religion reformée' (p. 413), killing three of them (p. 511). As we saw with the inclusion of a chapter on Protestant martyrs in d'Aubigné's *Histoire universelle*, violence shapes the attitudes of communities towards one another, strengthening confessional identity through hostility and collective memory.<sup>47</sup> Accordingly for Léry, 'Chrestien' has become an ambiguous and ambivalent term. The labels 'catholiques

<sup>46</sup> *Hatred in Print: Catholic Propaganda and Protestant Identity During the French Wars of Religion* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002), especially pp. 1-5, 13, 33-7, 56-9, 82, 97.

<sup>47</sup> The Calvinists killed in Brazil were included in Protestant martyrologies, such as Jean Crespin's *Histoire des martyrs persecutez et mis à mort pour la vérité de l'Évangile*. See Silvia Shannon, 'Villegaignon, Polyphemus, and Cain of America: Religion and Polemics in the French New World', in *Changing Identities in Early Modern France*, ed. by Michael Wolfe (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1996), pp. 325-44 (pp. 326-7).

Romains' and 'de la Religion reformée' (p. 107) are more specific and thus more appropriate as markers of identity. Christendom has no place at all.

Léry's usage of religious terminology is partisan; he does not seek to promote Christian unity but to bear witness to his faith and to articulate a confessional identity. In doing so, he dismisses the sorts of appeals made by Michel de l'Hospital. He does not share l'Hospital's faith in an overarching 'chrestien' identity. He has suffered too much danger at the hands of other so-called Christians – whose religious views he does not accept – for that:

Villegagnon, sans que nous en sceussions rien, ayant baillé au maistre du navire où nous repassasmes (qui l'ignoroit aussi) un proces lequel il avoit fait et formé contre nous, avec mandement expres au premier Juge auquel il seroit présenté en France, non seulement de nous retenir, mais aussi faire mourir et brusler comme heretiques qu'il disoit que nous estions (pp. 545-6).

Léry goes on to reassure the reader of his safety and then describe the fate of those of 'nostre compagnie' who remained in Brazil, three of whom were drowned by Villegaignon (p. 548). 'Heretiques' they may have been to Villegaignon but Léry redescribes them as 'fideles serviteurs de Jesus-Christ' (p. 548). In doing so, he asserts his interpretation of Christianity over and above that of Villegaignon, and promotes the righteousness of the 'gens [...] de nostre Religion' (p. 193) vis-à-vis the 'Catholiques', a word, coming from Léry's pen, full of derision. He writes elsewhere of 'vrais Chrestiens' (p. 181) and 'la vraye Religion' (p. 411) and condemns 'ces Atheistes', each time promoting the views of his confessional group, claiming the primacy of his definitions of these words. His usages of such vocabulary demarcate the boundaries of religious communities and frame a view of the world as fragmentary and conflictual. In Léry's parlance 'vrai Chrestien' is an exclusionary marker, expressing a narrow Protestant community that wants to purify and restore Christianity to what they regard as its original meaning. He makes a claim to speak for only one of the fragments into which Christendom has broken, not the whole.

By contrast, d'Aubigné in the *Histoire universelle* tries to avoid such partisan terminology in his pursuit of an impartial authorial voice: 'Que si les termes de Papiste et de Huguenot se lisent en quelque lieu, ce sera en faisant parler quelque partisan passionné et non du stil de l'Autheur' (I, p. 130). D'Aubigné here draws attention to the inherently political nature of words like 'Papiste' and 'Huguenot', the very words that Michel de l'Hospital warned should not be used. These words and others – 'heretiques',

‘luthériens’ and so on – denigrate people and ideas, represent certain communities as other and thereby reinforce ideological divisions.

That is not to say, however, that l’Hospital’s appeal to the common identity of ‘chrestien’ is a practicable solution since the *Histoire universelle* demonstrates that appeals to the rhetoric of Christendom tend to obscure division rather than overcome it. D’Aubigné comments of the 1559 treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis:<sup>48</sup>

une paix en effect pour les Royaumes de France et d’Espagne, en apparence de toute la Chrestienté, glorieuse aux Espagnols, desavantageuse aux François, redoutable aux Reformés: car, comme toutes les difficultés qui se presenterent au traicté estoient estouffees par le desir de repurger l’Eglise, ainsi après la paix establee, les Princes, qui par elle avoyent la paix du dehors travaillerent par æmulation à qui traicteroit plus rudement ceux qu’on appelloit heretiques. (I, pp. 126-7)

The word ‘Chrestienté’ is invoked and immediately split into constituent parts – ‘Espagnols’, ‘François’ and ‘Reformés’ – thereby parsing the ‘appearance’ of unity into disunity and factionalism. What we see here is the gap between the ideal of Christianity and the reality: the name Christendom may be invoked to justify political action, in this case peacemaking, even though the outcome may not be beneficial for the whole Christian community, favouring one country and one religious group over others. We also see the politics of language in action, specifically how the designation ‘heretique’ excludes certain people from an imagined community they would claim to be a part of, Christendom. Theologically, ‘Chrestienté’ is associated with ‘la paix’, but politically it involves redirecting violence towards heresy: ‘le pretexte de presser la paix entre les Rois, estoit le dessein d’exstirper les heretiques’ (I, p. 244). Christendom is an illusionary ideal of peace, an all-embracing notion that does not represent peace for all. Such is the slipperiness of the notion, its potential for constant rewriting according to shifting circumstances, that the Christendom conceived by the architects of the treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis excludes many who would be included when the idea was put to use as anti-Ottoman rhetoric.

Ostensibly a marker of unity, Christendom as it is presented in d’Aubigné’s *Histoire universelle* is more of an exclusionary concept. The term can become a rhetorical device to promote religious orthodoxy and to intensify conflict by promoting enmity towards those defined as enemies. In 1567 the Reformers are told that ‘c’estoit

<sup>48</sup> The peace of Cateau-Cambrésis ended the 1551-59 war between France and the Spanish Empire. It confirmed Spanish dominance on the Italian peninsula and was regarded by many as shameful for France. See R. J. Knecht, *The Rise and Fall of Renaissance France, 1483-1610* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), pp. 237-9.



folie à eux d'alleguer ni Edict de Janvier, ni Edict de paix, telles choses extorquées ne se pouvans octroyer qu'à temps, et n'ayant moyen qu'un Roi de France (sans se bander contre la Chrestienté) puisse establir en son Royaume deux religions' (II, p. 247). The argument made here by the French crown against leniency towards the Reformed Church is the attitude of 'Christendom', here clearly referring to Catholic Christendom. The Pope especially, d'Aubigné demonstrates, makes political use of the idea of Christendom. Supposedly the symbol of a unified church, the 'Prince de la Chrestienté' (I, p. 33) in fact fosters division: 'il proceda aux excommunications des Princes reformez' (VI, p. 264). The papal power of excommunication allows the pontiff to construct his own definition of Christendom, naming those who are within the Church and those who are considered heretics. D'Aubigné writes of Pope Paul III with regards to the build up to the Council of Trent: 'En l'an 1537 pour remedier (dit-il) aux heresies, dissensions en la Religion, guerres et troubles en la Chrestienté [...] assigna un Concile general à Mantouë au 23<sup>e</sup> jour de Mai' (I, pp. 77-8). One of his stated aims is to pacify Christendom, yet another is to clamp down on heresy, an ambition which in itself reshapes the contours of Christendom according to his own definition.

In spite of d'Aubigné's goal of objectivity in the *Histoire universelle* his personal comprehension of Christendom emerges in the text. It is a vision focussed on peace. He labels the Augsburg Settlement, which established the legality of Lutheranism in the Holy Roman Empire, 'le nœud de la paix d'Allemagne, qui a duré jusques aujourd'hui' (I, p. 53).<sup>49</sup> The note of praise in this statement is evident. The treaty was negotiated by the future Ferdinand I (Holy Roman Emperor from 1558-64), about whose death d'Aubigné writes: 'l'Empereur Ferdinand mourut d'hydropisie, Prince regretté des vrais Chrestiens, ami de paix, ennemi des cruautez, prudent, justicier et vigilant' (II, p. 346). The phrase 'vrais Chrestiens' is d'Aubigné's own political use of language in which he offers a definition of what it means to be a true Christian, that is, someone who is an 'ami de paix', an 'ennemi des cruautez' and so on. It is not a view that would have been universally shared, of course. D'Aubigné refers to the 'grand dessein' of the Jesuits 'de mettre la Chrestienté sous un Roi Katholique et sous un seul Pasteur' (VI, p. 141) – a post-Tridentine and exclusionary view of the Church which privileges political and theological uniformity and an attachment to Rome. D'Aubigné's description of the Catholic Ferdinand as a *vrai Chrestien* displays a willingness to

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<sup>49</sup> The 1555 Peace of Augsburg brought an end to religious war in the Holy Roman Empire. It gave each ruler the right to determine the religion, Catholic or Lutheran, of his subjects. See Michael Hughes, *Early Modern Germany, 1477-1806* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1992), pp. 59-60.

conceive of a Christian community that is based on peace and can respect, not erase, confessional difference.

### **Imagined communities in conflict: Calvinist double discourse**

The world that d'Aubigné depicts in the *Histoire universelle* is far from his ideal of peace. Dubois has described the Europe represented in d'Aubigné's *Histoire* as 'une mosaïque de communautés où les armées et les milices [...] jouent une pièce guerrière qui tient plus d'une tragédie shakespearienne que de l'épopée'.<sup>50</sup> The *Histoire universelle* is structured by an inexorable cycle of war and peace, each book ending with the description of a truce which inevitably erupts into violence in the next book, and so the work as a whole 'se termine sur une paix lourde de menaces, comme au début des troubles: le temps [...] répète le même scénario de piège et de violence'.<sup>51</sup> The clashes that he depicts are motivated by religious ideology, as epitomised at the beginning of the second book in which are juxtaposed two statements of religious belief: the Catholic 'confession de Bourdeaux' (I, p. 132) and then the 'Confession de foi faite d'un commun accord par les Eglises reformees du Royaume de France', introduced as 'les theses opposees aux premieres' (I, p. 146). The following chapter offers an 'Abregé du dire des Catholiques' (I, p. 164), and the next an 'Abregé du dire des Reformés' (I, p. 167). For Olivier Pot this is the quintessential example of d'Aubigné's polyphonic composition which aims to avoid particular viewpoints, even those of his fellow Huguenots.<sup>52</sup> The polyphonic form indicates a world of irreconcilable perspectives. These disagreements prove to be so violent since, in Dubois's words, 'l'unité de culture religieuse ne coïncide pas forcément avec le nationalisme politique'.<sup>53</sup> This section examines the relationship between religion and nation as it is mediated in d'Aubigné's *Histoire universelle* and Léry's *Histoire d'un voyage*. Both writers appeal to their faith and to their country in a double discourse of competing and ultimately irreconcilable narratives of cultural belonging.

For d'Aubigné Henri IV represented a potential fix, a means of healing the fundamental tension between faith and country, and combining the two in a larger cultural unity. As a Protestant and the heir to the French throne from 1584, it seemed to

<sup>50</sup> 'L'organisation de l'espace', p. 141.

<sup>51</sup> Fanlo, '«Mettre en ordre des choses tant desordonnées»', p. 205.

<sup>52</sup> 'L'*Histoire universelle*, ou une poétique de l'événementiel: Réflexions sur l'invention d'un genre', in *Entre Clio et Melpomène: Les fictions de l'histoire chez Agrippa d'Aubigné*, ed. by Olivier Pot (Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2010), pp. 145-223 (p. 170).

<sup>53</sup> 'L'organisation de l'espace', p. 141.

Calvinists that Henri's accession to the crown would allow for a reconciliation of loyalties to country and religion after decades of civil war. Indeed, Dubois has commented on the role occupied by Henri in d'Aubigné's *Histoire universelle*: '[il est] le représentant exemplaire de ce temps de fractures et de divisions, avant de se faire le restaurateur contesté d'une fragile unité nationale'.<sup>54</sup> It was noted above that the figure of Henri is, in spite of the wide geographical sweep of the narrative, a significant focus in the *Histoire universelle*. The hope that Henri embodied for Calvinists is signalled in the first chapter of the first book of the *Histoire*, which opens in the middle of the sixteenth century with the birth of the future Henri IV and describes Europe as follows: 'Durant le berceau de ce Prince, l'Europe, comme ayant lors pour ascendant un astreignée et belliqueux, fut esmeuë et rechauffée de toutes parts par diverses guerres' (I, p. 24). The juxtaposition of Henri – 'ce Prince' – with 'l'Europe' is telling. The vision of Europe d'Aubigné offers here at the word's first appearance is of a place marked above all by conflict with wars all over the continent. The inclusion of this description as the background to the birth of Henri flags the supposed destiny of the man: he was born to transform this divided Europe, to unite nation and religion.

Alas, it was not to be. In order to secure his position on the throne Henri had to convert to Catholicism. For his friend, the committed Calvinist d'Aubigné, this was a heavy blow. He was eventually forced into exile into Geneva, unable to resolve the competing allegiances of religion and country.<sup>55</sup> The figure of Henri IV is found at the end of the *Histoire universelle*, as at the start, alongside the word Europe. D'Aubigné summarises Henri's foreign policy aims on the eve of his assassination in 1610 as to become 'un Empereur des Chrestiens, qui de sa menace arresteroit les Turcs, pour reformer l'Italie, dompter l'Espagne, reconquerir l'Europe et faire trembler l'Univers' (IX, p. 406). There is here a confessional and a national dimension to what it means to be 'un Empereur des Chrestiens' since it involves reforming papal Italy and pacifying the old Catholic enemy Spain. More than that, it consists of a universal vision that will overcome divisions to unite an expansive Christendom, take back southeastern Europe from the Ottomans, and spread the Christian religion. Its presence towards the end of the text weighs heavily: in signalling the failures of Henri to remake community – to remodel Christendom and Europe as one and the same, as a cultural, political, and geographical unity – the phrase 'Empereur des Chrestiens' flags the path that might

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid., p. 141.

<sup>55</sup> For an account of his life, see the biography by Madeleine Lazard, *Agrippa d'Aubigné* (Paris: Fayard, 1998).

have been taken. As such, it marks an end to hopes of a grand unifying narrative that could unite country and religion in providing a systematic image of the world and of man's place within it.

Léry in the much more personal and much less impartial *Histoire d'un voyage* is able to offer a fuller exploration of split loyalties than d'Aubigné. Léry too left his country of birth for exile in Geneva. And although a Calvinist pastor, Léry claims of himself, 'François naturel que je suis, jaloux de l'honneur de mon prince' (p. 77). Monarchy though is problematic from the point of view of confessional difference, as the figure of Henri IV testifies. Léry's writing explores the impact on the individual of the discord between religion and nation. What does it mean to be French for a Calvinist subject to a Catholic king? What does it mean to be Christian in an age of confessionalism? Attached to both allegiances, Léry's identity is fragmentary.

Léry uses the paratextual framework of the *Histoire d'un voyage* to set the work within the context of the Wars of Religion, inviting the reader to regard it as concerned with the religious fragmentation of France as much as it is a recollection of a voyage.<sup>56</sup> The preface frames the *Histoire* as a correction to the 'impostures de Thevet' (p. 63), thereby promoting the truth claims of Léry and his coreligionists. The text is dedicated to the Huguenot general François de Coligny, son of Admiral Gaspard de Coligny who had supported Villegaignon's expedition to Brazil and who is characterised by Léry as a 'Capitaine François et Chrestien' (p. 48). These two defining features proved incompatible in his lifetime and he was killed in the St Bartholomew's Day Massacre. The two elements should, according to Léry's historical interpretation, have been united in the colony of *France antarctique*, as he writes in the dedicatory epistle:

aussi est-il tres-certain, que si l'affaire eust esté aussi bien poursuivy, qu'il avoit esté heureusement commencé, que l'un et l'autre regne, spirituel et temporel, y avoyent si bien prins pied de nostre temps, que plus de dix milles personnes de la nation Françoise y seroyent maintenant en aussi pleine et seure possession pour nostre Roy, que les Espagnols et Portugais y sont au nom de leurs. (p. 48)

Léry sees a world in which the spiritual and temporal domains have been sundered. This failure to align represents the fundamental problematic of Reformation-era discourses on community.<sup>57</sup> The struggle for a Calvinist Frenchman to resolve the contradiction

<sup>56</sup> Gérard Genette has emphasised the importance of a careful analysis of paratexts in *Seuils* (Paris: Seuil, 1987).

<sup>57</sup> Myriam Yardeni has examined the changing forms of national consciousness during the Wars of Religion in *La conscience nationale en France pendant les guerres de religion (1559-1598)* (Louvain: Nauwelaerts, 1971).

provokes the dream of a refuge in the New World where the spiritual and the temporal can coexist in harmony, where two identities can coexist in harmony.<sup>58</sup> Consider the pronoun ‘y’. According to Michel de Certeau’s analysis of the *Histoire d’un voyage*, the text establishes a structural difference between ‘y’ (*là-bas, ailleurs, par-delà*) and *ici* (*par-deçà*).<sup>59</sup> The task Léry sets himself is, in part, to offer a description of the *par-delà*, yet the work is haunted by the uncertainty of the *par-deçà*. Certeau indicates the instability – unwittingly, I believe – by naming the *par-deçà* first as France and later as Geneva.<sup>60</sup> The *par-deçà* – and the *nous* – for Léry is not one coherent entity; its referents shift, as we saw above. He writes of returning from Brazil ‘en France [...] ma patrie’ (p. 507), but France is not a place of safety for a man of his religious convictions. His *Histoire* portrays the fragmentation of the individual caught within a fragmented world.

The violent antagonism between communities in the Old World is one of the focal points of the *Histoire d’un voyage*. Léry closes the chapter concerned with the practice of anthropophagy in Brazil (15) with a series of reflections on the bloodshed cleaving Europe apart. He writes that ‘nos gros usuriers (succans le sang et la moëlle, et par consequent mangeans tous en vie [...]) [...] sont encores plus cruels que les sauvages’ (p. 375); that ‘durant la sanglante tragedie’ of the St Bartholomew’s Day Massacre the livers, hearts and other parts of corpses were eaten by the murderers (p. 376); and ‘au milieu de nous [...] ceux-ci se sont plongez au sang de leurs parens, voisins et compatriotes’ (p. 377). The vocabulary Léry adopts here is inclusive, taken from the semantic field of community, but the reality is anything but inclusive as ‘voisins et compatriotes’, ostensible members of the same communities, violently turn against each other, carving out new communities in blood, reshaping the meanings of such inclusive terms. The allusions to cannibalism signal, in the words of Janet Whatley, ‘the utter breakdown of community in Europe’.<sup>61</sup> Lestringant has argued that

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<sup>58</sup> Lestringant has written on the idea of a Protestant refuge in America. See *Le Huguenot et le sauvage* and ‘Genève et l’Amérique: le rêve du Refuge huguenot au temps des guerres de Religion (1555-1600)’, *Revue de l’histoire des religions*, 210 (1993), 331-47. There has been much debate on whether *France antarctique* was intended, when Villegaignon set out in 1555, as a Protestant refuge. Lestringant, for one, has argued that it was. On the other hand, John McGrath and Silvia Shannon have argued convincingly that Villegaignon’s initial intention was to establish a fort to protect French commercial interests in the area: ‘Polemic and History in French Brazil, 1555-1560’, *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, 27 (1996), 385-97; ‘Villegaignon, Polyphemus, and Cain of America’. The Calvinists who set out for Brazil in 1556 may have interpreted *France antarctique* as a potential haven, contrary to the official intentions.

<sup>59</sup> *L’écriture de l’histoire*, pp. 257-68.

<sup>60</sup> ‘[...] le mouvement de partance qui allait de *par-deçà* (ici, la France) à *par-delà* (là-bas, les Tupis)’, *ibid.*, p. 250; ‘*par-deçà* (Genève)’, p. 259.

<sup>61</sup> ‘Food and the Limits of Civility: The Testimony of Jean de Léry’, *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, 15 (1984), 387-400 (p. 391).

with the parallels he suggests between Europe and anthropophagy in the Americas Léry makes the cannibal a symbol of the corruption on both sides of the Atlantic.<sup>62</sup> Léry adds to the catalogue of cruelties, introducing, for example, Dracula and descriptions of Ottoman barbarities in the 1585 edition and an account of the Spanish in the New World in the edition of 1599 so that cannibalism is considered to be present everywhere.<sup>63</sup> Whereas in his account of a voyage to Brazil André Thevet locates savagery and barbarity outside of Europe, as we shall see in Chapter Five, Léry does not consider cruelty to be an extra-European phenomenon. In this way, the *Histoire d'un voyage* does not construct a concept of Europe or Christendom that is defined as superior to the Ottoman Empire or to the New World.

The refusal to posit the superiority of Europe vis-à-vis the rest of the world has consequences for the cultural meanings of the continent, in particular concerning the nature of the relationship between Christianity and Europe. Whereas Lestringant and Pagden have understood Léry to consider the Brazilians to be damned,<sup>64</sup> Andrea Frisch, in her study of how Léry's ethnographic discourse is influenced by John Calvin, argues that by putting 'Tupi culture on the same moral plane as that of contemporary Europeans' Léry grants an equality to the two cultures so that his own is not regarded as having a privileged link to God, the whole world falling short of His ideal.<sup>65</sup> Michel Jeanneret has made a complementary point: 'Le résultat pratique de la doctrine calvinienne du péché, c'est la tolérance et le sentiment d'une fondamentale égalité parmi les hommes – égalité dans la réprobation et dans l'incertitude du salut'.<sup>66</sup> We have already seen Léry chastise those 'par deçà parmi nous [...] qui portent le titre de Chrestiens, tant en Italie qu'ailleurs' (p. 375). If the peoples of Europe cannot be sure of salvation and the continent is beset with dissimulators, Christians in name alone, Europe in Léry's view is not distinct from the rest of the world on the grounds of the people's adherence to Christianity. Other writers that have been examined in this thesis – Belleforest and Thevet, for instance – regard Christianity as a crucial component of the meaning of Europe.

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<sup>62</sup> *Le Cannibale: Grandeur et décadence* (Paris: Perrin, 1994), p. 125.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.132-3. The 1585 and 1599 editions to chapter 15 can be found in the appendix of Lestringant's edition of the *Histoire d'un voyage*, pp. 571-95.

<sup>64</sup> 'Genève et l'Amérique', p. 334; Anthony Pagden, *European Encounters with the New World: From Renaissance to Romanticism* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993), pp. 42-7.

<sup>65</sup> 'In a Sacramental Mode: Jean de Léry's Calvinist Ethnography', *Representations*, 77 (2002), 82-106 (pp. 87-90).

<sup>66</sup> 'Léry et Thevet: Comment parler d'un monde nouveau?', in *Mélanges à la mémoire de Franco Simone* (Geneva: Slatkine, 1983), pp. 227-45 (p. 233).

Faced with a Europe in which he cannot reconcile his incompatible allegiances to both nation and religion, it is not so surprising that Léry is nostalgic about his time in the New World and expresses a yearning to return, declaring, ‘je regrette souvent que je ne suis parmi les sauvages’ (p. 508). Lestringant has indicated that the examples of barbarity in the Old World serve both to condemn Catholics and to make the Tupi seem more sympathetic.<sup>67</sup> It is the ‘cruelles désillusions’ of the twenty years since his voyage – the hopes, yet ultimate failure, of the Reformers in France – that colour Léry’s reflections on a Brazil experienced by his younger self.<sup>68</sup> As Wes Williams has argued, ‘his elegy is *not* for some now lost New World paradise; it is, rather, for a France now fallen into confessional conflict and consequent ruin’.<sup>69</sup> In *Tristes Tropiques* Claude Lévi-Strauss suggested that the early travellers to America found there what they wanted to find.<sup>70</sup> Léry certainly did. He looked back on the New World, through the lens of a pessimistic view of the world at the time of writing, and considered it to represent the safe haven, the fresh start away from Catholic Europe, that he so desired.

Or rather, the safe haven it might have been. Villegaignon has, in Léry’s view, put paid to that: ‘j’ay opinion, si Villegaignon ne se fust revolté de la Religion reformée, et que nous fussions demeurez plus long temps en ce pays-là, qu’on en eust attiré et gagné quelques-uns à Jesus Christ’ (pp. 413-4). America did not appear to be a good place only to build a new religious society; it could also have been a theatre for French glory:

je croy fermement si [...] Villegaignon eust tenu bon, qu’il y auroit à present plus de dix mille François, lesquels outre la bonne garde qu’ils eussent fait de nostre isle et de nostre fort (contre les Portugais qui ne l’eussent jamais sceu prendre comme ils ont fait depuis nostre retour) possederoyent maintenant sous l’obeissance du Roy un grand pays en la terre du Bresil, lequel à bon droit, en ce cas, on eust peu continuer d’appeler France Antarctique. (p. 506)

For Léry, Brazil represents a missed opportunity to have resolved the contradictions between religion and nation. There, the two aspects could have aligned. This regret explains in part why Léry stresses how dissimilar is the New World from the Old, even

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<sup>67</sup> *Le Huguenot et le sauvage*, p. 158. The accusation that Catholics were cannibals for wanting to eat the flesh of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist was widespread.

<sup>68</sup> *Le Huguenot et le sauvage*, p. 110.

<sup>69</sup> “‘L’Humanité du tout perdue?’: Early Modern Monsters, Cannibals and Human Souls’, *History and Anthropology*, 23 (2012), 235-56 (p. 252).

<sup>70</sup> ‘De l’autre côté de la fosse, seraient-ils encore là pour nous accueillir, tous ces prodiges perçus par les navigateurs des anciens siècles ? En parcourant des espaces vierges, ils étaient moins occupés de découvrir un nouveau monde que de vérifier le passé de l’ancien.’ *Tristes Tropiques* (Paris: Plon, 1955), p. 80.

though the two cultures share an equality:<sup>71</sup> he wants America to be different; he does not want to recreate Europe in America.<sup>72</sup> He wants to build a new community. However, America turned out to be too much like Europe: forced into exile in Geneva, Léry feels that he and his coreligionists are dominated by Catholics in Europe, in much the same manner that they were dominated by Catholics in *France antarctique*.<sup>73</sup> The tragedy of the New World, and indeed of the Old World, is that the two worlds do indeed parallel one another.

### Conclusions

Neither Jean de Léry nor Agrippa d'Aubigné got what they hoped for from the Reformation. With their religious beliefs they could not subscribe to a notion of a unified Christendom with the pope at the head. But the Reformation and the process of confessionalization did not bring about the changes they wanted. Whereas Michel de l'Hospital argued for civic identity as a solution to the religious crisis in France, Léry and d'Aubigné were less optimistic about the possibility of two religions co-existing. They favoured a model of community that was both confessional and national. However, the hopes they harboured and the solutions they conceived were already confined to the past when they took up their pens to write. For Léry, Brazil represents a missed opportunity, the safe haven from Catholic domination that might have been. For d'Aubigné, it was Henri IV who was the great hope, but his conversion shored up the status of Catholicism in France. Forced to choose between religion and nation, Léry and d'Aubigné opted for the former. Their texts register a sense of loss and can offer no grand narratives with which to replace Christendom, no allegiance which can reconcile their fragmentary identities.

Preoccupied with a fragmented continent and a future in which division seems inescapable, neither Léry nor d'Aubigné indicates a shift from a concept of Christendom expressing collective identity to a concept of Europe as a marker of allegiance. Léry's *Histoire d'un voyage* highlights the fact that Christendom need not be replaced with a unity as large; he does not articulate a collective identity as large or as all encompassing. Unlike Léry, d'Aubigné does indicate an overarching cultural unity, but it is in relation to the Ottoman Empire and is more associated with Christendom

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<sup>71</sup> The notion that Léry regards the two cultures as equal yet dissimilar is Frisch's: 'In a Sacramental Mode', pp. 90-1.

<sup>72</sup> *Le Huguenot et le sauvage*, p. 80.

<sup>73</sup> Shannon (p. 329) has suggested that a reading of Léry's *Histoire* indicates that the Calvinists considered themselves a minority on the ship to Brazil and then on the island.



than it is with Europe. In this way, the *Histoire universelle* demonstrates how under the pressure of religious division the notion of Christendom could continue to be utilised. Indeed, James Joll has reminded us that '[e]ven before the Reformation the unity of Christendom was easily broken'.<sup>74</sup> There was thus nothing inevitable about the eclipse of Christendom. Always more of an ideal than a reality and bound within a politics of language, the myth of Christendom could have gone on to sustain itself, should it have continued to prove itself culturally and politically useful. It may be more appropriate to emphasise the examples of an early uptake in the use of 'Europe' in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries – fleeting moments that point towards the future rise of Europe – rather than referring to a 'persistence of Christendom' or 'survival of Christendom', as historians have tended to do.<sup>75</sup>

Europe and Christendom were flexible ideas, the two terms used interchangeably and distinctly, neutrally and emotionally. The manner in which thought evolved from regarding Christendom as the largest unit of collective allegiance to regarding Europe in this light was not that of a decisive shift. Rather, Europe is the product of a slow, unsteady and contested emergence. The Reformation was a factor but it did not provoke an epistemological rupture. It remained possible afterwards to think in terms of Christendom, as d'Aubigné attests. What Christendom meant, though, was the subject of much disagreement. Rather than a linear history of an/the idea of Europe, it would be preferable to think of an array of discourses and counter-discourses about Europe/Christendom (both in society at large and within individual texts). One discourse may eventually have become dominant – a sense of shared values and superiority vis-à-vis the rest of the world – and the label Europe was preferred for this. The replacement of Christendom is suggested by d'Aubigné's phrase 'l'Europe [...] de toutes parts' (I, p. 24): Europe is a term which potentially comprises plurality, a whole constituted of many parts, and as such it is able to encapsulate the sense of fragmentation and diversity suggested by the very existence of plural discourses about the concept of Europe/Christendom.

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<sup>74</sup> 'Europe – An Historian's View', *History of European Ideas*, 1 (1980), 7-19 (p. 10).

<sup>75</sup> Hay, p. 111; Greengrass, *Christendom Destroyed*, p. 8.

## CHAPTER FOUR

**Reducing Europe? The Ottoman threat in the poetry of Ronsard and the political tracts of Savary de Brèves**

‘For almost a thousand years, from the first Moorish landing in Spain [AD 710] to the second Turkish siege of Vienna [1683], Europe was under constant threat from Islam.’<sup>1</sup> Although the capabilities of the Ottoman Empire were arguably in decline from the late-sixteenth century onwards, during the period with which we are concerned they remained the greatest military power on earth.<sup>2</sup> They posed the challenge of potential political and territorial conquest in Europe.<sup>3</sup> The capture of Constantinople in 1453 ushered in an era of Ottoman expansion across the Bosphorus westwards into Europe, before being repulsed at the gates of Vienna in 1529. The danger remained, nonetheless, as Christians in Europe feared that the Ottomans were, as Ronsard put it, ‘reduisant la Chrestienté’ in a spatial sense.<sup>4</sup> With the political and military buffer zone of the Byzantine Empire gone, the threat of Islamic expansion became more acute than it had been in the Middle Ages.<sup>5</sup>

The anti-Ottoman ideology galvanised by the fear of decline, of the geographical reduction of Christendom, is considered to have played a crucial role in the development of the idea of Europe. Denys Hay cites the fall of Constantinople and the consequent challenge posed to the continent as a factor which helped to increase the emotional content of the word Europe.<sup>6</sup> In an examination of the image of the Ottomans in Italy from 1453-1683, Mustafa Soykut has argued that after the fall of Constantinople the Turks were identified as the antithesis of Europe.<sup>7</sup> Likewise, Gerard Delanty has argued that a specifically European (as opposed to Christian) identity was born of resistance to Ottoman expansion.<sup>8</sup> Of course, Edward Said’s *Orientalism* remains a seminal work in this field. He argues that European colonialism established a discourse of the ‘Orient’ which was crucial in defining Europe, and ‘the West’, as the superior

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<sup>1</sup> Bernard Lewis, *Islam and the West* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 13.

<sup>2</sup> Michael J. Heath, *Crusading Commonplaces: La Noue, Lucinge and Rhetoric against the Turks* (Geneva: Droz, 1986), p. 9.

<sup>3</sup> Lewis, p. 72.

<sup>4</sup> Pierre de Ronsard, *Œuvres complètes*, ed. by Jean Céard, Daniel Ménager and Michel Simonin, 2 vols (Paris: Gallimard, 1993), I, p. 734. All references are to this edition.

<sup>5</sup> Heath, pp. 40-1.

<sup>6</sup> *Europe*, p. 73, 83-7.

<sup>7</sup> *Image of the ‘Turk’ in Italy: A History of the ‘Other’ in Early Modern Europe: 1453-1683* (Berlin: Klaus Schwarz, 2001), p. 1.

<sup>8</sup> *Inventing Europe*, p. 30.

opposite of the East. Critiquing Said, Nancy Bisaha has highlighted the fact that the sense of European superiority predated colonialism and existed during the Renaissance period when the continent was under threat from the Ottomans.<sup>9</sup> She also stresses the plurality of discourses about the Turks, as opposed to Said's one East-West discourse.<sup>10</sup>

In effect, Bisaha's work falls in line with a movement that has been taking shape over the past two decades and that a collection of essays on the subject has labelled 're-orienting the Renaissance'.<sup>11</sup> The goal of scholars working under this umbrella has been to shed light on the developments – social, cultural, economic, intellectual, political, and so on – of the period that depended upon the movement of people, ideas, skills and goods between the Ottoman Empire and Christian Europe. Lisa Jardine's *Worldly Goods*, for example, put trade between east and west at the centre of the story of the Renaissance. And in *The Renaissance Bazaar* Jerry Brotton explored the influence of cultural cross-fertilisation on art and learning. Such works have demonstrated how cultural exchange during the Renaissance period 'rendered borders rather porous'.<sup>12</sup> Yet there is more work to be done. Christine Isom-Verhaaren has highlighted the fact that scholars who have argued that Europe and European identity were formed by conflict between Christianity and Islam have not taken into account the fluid and pragmatic worlds of travel and diplomacy.<sup>13</sup> That many Frenchmen who travelled to the Ottoman Empire held positive views about the culture and society they found there has been attested in scholarship on the subject, but this has not made its mark on studies of the idea of Europe.<sup>14</sup> Accordingly, the time is ripe for a reassessment.

This chapter will re-orient the role of the Ottoman Empire in shaping Renaissance ideas of Europe. The Ottomans have been a lurking presence in the thesis

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<sup>9</sup> *Creating East and West: Renaissance Humanists and the Ottoman Turks* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), p. 6.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

<sup>11</sup> *Re-Orienting the Renaissance*, ed. by Gerald MacLean.

<sup>12</sup> Gerald MacLean, 'Introduction', in *Re-Orienting the Renaissance: Cultural Exchanges with the East*, ed. by Gerald MacLean (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), pp. 1-28 (p. 19).

<sup>13</sup> *Allies with the Infidel: The Ottoman and French Alliance in the Sixteenth Century* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2011), pp. 10-11.

<sup>14</sup> See Philip Mansel, 'The French Renaissance in Search of the Ottoman Empire' in *Re-Orienting the Renaissance: Cultural Exchanges with the East*, ed. by Gerald MacLean (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), pp. 96-107. Clarence Dana Rouillard's comprehensive work demonstrates the cordial relations between France and the Ottoman Empire: *The Turk in French History, Thought, and Literature (1520-1660)* (Paris: Boivin et Compagnie, 1940). Frédéric Tinguely has examined the writings of a number of French visitors to Constantinople in the middle of the sixteenth century in *L'Écriture du Levant à la Renaissance: Enquête sur les voyageurs français dans l'Empire de Soliman le Magnifique* (Geneva: Droz, 2000). Pascale Barthe has studied how cross-cultural relations between France and the Ottoman Empire were represented, often positively, in the literary and cultural artefacts of the early sixteenth century: *French Encounters with the Ottomans, 1510-1560* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016).

so far; we saw that in the cosmographical works of Thevet and Belleforest, Montaigne's *Journal de Voyage*, and d'Aubigné's *Histoire universelle*, the figure of the Turk had a degree of impact upon ideas of Europe and Christendom. We shall now examine the Ottoman Empire as a central theme of discourses about Europe. In order to do so we shall first consider a writer who never visited the Ottoman Empire yet whose work includes the image of the Turk as a threatening other, Pierre de Ronsard, before turning to the writings of a man who crossed cultural boundaries, the diplomat and scholar François Savary de Brèves who was French ambassador to both Constantinople and Rome. The key points of the analysis will be on how their understandings of the Ottoman Empire shape conceptions of Europe and how their thinking about the Ottomans relates to their wider thought. Phillip John Usher has argued that no one border divided France from the Ottoman Empire and that the sorts of borders that were conceived varied from writer to writer.<sup>15</sup> He reads the works of several authors, Ronsard included, in dialogue with other texts which offer different viewpoints on France's cultural borders. This chapter aims to extend Usher's work by bringing Europe/Christendom into the picture, asking what borders distinguished France, Christendom, Europe, and the Ottoman Empire from one another, and how these borders interacted and overlapped. We shall see that the two writers display a variety of concerns and depict a variety of interactions between east and west – economic, cultural, political and ideological – which offer different narratives about Europe.

### **Pierre de Ronsard and the place of France in Europe**

The nexus of thinking about Europe, Christendom and France is present in the works of the most famous poet of the French Renaissance, Pierre de Ronsard. As the unofficial leader of the Pléiade, he is an important figure in sixteenth-century constructions of nationhood. Joachim du Bellay, another key member of that brigade of poets, described the task of French verse as the enrichment of the French language by imitation of Greek and Latin authors so as to glorify the French nation.<sup>16</sup> In his study of literary nation-building Keller argues that in the *Discours des misères de ce temps* and the *Continuation du discours des misères de ce temps* Ronsard figures the French people as an imaginary family, conflating Frenchness and the Catholic religion to suggest that

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<sup>15</sup> 'Walking East in the Renaissance', in *French Global: A New Approach to Literary History*, ed. by Christie McDonald and Susan Rubin Suleiman (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), pp. 193-206.

<sup>16</sup> See his famous *La Deffence, et illustration de la langue françoise*, ed. by Jean-Charles Monferran (Geneva: Droz, 2001).

Reformers were betraying their country.<sup>17</sup> Religious fragmentation is not the only threat in the work of Ronsard; present too is the menace of the Ottoman Empire. The word Europe appears on seventy-one occasions in Ronsard's oeuvre,<sup>18</sup> often alongside an image of the Turks. The term 'Chrestienté' is more rare, occurring just three times,<sup>19</sup> twice in relation to the Ottomans. The less frequent usage of 'Chrestienté' can be explained in part by the demands of poetic verse; as Hay has pointed out, Europe was a much more flexible word than Christendom.<sup>20</sup> It is possible that Ronsard's choice of the term Europe also reflects a Renaissance humanist's preference for a word of classical origin over one of medieval Latin.<sup>21</sup> As we shall see, Ronsard in his poetry develops an idea of Europe which links the discourses of contemporary Ottoman expansion and the classical past. This section will demonstrate that the literary construction of the nation was not isolated from thinking about Europe and Christendom, but rather that the two processes informed one another.

The relationship between the Ottomans and Europe, as it is represented in Ronsard's poetry, is one of a civilisational clash. Following the 1564 siege of Malta, Ronsard wrote in 1565 of the threat posed by the Ottomans in a poem addressed to Charles IX (*À Luy-mesme*, 'Si les souhaits des hommes avoient lieu'):

[les] puissans Ottomans  
 Qui sous leurs mains par armes ont saisie  
 Tout le meilleur d'Europe et de l'Asie,  
 Lesquels hardis d'hommes et de vaisseaux  
 Ont d'avirons ja couvertes les eaux  
 Qu'on voit flotter dessus la mer Tyrrhene:  
 Ont ja campé leurs soldars sur l'arene  
 De la Sicile et de Calabre, afin  
 Que nostre loy par le Turc prenne fin. (II, p. 47)

Although a military alliance with the Ottoman Empire had been established since the reign of François I,<sup>22</sup> Ronsard depicts the westward movement of 'le Turc' as a menace to the whole of Europe. The continent is here defined in opposition to the Ottomans and is held together culturally by 'nostre loy', meaning the Christian faith. Throughout his life Ronsard urged action against the Turks in poems addressed to successive French

<sup>17</sup> Keller, pp. 41-53.

<sup>18</sup> A. E. Creore, *A Word-Index to the Poetic Works of Ronsard*, 2 vols (Leeds: W. S. Maney, 1972), I, p. 533. The figure excludes references to *Europe*, the goddess Europa.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, I, p. 251.

<sup>20</sup> Hay, p. 87.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 87.

<sup>22</sup> See Isom-Verhaaren's *Allies with the Infidel* for a full account of French relations with the Ottoman Empire.

kings.<sup>23</sup> The clash of two value systems – Europe versus ‘le barbare Turc’ (II, p. 39) – is the common depiction of the Ottomans found throughout Ronsard’s oeuvre. His description of the Ottomans as *barbares* is one that we have seen elsewhere in the thesis, running as it does through Renaissance French thought. However, it should be noted that against the backdrop of brewing religious war, Ronsard, in a poem dedicated to Catherine de Medici, praised the piety of the Ottomans in comparison to the ‘Pasteurs’ of ‘Europe’ (II, p. 90). Such anti-European polemic stems, as Chabod has asserted, from a desire to make Europe even greater.<sup>24</sup> Pious the Turks may be but Ronsard nonetheless stresses that their religion is ‘vicieuse’ (II, p. 90).

The role of the Ottomans in Ronsard’s poetic oeuvre is therefore largely that of a threatening other against whom the rulers of Europe could unite. The image of the Ottomans camped on the Italian peninsula included in the poem to Charles IX quoted above plays on a fear of proximity. Other examples of Ronsard’s crusade rhetoric are designed to stimulate feelings of optimism: in the ‘Discours de l’alteration et change des choses humaines’ of 1569, a consideration of the human consequences of change inspired by Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*,<sup>25</sup> he offers as solace the idea that the Ottoman Empire will inevitably decline and fall:

Le Turc seigneur de tant de villes fieres,  
De tant de mers, de ports et de rivieres,  
Qui ose seul une Europe assaillir,  
Doit quelque jour s’amoinrir et faillir. (II, p. 747)

Ronsard was following a general sixteenth-century trend in positing Constantinople, rather than the Holy Land, as the object of crusade.<sup>26</sup> The attraction of writing about crusade was the appeal for unity amongst warring Christians that it entailed. Thus, the spectre of a shared enemy on the soil of Europe was able to articulate a sense of overarching Christian identity during the era of the Reformation.

It is precisely the rhetoric of Christianity that predominates in Ronsard’s ‘Exhortation pour la paix’, which opens, ‘Non, ne combattez pas, vivez en amitié, / Chrestiens, changez vostre ire avecques la pitié’ (II, p. 807). The Turkish menace – ‘encores le Turc n’est / Si eslongné d’ici’ (II, p. 808) – and the territorial threat they pose to the continent Europe – ‘ils ont (sans coups ruer) en Europe passé’ (II, p. 808) –

<sup>23</sup> Isidore Silver, *Ronsard and the Grecian Lyre*, 3 vols (Geneva: Droz, 1981-7), II (1985), 220-1.

<sup>24</sup> Chabod, p. 71.

<sup>25</sup> Malcolm Quainton, *Ronsard’s Ordered Chaos: Visions of Flux and Stability in the Poetry of Pierre de Ronsard* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1980), pp. 31-2.

<sup>26</sup> Heath, p. 32.

provide the urgent background to the appeal to the notion of a unified Christianity. Francis Higman has underlined the political and personal context in which this poem was produced: it was written during a period when Ronsard was at court and had close acquaintance with royal policy; in urging peace between France and Spain, it seems that Ronsard was preparing the public for the official change in policy that led to the 1559 treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis.<sup>27</sup> The rhetorical appeal to Christianity highlights what the two warring parties have in common.<sup>28</sup> In other words, the meanings of Europe and Christendom overlap, but the latter carries more emotional value.

For Ronsard, Europe has a strong political signification, its fractures provoked as much by warring between states as by religious troubles within them. In a sonnet ‘À Madame Marguerite, duchesse de Savoye’ (Henri II’s sister), Ronsard, writing shortly before the treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis brought Franco-Spanish hostilities to a pause, refers to ‘Nostre Europe plongée au profond du tombeau, / Par Philippe et Henry au naufrage exposée’ (I, p. 520). Moreover, in 1553, whilst the Habsburg-Valois war was unfolding, the image of a fractured Europe provokes a desire to search for the mythological paradise of the Blessed Isles in Ronsard’s ‘Les Isles fortunées’:

Puis qu’Enyon d’une effroyable trope  
 Pieds contre-mont bouleverse l’Europe,  
 La pauvre Europe, et que l’horrible Mars  
 Le sang Chrestien espand de toutes pars:  
 Or’ mutinant contre soy l’Allemagne  
 Or’ opposant à la France l’Espagne,  
 Joyeux de meurtre, or’ le pays François  
 À l’Italie, et l’Escosse à l’Anglois:  
 Peuple chetif, qui ses forces hazarde  
 Contre soymesme, et qui sot ne prend garde  
 Que ce grand Turc bien tost ne faudra pas  
 De renverser leurs puissances à bas,  
 Les separant comme une Ourse cruelle  
 De cent chameaux separe la querelle. (II, p. 780)

This poem is an early example of Ronsard’s engagement with the theme of the Age of Gold. As Elizabeth Armstrong has noted, it is an imitation of Horace’s Sixteenth Epode, but where the Roman urged his friends to leave the wars of Italy behind, in Ronsard’s version it is Europe that is conflict-ridden.<sup>29</sup> It is a dream of being ‘Loin de l’Europe, et loin de ses combas’ (II, p. 782) and, as Daniel Ménager has pointed out, ‘Il faut que ce

<sup>27</sup> ‘Ronsard’s political and polemical poetry’, in *Ronsard the Poet*, ed. by Terence Cave (London: Methuen, 1973), pp. 241-85 (pp. 247-8).

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 252.

<sup>29</sup> *Ronsard and the Age of Gold* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), pp. 14-15.

monde de rêve offre aux voyageurs ce qu'ils ne trouvent plus en Europe: la paix, la tranquillité, l'abondance des choses'.<sup>30</sup> Ménager's reading of 'Les Isles fortunées' has flagged its tensions – the rivalry between the poets who travel there will not disappear in the New World, for example – which make the paradise heralded less clear-cut than may seem to be the case.<sup>31</sup> Such tensions and the necessary unreality of the dream-like vision in the first place draw the reader away from the fiction and back towards the problems in the Old World. As such, the poem acts as a warning, one not only about the bloody and murderous wars of the continent but also about the potential for the exploitation of a weak Europe by the mighty Ottoman bear. The image serves as an argument for strength in unity and a caution against the fragility of fragmentation.

Elsewhere, Ronsard adds a literary and cultural dimension to his political thinking on the Ottoman Empire. Rather than spurring warring Christians to ally together, Ronsard fantasises about a French attack on Constantinople that spreads Christianity and restores the culture of antiquity. Ménager's study of Ronsard's political poetry has flagged the centrality of the figure of the king in the poet's work,<sup>32</sup> and the monarch is indeed the figurehead of Ronsard's fantasy of crusade. In the poem addressed to Charles IX discussed above, which depicts the Ottomans advancing into Europe, Ronsard reminds the king of a popular prophecy:

C'est qu'un grand Roy de France doit un jour,  
En les dontant et chassant du sejour  
Que Constantin esleut pour sa demeure,  
Rompre leur Sceptre, et d'une foy meilleure  
Gagner les cœurs des peuples Asiens,  
De Circoncis en faire des Chrestiens,  
François d'habits, de mœurs, et de langage. (II, p. 48)

The prophecy that a second Charlemagne would come to re-conquer the Holy Land and save the world had been useful political rhetoric for the French monarchy since the fourteenth century.<sup>33</sup> The juxtaposition of 'Chrestiens' and 'François' invests Charles IX with the significance of the spiritual leadership of Christendom. Indeed, Heath has suggested that Ronsard's presentation of an attack on the Ottomans is more a matter of national renewal than a European or Christian alliance.<sup>34</sup> The crusade might spread

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<sup>30</sup> 'Conflits et évacion dans "Les Isles fortunées"', in *Writers in Conflict in Sixteenth-Century France: Essays in honour of Malcolm Quainton*, ed. by Elizabeth Vinestock and David Foster (Durham: Durham Modern Languages Series, 2008), pp. 21-36 (p. 24).

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> *Ronsard: Le Roi, le Poète et les Hommes* (Geneva: Droz, 1979).

<sup>33</sup> Bisaha, p. 40.

<sup>34</sup> Heath, p. 30.



Christianity but it will also spread the customs and language of the French people, that is, specifically French cultural and political values. Parallel arguments were being made at the same times to justify empire building in the New World. What is different here, though, is the historical dimension: Charles will restore the former glories of ancient Greek culture – ‘Mere des Arts, des Philosophes mere’ – by freeing her from the ‘Barbare’ Ottoman sultan (II, p. 49). The formulaic praise of Greece recalls du Bellay’s encomium of France as ‘mère des arts, des armes et des lois’, an intertextual link which reinforces an idea of France as the heir of Greek culture.<sup>35</sup>

The notion of *translatio* from Greece to France forms a part of Ronsard’s interweaving of discourses of Europe, Christendom, the Ottoman Empire and French nationhood. This interweaving forms a coherent narrative about Europe and France’s place within it. In 1584 Ronsard published the ‘Discours ou dialogue entre les Muses deslogées, et Ronsard’ in which he dramatises an encounter between the poet and the muses who have been exiled from Greece by the Ottoman advance. They tell Ronsard that:

Nous eumes autrefois des habits precieux,  
 Mais le barbare Turc de tout victorieux,  
 Ayant vaincu l’Asie et l’Afrique, et de l’Europe  
 La meilleure partie, a chassé nostre trope  
 De la Grece natale, et fuyant ses prisons  
 Errons, comme tu vois, sans biens et sans maisons,  
 Où le pied nous conduit, pour voir si sans excuses  
 Les peuples et les Rois auront pitié des Muses. (II, p. 39)

An allegory for poetry, the muses can act as a symbol for ancient culture more widely. The supposed barbarity of the Turks means that civilisation can no longer flourish in its cradle, Greece. The shabbily dressed muses make their way away from the Ottomans towards France:

Nous avons ouy dire  
 Que le Prince qui tient maintenant vostre Empire,  
 Et qui d’un double sceptre honore sa grandeur,  
 Est dessus tous les Roys des lettres amateur,  
 Caresse les sçavans, et des livres fait conte,  
 Estimant l’ignorance estre une grande honte:  
 Dy luy de nostre part qu’il luy plaise changer  
 En mieux nostre fortune, et nous donne à loger. (II, pp. 40-1)

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<sup>35</sup> Joachim du Bellay, *Les Regrets*, ed. by S. de Sacy (Paris: Gallimard, 1967), p. 79.

Ronsard brings in a humanistic and literary dimension to the idea of Europe. The continent as he regards it is a cultural and historical entity, the geographical extension of a civilisation inherited from the classical world combined with, as the presence of the Ottomans reminds the reader, the Christian religion. A culture of ‘lettres’, ‘sçavans’ and ‘livres’ born in Greece has migrated westwards and northwards to France. Now, in Ronsard’s view, at the heart of Europe, the centre of the Renaissance of antiquity, France is to take up the mantle that was forged in Greece and was passed to Rome before moving in his day to France. Rather than a celebration of French culture as it is, the muses here represent a challenge to live up to the lofty ideal of the ancient world. As such, the poem may reflect the dissatisfaction of Ronsard in his old age or his relationship with Henri III to whom he was not as close as his predecessors. Cave sees the poem as representative of a crisis of confidence suffered by Ronsard towards the end of his career as he struggled to obtain patronage and worried that his inspiration was spent.<sup>36</sup> In spite of the poem’s pessimistic notes, though, it remains the case that France above all other powers is best placed to nurture Europe’s cultural inheritance.

The younger Ronsard was even more vigorous in his championing of the potential of France and her role in Europe. In *Le Troisième livre des Odes* (1555) he published a series of odes to three of the sons of Henri II in which he depicts a future universal monarchy, the whole world divided between the three eldest male children of the French king. ‘À Monsieur le Dauphin’ (‘Que pourroy-je, moy François’) imagines Europe united under one monarch, Henri II’s heir, François:

Tu penseras en ton cœur  
D’acquérir l’Europe encore,  
Et de te faire vainqueur  
Des Gades jusqu’au Bosphore. (I, p. 734)

The theme of translation of empires is a central motif. ‘Ainsi qu’à Rome Cesar’, under François ‘Paris [sa] grand’ ville’ will be the capital of a great empire (I, p. 735). In Ronsard’s thinking, culture and empire go hand in hand, both shifting westwards over time from the Greeks through the Romans to, eventually, the French.<sup>37</sup> Du Bellay also linked the two, writing that ‘Le tens viendra [...] que ce noble, et puissant Royaume obtiendra à son tour les resnes de la monarchie, et que nostre langue [...] s’elevera en

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<sup>36</sup> ‘Ronsard’s mythological universe’, in *Ronsard the Poet*, ed. by Terence Cave (London: Methuen, 1973), pp. 159-208 (pp. 198-9).

<sup>37</sup> The status of Charlemagne, the first Holy Roman Emperor, as King of the Franks provided legitimacy to the French monarch’s claim to leadership in Christendom/Europe. See Frances Yates, *Astraea: The Imperial Theme in the Sixteenth Century* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975), pp. 3-4.

telle hauteur, et grosseur, qu'elle se pourra egaler aux mesmes Grecz et Romains'.<sup>38</sup> Moreover, Ronsard is connecting the idea of the French monarchy with the theme of empire. To do so was not rare in the sixteenth century: the ideal of a world ruler who could ensure order was popular in an age of religious crisis and it became associated with increasing national patriotism.<sup>39</sup>

Ronsard returns to the theme of universal monarchy throughout his career; he continues to project the idea even when the country is falling apart through religious civil war. In a 1578 sonnet, for instance, 'Au Roy Henry III', he opens, 'L'Europe est trop petite, et l'Asie et l'Afrique, / Pour toy qui te verras de tout le monde Roy' (I, p. 469). And he continues to be concerned with the Ottoman advance, writing in the posthumous preface to the *Franciade* of '[le] Seigneur Turc occupant par armes la meilleure partie de l'Europe, [...] reduisant la Chrestienté, de si vaste & grande qu'elle estoit' (I, p. 734). In other words, Ronsard remains preoccupied with the issue of community outside the contemporary boundaries of France. His solution to the problem of the Ottomans is not a reassertion of Christendom. Rather, Ronsard seeks solace in a smaller imagined community, namely a utopian ideal of the French nation. Yet this community is one that should be bigger, that should be imperial as well as national, that should be mapped onto Europe and indeed the world.<sup>40</sup> Europe is granted a privileged position within this imagined universal monarchy. In his odes to the sons of Henri II, he explains that the eldest will rule Europe, the smallest continent, since it is the best:

Mais tu as Roy plus heureux  
 Choisi les terres fertiles,  
 Pleines d'hommes valeureux,  
 Pleines de ports et de villes. (I, p. 738)

Ronsard's praise of Europe here is akin to that offered in the cosmographies examined in the first two chapters of this thesis. Historically and ideologically, the idea of Europe is made in the image of its dominant power. Ronsard positions France as the political and cultural heir of antiquity, of Rome as the universal monarchy, and in doing so he transforms a limited, national model of community into a potentially limitless imperial model.

<sup>38</sup> *La Deffence, et illustration*, p. 82.

<sup>39</sup> Yates, pp. 13-28.

<sup>40</sup> In *De la République des Turcs* (1560), Guillaume Postel imagined a world in which Jews, Muslim and Christians would live in harmony under a French king: see Usher, p. 195. What for Postel is a project is more for Ronsard a theme in his work. Ronsard differs too in that in his vision of universal monarchy he imagines the eradication of cultural difference.

Ronsard's thought is not static, however. He continued to work on his poetry after publication and often republished his works with alterations. We will consider two variations which highlight the political and poetical uses of the word Europe in Ronsard's oeuvre. First, in the 'Discours à G. Des-Autels' published in 1560, Ronsard writes of 'le temps orageux qui par l'Europe court' (II, p. 1011). In 1562 this was changed to 'le temps orageux qui par la France court' (II, p. 1581). The edit marks a change in the angle of Ronsard's vision; he becomes less preoccupied with the religious conflicts of the continent and more concerned with the situation specifically in France. In the new version nationhood takes centre stage at the expense of thinking about the consequences of the Reformation for the meaning of Europe. As the Wars of Religion began, Ronsard chose to shift the emphasis of his poem and focalise attention on the crisis in France.

Second, when Ronsard's 'Bergerie' ('Les chesnes ombrageux, que sans art la Nature') appeared in 1565 it contained an allusion to struggles against Protestantism, referring to 'nos Princes seigneurs de diverses contrées [...] [qui] Ont effroyé les loups', the 'loups' representing Protestants (II, p. 144, 1346). In 1584 this was altered to strike a less combative tone: '[nos Princes] Ont défendu l'Europe' (II, p. 144), Ronsard now writes, opting for an image of rulers working together for common defence. There is ambiguity here – they may be defending their realms from heresy or they may be fending off the Ottomans – but the mood has unmistakably shifted and this has been achieved by the usage of the term Europe. It is a different concept of Europe from that which we have seen elsewhere in Ronsard's work. The imperial flavour is absent; the deictic centre of the remark has a plurality of monarchs, rather than one universal monarch. It is arguably less controversial than a reference to Christendom would be in this context. In changing the meaning of the line of poetry, the adoption of the word Europe indicates the flexibility, or malleability, of the term, its potential to be deployed – rhetorically and politically – in different contexts and for different purposes. Here it is used to highlight cooperation between different powers.

The main emphasis of this section has been the shifting and contingent nature of the ideas and emphases in Ronsard's poetry. In the 'Exhortation pour la paix' the Ottomans function as a warning to advocate peace between France and Spain. Elsewhere they are used by Ronsard as an opportunity to assert French pride, to imagine a successful French crusade against Constantinople. He pictures a Europe of peace and of a coalition against the Ottoman Empire, and he pictures a Europe under French rule.

In this way, the meanings of Europe in his poetry fluctuate. He uses Europe as a political idea and he uses Europe as a cultural idea, emphasising especially the continuation, or rebirth, of classical civilisation. Movement and the changing shape of Europe are the essential features. There is the movement of the Ottoman Turks and the fantasised movement of the French to Constantinople, as well as the cultural movement from Greece to France, and the different shapes of Europe they betoken, the push and pull between Christian Europe and the Muslim Ottoman Empire. The dynamic between expansion and reduction is at the heart of Ronsard's thinking about Europe. The dominant thread is, as Ménager stressed about the poet's political thought, the figure of the French king. Cave has suggested that Ronsard's praise of the monarchy is not simply flattery in the hope of financial gain but reflects a genuine desire for national greatness.<sup>41</sup> Whether as a political actor seeking peace with its neighbours or as a Christian imperial power seeking to dominate the whole world, the French nation is central to Ronsard's discourses of Europe, Christendom and the Ottoman Empire. The role of France in Europe is also a significant feature of the writings of François Savary de Brèves, to which we now turn.

### **François Savary de Brèves and the Franco-Ottoman alliance**

Ronsard's cultural take on the Turks ignores France's economic and political relations with the Ottoman Empire. While he fantasised of French military expansion eastwards to push back the Ottomans, French royal policy promoted economic expansion through trade with the Empire. François I had considered the Habsburg Charles V a greater threat to his ambitions. Following his rival's election as Holy Roman Emperor in 1519 François inaugurated diplomatic and trading relations with Charles's powerful enemy, the Ottoman sultan Suleiman.<sup>42</sup> His successors continued the policy of sending ambassadors to the Sublime Porte in Constantinople. Christine Isom-Verhaaren has situated the Franco-Ottoman alliance within the fluid and pragmatic world of sixteenth-century diplomacy; the French were not the only power to make diplomatic overtures to the Ottomans, and the alliance generated an array of opinions, positive and negative.<sup>43</sup> The Huguenot soldier François de La Noue, for example, condemned it in his 1587 *Discours politiques et militaires* as having 'contamin[é]' 'l'intégrité chrestienne'.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> 'Ronsard's mythological universe', p. 204.

<sup>42</sup> Rouillard, p. 106.

<sup>43</sup> Isom-Verhaaren, p. 2.

<sup>44</sup> François de La Noue, *Discours politiques et militaires*, ed. by F. E. Sutcliffe (Geneva: Droz, 1967), p. 430.

Others – such as Jean de Monluc, an ambassador to Venice – argued that the alliance was in the interests of Christendom.<sup>45</sup>

A renewal of the treaty was negotiated by François Savary de Brèves, ambassador to Constantinople from 1589-1605, and signed by Ahmed I in 1604.<sup>46</sup> These Capitulations increased France's commercial interests and afforded protection to pilgrims to the Holy Land and to churches in Ottoman lands, thereby pursuing more peaceful movement eastwards than Ronsard envisaged.<sup>47</sup> The forty-eight articles of the treaty were published in a bilingual French and Turkish edition in 1615.<sup>48</sup> De Brèves was later ambassador to the Holy See (1608-14), where alongside his diplomatic activities he pursued his scholarly interests, establishing an Arabic printing press, the *Typographia Savariana*, during his residence.<sup>49</sup> His *Discours abrégé des asseurez moyens d'aneantir & ruiner la Monarchie des Princes Ottomans* was likely written while he was in Rome.<sup>50</sup> He was nonetheless a supporter of Franco-Ottoman relations and early in the reign of Louis XIII he published his text alongside another treatise, the *Discours sur l'alliance qu'a le Roy avec le grand Seigneur, & de l'utilité qu'elle apporte à la Chrestienté*.<sup>51</sup> They were republished with an account of his voyage from Constantinople to France in 1628 as *Relation des voyages de Monsieur de Brèves*.

The only modern study of de Brèves is an unpublished doctoral thesis which is concerned solely with his time as ambassador in Constantinople.<sup>52</sup> His scholarly work has attracted some attention and he has recently been mentioned as a formative influence on the intellectual Nicolas-Claude Fabri de Peiresc and the orientalist scholar André du Ryer in book-length studies of the two figures.<sup>53</sup> What is lacking though, aside from a full study of his career, is an examination of the two political tracts published in his lifetime. This section will examine de Brèves's discourse of the

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<sup>45</sup> In a speech reported by his brother, Blaise de Monluc, *Commentaires, 1521-1576*, ed. by Paul Courteault (Paris: Gallimard, 1964), pp. 85-6.

<sup>46</sup> Rouillard, pp. 139-40.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 140.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 84.

<sup>49</sup> G. J. Toomer, *'Eastern Wisdom and Learning': The Study of Arabic in Seventeenth-Century England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 30.

<sup>50</sup> Rouillard, pp. 140-1.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 141.

<sup>52</sup> Isabelle Petitclerc, 'François Savary de Brèves, ambassadeur de Henri IV à Constantinople (1585-1605): Diplomatie française dans l'Empire ottoman et recherche orientaliste' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Université Paris IV, 1988).

<sup>53</sup> Gérard Duverdiér, 'Savary de Brèves et Ibrahim Mütefferika: Deux drogmans culturels à l'origine de l'imprimerie turque', *Bulletin du Bibliophile*, 3 (1987), 322-59; Peter N. Miller, *Peiresc's Mediterranean World* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015); Alastair Hamilton and Francis Richard, *André du Ryer and Oriental Studies in Seventeenth-Century France* (Oxford: The Arcadian Library, 2004).

division between east and west, assessing his usage of the terms Europe and ‘Chrestienté’ in his writings on the Ottoman Empire. I will argue that whilst de Brèves, keen to promote the circulation of goods and people, considers the boundaries between Europe/Christendom and the Ottoman Empire to be porous, he makes use of ideas of Europe/Christendom and the Ottoman Empire as antithetical and clashing cultures in order to argue his political points. On the whole, his work demonstrates the truth of Mansel’s judgement that ‘the demands of the balance of power were more important than the division between Christianity and Islam’.<sup>54</sup>

The titles of Savary de Brèves’s political tracts concerning the Ottoman Empire appear paradoxical in intent, with one recommending their downfall and the other championing the French alliance. Although it is tempting to suggest that they were written for different audiences at different times or that the author’s thinking evolved over time, de Brèves makes it clear that the two texts were intended to be understood together.<sup>55</sup> During his lifetime they were published in the same volume alongside a transcription of the 1604 treaty, and he states that the *Discours sur l’alliance* is a development of a theme introduced in the *Discours abrégé*, the might of the Ottoman Empire:

Après avoir fait voir par mon precedent discours quelle est la puissance et grandeur de la Monarchie des Princes Ottomans, j’ay creu estre à propos de faire cognoistre les raisons qui obligent le Roy d’entretenir l’amitié que les Roys ses predecesseurs ont contractee depuis cent ans en çà, avec les grands Seigneurs sans aucune interruption, et faire approuver la residence d’un Ambassadeur ordinaire à leur Porte, puis qu’il regarde le bien de son Estat, et cause une notable utilité à tous les Princes de la Chrestienté.<sup>56</sup>

De Brèves would have the reader study first the *Discours abrégé*, which outlines how a crusade could be successful in spite of the strength of the Ottomans, before turning to the *Discours sur l’alliance*, a text which justifies current French policy in light of the Ottoman threat, deploying the emotive language of Christendom to defend the

<sup>54</sup> ‘The French Renaissance in Search of the Ottoman Empire’, p. 106.

<sup>55</sup> That did not, however, prevent the texts from circulating independently. The *Discours abrégé*, for example, was published in a 1666 collection of texts about the Ottoman Empire, *Recueil historique contenant diverses pieces curieuses de ce temps*, ed. by Louis Dumay (Cologne: Christophre van Dyck, 1666).

<sup>56</sup> François Savary de Brèves, *Discours sur l’alliance qu’a le Roy avec le grand Seigneur, & de l’utilité qu’elle apporte à la Chrestienté* (Paris: [n.pub], [n.d]), p. 1. All editions of the text I have consulted paginate the two tracts separately. For all future references to both discourses I shall use the pagination to be found in *Relation des voyages de Monsieur de Brèves, tant en Grèce, Terre Sainte et Égypte, qu’aux royaumes de Tunis et Arger, ensemble un traicté fait l’an 1604 entre le Roy Henry le Grand, et l’Empereur des Turcs, et trois discours dudit sieur, le tout recueilly par le S.D.C.* (Paris: Nicolas Gasse, 1628). This volume can be found online and is thus the most accessible to the reader.

government's pragmatism. Accordingly, we shall examine first the *Discours abrégé des asseurez moyens d'aneantir & ruiner la Monarchie des Princes Ottomans*.

The *Discours abrégé* opens with the spectre of powerful Ottoman sultans ruling in Europe. 'Ils se sont rendus seigneurs souverains d'une partie de l'Europe, de l'Asie, et de tout plein de pays de l'Afrique,' de Brèves writes (p. 3). He warns that the Empire could spread further into the continent; the *Grand Seigneur* could easily 'ruiner le Royaume de Sicile', for example (p. 11). In fact, 'le repos de l'Europe' is only assured since the sultans 'ont négligé les moyens de mal-faire aux Princes de l'Europe' as they are occupied in fighting the Persians (p. 12). De Brèves's uses of the word Europe indicate that the Ottomans are considered to represent more of a political and territorial threat than a spiritual challenge. Indeed, he offers the readers a sympathetic portrayal of the potential invaders and notes that to conquered peoples 'on leur laisse la possession de leurs biens, et l'exercice de leur Religion' (p. 8). He does not even label the Ottomans 'barbares' in either the *Discours abrégé* or the *Discours sur l'alliance*.

Nevertheless, the *Discours abrégé* works on the assumption that the powers of Europe would want to destroy the Ottoman Empire which 'a ravallé la grandeur et la gloire de la Chrestienté' (p. 46). Christendom, for de Brèves, carries cultural and ideological signification, whereas Europe is more of a political term. Both words are emotive and have spatial meaning. Christendom appeals to sentiments of pride and group identity; Europe appeals to fears of a political enemy with expansionist aims. De Brèves is keen to stress the Empire's 'espouventable puissance, afin que ceux qui prendront la peine de lire [...] cognoissent le pouvoir qu'elle a de mal-faire à l'Europe [...] [et] qu'elle n'est pas aisée à battre, n'y à vaincre' (p. 14). That said, de Brèves does assure his readers that the Ottomans could be defeated by a naval attack 'si la puissance Chrestienne se vouloit unir' (p. 32). We will turn later to the question of how likely such a union would be.

Who does de Brèves include within the contentious label 'Chrestienne'? His plan for crusade involves both the Catholic and the Protestant powers of the continent. In outlining the forces that he recommends attack Constantinople, de Brèves includes the navies of Spain, France, Venice and the Pope, as well as those of Protestant England and the Dutch Provinces (pp. 34-5). The fact of the matter is that he considers the Ottoman Empire to be so powerful that it could not be defeated without such a huge force:



L'execution de ceste proposition, est une œuvre de Dieu; s'il n'y met sa puissante main, et n'inspire nos Princes tant de l'une que de l'autre creance, il est impossible que les hommes y trouvent un acheminement. D'autre part, il se faudroit despouiller de toute sorte de mesfiance, n'entrer point en dispute sur la difference des Religions, n'estre point sur la démarche de la precedence, les uns avec les autres, ains seulement penser à battre ce puissant enemy (p. 46).

De Brèves does not present a plan that is designed to unite warring Christendom as one. A union of Catholic and Protestant powers is not the desired end point but simply the means to achieve the goal of destroying the Ottoman Empire. In this way, de Brèves's view diverges from other thinkers on the matter: René de Lucinge's project involves suppressing Protestant groups before embarking on a crusade, whereas François de La Noue considers the attack on Constantinople to be part of a mission to reunify Christendom.<sup>57</sup> For de Brèves, confessional differences are not suppressed or dissolved; the adherents of the different Christian 'Religions' should suspend their disagreements in order to work together against the Ottomans. The monarchs involved belong to different faiths ('creance') but they are 'nos Princes', all of us having more in common with each other, so de Brèves thinks, than with the Ottomans. The 'nos' here governs a diverse Christendom. Indeed, an acceptance of diversity is crucial to de Brèves's plan; he believes that Orthodox Christians will join the Latin Christians in fighting the Turks: 'Chrestiens subjects du Grand Seigneur [...] se revolteroient à la faveur de nostre armée' (p. 36); 'bien qu'ils [les Grecs] n'ayment pas nostre creance [...] infailliblement ils se revolteroient et prendroient les armes contre luy [le Turc] (pp. 37-8); 'Toute l'Asie est habitée des Chrestiens Grecs et Armeniens' (p.45).<sup>58</sup> The Orthodox Church can be hostile to 'nostre creance' and at the same time part of a universal and varied Christianity which is distinct from Latin Christendom and distinct from Rome.

The central argument of the *Discours abrégé* is that a union of Christians could bring about the end of the Ottoman Empire, not necessarily that they should unify. De Brèves's assertion is situated in a line of thinking which regarded the fall of the Ottomans as inevitable. Such is the theme of Lucinge's *De la naissance, durée et chute des estats*. And Loys Le Roy sees their fate as no different from that of all other empires.<sup>59</sup> The close of the *Discours*, however, undermines the possibility of a Christian union:

Je n'ay point voulu, en ce discours, parler des moyens qu'il faudroit tenir pour unir toutes ces puissances, je laisseray cela au jugement de ceux qui ont cognoissance de la sorte qu'il s'y

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<sup>57</sup> Heath, pp. 66-7.

<sup>58</sup> The idea of Christians in the Ottoman Empire as a potential fifth column was a commonplace of Renaissance crusade writing. See Heath, pp. 63-4.

<sup>59</sup> *De la vicissitude ou varieté des choses en l'univers* (Paris: Pierre l'Huilier, 1575), fols 92<sup>v</sup> – 96<sup>v</sup>.

faudroit conduire, que moy, qui serviray tousjours en une occasion semblable, de soldat, de guide, et d'interprete, ayant appris, durant le long sejour que j'ay faict parmy eux, leur langue, et les chemins de leur pays. (p. 47)

It is with this sort of Gallic shrug that de Brèves brings his tract concerning the ruination of the Ottoman Empire to an end. The emphasis is on the plurality – ‘ces puissances’ – and the likely irreconcilability of Europe/Christendom. The *Discours abrégé des asseurez moyens d'aneantir & ruiner la Monarchie des Princes Ottoman*, contrary to what its title might suggest, is not a rallying cry to crusade.

De Brèves's defence of French diplomatic relations with the Ottomans, the *Discours sur l'alliance qu'a le Roy avec le grand Seigneur, & de l'utilité qu'elle apporte à la Chrestienté*, is a much shorter work, which appeals to the emotional pull of Christendom to argue in favour of the Franco-Ottoman alliance. As we saw above, the opening paragraph insists on the alliance's ‘utilité à tous les Princes de la Chrestienté’ (p. 3). De Brèves downplays French political concerns, insisting that ‘[nos Roys] ne conservent pas ceste amitié, pour leur interest particulier, ny celuy de leurs sujets, mais encore pour le bien universel de la Chrestienté’ (p. 5). The rhetorical exaggeration of ‘universel’ is intended to strengthen his case. He opts for a superlative again – ‘toute’ – when suggesting the commercial gains of the pact are not reserved for France alone: ‘les marchands François, et ceux qui veulent arborer nostre estendart, en charge leurs vaisseaux, et les distribuent ainsi par toute l'Europe’ (p. 5). The words ‘Chrestienté’ and Europe are used here as synonyms, both articulating a broad collectivity. De Brèves follows the trend for recognising the Ottoman Empire as a political unit, rather than a religious foe, and therefore the sultan as someone with whom they could do business.<sup>60</sup> Religious rhetoric does not disappear, though, since it fulfils an important role in justifying political action.

Thus, de Brèves highlights the practical benefits to all Christians of the Franco-Ottoman alliance. The 1604 Capitulations allow ‘les pelerins de toutes nations’ to visit ‘les saints lieux, avec toute seureté’ (p. 9). Another result is the permission for six or seven monasteries to operate in Constantinople so that ‘Dieu y est servi avec le mesme culte et presque pareille liberté, que l'on peut faire au milieu de la France’ (p. 6). He includes the text of three letters sent to him by pope Clement VIII, deferring to the spiritual leader of Christendom – Roman Catholic Christendom at least – to support his argument that the alliance is beneficial for the Christian world (pp. 11-15). In presenting

<sup>60</sup> Heath, p. 21. De Brèves's two tracts testify to the coexistence of the two views of the Ottomans; they could be seen as both a political unit and a religious foe.

the case for the advantages of the Franco-Ottoman treaty, de Brèves relies on the emotive language of Christianity. The Capitulations, he tells us, afford protections to Christians, which is important because ‘tout l’Estat du Turc est remply de Chrestiens’ (p. 6). It is a state of affairs in which he rejoices: ‘Quel contentement de voir au milieu de l’Estat des infidelles, florir le nom Chrestien?’ (p. 8).

What we see in de Brèves’s treatise, then, is a preoccupation with fluidity and movement, and cooperation with the Ottoman Empire. His *Discours sur l’alliance* is a homage to the circulation of people and goods. As noted in the previous paragraph, ‘pelerins’ can travel easily back and forth. And the treaty makes it possible for ‘toutes sortes de nations Chrestiennes, de trafiquer chez eux’ (p. 5). Cultural transfers and exchanges break down grand narratives of opposition and hostility. To de Brèves, the Ottoman Empire is separated from Christendom not by hostile, insurmountable, fixed frontiers but by malleable contact zones. From the viewpoint of someone who travels between cultures, the world looks mixed, not divided into binaries. Difference, as de Brèves construes it, is fundamentally a matter of religion. Boundaries are less about geography than they are a state of mind; they can bleed into one another as Christian travellers and communities move. The fixed geographical idea of Europe runs counter to de Brèves’s fluid understanding of culture and community.

As the plural ‘nations Chrestiennes’ makes clear, the Christendom conceived in the *Discours sur l’alliance* is, like in the *Discours abrégé*, a diverse unit. Transfers of people and goods between the west and the Ottoman Empire do not erase the fragmentation of Christianity: ‘la conservation du nom Chrestien, et de la Religion Catholique, Apostolique et Romaine, dans leur pays, sera jugée tres-importante’ (p. 5). Whilst de Brèves appeals to an expansive Christendom, the concerns of the counter-Reformation Catholic Church are of particular importance in his thinking. As with the *Discours abrégé*, the *Discours sur l’alliance* is also not interested in promoting a reunified Christian community which overcomes confessional difference. Christendom is a useful notion for de Brèves, serving as it does as the emotional and rhetorical packaging of a diplomatic initiative in the interests of France and, by extension, the state religion, Roman Catholic Christianity. He is comfortable in conceiving of allegiance and belonging in onion-like layers, with Christianity an outer layer around Catholicism.

Frenchness is at the core for the ambassador to the Sublime Porte. French political interests are present in the *Discours sur l'alliance*, even though de Brèves plays down their significance in favour of a rhetorical appeal to Christendom. He acknowledges that the initial impetus behind François I's overtures to Suleiman was a national matter: '[le Roy] injustement pressé par les entreprises sur ceste Monarchie, de Charles quint, du Roy d'Angleterre, et de la plus-part des Princes de la Chrestienté' (pp. 3-4). 'Chrestienté', then, is turned in on itself, riven not only by religious disputes but also by competing political units. France is unsurprisingly cast in the role of victim, threatened by coreligionists for political and economic gain, not for ideological or cultural reasons. Thus, de Brèves presents the Franco-Ottoman alliance as the necessary defence of a Christian power which benevolently secures rights and privileges for the whole of Christendom, including those rival powers.

Such benevolence is conditional, though. De Brèves would not be averse to an Ottoman military attack in Europe if it were in the interests of France and at the expense of a rival:

la mesme consideration qui fait naistre ceste amitié, peut convier sa Majesté, de la conserver et d'en faire estat: dautant qu'elle n'est pas assurée d'estre tousjours en bonne intelligence avec ses voisins, et pourroit arriver par succession de temps, que les Princes de l'Empire, jaloux de sa grandeur, voudroient troubler son repos. Ce qu'avenant, il seroit fort aisé de destourner leur armes, par l'entremise du Turc, lequel en mettant une puissante armée sur pied, et envoyant du costé de Hongrie, pourroit traverser leurs desseins, et les obliger à retourner chez eux, pour défendre leur pays, et empescher la ruine dont telle puissance les menasseroit. (p. 9)

The Ottoman Empire is regarded as less of a threat than their rivals in Europe because it is further away. The Holy Roman Empire, acting as a buffer for France, shapes a distinctively French perception of international relations. Such views undoubtedly influence de Brèves's conception of the boundaries of community as flexible. For the safety of France, he would not be opposed to the Ottomans advancing further into the continent. La Noue, for example, takes the opposite view, decrying that 'du costé de la mer nous avons ces barbares pres de nos portes, et du costé de la terre, nous les avons dedans nos portes' (p. 439). With his possessive adjectives, La Noue articulates a much wider imagined community, 'la Chrestienté', shaped by opposition to the 'barbares' Turks. De Brèves, as mentioned above, does not use the descriptor 'barbare'. La Noue presents the Ottomans similarly to Ronsard: they are invasive, reducing Christendom, and therefore need to be expelled. For La Noue the Ottoman Empire is close at hand; for de Brèves it is distant. Whereas La Noue wants to unify fragmented Christendom, de

Brèves in the *Discours abrégé* does not think a successful crusade would restore Christian unity:

Il seroit aussi necessaire, si ce dessein estoit agréé desdits Princes, qui en faciliteroient la conqueste, par l'effort de leurs armes; qu'il se fist un project du partage, afin que (Dieu permettant la victoire) l'on évitast les débats qui pourroient, pour ce regard, arriver entre eux. (p. 47)

The plan which de Brèves outlines is therefore not one that dissolves differences. Rather, the warring parties remain discrete and will expect material spoils from the defeat of the ideological enemy. Whilst to be successful the attack must be a collective endeavour, the good of the collective is important insofar as it advances the interests of the individual political units.

It seems that de Brèves considers the Ottoman alliance to be more advantageous to France than a general assault on Constantinople. Neither Heath nor Petitclerc mention the *Discours sur l'alliance* in their considerations of the *Discours abrégé*, yet the views expressed in the former must influence our reading of the latter. The arrangement of the two tracts is significant. It was de Brèves's intention, as we saw above, that the *Discours abrégé* is read first. In this light, the attack on the Ottoman Empire seems an unlikely dream, its illusionary quality enhanced by the pragmatic and realistic *Discours sur l'alliance*. Read separately, the *Discours abrégé* may seem an earnest project. Read after the *Discours sur l'alliance* it may signal a beacon of hope for the future. By positioning the *Discours abrégé* first, de Brèves makes the plan an unrealistic fantasy. Ostensibly paradoxical, the two texts represent the two poles of foreign policy between which the monarchy vacillated throughout the seventeenth century: a national struggle against the other dynastic states of Europe, and an appeal to overcome quarrels and unite against the Turk.<sup>61</sup> Petitclerc wrote of 'la ambigüité de la nature de l'Ambassade d'Orient', since the ambassador is officially responsible for propagating French interests but must also be able to support a Christian anti-Ottoman coalition.<sup>62</sup> De Brèves's treatises make public this dual aspect. We can, however, speculate that the personal sentiments of this fluent Turkish speaker – who spent over twenty years with the Ottoman court and established an Arabic printing press in Rome and then France – are likely to have been rather positive towards the Ottomans, or at the very least less hostile towards them than of other powers in Europe.

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<sup>61</sup> Petitclerc, p. 259. As mentioned above, in spite of noting the shifting and flexible nature of French foreign policy, Petitclerc does not write about the *Discours sur l'alliance*.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., p. 260.

Indeed, when in 1624 he wrote to the French king Louis XIII, he included an updated version of the *Discours sur l'alliance* which emphasises above all the threat of the king of Spain who seeks to 'parvenir a la Monarchie Chrestienne'.<sup>63</sup> He includes a *Discours tres important des affaires de la Mer et des moyens que Dieu a donnez a vostre Majesté pour empescher les desseins qu'a le Roy Catholique de se rendre absolu Seigneur de toute l'Europe comme il fera s'il n'y est remedié* (fol. 25<sup>r</sup>) in which he argues that the strength of the French military is 'le seul obstacle qu'il [le Roy d'Espagne] a pour devenir absolu Seigneur de toute l'Europe' (fol. 26<sup>v</sup>). We saw in the last chapter that d'Aubigné wanted Henri IV to 'parvenir a la Monarchie Chrestienne'. Here de Brèves, who certainly does not want that for Spain, argues against unity, presenting Spain as a greater threat to Europe than the Ottoman Empire. He appeals to the rhetoric of both Europe and Christianity in his critique of Spanish hegemony, yet the object of his concern is really neither Europe nor Christendom but France.

In this section we have seen what might be termed the paradox of Europe. There was not one European idea of the Turk; rather there were, as de Brèves's two texts illustrate, different conceptions of the Ottoman Empire's relationship with Europe and with France. These competing stories – one of warfare, one of cooperation – should be mutually exclusive but they are not. The simultaneous existence of these two narratives complicates the notion of an idea of Europe, or a European identity, shaped by opposition to the Ottomans. Running alongside, and against, the currents of ideological hostility, which are to be found in Ronsard's work, were the realities of geopolitics. For de Brèves, who as an ambassador had to be attuned to the shifting aims of French foreign policy, the boundaries between Europe/Christendom were much more fluid than accounts of the development of the idea of Europe have tended to argue. His vision of community was one of movement of people, goods, and ideas across boundaries unfixed and permeable. Nevertheless, alongside this line of thinking he uses in his writings an idea of Europe, and an idea of Christendom, as the antithesis of the Ottoman Empire. *Uses* is the operative word in the previous sentence, since in the *Discours abrégé des asseurez moyens d'aneantir & ruiner la Monarchie des Princes Ottomans* and the *Discours sur l'alliance qu'a le Roy avec le grand Seigneur, & de l'utilité qu'elle apporte à la Chrestienté* such a fixed political and cultural idea of Europe is used to support de Brèves's arguments.

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<sup>63</sup> Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France (BnF), MS fonds français 18075, fol. 2<sup>r</sup>.

### De Brèves in Rome: Diplomatic correspondence

The issues raised in de Brèves's two treatises concerning the Ottoman Empire – Christendom, national interest, the threat posed by European powers – are found also in the diplomatic correspondence produced during his time as ambassador in Rome. In his instructions to de Brèves, dated May 1608, the French king Henri IV does not use the word Europe. He refers instead to the 'Princes et Potantats de la Chrestienté'.<sup>64</sup> He advises his ambassador to use the language of Christendom, instructing him to send the pope (Paul V) his wishes for a pontificate that would be prosperous for 'la Republique Chrestienne' (fol. 4); to impress upon the pope his duty to care for peace in 'toute la Republique Chrestienne ja par trop affligée et descordante en soy' (fol. 32); to speak of all the good the Franco-Ottoman alliance has done for 'Chrestiens' should the pope discuss his desire for crusade (fol. 44); and to extol peace between France and Spain for 'le bien universel de la Chrestienté' (fol. 39).

Accordingly, de Brèves's letters to the king are peppered with this sort of vocabulary. He describes certain initiatives as 'utile à la Republique Chrestienne' (fol. 68) or designed for 'le bien de la Chrestienté' (fol. 69). He refers to rulers as 'les Princes Chrestiens' (fol. 154) and their countries as 'les puissances de la Monarchie Chrestienne' (fol. 132). He uses Christendom as a spatial term, writing of 'toutes les despesches qui sont escrites en France, en Espagne et autres lieux de la Chrestienté', for example (fol. 231). The word Europe is largely absent, restricted to collocations with a spatial signification: 'du costé de l'Asie, voire mesme de l'Europe' (fol. 253). The point to be taken from this is that the vocabulary referring to ideas of Europe and Christendom is context dependent. At the Vatican it is of course appropriate to refer to Christendom. This is what de Brèves does. And in reporting of his activities and discussions at the Holy See he retains the language he has to adopt on a day-to-day basis.

De Brèves's reports on his audiences with the pope demonstrate Paul V's use of the terminology of Christendom to mark the boundaries of community. Paul often uses the word 'Chrestienté' as part of a commonplace formula, such as with his praise of Henri IV: '[nous] ne croyons pas que la Chrestienté puisse recevoir plus de bien et de soulagement d'autres Princes que de sa Majesté' (fol. 56). The word is invoked also when he speaks of attacking the Ottoman Empire: it is his 'but de voir la Chrestienté en

<sup>64</sup> Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France (BnF), MS fonds cinq cents de Colbert 351, fol. 22.

repos et union pour puis apres faire quelque grand dessein contre les ennemis de l'Eglise de Dieu' (fol. 116); he wants 'les puissances des deux plus grands Princes de la Chrestienté unies pour s'opposer aux ennemis de la Religion Chrestienne' (fol. 320). For the pope, Christendom is the antithesis of the Ottoman Empire. Unlike Europe, it is an emotive and rhetorical term. He uses such language to define community, to include and exclude. The Ottomans are outside the boundaries of Christendom and as such ought to be destroyed. These boundaries though do not have a clear geographical basis and do not correspond to Europe since there are heretics within. In speaking of the religious tensions in Germany that will later lead to the Thirty Years' War (1618-48), the pope prays for the 'conservation de la Religion Chrestienne dans les pays d'Alemagne' (fol. 112), by which he means Roman Catholicism, not what he dismisses with the commonplace term 'la Religion Pretendue Reformée' (fol. 112). 'Chrestienne' here does not articulate a wide Christendom but a smaller, exclusionary belief community.

De Brèves himself uses Christendom for political and rhetorical purposes. He tells his king that he said to the pope:

Je ne trouve pas Tres Sainct Pere que les Espagnols qui portent le nom de Catholiques ayent moins de volonté de mal faire, et troubler le repos de la France et du reste de la Chrestienté que les heretiques. Combien de fois sous pretexte de Religion ont ils trompé vostre Saincteté et ses Predecesseurs. (fols 226-7)

As part of a strategy of attempting to gain favour at the papal court de Brèves lambasts the Spanish. It is not just their actions he criticises but also their recourse to religion as a justification. He objects to the politics of language as practised by the Spanish, while at the same time using language politically himself. His words are carefully chosen to be persuasive. He includes the commonplace idea of 'le repos de la Chrestienté', relying on its rhetorical and emotional force to condemn the Spanish for upsetting the theoretical unity of Christendom as much as, if not more than, confessional division does. In the development of the ideas of Europe and Christendom, political fragmentation is just as significant as religious fragmentation. But here at the Vatican where political and religious divisions are both on the agenda – contrary to the *Discours abrégé* in which de Brèves could write of 'le repos de l'Europe' – only the word 'Chrestienté' will do.

Read together, de Brèves's private diplomatic correspondence and his public political tracts demonstrate the flexibility of the functions of the words Europe and 'Chrestienté'. Whereas in the *Discours abrégé* and the *Discours sur l'alliance de*



Brèves used the two words with a similar frequency, ‘Chrestienté’ is found much more regularly in his diplomatic letters than the term Europe is. The two were potentially synonymous, as we have seen, since both could express spatial, cultural or political meanings when an author so desired. Equally, the two were distinguishable. As de Brèves and other figures examined in the thesis have indicated, the words Europe and Christendom could carry different weight in different contexts, and writers with a case to make were open to exploiting these nuances. To Ronsard, Europe is preferable to ‘Chrestienté’ in metrical poetry. It also allows him to elaborate a notion which draws on the term’s classical associations as well as those of religion. De Brèves offers a different perspective; he did not face the constraints of poetic metre. To him, both were regarded as applicable and rhetorically stirring in polemical tracts on the political subject of relations with the Ottoman Empire. However, his diplomatic correspondence reveals that within a religio-political discursive framework the word Europe was a much more neutral word, lacking the emotional charge of ‘Chrestienté’.

### Conclusions

The words Europe and Christendom as they are used in the works of Ronsard and de Brèves are involved in representations of the movement of community and culture. Neither writer portrays the relationship of Europe/Christendom with the Ottoman Empire in a static manner; both depict a push-pull dynamic. De Brèves in the *Discours abrégé* offers a project for expanding Christendom, for pushing the Turks back. In the *Discours sur l’alliance* he demonstrates that Christendom is already expanding: it is pursuing economic expansion through trade. Ronsard describes the ‘barbare’ Ottoman culture moving westwards and in response dreams of expanding Christendom through military force. The new Christendom Ronsard envisages, though, is specifically French. He appeals in his poetry to a French Christian empire expanding to the east. His poetic dreams are largely a means of glorifying France but they also convey the cultural and political ideals that Christianity and the French monarchy represent. Contemporary to Ronsard, other thinkers were also dreaming of an imperial France, and not only at the expense of the Ottoman Empire.

In *Les Trois Mondes* of 1582 the Protestant Lancelot Voisin de la Popelinière advocated French exploration and settlement in the *Terre Australe*, the third world of the title, south of the New World of the Americas.<sup>65</sup> For la Popelinière, a *France*

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<sup>65</sup> *Le Huguenot et le sauvage*, pp. 451-5.

*Australe* offered a potential solution to religious division at home as well as an opportunity to expand the imagined community of France. In the text *la Popelinière*, who like Ronsard desires a French empire, connects the theme of empire with an idea of Europe. He has this to say of Europe:

Laquelle outre les royaumes de Suede, Norvege, Finland, Finmark, Lapie, Serfinie, Corelie, Biartmie, Botnie, Novogarde & autres peu connus & plus prochains des heureux hyperborées soubz le pol Arctique, vers le Nort l'empire des Allemans, avec les royaumes de Moscovie, Pologne, Danemark, Holande, isles d'Angleterre, Escosse, & Yrlande: les Gaules où est la France à l'Ocean, l'Espagne & l'Italie au Midy: puis la Grece & les pays qu'arrose le Danube au Levant. Et bien qu'autrefois de loy payenne & idolatrique, comme presque tout le monde, est depuis la venue du Messias neantmoins faite chrestienne. Presque toute anciennement soubz l'empire romain: mais au declin de ses bonnes mœurs, desmembrée par l'impourveue descente des Septentrionaulx, ne s'est veuë moins tourmentée par diversité d'estats, ennemys le plus souvent les uns des autres (qui tous ont acreu leur petitesse de la grandeur d'une si fameuse monarchie) que par la survenue des nouveaux estrangers enjambans sur eux, par l'occasion de leurs partialitez plus que par les autres moyens suffisans à leur ruine: les Turcs mesmement & Sarrazins.<sup>66</sup>

Long after the empire's fall, the *imperium romanum* remained a powerful notion in the western imagination, representing a transnational geographical area and a cultural unity.<sup>67</sup> *La Popelinière* here associates the Roman Empire with Europe, eliding reference to the real territorial extent of the empire over three continents but not including large parts of central and northern Europe. He implies that Europe's present borders match those of the *imperium romanum*, casually qualified only by the adverb 'presque'. The violent metaphor of dismemberment that he uses to characterise the breakup of the Empire posits diversity as a source of torment for the continent and empire as a source of good, of 'bonnes mœurs' – the opposite of barbarity and savagery. Moreover, aside from geography and the legacy of Rome, *la Popelinière* flags Christianity as a defining feature of Europe. And he alludes to the external threat posed by the Ottoman Empire. These are all ideas that we have seen Ronsard link together to form a nexus of meaning around the word Europe.

Where *la Popelinière* champions a French empire, other writers offer much more bleak meditations on the responses of communities to the threat of reduction. Jean de Léry is not concerned with the threat of the Ottoman Empire but with the pressure of reduction from within, from a model of community that is shrinking. The previous chapter examined his response to the breakup of Christianity. For Léry, no grand narrative can articulate his experience as a Calvinist in exile. He does not use the idea of

<sup>66</sup> *Les Trois Mondes*, p. 150.

<sup>67</sup> Pagden, *Lords of all the World*, pp. 11-14.

the Turk to promote Christian unity as both Ronsard and de Brèves do. Yet as lonely as his authorial voice can often feel to the reader of the *Journal d'un voyage*, Léry's pessimism does not collapse into solipsism. However, his attempts to define a collective identity do encounter problems. First, Léry feels that the Calvinists are not as united as they should be. Of the warm and close relationships shared by the Protestants in *France antarctique* he writes, 'demeurames nous tousjours en telle union et concorde, que je desirois que tous ceux qui font aujourd'huy profession de la Religion reformée marchassent de tel pied que nous faisons lors' (p. 195). A happy memory is blighted by the present situation. Those who went to Brazil – the 'nous' in this quotation – represent a model community which is no longer to be found in the world around Léry. Second, as we saw in the previous chapter of this thesis, Léry defines himself as 'François' but like so many others has been forced out of the country of his birth. He is unable to answer the question of what it means to be French when France is riven by civil war. Thus, there is a fundamental ambivalence to Léry's conception of community and collective identity.

It is the Reformation and the religious conflicts that follow which complicated the idea of Europe in relation to the Ottoman Empire. The fall of the Byzantine Empire was a potential boon to the fortunes of the notion of Christendom. As Frederick Quinn writes: 'The ancient rivalry of Latin and Greek Christendom, Rome versus Constantinople, was now overlaid with an even sharper Christian-Muslim divide, but one with less clear geographical boundaries.'<sup>68</sup> The removal of the political buffer zone between east and west brought an end to an empire which held an ambivalent and ambiguous position in relation to the concept of Christendom: were Greek Christians members of the community or was membership restricted to Latin Christianity? The Ottoman advance offered a clearer binary cultural divide and represented a threatening alterity against which Christian Europe could unite. Yet it was not long before confessional divides ruptured the potential integrity of Christendom.

Of course, though, as we have seen, the term 'Chrestienté' continued to be used. François de Pavie describes Constantinople as the 'siege où maintenant les Empereurs Ottomans, à la honte des Chrestiens, font leur principale demeure' (p. 176), and he bemoans the fall of Rhodes in 1522: 'combien fut grande la perte d'une telle place à la Chrestienté' (p. 162). In many ways, the Ottoman threat strengthened the semantic

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<sup>68</sup> *The Sum of All Heresies: The Image of Islam in Western Thought* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 35.

association of Europe and ‘Chrestienté’ since the Turks represented both a territorial and a cultural danger. Thus, where Pavie used the word ‘Chrestienté’, others opted for the term Europe when writing about the Ottoman advance. François de Belleforest, for instance, lamented that Greece ‘a este une des principales, et plus insignes regions de l’Europe, et laquelle à present est, et vit souz la tyrannie du Turc’ (III, pp. 1-2).

This chapter has considered the complex intellectual understanding of the Ottoman Empire in relation to Europe during the Renaissance period. It is not simply the case that Europe was considered to be the antithesis of the Islamic empire to the east, although that idea certainly did circulate and was used by Savary de Brèves as a political tool. On the other hand, de Brèves argued for the movement of people and goods between the Christian and Muslim worlds, for cross-cultural interaction rather than ideological hostility, for porous and shifting boundaries; his advocacy of relations with the Ottoman Empire represents, as Miller has put it, ‘the coming predominance of commerce, rather than military conflict, as the main form of the interaction between West and East’.<sup>69</sup> When he was writing, though, there were multiple Europes: an economic conception of Europe which clashed with an ideological conception of Europe, the former privileging trade and cooperation over hostility; a cultural conception of Europe as Christian and superior to the non-Christian world beyond; and a political conception of Europe that could regard the Ottoman Empire as friend or foe depending on the present, transient political objectives.

Europe, then, was a multiple and fragmented story with paradoxical ideas in play at the same time. The threat of the Ottoman Empire shaped thinking about Europe, but so too did the opportunities of the Ottoman Empire in terms of commercial exchange. And thinking about the Turks in relation to Europe/Christendom was tied in to thinking about other issues of community definition. For instance, the propaganda of the period often regarded infidels and heretics as one and the same, linking in this way the threat of religious enemies on the outside and the threat of heretics within.<sup>70</sup> Both Ronsard and de Brèves focus on smaller imagined communities, championing the French nation rather than a grand narrative of Christendom. Even de Brèves’s crusade text, the *Discours abrégé*, places national interest first, unlike La Noue’s whose writing promotes crusade in the name of ‘Chrestienté’ as a response to the twin threats of internal self-destruction and external domination. The challenge of the Ottoman

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<sup>69</sup> Peiresc’s *Mediterranean World*, p. 39.

<sup>70</sup> Heath, p. 14.

advance into Europe was thus met with a variety of responses, in some instances strengthening concepts of Europe and Christendom, and in others strengthening the idea of France, redrawing connections so that the Turks were friend and the Spanish foe. The shape of Europe in the face of an expanding Ottoman Empire does at times look reduced, but it can also look fragmented as nations become increasingly emphasised. It can also look expansionary as people and goods move eastwards from Europe into the Ottoman Empire.

## CHAPTER FIVE

**Expanding Europe? The New World in Montaigne's *Essais* and Thevet's *Les Singularitez de la France antarctique***

The extent of the intellectual impact upon Europe of the 'discovery' of the Americas has been subject to considerable scholarly debate.<sup>1</sup> J. H. Elliott's *The Old World and the New, 1492-1650*, published in 1970, opened up the subject with its assertion of an 'uncertain impact' and a long, slow process of overturning projected images of the New World and assimilating American reality into European consciousness.<sup>2</sup> Following in this vein, Anthony Pagden and Anthony Grafton, for example, have emphasised the reliance on traditional knowledge in the understanding of new information arising from the voyages of discovery.<sup>3</sup> Other scholars, on the other hand, consider the encounter to have been more shocking and transformative. Stephen Greenblatt, for instance, has written of the 'cracking apart of contextual understanding in an elusive and ambiguous experience of wonder'.<sup>4</sup> In considering the New World's influence on the Old, Michael Ryan has focussed on a theme central to this thesis: words. He proposed an exploration of 'the ways in which Europeans assimilated exotic peoples into their own universe of discourse,' asking, 'How were these new worlds incorporated into a European lexicon that made them intelligible?'<sup>5</sup>

What role did the word Europe play in that 'universe of discourse'? The terms Europe and European(s) are often found in accounts, such as Ryan's, of how awareness of the New World affected the mental habits of the Old. But were those words central to early modern experiences of America? Was Europe an important word which was used to conceptualise and assimilate the New World? Was it what Raymond Williams would call a keyword, a term actively involved in shaping the social and historical processes that the discovery engendered? It is the aim of this chapter to address the conception of Europe as it was related to the discourses of expansion that developed in the context of

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<sup>1</sup> As an example see the collection of essays which emerged from an international conference in 1991, *America in European Consciousness, 1493-1750*, ed. by Karen Ordahl Kupperman (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995).

<sup>2</sup> *The Old World and the New: 1492-1650* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), especially pp. 1-53.

<sup>3</sup> Anthony Pagden, *The Fall of Natural Man: The American Indian and the Origins of Comparative Ethnology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p. 141; Anthony Grafton with April Shelford and Nancy Siraisi, *New Worlds, Ancient Texts: The Power of Tradition and the Shock of Discovery* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992), pp. 54-8.

<sup>4</sup> *Marvelous Possessions*, p. 19.

<sup>5</sup> 'Assimilating New Worlds in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 23 (1981), 519-38 (p. 521).

the encounter with new lands. It begins with a consideration of the word Europe and the lexis with which it is connected – *sauvage, barbare, cruel* and so on – in André Thevet’s *Les Singularitez de la France antarctique*, before moving on to an analysis of Montaigne’s engagement with the same vocabulary and ideas in ‘Des cannibales’ and ‘Des coches’. We encountered both of these figures in Chapter Two where we found that the uses of Europe differed in their respective works. Their writings that are examined in this chapter also make different use of the term Europe.

I argue that in ‘Des cannibales’ and ‘Des coches’ Montaigne, who had read Thevet’s text, offers a productive response to the idea of Europe generated by discourses of expansion and conquest of the New World, of which *Les Singularitez* is broadly representative. Taken together, the two works dramatise an instance of semantic conflict and negotiation of meaning. Thevet uses the word Europe to formulate what Pagden has called an ‘ideology of empire’.<sup>6</sup> He understands the expansion of Europe into the New World as justifiable and commendable, an analysis which serves to promote further conquest.<sup>7</sup> Montaigne enacts a different interpretation of the world, and of Europe in particular, by unsettling the meanings of the vocabulary that generate Thevet’s ideas of empire. Central to Montaigne’s reshaping of words is what André Tournon has characterised as ‘une philosophie de l’incertitude’, whereby definitive conclusions are resisted, and the reader is encouraged towards scepticism and inquiry.<sup>8</sup> With their considerations of the New World, Montaigne’s American essays are geared towards inspiring critical readings of contemporary geographical writings such as Thevet’s and of the lexicon that underpins their ideological perspectives.

### **Europe as an ideology of empire**

André Thevet was a member of Admiral Nicolas de Villegaignon’s expedition to South America which led to the foundation of the colony of *France antarctique* in present-day Rio de Janeiro. They set out from Le Havre in July and landed 15 November 1555. Thevet was there for only ten weeks before illness forced him to set out for France 31 January 1556. His notes, embellished by Mathurin Héret, a doctor and a Hellenist, were published in 1557.<sup>9</sup> *Les Singularitez de la France antarctique* has been called a ‘récit en

<sup>6</sup> In *Lords of all the World: Ideologies of Empire in Spain, Britain and France c.1500-c.1800*.

<sup>7</sup> Frank Lestringant, ‘Le Récit de voyage et la question des genres’, p. 98.

<sup>8</sup> *La Glose et l’essai* (Paris: Champion, 2000), p. 244.

<sup>9</sup> For an account of Thevet’s voyage and return to France, see Frank Lestringant, *André Thevet: Cosmographe des derniers Valois* (Geneva: Droz, 1991), pp. 89-104. For more on Héret’s role in the publication of *Les Singularitez* see Lestringant, *André Thevet: Cosmographe*, pp. 100-4.

archipel'.<sup>10</sup> It narrates little of the actual voyage and focusses instead on describing selected aspects of the flora, fauna and peoples of Africa and the Americas. The text is often judged in terms of its veracity. Jean de Léry famously labelled Thevet a liar,<sup>11</sup> and it is certainly true that he strayed away from an autoptic account, writing about Amazons, for example.<sup>12</sup> There have, however, been some attempts to rehabilitate Thevet's reputation: Dickason praises his ethnographic descriptions as supplementary to Léry's, and Lestringant has found Thevet's 'fausse fenêtre' on the New World to be a fruitful means of exploring sixteenth-century mentalities.<sup>13</sup> In one study, Conley compares Thevet's description of *France antarctique* in *Les Singularitez* with his later account in the *Cosmographie universelle* that was examined in Chapter Two, finding the former to be a largely apolitical work while the latter, written during the French religious wars, 'could not be divorced from the forces of history that the colony seemed to anticipate'.<sup>14</sup> Whilst it is true that *Les Singularitez* is not propaganda pushing new settlers towards *France antarctique*,<sup>15</sup> Conley's focus on Thevet's passages about Brazil, at the expense of the rest of the text, ignores the larger political framework within which the travel account operates. Written in a different religio-political context from that of the *Cosmographie universelle* and written with different concerns, *Les Singularitez de la France antarctique* is, I argue, nonetheless ideological, deeply embedded within a politics of language. In this section we will consider the multiple meanings of Europe in Thevet's rhetoric and the embedding of the word in a semantic relationship with other loaded terminology – 'sauvage', for example – which function together to underpin ideas of empire.

The word Europe appears over thirty times in *Les Singularitez* in which it functions as a spatial marker and is invested with emotive meaning. As in his *Cosmographie universelle* Thevet delimits the boundaries of the continent: 'Ce détroit [Gibraltar] est sur les limites d'Espagne, divisant l'Europe d'avec l'Afrique; comme celui de Constantinople, l'Europe de l'Asie' (pp. 59-60). The term Europe is often used

<sup>10</sup> Frank Lestringant, 'L'Exotisme en France, de Rabelais à Jean de Léry: De l'inventaire à l'aventure', in *D'encre de Brésil: Jean de Léry, écrivain*, ed. by Frank Lestringant and Marie-Christine Gomez-Géraud (Orléans: Paradigme, 1999), pp. 81-92 (p. 87).

<sup>11</sup> *Histoire d'un voyage*, p. 63.

<sup>12</sup> André Thevet, *Le Brésil d'André Thevet: Les singularités de la France antarctique*, ed. by Frank Lestringant (Paris: Chandeigne, 2011), pp. 312-23. All references will be to this, the most recent scholarly edition of the text, in which spelling has been modernised.

<sup>13</sup> Olive Patricia Dickason, *The Myth of the Savage: And the Beginnings of French Colonialism in the Americas* (Edmonton: The University of Alberta Press, 1997), p. 177; Lestringant, 'Le Récit de voyage et la question des genres', p. 93.

<sup>14</sup> 'Thevet Revisits Guanabara', p. 763.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 759.



as a marker of comparison in his descriptions of the New World; for example, in a comment on the absence of metal tools in Brazil: ‘Je ne doute que l’Europe et quelques autres pays n’aient été autrefois sans usage de ferrements’ (p. 270). We know that the appearance of the word Europe is a meaningful choice since other geographical reference points are to be found in the text: the Canary Islands are said to be ‘îles distantes de l’équinoxial de vingt-sept degrés et de notre France de cinq cents lieues ou environ’ (p. 58). When Thevet writes of leaving Brazil, the turn towards home is characterised by his use of the word Europe. ‘Il fut question pour notre conduite commencer à compter nos degrés depuis là jusques en notre Europe,’ he writes (p. 341). Later, ‘pour atteindre notre Europe’ (p. 363) is the phrase he uses to describe the goal of the journey. To narrate travel is to posit a fixed position of origin and destination.<sup>16</sup> Thevet conceptualises his origin, and ultimate destination, as Europe. In doing so, the continent becomes more than a neutral geographical space, it takes on the connotations of home, for the narrator and also for the reader who is implicated by the possessive adjective ‘notre’. The deictic centre of the first-person plural utterances in *Les Singularitez* constructs an imagined community of people connected by their origin, their home, which is figured here as Europe.

Thevet does not write of returning to France and indeed the word France is found less often in the text than the word Europe. However, nationality is important for him as a marker of identity. He writes of ‘le seigneur de Villegagnon, et autres Français’ in Brazil (p. 161) and he writes of ‘les Portugais’ and ‘les Espagnols’ in the New World. More often than not, though, Thevet highlights what the Spanish, Portuguese and French share, rather than what divides them. Europe is a significant term for representing these three peoples as alike. They are drawn together by the phrase ‘notre Europe’. Thevet uses the word Europe to mediate cultural difference; the peoples of the Americas are described as different from those of Europe, not different from those of France. In this way, Thevet, unlike Jean de Léry, suggests that the New World is a place where the differences of the peoples of Europe are dissolved.

Nevertheless, these people are not labelled as Europeans; when not referred to by their nationality, they are identified as Christians. Thevet can write of ‘les chrétiens, soient Français ou Espagnols’ (p. 302) and ‘notre religion chrétienne’ (p. 62). Christianity is linked with Europe as Thevet praises God for bestowing privileges on

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<sup>16</sup> Michael Householder, *Inventing Americans in the Age of Discovery: Narratives of Encounter* (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2011), p. 15.

Europe over and above the rest of the world: ‘En quoi ne pouvons assez louer et reconnaître notre Dieu, lequel par singulière affection, sur toutes les autres parties du monde, aurait uniquement favorisé à notre Europe’ (pp. 380-1). He largely effaces reference to the Reformation and the consequent fragmentation of religious belief and practice, in marked contrast to Léry in his account of Brazil. Thevet’s references to ‘notre religion’ belie the reality of religious controversy in Europe and the brewing tensions that would erupt in civil wars in France from 1562. He makes just one reference to growing religious heterodoxy, judging the Amerindian ‘ignorance’ of God to be more ‘tolérable’ than the beliefs of ‘les damnables athéistes de notre temps’ (p.198).<sup>17</sup> On the whole, *Les Singularitez* emphasises the unity of Christianity and of Europe.

Thevet associates with ‘notre Europe’ a set of cultural practices which serve to mark out the continent as more advanced than the rest of the world. The development of agricultural techniques is presented as a major turning point in the history of the Europe:

Et même en toute notre Europe, avant que l’on commençât à cultiver la terre, à planter et semer diversité de fruits, les hommes se contentaient seulement de ce que la terre produisait de son naturel; ayant pour breuvage de belle eau claire; pour vêtements quelques écorces de bois, feuillages et quelques peaux. (p. 404)

The ‘toute’ here suggests a homogenous continent, unified by more than religion, by a set of cultural customs which evolved from the cultivation of the earth, such as the wearing of certain types of clothing. Through its transformations Europe connotes advancement. It is marked out from Brazil for having undergone such changes. Thevet’s ethnographic description of *France antarctique* offers a portrait of a land that resembles what Europe used to be like; thus Brazil is, as Lestringant suggests, a means of measuring the progress of Europe.<sup>18</sup>

Those features that define Europe, according to Thevet, are said to be absent not only in Brazil but in the rest of the world. Of the New World Thevet writes: ‘Elle [l’Amérique] a été et est habitée pour le jourd’hui, outre les chrétiens qui depuis Améric Vespuce l’habitent, de gens merveilleusement étranges et sauvages, sans foi, sans loi,

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<sup>17</sup> The meaning of the word ‘athéistes’ is not the same as the modern term ‘athée’, used as it was by writers to mean whatever they wanted it to mean, often to condemn any ideas regarded as unorthodox, not only disbelief in God. For a discussion of the usage of the word in the sixteenth century see Lucien Febvre, *Le Problème de l’incroyance au XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle: La Religion de Rabelais* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1968), pp. 126-138.

<sup>18</sup> *L’atelier du cosmographe*, p. 94.

sans religion, sans civilité aucune (p. 162)'. The list here of what the Americans lack is a commonplace of early writings on the New World.<sup>19</sup> The 'chrétiens' who live in America do not lack faith, law and civility, Thevet stresses. Nor do the people of Europe, a place characterised by religion and cultivation. In early modern Europe the reduction of nature to order was perceived to be the task of humankind.<sup>20</sup> By living in a state of nature – the definition of 'sauvage', an antonym of 'civilité' – the Amerindians are deemed inferior to the Christians of Europe.<sup>21</sup> Such traits are lacking not only in America but the whole world bar Europe; the peoples of Cape Verde, for instance, are compared to 'ceux du Brésil' and said to be 'sans loi' (p. 90). In representing extra-European peoples in this manner, Thevet dehumanises them. He writes, 'ces gens que nous appelons sauvages, ainsi qu'ils vivent par les bois et champs à la manière presque des bêtes brutes' (p. 175). He refers to the Tupi as 'ces bestiaux' (p. 240) and 'ces pauvres brutaux' (p. 222), and he employs the word 'sauvage' to describe animals: 'bêtes sauvages' (p. 157), 'porc sauvage' (p. 254) and 'chat sauvage' (p. 256). Furthermore, he opts for the label 'barbares' on occasion, a term which could be used to suggest an improved form of savagery but nonetheless denies the humanity of people thus described.<sup>22</sup>

Denigration of the world outside Europe shapes the meanings of Europe. As Pagden writes, 'all European cultures [...] require the presence of something against which they can represent themselves, invariably to their own advantage'.<sup>23</sup> In *Les Singularitez* and other contemporary travel writing, the New World functions as a mirror in which aspects of Europe can be seen.<sup>24</sup> Savagery offers a way of conceptualising the New World against which a sense of Europeaness can be asserted. Much earlier political ideas had been similarly concerned with the limits of the human: non-Romans had been regarded, by Cicero for example, as less than human; and later to be human, to be civil, became associated with being Christian.<sup>25</sup> Whilst for Thevet the

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<sup>19</sup> Janet Whatley, 'Savage Hierarchies: French Catholic Observers of the New World', *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, 17 (1986), 319-30 (p. 321).

<sup>20</sup> Dickason, p. 84; Pagden, *European Encounters*, p. 6.

<sup>21</sup> See Dickason's wide-ranging study of the term 'sauvage', especially pp. 63-91.

<sup>22</sup> Denis Crouzet, 'Sur le concept de barbarie au XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle', in *La Conscience européenne au XV<sup>e</sup> et au XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle: Actes du colloque international organisé à l'Ecole Normale Supérieure de Jeunes Filles (30 septembre – 3 octobre 1980)* (Paris: Collection de l'Ecole Normale Supérieure de Jeunes Filles, 1982), pp. 103-126 (p. 105).

<sup>23</sup> *European Encounters*, pp. 183-84

<sup>24</sup> Jean-Claude Margolin, 'L'Europe dans le miroir du nouveau monde', in *La Conscience européenne au XV<sup>e</sup> et au XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle: Actes du colloque international organisé à l'Ecole Normale Supérieure de Jeunes Filles (30 septembre – 3 octobre 1980)* (Paris: Collection de l'Ecole Normale Supérieure de Jeunes Filles, 1982), pp. 235-64 (p. 237).

<sup>25</sup> Pagden, *Lords of All the World*, pp. 20-24.

same Christian/non-Christian distinction still holds, he also associates civility/humanity with the word Europe, as we have seen. Europe is one term in a network of interlinked vocabulary which represents a way of seeing the world, of articulating Thevet's sense of the superiority of his culture. 'Sauvage', 'barbare' and 'cruel' perform the same function: 'ces Amériques ne font jamais entre eux aucune trêve ni paction, quelque inimitié qu'il y ait, comme font toutes autres nations, même entre les plus cruels et barbares, comme Turcs, Mores et Arabes' (p. 202). Of sixteenth-century depictions of the New World Michael Wintroub has said: 'In writing the Other and making her "legible," Europeans were less interested in understanding Others per se than in articulating their own interests and concerns'.<sup>26</sup> Thevet's concern is with the righteousness of the developing empires in the Americas.

Thevet's promotion of the superiority of Europe underpins an ideology of empire. Dickason has noted that the classification of Amerindians as savages allowed Europeans to create the ideology which made possible the establishment of overseas empires.<sup>27</sup> The first appearance of the word 'sauvage' in *Les Singularitez* is in chapter 5 in which it refers to the original inhabitants of the Canary Islands before the Castilian conquest resulted in the cultivation of the land and the introduction of Christianity (pp. 71-2). This scene, with its justification for the actions of the Spanish, frames the cultural encounters that are described later in the narrative. In other words, savagery and conquest are interlinked throughout the text. In Thevet's writing, this ideology of conquest is enveloped within the definition of the word Europe. He writes that in Peru 'à présent y trouverez villes, châteaux, cités, bourgades, maisons, villes épiscopales, républiques, et toute autre manière de vivre que vous jugeriez être une autre Europe' (p. 349), highlighting in this way features and elements which constitute Europe and which have been constructed by the Spanish in the New World. It is not, for Thevet, a new Spain but a new Europe. In this way, *Les Singularitez* carries the idea that Europe could exist somewhere else, that Europe is a cultural model which can be transported overseas. In Thevet's championing of empire building, Europe is an important word.

The term Europe as it is used in *Les Singularitez* tends to obscure the tensions between the countries competing to expand into the New World. Where Léry highlights the conflicts between French and Portuguese travellers, Thevet erases them from his text. Of course, confessional difference provides one explanation; Thevet shared his

<sup>26</sup> *A Savage Mirror: Power, Identity, and Knowledge in Early Modern France* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2006), p. 5.

<sup>27</sup> Dickason, p. xiii.

Catholicism with the Portuguese. But in the previous chapter we saw how the Catholic François Savary de Brèves criticised Spain. Thevet, by contrast, champions the Spanish. He praises them for improving the morals of the Americans:

Les habitants du jourd'hui jadis cruels et inhumains, par succession de temps ont changé si bien de mœurs et de condition, qu'au lieu d'être barbares et cruels, sont à présent humains et gracieux, en sorte qu'ils ont laissé toutes anciennes incivilités, inhumanités et mauvaises coutumes; comme de s'entretuer l'un l'autre, manger chairs humaines, avoir compagnie à la première femme qu'ils trouvaient, sans avoir aucun égard au sang et parentage, et autres semblables vices et imperfections. (p. 362)

This extract is taken almost word for word from the 1539 French translation of Boemus's 1520 *Omniium gentium mores*,<sup>28</sup> a text that spurred Renaissance interest in cultural customs.<sup>29</sup> Thevet uses it to frame the meanings of Europe and the Americas. No mention of the New World is made in Boemus's work, which weaves a narrative of humanity's rise from savagery to civility following the Flood.<sup>30</sup> Thevet transplants this account from its original context to the Americas in order to provide an interpretation of Spanish activities there. Doing so with a view to justifying the development of empire in Mexico is significant since, as Inga Clendinnen has argued, 'The conquest of Mexico mattered to the men of the sixteenth century because it provided Spaniards and other Europeans with their first great paradigm for European encounters with an organized native state'.<sup>31</sup> Montaigne, as we shall see, offers a radically different interpretation of this paradigm. For Thevet, the conquest of Mexico is a model to be admired and imitated. Just as the Roman *civitas* was conceived as a civilisation for exportation and Christianity entailed an obligation to extend the faith,<sup>32</sup> Europe is represented in *Les Singularitez* as a culture to be expanded.

In sum, then, far from apolitical, *Les Singularitez* is an overtly ideological work. The primary objective of the text may not be to present an explicit argument in favour

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<sup>28</sup> 'En somme les mortelz par succession de temps changerent si bien de conditions qu'en lieu d'estre Barbares et cruelz ilz furent humains et gracieux deulx mesmes, et se reiglerent en sorte qu'ilz delaisserent toutes anciennes incivilitez et inhumanitez: comme de s'entretuer l'ung l'aulture, de manger chairs humaines, et prendre la compaignie de la premiere rencontree, sans aucune discretion de sang ou parentage, et au tres semblables vices, et imperfections.' *Recueil de diverses histoires touchant les situations de toutes regions & pays contenez es trois parties du monde, avec les particulieres moeurs, loix, & ceremonies de toutes nations & peuples y habitans* (Paris: Galliot de Pré, 1539).

<sup>29</sup> John O'Brien, 'Fashion', in *Montaigne after Theory / Theory after Montaigne*, ed. by Zahi Zalloua (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2009) pp. 55-74 (p. 58).

<sup>30</sup> Dickason, pp. 32-3. Thevet was influenced by other writings: Lestringant examines the contribution of Polydore Vergil's 1499 *De Inventoribus Rerum* to the ideas on the origins of civilisation in *Les Singularitez*. See *L'atelier du cosmographe*, pp. 91-101.

<sup>31</sup> 'Cortés, Signs, and the Conquest of Mexico', in *The Transmission of Culture in Early Modern Europe*, ed. by Anthony Grafton and Ann Blair (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990), pp. 87-130 (p. 87).

<sup>32</sup> Pagden, *Lords of All the World*, pp. 22-24, 30-1.

of overseas empire building but to recount a voyage and to fashion Thevet as an authority on geography and foreign cultures. In doing so, though, Thevet's practice of representation mediates the world outside Europe as inferior, with the potential to be improved through subjugation by European powers. The ideology of empire is thus embedded within every page. Europe is one among a number of keywords that propagate Thevet's worldview: 'sauvage', 'barbare', 'cruel', 'inhumain'. Europe, construed as the opposite of 'sauvage', signifies religion, cultivation, progress, superiority. We will now turn to Montaigne who read Thevet's *Singularitez* but interpreted the same words rather differently.

### **Europe, savagery and cruelty in the *Essais***

The word Europe is found only once in the whole of the *Essais*, and this is in 'Des cannibales', a chapter concerned with Brazil. In considering what the newly discovered world might be, Montaigne introduces the Atlantis myth, describing how the kings of the island occupied 'la longueur de l'Europe jusques en la Toscane'.<sup>33</sup> The word is thus used in its purely spatial sense. However, it is intriguing to find the sole instance of the word within the context of Atlantis, a tale of hubris, of a people who allegedly, as Montaigne reminds us, wanted to 'subjuguer toutes les nations' and came to Europe to do so before 'les Atheniens les soustindrent' and 'leur isle furent engloutis par le deluge' (p. 203). In an essay which is concerned with the expansion of Europe into the New World, the parallel between the ancient example and the contemporary world is obvious.

Explicit condemnation of the Spanish, who aim to 'subjuguer' America, is taken up in the later chapter 'Des coches', whereas 'Des cannibales' pivots on the meanings of the words 'sauvage' and 'barbare'. In the only essay to feature the term Europe, Montaigne interrogates the network of vocabulary related to the word as Thevet uses it. Very aware of the power of words, Montaigne declares, in a now much-celebrated maxim, 'chacun appelle barbarie ce qui n'est pas de son usage' (p. 205). Often read as an early modern expression of cultural relativism, 'Des cannibales' is as much concerned with politics at home as it is abroad, as several critics have suggested.<sup>34</sup> I

<sup>33</sup> Michel de Montaigne, *Les Essais*, ed. by Pierre Villey and V.L. Saulnier (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2004), p. 203. All references are to this edition.

<sup>34</sup> For example: David Quint, 'A Reconsideration of Montaigne's *Des cannibales*', in *America in European Consciousness, 1493-1750*, ed. by Karen Ordahl Kupperman (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), pp. 166-91 (p. 168); and Celso Martins Azar Filho, 'Nouveau monde, homme nouveau', *Montaigne Studies*, XXII (2010), 71-84 (p. 77).

read Montaigne as a reader of Thevet and other writers on the New World, focusing on his critical reassessment of the vocabulary which Thevet uses to craft an idea of a Europe expanding overseas.<sup>35</sup> Edward Benson has written that the *Essais* ‘were more concerned with the linguistic and epistemological systems which undergird and give expression to modern political structures than with those structures themselves’, and this is certainly true of ‘Des cannibales’, while ‘Des coches’ – which tends to be read as a condemnation of Spain and, to an extent, Europe – displays an interest in political structures.<sup>36</sup> We will see how Montaigne considers the issues of cruelty, warfare and the ancient past in a challenge to Thevet’s assessment of European expansion. Rather than taking either a literary studies approach focussing on single chapters or one associated with intellectual history or politics which explores passages taken from throughout the *Essais*, I follow critics such as David Quint in combining the two.<sup>37</sup> This has the advantage of being able to consider the thematics of particular essays within the context of the larger work, making connections between different chapters, whilst not losing sight of the complexities generated within the framework of individual chapters.

The unstable nature of words is raised at the outset of ‘Des cannibales’, which begins as follows:

Quand le Roy Pyrrhus passa en Italie, apres qu’il eut reconneu l’ordonnance de l’armée que les Romains luy envoyoyent au devant : Je ne sçay, dit-il, quels barbares sont ceux-ci (car les Grecs appelloyent ainsi toutes les nations estrangieres), mais la disposition de cette armée que je voy, n’est aucunement barbare. Autant en dirent les Grecs de celle que Flaminius fit passer en leur país, et Philippus voyant d’un tertre l’ordre et distribution du camp Romain en son Royaume, sous Publius Sulpicius Galba. Voylà comment il se faut garder de s’atacher aux opinions vulgaires, et les faut juger par la voye de la raison, non par la voix commune. (p. 202)

The ancient Greeks, Montaigne tells us, labelled all other cultures ‘barbares’, thereby creating Greekness as an opposition to this image of the other, rather than from internal unity. However, this story of superiority that they told about themselves was unsettled when the Greeks came into contact with the Romans, a people that were too sophisticated to fit the Greek idea of barbarity. The parallels with the contemporary world that Montaigne will go on to analyse are evident. Over the course of the essay he considers a story that his contemporaries tell about themselves, the story we have seen in Thevet’s *Singularitez*: namely that present-day Europe is superior to the savage and

<sup>35</sup> For a consideration of which geographical writers Montaigne was familiar with see Gérard Defaux, ‘Un cannibale en haut de chausses: Montaigne, la différence et la logique de l’identité’, *Modern Language Notes*, 97 (1982), 919-57 (p. 937).

<sup>36</sup> *Money and Magic in Montaigne: The Historicity of the Essais* (Geneva: Droz, 1995), p. 162.

<sup>37</sup> See David Quint, *Montaigne and the Quality of Mercy: Ethical and Political Themes in the Essais* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998).

barbarous New World. He unpicks the dominant ideological constructions of his day in order to suggest that this narrative, like the one recognised by the ancient Greeks, is false. The unreliability of words and the value-laden nature of their meanings are the crucial issues raised at the very beginning of ‘Des cannibales’ in a description of a cultural encounter which frames the whole essay, itself a meditation on cultural encounter.

It would seem appropriate to draw from the example of Pyrrhus the general conclusion that ‘chacun appelle barbarie ce qui n’est pas de son usage’, but instead Montaigne engages in one of the digressions for which his style is noted, a digression which allows him to link the problem of language with contemporary cosmographical writing. He turns to the ostensible subject of the chapter, ‘cet autre monde qui a esté decouvert en nostre siècle’ (p. 203), and dismisses sources from antiquity which may have been interpreted as referring to the New World, as well as reflecting on natural changes that occur to the landscape, and praising eyewitness topographic accounts of foreign lands. It is a very revealing digression that positions Montaigne’s text relative to geographical writing and alludes to Thevet’s works in particular. He criticizes ‘cosmographes’ for embellishing their ethnographic descriptions beyond their direct experience: ‘pour avoir cet avantage sur nous d’avoir veu la Palestine, ils veulent jouir de ce privilege de nous conter nouvelles de tout le demeurant du monde’ (p. 205). This is an objection that could be leveled at Thevet, the ‘cosmographe du Roy’, who used his trip to Brazil to publish a description of Africa and the Americas in his *Singularitez de la France antarctique*, and in 1575 published a *Cosmographie universelle*.<sup>38</sup> Indeed, Montaigne refers to ‘France antarctique’ (p. 203), rather than *Brésil*, in what is perhaps an invocation of Thevet’s *récit de voyage*; Léry, for instance, prefers *Brésil*. It is significant that it is immediately after the critique of cosmography that Montaigne, ‘pour revenir à [son] propos’, writes, ‘il n’y a rien de barbare et de sauvage en cette nation, à ce qu’on m’en a rapporté, sinon que chacun appelle barbarie ce qui n’est pas de son usage’ (p. 205). The misuse of language is, therefore, associated with cosmography.

For Montaigne the problem with cosmography is that a static genre, which aims to fix the universe on the page, cannot reflect the world in flux. It is a world that is literally changing, as is made clear in the text just before Montaigne condemns cosmographers: the course of ‘ma riviere de Dordogne’ has visibly altered in

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<sup>38</sup> Defaux, ‘Un cannibale en haut de chausses’, p. 938.



Montaigne's lifetime and his brother has 'perdu quatre lieues de terre' to the sea (p. 204). This 1588 addition, which in Colin Dickson's words 'points to the unknowability of the world', helps to clarify the meaning of the chapter.<sup>39</sup> If the world is continually changing then must not the language we use to describe the world, and the categories for understanding it, change too? This strained relationship between language and the referential world, between appearance and reality, is at the heart of Jean Starobinski's study of Montaigne 'en mouvement'.<sup>40</sup> Signifiers in 'Des cannibales' struggle to pin down the respective referent as it is forever in motion. After providing examples of the mutability of the world and criticizing those cosmographers who attempt, and fail, to represent the world in writing, Montaigne launches into the essay proper, tackling two words which, as we have seen with Thevet, structure and determine interpretations of the world, namely 'barbare' and 'sauvage'.

Montaigne plays with different meanings of these two words throughout 'Des cannibales', a process which has been carefully traced by Duval.<sup>41</sup> As we have seen, 'barbare' is first stripped of its negative connotations, said to refer to nothing more than difference. Montaigne goes on to valorize the term 'sauvage' by focusing on its associations with the natural world: 'Ils sont sauvages, de mesmes que nous appellons sauvages les fruicts que nature, de soy et de son progrez ordinaire, a produicts [...] En ceux là sont vives et vigoureuses les vrayes, et plus utiles et naturelles vertus et proprieté' (p. 205). Thevet, by contrast, only occasionally uses the term to characterise plant life – 'racines sauvages', for example (p. 164) – preferring to emphasise the semantic link to animals. Montaigne's next move is to reinstate the negative meaning of the word 'barbare', declaring the Cannibals to be barbarous – since they practice anthropophagy – yet less barbarous than 'nous' (pp. 209-10). The Brazilians are then said to be not 'sauvage' as they are braver in war than 'nous' (p. 212). Finally, they are no longer regarded as 'barbare' given the artfulness of their music 'tout à fait Anacreontique' (p. 213). Tournon has identified three different values in the concept of barbarism, all of which Montaigne deploys here: one is pejorative, another is

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<sup>39</sup> 'Geographic Imagination in the *Essais* and Geomorphism in Montaigne Criticism', in *Geo/graphies: Mapping the Imagination in French and Francophone Literature and Film*, ed. by Freeman G. Henry (= *French Literature Series*, 30 (2003)), pp. 29-40 (p. 33).

<sup>40</sup> *Montaigne en mouvement* (Paris: Gallimard, 1993).

<sup>41</sup> 'Lessons of the New World: Design and Meaning in Montaigne's "Des Cannibales" (I:31) and "Des coches" (III:6)', *Yale French Studies*, 64 (1983), 95-112.

praiseworthy (of the simplicity of primitive life), and the final is neutral (a marker of different cultural customs).<sup>42</sup>

The shifting meanings point towards the malleable nature of words. The constant throughout the destabilisation of meaning and judgement is, as Duval indicates, Montaigne's regard for the Cannibals: whether they should be considered savage, barbarous or neither, they are considered favourably.<sup>43</sup> Whilst Quint has emphasised Montaigne's critique of Tupi cruelty and cautioned against an idealistic reading of 'Des cannibales', the point still stands that the Brazilians, in spite of their faults, are represented positively in comparison to the peoples of the Old World.<sup>44</sup> As a consequence, I wish to draw a different conclusion from Duval's suggestion that the shifts of perspective in 'Des cannibales' illustrate the premise that 'nous, et nostre jugement, et toutes choses mortelles, vont coulant et roulant sans cesse'.<sup>45</sup> Rather, I suggest that the chapter stages a *parti pris* – in this case that Brazilians are more praiseworthy than Europeans – and the manipulation of language that takes place so as to support this position and persuade one's interlocutors. In doing so, he uses the very terms – 'sauvage' and 'barbare' – that are crucial to Thevet in giving definition to Europe and are central to discourses of expansion. Montaigne's technique, therefore, is a 'thought-experiment' that highlights how the assumptions of geographical writing rest on words whose meanings are not fixed and are used rhetorically with the intention of persuading the readership of a particular viewpoint.<sup>46</sup> Montaigne does explicitly warn us in 'Des cannibales' that 'les fines gens', including cosmographers, 'ne vous representent jamais les choses pures, ils les inclinent et masquent selon le visage qu'ils leur ont veu' (p. 205).

The semantic destabilisation of the words 'sauvage' and 'barbare' forms part of a wider strategy of interrogating the language and ideas of travel writing. Its effect is not to establish alternative definitions of these terms but rather it allows Montaigne to think about the uses of certain terms, to make room for doubt, to attack dogmatic

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<sup>42</sup> *La Glose et l'essai*, p. 217.

<sup>43</sup> 'Lessons of the New World', p. 102.

<sup>44</sup> 'A Reconsideration of Montaigne's *Des cannibales*', esp. pp 170-4.

<sup>45</sup> 'Lessons of the New World', p. 104. Duval takes this quotation from Montaigne's 'Apologie de Raimond Sebond' (II: 12, p. 601).

<sup>46</sup> Terence Cave has written of the crucial aspect of the manner in which Montaigne writes: 'Montaigne's "position" on particular topics becomes secondary to the way in which he handles them [...] His reflections are thought-experiments rather than propositions or statements of position.' See *How to Read Montaigne* (London: Granta, 2007), pp. 2-3. In 'Des cannibales' and 'Des coches', then, Montaigne is thinking through the consequences of the terms of the debate about the New World, rather than directly stating his viewpoint.

thought, and to allow for a process of continual reconsideration of the ideas and beliefs that are interwoven with these words, including the conception of Europe. Montaigne encourages his readers to, like Pyrrhus at the beginning of the essay, reassess their beliefs. In that sense, ‘Des cannibales’ is, as Defaux has indicated, ‘un *essai reflexif*: c’est-à-dire un essai où le discours n’a pas pour fonction essentielle d’illustrer un thème choisi, mais de constituer un prétexte à l’exercice du jugement non seulement de celui qui le tient, mais encore de celui qui le reçoit’.<sup>47</sup> For Tournon, the chapter is structured like a methodical inquiry, assessing the ‘voix commune’ and the utopian counter opinion against one another.<sup>48</sup> In his defence of the Cannibals Montaigne writes inconsistencies into his text, and in doing so he highlights particular issues to be re-examined. For instance, the superiority of art and culture over nature, which underpins Thevet’s definitions of Europe and savagery, is questioned in this manner. Nature is first praised above artifice, but later the Cannibals are hailed for their music. The terms of the reassessment are written in the very language which Montaigne critiques, that of geographical writing. A list of what the Amerindians lack, which we have seen in Thevet, is used by Montaigne as a vehicle of praise for the Tupi’s natural state: ‘nulle cognoissance de lettres; nulle science de nombres; nul nom de magistrat, ny de supériorité politique’ (p. 206) – it is said to be more perfect than ‘la republique qu’il [Platon] a imaginée’ (p. 207). Negation is rewritten in this way as a positive.

Montaigne was able to exploit existing ambiguities in the understanding and representation of America. While for Thevet cruelty is a marker of American savagery – even if some groups, such as the Amazons, are crueller than others (pp. 316-23) – the image of a vicious New World occupied a fault line in Renaissance thought, contrasting as it did to images of a simple and innocent New World.<sup>49</sup> This ambivalence is illustrated by two poems included in the paratext of *Les Singularitez*. First, Étienne Jodelle accuses his contemporaries of being no less barbarous than the peoples of America:

Ces barbares marchent tout nus,  
Et nous, nous marchons inconnus,  
Fardés, masqués. Ce peuple étrange  
À la piété ne se range.  
Nous la nôtre nous méprisons,  
Pipons, vendons et déguisons.  
Ces barbares pour se conduire

<sup>47</sup> ‘Un cannibale en haut de chausses’, p. 935.

<sup>48</sup> *La Glose et l’essai*, p. 221.

<sup>49</sup> Dickason, pp. 35-7.

N'ont pas tant que nous de raison,  
 Mais qui ne voit que la foison  
 N'en sert que pour nous entretenir? (pp. 414-5)<sup>50</sup>

Second, François de Belleforest captures the simultaneous horror and admiration that reading about New World peoples can provoke:

Desquels quand la façon viens lire  
 Avec tant d'inhumanités,  
 D'horreur, de pitié et puis d'ire,  
 Je poursuis ces grands cruautés,  
 Quelquefois de leur politique  
 Je loue la sainte pratique  
 Avecque leurs simplicités. (p. 418)

These odes offer us some evidence of how *Les Singularitez* was read, but Thevet himself, as we have seen, simplifies the equivocal response to the New World, characterising non-Europeans as 'cruels et inhumains' (p. 362). In contrast, the writing of Léry is located on the pivot. Seeing *France antarctique* as both Edenic and a site of fallen cannibals, 'Léry's attitude towards the Tupi swivels ambivalently between sympathy and revulsion', to borrow the words of John O'Brien.<sup>51</sup>

Montaigne follows Léry in considering the presence of cruelty in the Old World, thereby subjecting the key term 'cruauté' to a reconsideration in a similar manner to 'sauvage' and 'barbare'. Thematised in 'Des cannibales' and developed further in 'Des cochés', cruelty represents a hinge between the two cultures which, explored by Montaigne, contributes to an understanding of the meanings of Europe. In defending the cannibalistic Amerindians as less barbarous than the peoples of the Old World, he writes:

Je pense qu'il y a plus de barbarie à manger un homme vivant qu'à le manger mort, à deschirer, par tourmens et par geénes, un corps encore plein de sentiment, le faire rostir par le menu, le faire mordre et meurtrir aux chiens et aux pourceaux (comme nous l'avons, non seulement leu, mais veu de fresche mémoire, non entre des ennemis anciens, mais entre des voisins et concitoyens, et qui pis est, sous pretexte de pieté et de religion), que de le rostir et manger apres qu'il est trespassé. (p. 209)

The terminology of community – 'voisins et concitoyens' – is governed by the indefinite article 'des', rather than a possessive adjective, and so at this moment in which Montaigne alludes to the Wars of Religion, he does not align himself with any

<sup>50</sup> Elizabeth Armstrong comments on this in *Ronsard and the Age of Gold*, pp.138-9, noting that Jodelle disregards 'both the tone and the trend of Thevet's comments on the Indians'.

<sup>51</sup> 'To the Ends of the Earth: Renaissance Journeys and Imagination's Sight', *Seventeenth-Century French Studies*, 30 (2008), 17-31 (p. 27).

particular group. Léry, on the other hand, writes as a French Calvinist so as to condemn their treatment at the hands of French Catholics. George Hoffmann interprets ‘Des cannibales’ as a sceptical engagement with the Catholic Mass, alluding to contemporary Protestant attacks on Catholics as cannibalistic god-eaters.<sup>52</sup> Lestringant, on the other hand, considers Montaigne to be less polemical and more reflective in his reflections on the Eucharistic debate.<sup>53</sup> Regardless, Montaigne does not exclude the Protestants from blame; in the above quotation, the writer and his readers (‘nous’) are positioned as spectators, and what they see is one community of ‘concitoyens’ that has been fractured into a series of neighbouring, warring communities – ‘voisins’ implying closeness yet also difference, not the unity of ‘concitoyens’. No one group is presented as the dominant aggressor. Montaigne’s gaze then shifts from the viewpoint of an outsider looking in to that of an insider looking around him. What he sees is cruelty everywhere: ‘la trahison, la desloyauté, la tyrannie, la cruauté [...] sont nos fautes ordinaires’ (p. 210). Here is the possessive adjective ‘nos’, an articulation of a collectivity to which Montaigne belongs and which is characterised by ‘la cruauté’.

Similarly, the chapter entitled ‘De la cruauté’ (II: 11) is concerned with violence in the Old World. It is in this essay that Montaigne declares, ‘Je hay, entre autres vices, cruellement la cruauté, et par nature et par jugement, comme l’extreme de tous les vices’ (p. 429). Judith Shklar has argued that cruelty is Montaigne’s primary moral concern in the *Essais*.<sup>54</sup> The American natives are largely missing from the chapter, mentioned just once in a comment which recalls ‘Des cannibales’: ‘Les sauvages ne m’offensent pas tant de rostir et manger les corps des trespassez que ceux qui les tourmentent et persecutent vivans’ (p. 430). For Thevet, Tupi anthropophagy is described as an ‘excessive cruauté’ (p. 216). The focus of Montaigne’s condemnation in ‘De la cruauté’ is the French aristocracy, as Quint has demonstrated.<sup>55</sup> Montaigne writes: ‘Je vy en une saison en laquelle nous foisonnons en exemples incroyables de ce vice [la cruauté], par la licence de nos guerres civiles [...] il se fut trouvé des ames si monstrueuses, qui, pour le seul plaisir du meurtre, le voulussent commettre’ (p. 432). The cruelties witnessed in the – *nos* – civil wars thus reveal the monsters within French society. He does, though, map cruelty more widely, describing tales of tortures in Rome as ‘ces inhumains excez’ (p. 432). In fact, Montaigne speculates that inhumanity might

<sup>52</sup> George Hoffmann, ‘Anatomy of the Mass: Montaigne’s “Cannibals”’, *PMLA*, 117 (2002), 207-21.

<sup>53</sup> *Une Sainte horreur, ou le voyage en Eucharistie: XVI<sup>e</sup> – XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1996), p. 247.

<sup>54</sup> Judith N. Shklar, *Ordinary Vices* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984), p. 8.

<sup>55</sup> *Montaigne and the Quality of Mercy*, pp. 42-74.

actually be fundamental to human nature: ‘Nature, à ce creins-je, elle mesme attache à l’homme quelque instinct à l’inhumanité’ (p. 433).

The interrelated notions of cruelty and humanity, and their meanings in relation to Europe and America, are most fully explored in ‘Des coches’. Whereas for Thevet the European conquests in the New World are justified since they have rendered the inhabitants more civilised, more human and less cruel, for Montaigne the outcome is precisely the opposite: ‘nous nous sommes servis de leur ignorance et inexpérience à les plier plus facilement vers la trahison, luxure, avarice et vers toute sorte d’inhumanité et de cruauté, à l’exemple et patron de nos meurs’ (p. 910). The very terms that Thevet uses to represent an America against which Europe is defined – ‘inhumanité’ and ‘cruauté’ – are redeployed by Montaigne against the collective subject ‘nous’, rather than the other, thereby inverting the relationship of superiority/inferiority which was fundamental to ideologies of empire. With this rewriting, he challenges an argument in favour of European expansion. Although Montaigne and Thevet differ in their representations of the impact of the Old World on the New, they both regard that impact as related to the characters of the colonisers – ‘nos meurs’. Montaigne, like Thevet, writes himself into that group with the plural subject pronoun, considering that he and his intended readers, and others beyond, share certain customs with the Spanish and Portuguese conquerors, all belonging to one imagined community.

Montaigne’s displacement of the location of cruelty is one way in which he assesses negatively the relationship of this imagined community to expansion. A second strategy is the interpretation of cultures through the lens of warfare. He writes of the Cannibals that ‘Leur guerre est toute noble et genereuse, et a autant d’excuse et de beauté que cette maladie humaine en peut recevoir: elle n’a autre fondement parmy eux que la seule jalousie de la vertu’ (p. 210) – the adjective ‘humaine’ granting the status of humanity to them alongside the imagined community to which he belongs. Crucially, though, the two cultures are different: ‘Ils ne sont pas en debat de la conquest de nouvelles terres’ (p. 210). There are echoes here of Ronsard’s 1559 *Complainte contre Fortune*:

Las! si tu leur apprens à limiter la terre,  
 Pour agrandir leurs champs ils se feront la guerre,  
 Les procez auront lieu, l’amitié defaudra,  
 Et l’aspre ambition tourmenter les viendra  
 Comme elle fait ici nous autres pauvres hommes,  
 Qui par trop de raison trop miserables sommes:  
 Ils vivent maintenant en leur âge doré. (II, p. 778)

A society living through a golden age cannot conceive of territorial expansion.<sup>56</sup> In both ‘Des cannibales’ and ‘Des coches’ Montaigne valorises defensive wars, battles to counter the sort of aggressive expansion being undertaken by his contemporaries in the New World. In this he follows the Roman jurists who tended to argue that only a war waged defensively was legitimate.<sup>57</sup> He writes in ‘Des cannibales’ of the ‘gloire’ of the defence of Thermopylae (p. 211). In ‘Des coches’ he recommends monarchical spending on ‘fortifications et murs’ – as well as ports, hospitals and other constructions – on the grounds that the expenditure would be ‘utile, juste et durable’ (p. 902). In his discussion of the use of coaches in war he states, ‘les Hongres les mirent tres-utilement en besongne contre les Turcs’ (p. 901), alluding in this way to the incursion of the Ottoman Empire into Europe. Similarly, the ‘Roy de Mexico’ is praised for his defence against the Spanish, ‘ayant long temps defendu sa ville assiegée et montré en ce siege tout ce que peut et la souffrance et la perseverance’ (p. 912). And sympathy is generated for the peoples of the New World: ‘tant de milliers d’hommes, femmes et enfans, se presentent et rejettent à tant de fois aux dangers inevitables, pour la deffence de leurs dieux et de leur liberté’ (p. 910). The conquest of new lands is thus condemned for its connection with cruelty. This idea of conquest as cruel is personalised in ‘De la cruauté’ in a comment on the sport of hunting which follows his condemnation of the violence of the religious wars: ‘je n’ay pas sçeu voir seulement sans desplaisir poursuivre et tuer une beste innocente, qui est sans deffence et de qui nous ne recevons aucune offence’ (p. 432). Montaigne’s suggestion that innocent animals should not be killed serves as a counter to attempts to justify conquest on the basis that the peoples of the New World were not fully human, such as Thevet’s labelling the Brazilians ‘ces bestiaux’.

‘Des coches’, however, indicates that Montaigne is not opposed to empire per se, but rather specifically to contemporary European expansion overseas. He wishes that the ancients had discovered the New World:

Que n’est tombée sous Alexandre ou sous ces anciens Grecs et Romains une si noble conquête, et une si grande mutation et alteration de tant d’empires et de peuples sous des mains qui eussent doucement poly et defriché ce qu’il y avoit de sauvage, et eussent conforté et promu les bonnes semences que nature y avoit produit, meslant non seulement à la culture des terres et ornement des villes les arts de deçà, en tant qu’elles y eussent esté necessaires, mais aussi meslant les vertus Grecques et Romaines aux originelles du pays! (p. 910)

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<sup>56</sup> Armstrong comments on the theme of the Age of Gold in this poem in *Ronsard and the Age of Gold*, pp. 27-8.

<sup>57</sup> Pagden, *Lords of all the World*, p. 95.

Although he disapproves of the form European expansion into the New World has taken, Montaigne grants that it would be possible to make a ‘noble conquête’, or rather that such a conquest would have been possible for the Greeks or the Romans. The crucial word here is the one that is repeated, ‘meslant’; it suggests that the ancients might have been more culturally inclusive, adopting some local customs. The notion of mixing offers a contrary model of empire to that of Thevet’s ‘une autre Europe’ which advocates an imposition of the practices of Europe at the expense of local cultures. In arguing the case for an ancient conquest of the New World, Montaigne notes that they would have brought farming and building techniques, which Thevet represents as gifts the Spanish and Portuguese have bestowed, but his statement is qualified by the acknowledgement that the Americans were not completely lacking in this regard. Indeed, he later indicates certain achievements of the New World to be greater than those of antiquity; for example, ‘ny Græce, ny Romme, ny Ægypte ne peut, soit en utilité, ou difficulté, ou noblesses, comparer aucun de ses ouvrages au chemin qui se voit au Peru, dressé par les Roys du pays, depuis la ville de Quito jusques à celle de Cusco’ (p. 914). As Duval has demonstrated, the structure of the chapter – in which three subjects are discussed in relation to the ancient world before the same subjects are then considered, in reverse order, in the context of the New World – suggests similarities between America and antiquity:

It would appear that the chapter is deliberately designed to suggest, through an artful arrangement of *formal* correspondences, *substantial* correspondences and similarities between Rome and America far more compelling than any that discursive argument or an examination of known facts could possibly reveal.<sup>58</sup>

The effect is to dissociate contemporary Europe from the ancient or new worlds, suggesting that it is inferior to both. Dain Trafton interprets the essay differently, considering Montaigne to regard a ‘mature’ ancient world as superior to a ‘childish’ New World.<sup>59</sup> But regardless, the point about contemporary Europe is that it is deemed unworthy of substantial comparison to either.

Present-day Europe’s separation from the classical legacy undercuts the relevance of antique justifications of empire to the sixteenth-century project of expansion into the New World. The theoretical underpinnings of the European empires in the Americas owed a great debt to the ancient world as sixteenth-century thinkers borrowed from the Roman Empire political models and an idiom with which to

<sup>58</sup> ‘Lessons of the New World’, p. 107.

<sup>59</sup> ‘Ancients and Indians in Montaigne’s “Des coches”’, *Symposium*, 27 (1973), 76-90 (p. 76).



understand the nature and the legitimacy of the developing empires in the New World.<sup>60</sup> Therefore, dissociating the sixteenth-century world from antiquity, as Montaigne does, is to undermine the relevance of Roman ideas of empire to the present day, and to deny a *translatio imperii* from Rome to a contemporary European power. ‘The inaccessibility of the classical world as a political and cultural model is a recurring theme in the *Essais*’, notes Jotham Parsons;<sup>61</sup> Roman conceptions of empire, notably the impulse to expand and to civilise those outside the *civitas*,<sup>62</sup> are one such inaccessible, or inappropriate, model. Montaigne’s musings can thus be understood within the context of intellectual disputes as to whether the wars in the New World were just, of which the Valladolid debate (1550-1) between Bartolomé de Las Casas and Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda is the most famous example.<sup>63</sup>

On the other hand, Thevet, who is supportive of overseas empire, implies a link between the past and the present, regarding the historical movement from one to the other as a stable genealogy. He makes the connection at the start of chapter 24 in which he recounts his arrival in *France antarctique*:

Après que par la divine clémence, avec tant de travaux communs et ordinaires à si longue navigation, fûmes parvenus en terre ferme, non si tôt que notre vouloir et espérance le désirait, qui fut le dixième jour de novembre, au lieu de se reposer, ne fut question, sinon de découvrir et chercher lieux propres à faire sieges nouveaux, autant étonnés comme les Troyens arrivant en Italie. (p. 150)

With this allusion to the *Aeneid*, Thevet represents his first direct encounter with the New World as akin to Aeneas’s landing in Italy, that is, as a foundational moment for an empire. Mythical past exploits fold into the present, reinforcing the validity of the mission to Brazil, encapsulating a hope for its success and for the development of an empire. Thevet makes two further references to the Trojans; first, comparing the hospitality they receive from the Tupi to that of Dido (p. 156); second, in chapter 59, ‘Comme la terre de l’Amérique fut découverte’, he compares the Portuguese looking for land to the Trojans searching for Carthage (p. 299). The Portuguese are compared to other ancient figures. The description of their cultivation of Madeira provokes the

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<sup>60</sup> Pagden, *Lords of all the World*, p. 11.

<sup>61</sup> *Making Money*, p. 190.

<sup>62</sup> Pagden, *Lords of all the World*, pp. 19-23.

<sup>63</sup> For an account of the Valladolid debate and its background and aftermath, see Lewis Hanke, *All Mankind is One: A Study of the Disputation Between Bartolomé de Las Casas and Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda in 1550 on the Intellectual and Religious Capacity of the American Indians* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1974). Other accounts can be found in Pagden, *The Fall of Natural Man*, pp. 109-45; and David A. Lupher, *Romans in a New World: Classical Models in Sixteenth-Century Spanish America* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2003), pp. 103-49.

following remark: ‘Je sais bien que Cyrus, roi des Mèdes et Assyriens, avant que d’avoir conquis l’Égypte, fit planter grand nombre de plantes, lesquelles il fit apporter de Syrie, qui depuis ont rapporté de bons vins, mais qui n’ont surpassé toutefois ceux de Madère’ (p. 85). Ancient precedent justifies contemporary actions, yet is surpassed by them. Thevet, in fact, explicitly connects the word Europe to the ancient Romans: ‘Nous voyons en notre Europe combien les Romains, au commencement voulant amplifier leur Empire, voire d’un si peu de terre au regard de ce qui a été fait depuis soixante ans ençà, ont épandu de sang, tant d’eux que de leurs ennemis’ (p. 328). The term, used here with its spatial sense and with the implication of an imagined contemporary community, is invested with a historical element. Rather than Montaigne’s geographical features in flux, Thevet presents a stable continent reaching as far back in time to the expanding Roman Empire.

The relationship between the classical world and contemporary Europe is of course implied as well in the mythological origin of the name of the continent. Neil Kenny has suggested that Europe was a concept ‘derived from ancient myth and popularized by humanism’.<sup>64</sup> Central to the myth is movement; as it is put in Apian’s *Cosmographie*: ‘Europe (la premiere partie du monde) est appellee de la fille de Agenor Roy des Pheniciens, laquelle en Asie aymee de Juppiter fut transportee en Crete’ (fol. 30<sup>v</sup>). Whilst Peter Gommers has noted that in reality the name for the continent likely predated a later interpretation of the Phoenician princess as the continent’s eponym, we are dealing here with what was thought at the time.<sup>65</sup> Integral to the source of the Europa myth, Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, is the movement from Sidon to Crete, that is, from Asia to Europe (II. 833 – III. 2).<sup>66</sup> Likewise, Jean-Antoine de Baïf’s poem, *Le Ravissement d’Europe* (1552), highlights this westward motion to Crete:

Elle pensoit voir en sa fantasie  
De face et corps deux femmes, l’une Asie  
Sa douce terre, et l’autre de dela  
Que de son nom depuis on appela.<sup>67</sup>

Asia and Europe are configured as separate geographical areas and as separate female bodies. The sense of a foundational moment is captured when Jupiter speaks to Europa

<sup>64</sup> *An Introduction to Sixteenth-Century French Literature and Thought: Other Times, Other Places* (London: Duckworth, 2008), p. 162.

<sup>65</sup> Gommers, p. 67.

<sup>66</sup> Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, ed. by G. P. Goold, 2 vols (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1977), I, pp. 118-24.

<sup>67</sup> Jean-Antoine de Baïf, *Œuvres complètes*, ed. by Guy Demerson, Perrine Galand-Hallyn, Daniel Ménager and Anne-Pascale Pouey-Mounou, 2 vols (Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2002-10), I (2002), p. 486, 31-4.

upon their landing on ‘cette isle de Crete’ (l. 386): ‘Icy de moy tu auras des enfans, / Roys sur la terre en gloire triomphans’ (ll. 389-90). The image of Europa crossing the sea seems particularly apposite when considering European expansion overseas. In sixteenth-century culture empire was associated with movement. Aeneas’s voyage from Troy to Italy was noted above. The afterlife of Troy is evident in the prefatory note, ‘Au lecteur’, to Ronsard’s *Franciade* (1572), in which the poem is declared to be ‘un Roman comme l’Iliade et l’Æneïde’ (I, p. 1182). The work itself begins with the claim that the French are descended from Francus, the son of the Trojan Hector, who overcame numerous adversities to go on to build ‘les grans murs de Paris’ (I. 1-12). Just as Ronsard names the entity he valorises, France, so too does Thevet in *Les Singularitez* name the concept he lauds, Europe.

Montaigne, in contrast, does not name Europe, a marked absence given the presence of the words ‘sauvage’ and ‘barbare’. He articulates a community through the pronoun ‘nous’ but he has no name for it. It is, anyway, not a stable collective subject; the ‘nous’ shifts and fragments. Defined in part in opposition to the New World, it is not as invariable as in Thevet’s usage, referring to those within the kingdom of France (‘nostre Royne Catherine’ (p. 902)), those of a certain social status (‘nos valets’ (p. 903)), as well as to the Old World more widely (‘Nostre monde vient d’en trouver un autre’ (p. 908)). The shifts in the referent of the ‘nous’ dramatise the fracturing and fluctuating of identities in a period of religious upheaval. In his study of nationhood in French Renaissance literature, Hampton offers a fruitful way of understanding the collective subject in ‘Des coches’, arguing that the chapter is an attempt to define a location, France, from which to articulate a collective identity that allows him to judge the atrocities of the Spanish in the New World, a group of people to whom he feels a shared cultural connection in spite of his revulsion.<sup>68</sup> There has been a tendency on the part of other commentators on the text to overstate Montaigne’s sense of disconnection from the Spanish. James Supple argues that Montaigne offers idealised portraits of the ancient world and the New World in order to emphasise the vices of the Spanish.<sup>69</sup> Similarly, Edward Benson suggests that ‘Montaigne shifted the focus of his attack from “nous” Europeans to Spaniards’, p. 172.<sup>70</sup> Thomas Parker too notes the fragmentation of

<sup>68</sup> *Literature and Nation in the Sixteenth Century*, pp. 195-226.

<sup>69</sup> “‘Que n’est tombée soubz Alexandre ou soubz ces anciens Grecs et Romains une si noble conquête?’: Montaigne et les conquérants de l’or”, in *Montaigne et le nouveau monde: Actes du colloque de Paris 18-20 mai 1992*, ed. by Jean-Claude Arnould (Paris: Société Internationale des amis de Montaigne, 1993), pp. 85-93 (p. 92).

<sup>70</sup> *Money and Magic in Montaigne*, p. 172.

the ‘nous’ and asserts that Montaigne dissociates himself from the Spanish, associating instead with the Americas by referring to the inhabitants with a possessive adjective: ‘tesmoing mes Cannibales’ (p. 911).<sup>71</sup> I would argue, however, that Montaigne is referring to his earlier chapter ‘Des cannibales’ more so than he is suggesting an affinity with the Native Americans. Although he reviles the Spanish conquest, when he does single out the Spanish he is quick to re-establish them within the boundaries of the ‘nous’ community; for example, the clause ‘S’ils se fussent proposés d’estendre nostre foy’ (p. 913) initially puts them at a distance but immediately reincorporates them with a reference to shared cultural practices. Montaigne is certainly grasping at a collective identity that is larger than France alone. The refusal, or inability, to name this community reveals that Montaigne is struggling to understand the nature of a changing world and struggling to find the vocabulary to articulate the experience.

### **The costs of expansion**

‘Des coches’ makes it clear that the expansion of Europe is understood as commercial expansion. In crude financial terms, the Old World extracts commodities from the New and the latter receive payment of a kind. It is appropriate to interpret the relationship in such a manner given that Montaigne does likewise: ‘il n’y a pas cinquante ans qu’il [le nouveau monde] ne sçavoit ny lettres, ny pois, ny mesure, ny vestements, ny bleds, ny vignes’ (p. 908). He indicates, as Thevet does, that Europe has a material and intellectual impact on America, but he goes on:

‘crains-je que nous aurons bien fort hasté sa declinaison et sa ruyne par nostre contagion, et que nous luy aurons bien cher vendu nos opinions et nos arts [...] La plus part de leurs responces et des negotiations faictes avec eux tesmoignent qu’ils ne nous devoient rien’ (p. 909).

Our ‘opinions’ and ‘arts’ have come at the expense of death and disease. Montaigne poses the question of the cost of European expansion: ‘Qui mit jamais à tel pris le service de la mercadence et de la trafique?’ (p. 910). Note the economic idiom – ‘vendu’, ‘negotiations’, ‘devoient’, ‘pris’ – which is threaded throughout the chapter. The language points towards financial anxieties closer to home. Montaigne writes that ‘nostre or est tout en emploite et en commerce’ (p. 913), the possessive adjective highlighting his awareness that France and Spain were locked into the same monetary system. It is the acknowledgement of money in circulation – in contrast to static Inca gold all in display and not for exchange – in a chapter which muses on royal

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<sup>71</sup> ‘Art and Nature: the Old and New World Seen through Montaigne’s Spanish Mirror’, *Montaigne Studies*, XXII (2010), 23-37 (p. 34).

expenditure which leads Cave to consider that the financial reflections of ‘Des coches’ likely stem in part from a concern with inflation.<sup>72</sup>

In this section we shall see how Montaigne thinks about the New World and the Old in economic terms, and how ‘Des coches’ operates at the nexus of a web of discourse about empire, expansion, commerce and Europe. He attacks as false ideas of empire which rely on the premise of spreading Christianity, displaying a markedly different attitude to that of Thevet, and asks if the costs of expansion to the New World and the Old are justifiable. Desan has highlighted the centrality of economic discourse to Montaigne’s critique of European empire-building:

A une époque où le matérialisme est roi, Montaigne voit dans l’extermination des Indiens du Pérou, du Mexique et du Brésil la preuve flagrante d’une société qui a perdu tout sens humain. C’est au nom d’un profit bassement matériel – que cela soit pour l’or ou les épices – que l’on massacre ces Autres qui permettent à Montaigne de déconstruire l’horrible réalité de la logique coloniale.<sup>73</sup>

I extend Desan’s analysis by linking Montaigne’s economic discourse to his reading of Thevet and the question of Europe.

Trade is represented in Thevet’s *Singularitez* as beneficial for America. The opening up of the New World for Europe’s commercial gain is said to bring material benefits: ‘En leur pays [Brésil], il n’y a villes ni forteresses de grandeur, sinon celles que les Portugais et autres chrétiens y ont bâties pour leur commodité’ (p. 230). Such buildings are, as we saw above, a marker of civilisation. Trade itself is another significant mechanism for civilising the New World: ‘Le trafic, si bien nous considérons, est merveilleusement utile, outre qu’il est le moyen d’entretenir la société civile’ (p. 247). Thevet highlights Peru as an example of the benefits: ‘Le peuple de cette contrée [...] combien qu’il soit sauvage et barbare, est toutefois fort docile, à cause

<sup>72</sup> *Pré-histoires II*, pp. 178-84. For an overview of the French inflationary crisis, see Parsons, pp. 104-42.

<sup>73</sup> *Montaigne, les Cannibales et les Conquistadores* (Paris: Nizet, 1994), p. 7. Desan has taken further interest elsewhere in Montaigne’s economic thinking. In *Les Commerces de Montaigne: le discours économique des Essais* (Paris: A.-G. Nizet, 1992) he examines economic discourse as part of Montaigne’s ‘mode de pensée’, arguing that it is not limited to the employment of certain types of language but has an impact on the form and content of the *Essais*, as well as influencing other types of discourse (pp. 12-16). He stresses the importance of the economic to the period’s thought: ‘La grande transformation épistémologique de la seconde moitié du XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle est directement liée à l’impossibilité de penser le monde et l’homme en des termes qui ne seraient pas économiques’ (*Les Commerces de Montaigne*, p. 19). Montaigne forms a part of Desan’s general study which traces economic influences on the literature of the French Renaissance, *L’Imaginaire économique de la Renaissance* (Paris: Presses de l’Université de Paris-Sorbonne, 2002). Another scholar who has approached the economic theme in Montaigne’s work is Edward Benson, who considers finance in relation to witchcraft and magic in the *Essais* in his *Money and Magic in Montaigne*.

de la marchandise et traffic qui se mène là; autrement ne serait moins rude que les autres de l'Amérique' (p. 346). In short, for Thevet, trade brings civility.

In 'Des coches' we are presented with a different viewpoint: trade brings 'ruyne'. 'Des cannibales' paints a picture of a society 'en laquelle il n'y a aucune espece de trafique' (p. 206); as Desan has written, 'L'économie cannibale signifie une *non-économie* [...] Montaigne place le Cannibale en dehors du réseau d'échange marchand'.<sup>74</sup> 'Des coches', on the other hand, offers the reader an image of the New World after it has begun to be incorporated into the economic system of the Old World. The cruelties inflicted upon the peoples of Mexico by the conquistadors, as described by Montaigne, are driven by commerce:

ne trouvant point apres cette victoire tout l'or qu'ils s'estoient promis, apres avoir tout remué et tout fouillé, se mirent à en chercher des nouvelles par les plus aspres geines dequoy ils se peurent adviser, sur les prisonniers qu'ils tenoient. Mais, n'ayant rien profité, trouvant des courages plus forts que leurs torments, ils en vindrent en fin à telle rage que, contre leur foy et contre tout droit des gens, ils condamnerent le Roy mesme et l'un des principaux seigneurs de sa court à la geine en presence l'un de l'autre. (p. 912)

There is an irony here in the dizzying spiral of violence and financial greed which sees the failure to 'profit' from torture provoke greater tortures. To quote Desan once more: 'Le commerce est visiblement allé trop loin du temps de Montaigne; c'est devenu une excuse pour exterminer les peuples'.<sup>75</sup> Montaigne condemns the Spanish actions as 'contre tout droit des gens', referring to the *ius gentium*, or natural law, a concept from ancient Roman law signifying the laws thought to be held in common by all peoples of the world inside and outside the Empire.<sup>76</sup> Church canon law later influenced the *ius gentium*.<sup>77</sup> And so Montaigne is accusing the Spanish of violating both ancient principles and the Christian faith.

In this way, Montaigne problematises the supposed aim of spreading Christianity, which was central to Thevet's pro-imperial ideology. In a chapter on 'la rivière de Plate & pays circonvoisins', Thevet writes that the Spanish 'ont conquêtés,

<sup>74</sup> *Les Commerces de Montaigne*, p. 191.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 206.

<sup>76</sup> David J. Bederman, *International Law in Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 85.

<sup>77</sup> Isidore of Seville wrote: 'ius gentium est sedium occupatio, aedificatio, munitio, bella, captivitates, servitutes, postliminia, foedera pacis, indutiae, legatorum non violandorum religio, conubia inter alienigenas prohibita. Et inde ius gentium, quia eo iure omnes fere gentes utuntur' ('The law of nations concerns the occupation of territory, building, fortification, wars, captivities, enslavements, the right of return, treaties of peace, truces, the pledge not to molest embassies, the prohibition of marriages between different races. And it is called the law of nations because nearly all nations use it'): *Etymologies* (v. 6), p. 118.

même jusques aux Moluques en l'Océan, au Ponant de l'autre côté de l'Amérique, de manière qu'aujourd'hui ils tiennent grand pays alentour de cette belle rivière, où ils ont bâti villes et forts, et ont été faits chrétiens quelques sauvages' (p. 280), thereby representing the outcomes of conquest – land and converts – as positive. Montaigne views land and conversion differently, however:

S'ils se fussent proposés d'estendre nostre foy, ils eussent considéré que ce n'est pas en possession de terres qu'elle s'amplifie, mais en possession d'hommes, et se fussent trop contentez des meurtres que la nécessité de la guerre apporte, sans y mesler indifferemment une boucherie, comme sur des bestes sauvages, universelle, autant que le fer et le feu y ont peu atteindre, n'ayant conservé par leur dessein qu'autant qu'ils en ont voulu faire de miserables esclaves pour l'ouvrage et service de leurs minieres (p. 913).

The link between religion and violence recalls Montaigne's allusions to the Wars of Religion, which suggests in turn the ambivalent meaning of the phrase, 'nostre foy'. The expansion of Europe has thus seen an expansion of religious violence. Yet, as in 'Des cannibales' in which the civil wars were said to stem from the 'pretexte de pieté et de religion' (p. 209), faith is considered a mere pretext to obscure the real greedy economic motivation. No matter, then, the disconnect between the religious goal of conquest and its bloody results, value can be extracted from the peoples of the New World by putting them to work in the mines – those they have not killed, that is. The emotive language used to describe the killings in the New Worlds alludes as well to the French religious wars, since 'boucherie' is semantically related to 'massacre', which signified a butcher's chopping block before the Wars of Religion when it took on its figurative meaning of the mass murder of people.<sup>78</sup> To a readership exhausted by the ravages of war in France, the parallels suggest the futility and waste to America of the European conquests. Montaigne, though, underscores the etymology of 'boucherie' in a manner that emphasises the peculiar relevance of the term in the American context: 'une boucherie, comme sur des bestes sauvages', reintroducing at this moment the term of which Thevet, and others, are so fond. In this way, he returns indirectly to one of the central themes of 'Des cannibales', the power of language. With this example, Montaigne elucidates how the word 'sauvage' allows, validates and encourages the killing of the people labelled thus. The costs of representing someone as inhuman can be fatal.

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<sup>78</sup> Mark Greengrass, 'Hidden Transcripts: Secret Histories and Personal Testimonies of Religious Violence in the French Wars of Religion', in *The Massacre in History*, ed. by Mark Levene and Penny Roberts (New York: Berghahn, 1999), pp. 69-88 (p. 69).

By contrast, Thevet in his writing largely conceals the bloodshed in the New World. On the rare occasions when he does not ignore the violence of Europeans, his method of representation is to gloss it. This is the case in Thevet's description of the Canary Islands, which, as was mentioned above, frames the cultural encounters that feature later in the text:

Ce pays anciennement a été habité de gens sauvages et barbares, ignorant Dieu et totalement idolâtres, adorant le Soleil, la Lune et quelques autres planètes comme souveraines déités, desquelles ils recevaient tous biens; mais depuis cinquante ans les Espagnols les ont défaits et subjugués, et en parties tués, et les autres tenus captifs et esclaves; lesquels s'habituant là, y ont introduit la foi chrétienne, de manière qu'il n'y a plus des anciens et premiers habitateurs, sinon quelques-uns qui se sont retirés et cachés aux montagnes. (p. 72)

The activities of the Spanish in the Canary Islands are structured in a linear narrative which tells a story of positive progression from savage godlessness to Christianity. The events that take place between these two poles – the killings and the slavery – are rationalised by the logic of a constructed teleological narrative. Of violence in America itself, Thevet writes of the Spanish and Portuguese: 'Or ne faut penser telles découvertures avoir été faites sans grande effusion de sang humain, spécialement des pauvres chrétiens qui ont exposé leur vie, sans avoir égard à la cruauté et inhumanité de ces peuples, bref, ni difficulté quelconque' (p. 328). Thevet pre-empts any questions his readers may have about the violence of conquest that he has effaced from *Les Singularitez*; he reverses any negative expectations to focus attention on generating sympathy for the Europeans in America, reminding his readers of the traits of cruelty and inhumanity with which he has endowed the peoples of the New World in his descriptions of them.<sup>79</sup>

However, for Montaigne, the jurist, the Europeans in the Americas are guilty of a crime, 'meurtre'. The condemnation encapsulated by the word 'meurtre' comes at the very end of 'Des coches':

Ce dernier Roy du Peru, le jour qu'il fut pris, estoit ainsi porté sur des brancars d'or, et assis dans une cheze d'or, au milieu de sa bataille. Autant qu'on tuoit de ces porteurs pour le faire choir à bas, car on le vouloit prendre vif, autant d'autres, et à l'envy, prenoient la place des morts, de façon qu'on ne le peut onques abbatre, quelque meurtre qu'on fit de ces gens là, jusques à ce qu'un homme de cheval l'alla saisir au corps, et l'avalla par terre. (p. 915)

The word 'or' featuring twice, we have here at the close a spectacle of gold and murder. The whole process of European expansion is crystallised in this one image of the fall of

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<sup>79</sup> Lestringant has examined pro-Spanish sympathies in Thevet's *Vrais Pourtraits et Vies des hommes illustres* (1584) in *Le Huguenot et le sauvage*, pp. 357-71.



Atahualpa, reducing the conquest of the New World to the intertwined notions of riches and slaughter. The religious pretext has disappeared from the scene as the Spanish kill indiscriminately in their relentless quest for the body borne aloft on gold. There is no mention of gold in *Les Singularitez*, perhaps surprisingly given that the search for it had become a commonplace of travel accounts to the New World. Columbus's writings, for example, are marked by unrelenting references to conversion and the prospect of gold.<sup>80</sup> Thevet's silence could be understood as an attempt to purify the perceived motives of travellers to America. In contrast, Montaigne, in his critique, brings gold to the fore, underlining the financial relationship at the heart of the conquest: goods in exchange for murder.

As well as the cost to the New World, 'Des coches' suggests that expansion might incur costs to the Old World, financial as well as the sense of moral bankruptcy that emerges from his representation of the conquistadors. America is thus used as a device through which to criticise the European economy. The Amerindians at Rouen, so 'Des cannibales' tells us, are surprised by inequality in France: 'il y avoit parmy nous des hommes pleins et gorgez de toutes sortes de commoditez, et que leurs moitez estoient mendians à leurs portes, décharnez de faim et de pauvreté' (p. 214). In 'Des coches', the discussion of 'pompe et magnificence' (p. 914) is beset with concerns about excessive princely spending or 'liberalité' (p. 904), hence Cave's reading of a concern for inflation. It is an idiom of excess which Montaigne adopts:

c'est une espece de pusillanimité aux monarques, et un tesmoignage de ne sentir point assez ce qu'ils sont, de travailler à se faire valloir et paroistre par despences excessives. Ce seroit chose excusable en pays estranger; mais parmy ses subjects, où il peut tout, il tire de sa dignité le plus extreme degré d'honneur où il puisse arriver. (p. 902)

A distinction is opened up here between expenditure internal to the kingdom and foreign expenditure. Given how the chapter unfolds it seems appropriate to see here an allusion to spending on wars in the Americas. Montaigne goes on to praise expenditure on forts, hospitals and so on, indicating a preference for royal spending at home, rather than abroad. Conley considers Montaigne's suggestion here to be an alternative to Spain's deficit spending.<sup>81</sup> Cave compares expenditure by Americans, the road from Quito to Cusco (p. 914), with the unfinished Pont Neuf (p. 902), considering that Montaigne regards as praiseworthy the American attitude to money: 'il ne s'agit pas

<sup>80</sup> Desan, *Montaigne, les Cannibales et les Conquistadores*, p. 62.

<sup>81</sup> 'The Essays and the New World', in *The Cambridge Companion to Montaigne*, ed. by Ullrich Langer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 74-95 (p. 87).

d'un trésor gardé avec peine et exposé à toutes sortes d'éventuelles déperditions, mais d'un bien national permanent'.<sup>82</sup> Ann Moss has noted that where in the Old World money is mobile, used and circulated, in the New it is static.<sup>83</sup> The question that Montaigne poses is whether or not trade – the circulation of goods and finance – is beneficial, and if so for whom is it beneficial? For the expansion of Europe's market economy into the America comes with counter-expansion, that is, movements back into Europe of goods and treasure, and of their associated problems, such as inflation.

Money is, as we have seen, not the only cultural characteristic of the Old World to be associated with movement: Europe's territorial expansion into the New World is of course a process of motion. If we were to interrogate this movement and ask to where Europe is going, 'Des coches' provides an answer. Montaigne is dismissive of narratives of historical progress (we might think of those which underpin Thevet's conception of Europe, for example): 'Nous n'allons point, nous rodons plustost, et tournoions çà et là' (p. 907). Movement is also inscribed in the title of the chapter, 'Des coches', and thus with the image of the wheel – motion, yes, but circular, ending up back where one started. The structure of the essay reflects this, beginning and closing with a discussion of coaches. In spite of this, there has been a movement from the discussion of the ancient world to a discussion of the New World, from a civilisation long since over to an empire that has just collapsed, as represented by the image of Atahualpa dragged to the ground. Thus, the spectre of the fall of empires hangs over 'Des coches', a chapter concerned with the development of European empires in the New World.

It seems apt, then, for Montaigne to open his exploration of the New World – or, more accurately, the Old World's relation with the New – with Pyrrhus. Plutarch's *Moralia* 184 encapsulates the idea of a Pyrrhic victory: 'When he was twice victorious in conflict with the Romans, but lost many of his friends and commanders, he [Pyrrhus] said, "If we are victorious over the Romans in one more battle, we are lost!"'.<sup>84</sup> To Montaigne, the costs of expansion may very well be greater than the rewards. His concern is in part not for the horrors that have occurred in America but what might happen. Implicating the French within the 'nous' on the same terms as the

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<sup>82</sup> *Pré-histoires II*, p. 181.

<sup>83</sup> "'Des coches": Une rhétorique transportable?', in *Montaigne et la rhétorique: Actes du Colloque de St Andrews (28-31 mars 1992)*, ed. by John O'Brien, Malcolm Quainton et James Supple (Paris: Champion, 1994), pp. 77-87 (p. 84).

<sup>84</sup> Plutarch, *Moralia*, trans. by Frank Cole Babbitt, 14 vols (London: Heinemann, 1931), III, p. 85.

conquistadors acts as both a judgment and a caution: the French would perhaps, given the opportunity, do the same as the Spanish, yet – considering the human, ethical and financial costs to the world – they should not subscribe to an ideology of a superior Europe with a right to expand and to kill.

### Conclusions

This chapter has traced how Montaigne reads Thevet and rewrites the discourse used by Thevet and others who condemned the New World as inferior to the Old World. Thevet related a set of existing words and ideas – savagery, Christianity, civility and expansion – to the term Europe, thereby crafting an idea of Europe as an ideology of empire. Europe in Thevet's work appears to be an aggressive keyword, articulating a cultural model that encompasses Christianity and, in addition, a sense of landscape – cultivated earth and a certain built environment – and moral superiority, all of which presupposes a right to impose these features upon the New World and its peoples. Unlike France, Spain and Portugal had by 1557 achieved significant inroads in the Americas; framing those endeavours as European victories allows Thevet to support the then germinating French colony in Brazil.

Montaigne wrote later, after the failure of the French missions to Brazil, Florida and Canada, and at the height of the French religious wars. He, contrary to Thevet, is a pessimistic interpreter of his society, a society he reflects on at great length but never names as Europe. Sensitive to, and critical of, the politics of language, he reassesses the terms which are crucial to Thevet's definition of Europe – 'sauvage', 'barbare' and 'cruauté' – yet does not find an adequate term to express the imagined community, the 'nous', which includes himself and the Spanish. When he uses the word Europe on the only occasion in the *Essais* it is with its spatial signification and nothing more. His rejection of the term entails a rejection of what it had come to signify in geographical writing and what Montaigne condemns in his writings on the New World: cultural superiority and an impulse to expansion.

'Il n'y a rien de seul et de rare eu esgard à nature, ouy bien eu esgard à nostre cognoissance, qui est un miserable fondement de nos regles et qui nous represente volontiers une tres-fauche image des choses' (p. 908). Whilst travel accounts and other forms of geographical writing purport to deepen human understanding and knowledge, Montaigne is sceptical of their ability to represent truth. He uses the flexible form of the personal *essai* to unsettle linear accounts of progress, and to suggest the images created

by the idiom of savagery are false. In exposing this vocabulary, Montaigne does not seek to offer a replacement for a word that 'sauvage' and 'barbare' contribute to defining, Europe. Europe is a word which itself offers 'une tres-fauce image des choses'. How can the term Europe adequately reflect and explain a changing world? It is a world that is variable across space as well as time; we saw in Chapter Two of the thesis how, as he travelled through a part of Europe, Montaigne recorded his observations on cultural difference in his *Journal de voyage*. The shifting 'nous', its changing referents, in 'Des cannibales' and 'Des coches' is both part of the problem of a world in flux and the answer. The 'nous' dramatises the sense of belonging simultaneously to different imagined communities, and feeling greater and lesser affinities with different groups at different moments. There can be no stable collective identity in a period of civil war, of religious conflict. The challenge of articulating this cannot be met by forcing a static word, a static definition, on an unstable concept. To do otherwise – as Thevet does with 'Europe' – is to establish a rigid ideology. And a rigid ideology, as not only the American chapters but the *Essais* as a whole demonstrate, tends to lead inexorably to violence. Taken together, 'Des cannibales' and 'Des coches' are an excavation of a certain conception of Europe which reveals the twin foundations of expansion and violence.

## CONCLUSION

### *Nostre Europe?*

This thesis opened with a reflection on the contingent nature of historical scholarship: the conclusions reached are dependent upon the sources selected for examination. I speculated that modern accounts of the development of Europe as a cultural idea may have overstated its significance during the Renaissance period. Taken together, the sources selected for examination in this thesis have demonstrated that the meanings of Europe were shifting with the new social and cultural realities of the time, although many continuities endured. Christendom, for instance, remained durable, a vital political, cultural and spatial term – often but not always a synonym of Europe – in the early seventeenth century, as François Savary de Brèves’s treatises on the Ottoman Empire attest. For some, including Rabelais and Montaigne, Europe was not a word of great importance and not one that they used with frequency or with much meaning beyond that of a unit of geographical delimitation. When the term did appear in writing, its meaning was not stable but rather very much dependent on context as each writer used the word Europe for a particular purpose.

We have seen the phrase ‘nostre Europe’ recur in several texts by different writers. It refers to Europe as a place, but as it is governed by the possessive adjective it gestures towards something more – towards a community of people who inhabit that place. Some writers make that emotive sense more explicit. André Thevet, for instance, emphasised the shared religion of the community, writing ‘notre Dieu, lequel par singulière affection, sur toutes les autres parties du monde, aurait uniquement favorisé à notre Europe’ (pp. 380-1). Thevet’s statement here is clear evidence for the growing predominance of the word Europe in the period, but if we consider other writings drawn from the same discursive context we may draw different conclusions. Jean de Léry may have used the phrase ‘nostre Europe’ but he did so without the ideological implications of Thevet’s usage. Montaigne in his essays on the New World included the word Europe just once and in its spatial sense, without its cultural connotations. In writing of ‘nostre monde’, he eschewed the term Europe as a marker of a community of people, preferring ‘monde’ to depict a social reality as he regarded it. These figures imagined different boundaries from those of Thevet – different geographically perhaps, and different culturally and politically.

In other words, it is necessary to consider what is at stake in each individual utterance. All of the writers considered in this thesis wrote for varying audiences and varying purposes. Europe was – and undoubtedly remains – a flexible term, liable to be used in a text with a range of meanings and nuances, or not used at all with preference given to an alternative formulation. ‘Chrestienté’ was broadly synonymous with Europe, yet because they were different signifiers writers could exploit them to generate different meanings. Thevet’s preference for Europe reflects a focus on cultural characteristics, aside from Christianity, that suggest a superiority of the peoples of the Old World vis-à-vis the New. Agrippa d’Aubigné, on the other hand, in a text concerned with religion and geography, the *Histoire universelle*, tends to reserve the word Europe for marking space and ‘Chrestienté’ for cultural references, although on occasion he uses the two interchangeably. The published writings and diplomatic correspondence of Savary de Brèves demonstrate how an individual was prepared to switch between the two according to audience and purpose. In speaking of Christendom to the pope and writing of Christendom to his king, de Brèves was using words for political reasons. His idiom varied in the tracts about the Ottoman Empire that he published: the term Europe appeared as much as ‘Chrestienté’ did and, unlike in his diplomatic letters, was used not only as a spatial marker.

Consider as an example a particular utterance which was central to French politics in the Renaissance: the monarch’s coronation ceremony. Upon succeeding to the throne the new king of France would proceed to the Cathedral at Reims to be crowned. There he would place his hand on the Gospels and swear two oaths in Latin, the first a promise to uphold the privileges of the Church, the second a promise to his subjects (the ‘serment au royaume’):

*Haec populo christiano, et mihi subdito, in Christi promitto nomine:*

*In primis, ut ecclesiae Dei omnis populus christianus veram pacem, nostro arbitrio, in omni tempore servet.*

*Item, ut omnes rapacitates, et omnes iniquitates, omnibus gradibus interdiciam.*

*Item, ut in omnibus judiciis aequitatem et misericordiam praecipiam ; ut mihi et vobis indulgeat suam misericordiam clemens et misericors Deus.*

*Item, de terra mea, ac jurisdictione mihi subdita, universos haereticos ab ecclesia denotatos pro viribus bona fide exterminare studebo. Haec omnia supradicta firmo juramento : sic me Deus adjuvet, et haec sancta Dei Evangelia.<sup>1</sup>*

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<sup>1</sup> ‘Je promets, au nom de Jésus-Christ, au peuple chrétien qui m’est soumis: Premièrement, de faire conserver en tout temps, à l’Eglise de Dieu, la paix, par le peuple chrétien. D’empêcher les personnes de tout rang de commettre des rapines et des iniquités, de quelque nature qu’elles soient. De faire observer la justice et la miséricorde dans les jugements, afin que Dieu, qui est la source de la clémence et de la miséricorde, daigne la répandre sur moi et sur vous aussi. De m’appliquer sincèrement, et selon mon

This pledge to uphold peace and justice done, the king would be anointed with holy oil and the crown placed upon his head.<sup>2</sup> The religious nature of the ceremony charges the king with a responsibility that is more than political; the monarch – divinely appointed as he supposedly was – is entrusted with the spiritual welfare of his people. From the thirteenth century it had been commonplace to refer to the king of France and his kingdom with the title ‘très chrétiens’. Only the French were given this honour. It made of them an elect people, particularly blessed with the grace of God.<sup>3</sup>

The unchanging conception of the monarchy’s relationship with the people of France preserved in the ‘serment au royaume’ is at odds with the reality of a changing society. The king’s subjects are described as Christian (*‘populus christianus’*), but, as we have seen, the Reformation had made this word a locus of conflict. The oath refers to the Church in the singular (*‘ecclesiae’/‘ecclesia’*), denying the validity of the new Reformed religion. And the king promises to expel from his lands those whom the Church has deemed heretical. Yet, he who was deemed a heretic by one person might be regarded as a good Christian by another. There were alternative ideas of the meanings of Christianity and heresy. The coronation oath thus constructs a definition of France, an exclusionary one which performs the ideology that underpins the exile of Calvinists such as Léry and d’Aubigné, two figures who have conceptions of community opposed to that offered in the ‘serment au royaume’.

What of Christendom? How does Christendom relate to the vision of France offered in the coronation oath? Since community belonging operates at several levels simultaneously – that of locality, nation and so on – all definitions of community implicate others, whether or not they are acknowledged. The image in the ‘serment au royaume’ is of a homogeneous community ruled by a monarch whose legitimacy rests upon his claim to uphold religious unity within his own kingdom only. In clamping down on heresy within his own borders, the king surely forces dissenters out of France and into the wider lands of Christendom. But in articulating this particular

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pouvoir, à expulser de toutes les terres soumises à ma domination, les hérétiques nommément condamnés par l’Eglise. Je confirme par serment toutes les choses énoncées ci-dessus: qu’ainsi Dieu et ses saints évangiles me soient en aide.’ Georges Péré, *Le sacre et le couronnement des rois de France dans leurs rapports avec les lois fondamentales* (Toulouse: Université de Toulouse, Faculté de Droit, 1921), pp. 35-6.

<sup>2</sup> Arlette Jouanna, *La France du XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle: 1483-1598* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 2012), pp. 39-41.

<sup>3</sup> Jouanna, p. 39. Colette Beaune provides an overview of the history of the idea of France as ‘très chrétienne’ in *Naissance de la nation France* (Paris: Gallimard, 1985), pp. 207-229.

understanding of what France is, the implications for Christian countries outside of France, for Christendom more widely, are ignored.

Likewise with definitions of Europe, the wider associations were often obscured, especially in the cosmographies of Peter Apian, François de Belleforest and André Thevet. In their descriptions of Europe as ‘riche’ and ‘fertile’ they ignore the diversity of the continent which Belleforest and Thevet depict elsewhere in their voluminous tomes. What their homogenising definitions of Europe promote is the idea that the continent is superior to the rest of the world. Thus, a statement about, or which included, the term Europe was never just about Europe. Rather, it was bound up with a series of social, political and cultural processes, and was governed by, and in turn governed, the writer’s positions and reflections on other matters. Thevet’s Europe shaped and was shaped by his take on overseas expansion. De Brèves’s Christendom, to offer a different example, shaped and was shaped by his status as the ambassador to the Holy See.

All utterances impose a definition on a word, using it in a particular manner and with a particular meaning in order to make a particular point. In deploying the word Europe, then, an author was making a whole series of assertions – about the continent, of course, but also about community and identity. In Chapters One and Two we saw how cosmographies invest the term Europe with significant cultural meanings, whereas other texts with geographical concerns – namely Rabelais’s *Quart Livre* and Montaigne’s *Journal de voyage* – adopt the word infrequently, restricting it to a spatial signification. Chapter Three considered how the word Europe was bound up in reflections on the fragmentation of religion and society, comparing the instances of the term in the writings of two Calvinists, Léry and d’Aubigné. We found that while the latter regarded it as a synonym of ‘Chrestienté’, the former did not write of Christendom and used the term Europe less to refer to a cultural entity and more as a marker of comparison to provide a description of the natural world of Brazil. Chapter Four examined how the Ottoman Empire influenced reflections on the meanings of Europe. We saw two very different writers, Ronsard and de Brèves, both describing Europe as a cultural and political unit threatened by the Ottoman Empire and both concerned above all with the role of France in Europe. Ronsard’s Europe, though, is a much more literary and idealised vision. The final chapter presented antithetical interpretations of the Old World’s expansion into the New World: where Thevet was full of praise, Montaigne was condemnatory. Their uses of the word Europe differed too. Thevet deployed it



frequently in *Les Singularitez* as a cultural marker of superiority. Montaigne opted for the term just once in the *Essais*, restricting it to its spatial meaning.

What emerged from these analyses was a sense of the differences in the frequency of use of the term Europe and the meanings which were given to it. Rabelais's *Quart Livre* and Montaigne's *Journal de voyage* are concerned much more with human stories than are the cosmographies of Apian, Belleforest and Thevet. They explore geography in a manner different from that of the cosmographies, in a way in which the word Europe is of little use. On the other hand, the scope of the cosmographies – describing the whole world – necessitates usage of the term. Europe likewise finds a place in Léry's *Histoire d'un voyage*, whereas its potential counterpart 'Chrestienté' is absent. The term Europe is of some use to him in comparing one part of the world with another. Similarly, Thevet's account of the New World, *Les Singularitez de la France antarctique*, sees more instances of the word Europe than 'Chrestienté'. In Montaigne's essays on the Americas, though, the term Europe makes but one appearance. Although d'Aubigné attempts to write about the whole world in his *Histoire universelle*, 'Chrestienté' is found more frequently than Europe in the text since religion is the main theme of the work. The meanings d'Aubigné ascribes to both terms overlap yet he tends to prefer 'Chrestienté' as a term referring to culture, community and identity. Ronsard, by contrast, uses the term Europe to articulate cultural meanings. It is more suitable than 'Chrestienté' for poetic metre and, being of classical origin, it reflects how Ronsard views the culture to which he is referring: Christian, yes, but also informed by Greco-Roman civilisation. De Brèves's diplomatic correspondence reveals that Europe can be eschewed entirely in favour of 'Chrestienté' – which can signify a geographical area – when the context favours it. It must be concluded that genre, the *kind* of text, had a significant influence on the fortunes of the word Europe: works of geography tended to require it; works focussed on human experience tended to ignore it; political tracts valued it as a synonym of Christendom; poetry admired its form and cultural signification.

Considering the discursive contexts in which the word Europe was found has allowed this thesis to assess the significance of non-usage. We can make inferences when the term is not used by a writer in a context similar to that in which others have used it. Rabelais and Montaigne are two of the great figures of the European Renaissance, but neither used the word Europe often and when they did it was as a spatial marker. Indeed, in its sole appearance in the *Quart Livre* it is a term of some

hyperbole, suggesting a geographical unit too big to comprehend and to be meaningful to an individual. Rabelais drew on the language and style of cosmographical writing in his *Quart Livre* in order to offer an exploration of the world in which he lived, yet the term Europe – so essential to the cosmographies – was of limited use to him. For Montaigne too the word was of little relevance in his *Essais* or in his travel account, whereas it was a common term in one of his sources for ‘Des cannibales’ and ‘Des coches’, Thevet’s *Les Singularitez de la France antarctique*. In these essays Montaigne rejected the views of Thevet regarding the superiority of the Old World and rejected the signifier which carried those cultural connotations, Europe.

It is worth asking, then, if Europe was an early modern ‘keyword’. As was mentioned in the introduction to the thesis, the term as it was used by Raymond Williams has recently been taken up enthusiastically by scholars working within the field of Renaissance studies. Was Europe a word that involved ‘ideas and values’?<sup>4</sup> Was it a ‘significant, binding [word] in certain activities and their interpretation’ and a ‘significant, indicative [word] in certain forms of thought’?<sup>5</sup> The answer is that Europe was a word that could involve values but it certainly did not have to. The thesis has offered examples of uses of the word as a neutral term denoting space, and uses where the word carries ‘active social and political values’.<sup>6</sup> In *Les Singularitez* Thevet’s ideological standpoint on empire building was articulated through the ways in which he deployed the term Europe. Léry also wrote of the French in Brazil but he viewed the relationship between the New World and the Old differently, and he used the word Europe less often and in a different way from Thevet. For Ronsard, Europe was a word which articulated his politico-cultural conception of the world. In contrast, neither Rabelais nor Montaigne used the term often, and when they did it was not in a way that involved values. Europe was not a significant word for their interpretations of society. Whereas some writers actively used the term Europe in their explorations of religious, political and cultural issues – such as the discovery of the New World and the Reformation – others exploring the very same issues did not. In short, Europe may have been a keyword in the thinking of Ronsard and Thevet and others, but not a keyword in the thinking of Rabelais or Montaigne.

It is no coincidence that it is in the thoughtful, speculative literature of Rabelais and Montaigne where we find the word Europe little used. Their works eschew

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<sup>4</sup> Williams, *Keywords*, p. 17.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 18.

dogmatic thinking and encourage reflection. The word Europe as it was often used was largely irrelevant to their style of writing. To some others it was useful as a totalising, homogenising way of understanding culture, society and humanity. It is helpful here to recall Isaiah Berlin's categorisation of people as either foxes or hedgehogs:

There is a line among the fragments of the Greek poet Archilochus which says: 'The fox knows many things, but the hedgehog knows one big thing'. [...] [T]aken figuratively, the words can be made to yield a sense in which they mark one of the deepest differences which divide writers and thinkers, and, it may be, human beings in general. For there exists a great chasm between those, on one side, who relate everything to a single central vision, one system less or more coherent or articulate, in terms of which they understand, think and feel – a single, universal, organizing principle in terms of which all that they are and say has significance – and, on the other side, those who pursue many ends, often unrelated and even contradictory, connected, if at all, only in some *de facto* way, for some psychological or physiological cause, related by no moral or aesthetic principle; these last lead lives, perform acts, and entertain ideas that are centrifugal rather than centripetal, their thought is scattered or diffused, moving on many levels, seizing upon the essence of a vast variety of experiences and objects for what they are in themselves, without, consciously or unconsciously, seeking to fit them into, or exclude them from, any one unchanging, all-embracing, sometimes self-contradictory and incomplete, at times fanatical, unitary inner vision.<sup>7</sup>

Montaigne is, according to Berlin, a fox.<sup>8</sup> Europe as it is used in cosmographies and elsewhere, in Thevet's *Singularitez* and Ronsard's poetry for instance, represents a systematic, unitary vision of a fixed Europe as a homogenous block distinct from, and superior to, the rest of the world. It is this vision that has tended to dominate historical accounts of the idea (note the singular) of Europe in the Renaissance. But it was not the only vision at the time: where Thevet and Ronsard are monists, Rabelais and Montaigne are pluralists. A static Europe is in contradiction to the twists and turns of their thought. They both offer a much more complex picture of the continent and its significations than Thevet and Ronsard do. Their non-usage of the term Europe represents a rejection of the word as it was being used in the geographical writings that they reacted against in their works.

Savary de Brèves offers a different picture still. Like Rabelais and Montaigne, he has a much more fluid conception of the continent, but he differs from them in that he was able to make productive use of the word Europe. In his works he deploys an idea of Europe as a homogeneous, static concept shaped by opposition to the Ottoman Empire. He does this in order to defend the renewal of the Franco-Ottoman alliance that he negotiated. Yet in those very same writings he undermines that concept of Europe.

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<sup>7</sup> *The Hedgehog and the Fox: An Essay on Tolstoy's View of History* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1953), pp. 1-2.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

He represents the continent – and Christendom – not as a systematic block but as a collection of diverse and fragmented polities. He breaks down the grand narrative of opposition by foregrounding the transfers that take place across Christendom and the Ottoman Empire. The borders of Europe as he depicts them are much more flexible and malleable than the instances of the word Europe in his political tracts would suggest. Fearing that the Spanish will dominate the continent, he champions trade and cooperation with the Ottomans at the expense of Spain. Such anxieties highlight the contingent nature of thinking about Europe. Concern about Spanish hegemony reveals a different conception of the continent from the perspective, say, of a Spanish patriot. Only a Frenchman could have written as André Thevet did that ‘la France estoit situee au milieu de l’Europe, comme le coeur de la Chrestienté’ (*La Cosmographie universelle*, II, fol. 508<sup>r</sup>).

With such divergent meanings and uses of Europe it is pertinent to return to the formulation ‘nostre Europe’ and ask, whose Europe? In this thesis we have seen multiple Europes: a geographical Europe; variations on a cultural Europe defined in opposition to the New World, to the Ottoman Empire, to Orthodox Christianity; a political Europe which should unite to expel the Turks from the continent. Each writer examined herein offers a different idea of Europe, a different narrative about Europe. Each writer delimits different boundaries. The cosmographies offer a fixed geographical Europe enshrined with cultural values but find in their topographical descriptions that not everywhere in the continent meets these values, Muscovy and Greece in particular occupying an ambiguous place in relation to the Europe defined by Thevet and Belleforest. Montaigne delimits an imagined community, ‘nous’, that is wider than France but is not labelled Europe. Rabelais imagines numerous communities in the Old World in conflict with one another. Léry and d’Aubigné, also preoccupied with conflict, reject Europe and Christendom as grand narratives. However, Ronsard and de Brèves do deploy Europe as a meaningful idea, and they do so for rhetorical purposes – respectively, to praise the king and to defend the Franco-Ottoman alliance. The narratives of Europe each writer deploys – whether that is as an advanced culture, a geographical entity, or a space riven with conflict – are determined by the purposes and experiences of the author.

Of course, it is not just the figures of the Renaissance who told different stories about Europe; historians who write about the period also tell a story about the

continent.<sup>9</sup> Hay, Hale and Greengrass have described a Europe that came to prominence over the course of the sixteenth century, gradually replacing Christendom as a cultural symbol, a set of values, to which people, slowly becoming known as Europeans, were attached. This thesis has recounted an alternative story, presenting a fragmentary, multiperspectival narrative. Far from a linear history of Europe, the story told here is of Europes, of different conceptions at different times and constructed from different pens. From the vantage point of the twenty-first century we can see that, yes, Europe did eclipse Christendom so that now it is as much a word referring to culture and identity as it is a signifier of geography. This study has glimpsed just how complex, fraught, contested and uneven that process was.

The work of rethinking the meanings of Europe was not a simple transfer of the significations of one term, ‘Chrestienté’, to another, Europe; rather, it was a long negotiation of the contextual and discursive scope of the two words. The Europe which stood for a superior civilisation vis-à-vis the rest of the world was taken up in geographical, especially cosmographical, writing much more quickly than it was elsewhere. In other contexts, the newer meanings of the word were much slower to emerge. They were coming into travel writing – or texts like de Brèves’s and d’Aubigné’s that were likewise concerned with the similarities and dissimilarities between Christian Europe and the cultures to the east and west – as an alternative to, but not yet an outright replacement for, Christendom. Europe was perhaps more commonly found in relation to writing on the New World, whereas ‘Chrestienté’ was preferred to describe differences with the Ottoman Empire. The relative absence of the word Europe in the works of Rabelais and Montaigne indicate that, unlike today, it was not yet a term in common currency. Above all, Thevet’s fondness for the word in *Les Singularitez* and de Brèves’s switching between ‘Europe’ and ‘Chrestienté’ in his published works and correspondence demonstrate the contingent nature of the words themselves, liable as they were to be used to further specific agendas.

As a result, it is not easy to ascribe particular causes to the shifting nature of the term Europe. In the Introduction it was explained that historians have conventionally attributed the changes in the word during the Renaissance to four key factors: humanism, the discovery of the New World, the expansion of the Ottoman Empire and the Protestant Reformation. This thesis has indicated how uneven the impact of each of

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<sup>9</sup> See Hayden White’s *Metahistory* for his argument about the textuality of history and the stories that historians ‘construct’ about the past.

those causes was. While Ronsard's enthusiasm for classical culture is testified in his frequent use of the word Europe, the humanists Rabelais and Montaigne rarely use the term. Likewise, not all who wrote about the New World made use of the word Europe; although Thevet did, it is found much less in Léry's and Montaigne's writings on Brazil. The cosmographies, though, do indicate that the discovery of the New World had some impact on how Europe was represented. As for the Ottoman Empire, again we have seen that the response was not equivocal. While Ronsard's poetry reveals a Europe shaped in part against the Ottoman Empire, de Brèves offers a much less hostile picture of the Turks. Finally, the *Histoire universelle* of the Calvinist d'Aubigné has revealed the enduring utility of the word Christendom, even in the face of religious wars and scepticism about the idea of unity signified by the term.

In other words, this thesis has been concerned with the experiences of change as it was happening. It was not my goal to account for long-term developments in the conception of Europe. Inspired by Terence Cave's method of pre-history, I focussed on examining texts 'in the present tense of their articulation'.<sup>10</sup> The writers considered in the thesis were grappling with a world that was changing due to phenomena such as the Reformation and the discovery of the New World. Their works display the 'signs of a future story' about Europe, although the authors of course did not know what lay ahead.<sup>11</sup> It is precisely when the writers struggle to comprehend the changing world that the continuous threads in their thinking break down and signs of the future emerge. Rabelais's travellers in the *Quart Livre* go beyond the island of the Macraeons and beyond the intolerance of the Papimanes to an unknown destination. Both Thevet and Belleforest simultaneously include and exclude the Greeks and the Muscovites within the definitions of Europe that they provide in their cosmographies. D'Aubigné's *Histoire universelle* ends where it started with the prospect of further religious conflict. Horrified by the Tupi and longing to return to the New World, Léry's recollections of his journey to Brazil are ambivalent. De Brèves's political arguments rest on the contradictory foreign policy objectives of the destruction of the Ottoman Empire and cooperation with the Turks. Ronsard heralds a *translatio imperii* from Rome to France, yet writes also of a France ravaged by civil war. Montaigne, who travelling around the continent had experienced its diversity, writes in 'Des cannibales' and 'Des coches' of a community ('nous') that he cannot name.

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<sup>10</sup> Holland and Scholar, 'Introduction', p. 4.

<sup>11</sup> Cave, 'Master-Mind Lecture', p. 186.

### **Boundaries and shapes**

This thesis has been an exercise in boundaries. Material has been analysed from within the boundary of the French language. Previous studies of the idea of Europe have taken a different approach to the parameters of their work, often ignoring boundaries of language or polity so as to consider evidence from across the continent. This thesis, then, was an attempt to ask whether there really were no boundaries in thinking about Europe during the Renaissance, whether there really was ‘a European view of the world [...] which was more distinguished by its shared features than by its internal divisions’.<sup>12</sup> My conclusion is that there was not even a French view of the world, let alone a European view, although I do not doubt that some French writers held similar views to others across the continent. Of course, though, just as the conclusions of Wintle and others were based on the sources they used, so too are my conclusions drawn from the sources I have considered.

Further work could take a different approach in order to test and to extend the insights of the work done here. Whilst the focus here has been the word Europe, the term ‘Chrestienté’ has featured heavily. It would be interesting to examine Christendom using the methodology of word history as it was practised here. The question of national communities in relation to Europe/Christendom could be illuminated by a study that compares vernacular material with Latin texts. A particular topic could be analysed from the viewpoint of different languages. For instance, how was the Europa myth – which lay outside the scope of this thesis – represented in French, Latin, Spanish and other sources? Or, how was the relationship between Protestant England and the rest of Europe represented in different national vernaculars? Such questions do not have to be considered through the comparative lens of language but could also usefully be examined from the viewpoint of other cultural differences, including religion, social status and political belief.

Restricting the source material to French language texts, as this thesis has done, has offered new perspectives on thinking about Europe during the Renaissance period and new perspectives on the culture of Renaissance France. The approach taken has offered a new analysis of the history of the idea of Europe, flagging the plurality of conceptions of Europe at the expense of a linear narrative. In turn, the topic of Europe has led to new interpretations of sixteenth-century French texts. Within the boundary of

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<sup>12</sup> Wintle, p. 29.

French writing, different frames of reference have been considered: the contrasting religious beliefs of L ry and Thevet and others; the divergent political opinions of Michel de l'Hospital and d'Aubign , Ronsard and Montaigne; and distinctive social statuses, from exiles (L ry and d'Aubign ) to political insiders like Savary de Br ves. The emphasis on the word Europe in this thesis has uncovered how the concerns of these figures intersected with thinking about Europe. Thevet's promotion of empire, L ry's and d'Aubign 's feelings as French Calvinists, Ronsard's exaltation of French glory, and de Br ves's ambassadorial role can all be understood in part through the ways in which they used the term Europe. And those usages afford glimpses of how Europe was conceptualised during the period.

New readings of canonical French literature were made possible by the move away from a narrow focus on the instances of the word Europe and towards a consideration of the contexts in which the term sometimes appeared. The study widened its angle of vision from the term Europe to its 'field of meanings' and clusters of 'interrelated words and references'.<sup>13</sup> The comparative analysis of this cluster as it appeared in Apian's *Cosmographie* and Rabelais's *Quart Livre* shed new light on the form and meanings of the latter: I argued that the islands of the *Quart Livre* represent a reimagined Old World which creates a textual space for speculation about the future of Europe. The cluster of interrelated words that are used in Thevet's *Singularitez* are taken up in Montaigne's *essais* on the Americas. The consideration of the dynamics of those words and their meanings in the two works has provided fresh insight into two chapters, 'Des cannibales' and 'Des coches', which have been widely commented upon. In particular, to the question of to whom the 'nous' refers, I have been able to suggest a more satisfying answer than simply the 'Old World' or 'Europeans' or 'the French and Spanish': the absence of a noun definitively attached to the 'nous' stages Montaigne's uncertainty about cultural belonging and the world around him.

The thesis has demonstrated that in engaging with the lexicon connected to the word Europe, Rabelais and Montaigne were indirectly addressing issues about the term, its functions and the concept(s) to which it could refer. In their works they both reshaped the field of meanings around the term Europe. Montaigne reinterpreted the words 'sauvage' and 'barbare', both of which were crucial to Thevet's conception of Europe in *Les Singularitez*. In doing so, he shifted the meanings of the idea of Europe that Thevet had articulated, without using the word Europe more than once. As for

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<sup>13</sup> Williams, *Keywords*, p. 25; *ibid.*, p. 22.



Rabelais, in describing islands that resembled communities in Europe as no longer ‘riche’ he relocated the concept of Europe as it was used in the *Cosmographie* of Peter Apian. Despite the word Europe occurring just once in the *Quart Livre*, the idyll to which it elsewhere referred was dismissed as belonging to the past, not the present.

In conclusion, word history as it has been practised here has offered a wide view on the dynamics and problematics of the term Europe in Renaissance France. Paying attention to wider contexts, networks of meanings, and absences has generated a more thorough analysis of the word than a linear history or an account that did not consider non-usage would have done. Although the framework of this thesis has been writing in the French vernacular, it is apposite to return to Francis Bacon. The Introduction highlighted the fact that Bacon’s use of the phrase ‘we Europeans’ has been cited as evidence for the existence of a European identity by the beginning of the seventeenth century. I would argue that an examination of contexts in which a certain word does not appear allows for a better assessment of the usages of a word. In this thesis we have not encountered sufficient evidence to indicate that the sixteenth century gave birth to a European identity.

It can be concluded from this thesis that differing meditations on the shape and meanings of Europe featured in an array of discursive contexts during the Renaissance in France. Narratives of fragmentation, reduction and expansion were met with counter-narratives and different conceptions of what the shape of Europe might be. Where Léry and d’Aubigné pictured a Europe fragmented along religious lines, Michel de l’Hospital hoped to heal discord and unite along national lines. Both Ronsard and de Brèves resisted the threat of a Europe reduced by the Ottoman Empire: Ronsard with a fantasy of conquest; de Brèves with a pragmatic understanding of cultural and commercial exchange. Where Thevet championed the expansion of Europe, Montaigne imagined an end to the expansion of the Old World: ‘L’univers tombera en paralisie; l’un membre sera perclus, l’autre en vigueur’ (p. 911). Far from one idea of Europe in Renaissance France, there was one word at the intersection of multiple competing ideas about politics, culture, religion and the world. And there were opposed understandings of the cultural, political, social and even spatial meanings of that word.

(c.78,000 words)

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