Scepticism, atheism and libertinism: a study of the polemic between François Garasse and François Ogier, 1623-25.

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Thesis submitted for PhD examination

University of London

July 1996

Total number of words: 97,392
The Jesuit Garasse's *Doctrine curieuse* (1623), an attack on what he saw as the rise of atheism, has been quoted by many modern scholars, most notably Pintard in his *Libertinage érudit* (1943), as proof that libertinism existed in doctrinal form from the 1620s. This 'intellectual libertinism', as Pintard calls it, was allegedly practised by such influential thinkers as Gassendi, Naudé and La Mothe Le Vayer, and was the direct forerunner of later 17th- and 18th-century free thought.

Pintard's case rests on the assumption that Garasse was right to condemn Charron's *De la Sagesse* (1601) as the work of a secret atheist. Ogier, on the other hand, read *De la Sagesse* as a secular work by a Christian sceptic and humanist who was unquestionably devout and true to his priestly calling. In his *Jugement & censure du livre de la doctrine curieuse* (1623), Ogier condemns Garasse as a wordy scholastic unfit to judge the works of learned humanists; he sees him as an ignorant and narrow scholastic teacher, inaccurate in his scholarship and with a mind closed to humanist learning. A historical study of the polemic between Ogier and Garasse shows that their differences were the traditional ones one might expect: both the scholastic Garasse and the humanist Ogier use terms and arguments common in the polemics of their Renaissance antecedents. Ogier's view of Charron as a Christian humanist is echoed by Port-Royal's Saint-Cyran in his attack on Garasse's *Somme théologique* (1625) where he defends Charron as an Augustinian and condemns Garasse as an incompetent theologian.
Moreover, Garasse's *Somme*, where he expresses his own Christian apology and theology, contains a surprising development: while continuing to censure Charron as a writer, he himself makes use of many of the Christian sceptics' arguments - precisely those for which he had condemned Charron.
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INTRODUCTION

The starting-point of this thesis was a line in Marc Fumaroli's work *L'Age de l'éloquence*. In the course of his major study of rhetoric in the Renaissance and early seventeenth century, Fumaroli deals briefly with the quarrel between François Garasse and François Ogier (pp.329-34). Garasse was a Jesuit writer of polemics, whose fame is largely due to his book entitled *La Doctrine curieuse*, in which he studied what he saw as the rise of atheism in France in the 1620s, and speculated on the reasons for it, suggesting that certain literary figures had professed atheistic doctrines in their writing. Fumaroli finds fault with Garasse for his poor use of rhetoric, and considers that 'la réplique la plus efficace à la Doctrine curieuse' is to be found in the *Jugement & censure du livre de la doctrine curieuse*, written by Ogier. Fumaroli describes Ogier's work as 'un des premiers chefs-d'oeuvre de la critique littéraire classique' (p.332), and Ogier himself as 'un des grands méconnus de l'histoire littéraire du XVIIe siècle' (p.332). The close study of Garasse's *Doctrine curieuse* and of Ogier's *Jugement & censure* is the main object of my thesis.

The reading of the texts of Garasse and Ogier raises


2 *La Doctrine curieuse des beaux esprits de ce temps, ou pretendus tels: contenant plusieurs maximes pernicieuses à l'Estât, à la Religion, & aux bonnes moeurs. Combattue et renversée par le P. François Garassus de la Compagnie de Jesus* (Paris: Chappelet, 1623).

many issues besides the rhetorical questions which Fumaroli studied. Ogier did indeed reply to Garasse's excessive use of rhetoric, but also touched on other aspects of the Jesuit's arguments, devoting considerable space to refuting the accusations made against some, but not all, of the writers under attack from Garasse. In particular, a central figure to appear in the quarrel is Pierre Charron, a Catholic priest and follower of Montaigne. Charron was a leading Christian sceptic and humanist, but Garasse presented him as a major instigator of the libertine movement he was attacking, and accused him of leading a libertine lifestyle. Ogier, however, vehemently rebutted both of these accusations. A comparison of Charron's *De la Sagesse*, his major work, with Garasse's *Doctrine curieuse* reveals that criticism of Charron's thought is implied throughout Garasse's polemic, and that the latter is first and foremost a general attack on Charron's doctrine. Ogier, while defending Charron, also betrays his influence; he uses many of the ideas which were central to Charron's philosophical outlook. We shall return again and again to Charron's ideas, for the quarrel between Garasse and Ogier stemmed from their starkly opposed conclusions as to whether or not Charron's views were in keeping with the teachings of

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4 Pierre Charron, *De la Sagesse trois livres* (Bordeaux: Millanges, 1601). Anticipating objections to the text from the Sorbonne, Charron prepared a second edition, in which he sought to clarify matters of controversy, an edition which was published in Paris in 1604. References to the text are taken from the 1613 edition, (Paris: Douceur, 1613), which follows the 1604 text, and also includes the parts of the Bordeaux text which were removed, as well as Charron's *Petit traicté de sagesse*, intended as a succinct summary and further clarification of the main work.
the Catholic Church.

This quarrel occurred at a moment of change - and some confusion - in the history of ideas. It is important to start by establishing the context in which it took place. Chapter 1 begins, therefore, with a brief introduction to the main ideas contained in Charron's work. As these have strong connections with the debate between humanists and scholastics in the Renaissance, I look next at this debate. Charron's ideas echo those of other humanistic thinkers, some of whom were also attacked by Garasse: I devote a few pages each to some of the more important of these. I look first at Erasmus who was probably the most important of the humanists to attack scholastic scholarship; equally, although he was not the first Renaissance writer to revive and make systematic use of the arguments of scepticism, he was the figure whose sceptical ideas - at least until the Essais of Montaigne - had the most widespread influence in France. Secondly, I look briefly at some of the key ideas of Pomponazzi; he is of special interest both because Garasse attacks him by name and because his work was often widely misinterpreted by readers who refused to accept the distinction he made between the uncertain speculative arguments of secular philosophy and the certain - because divinely instituted - doctrines of the Catholic Church. Charron was to suffer similar treatment. The third figure essential to an understanding of Charron is Montaigne who influenced his ideas in almost every domain. Next, I look at the question of the sincerity of Charron's professions of faith. I end the first chapter with an introductory look at Garasse's general strategy in La Doctrine curieuse, which is
to lump together in a single atheistic band Charron and all those he wished, for one reason or another, to discredit.

Garasse's fame is due in part to the attention given to his works, particularly *La Doctrine curieuse*, by scholars of a more modern era. From the middle of the nineteenth century, scholars have seen his work as a potential mine of information on the presence of atheism in France in the 1620s. The culmination of this scholarship is René Pintard's *Libertinage érudit* (1943), where Charron is cited as one of those who encouraged the growth of atheism. The views of modern scholars on Garasse are of such importance that I devote a chapter to them (Chapter 2). Pintard's theories have been challenged, and part of the purpose of this thesis is to see how far these challenges are justified; I aim, too, to see the extent to which modern scholarship has built up myths about the early seventeenth century which are not supported by the original texts of Garasse, Ogier and Charron.

Chapters 3 and 4 offer a general introduction to the lives and works, respectively, of Garasse and Ogier.

The main body of my thesis is a close study of the key works: Chapters 5-7 focus on *La Doctrine curieuse* (1623) while, in Chapters 8-11, I look at Ogier's *Jugement & censure* (also 1623). It is through these works, particularly, that I hope to show the fundamental differences between Garasse's and Ogier's understanding of humanistic scepticism. In Chapters 12-14, I examine Garasse's *Apologie* (1624) in which he clarifies and adds to

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the arguments of *La Doctrine curieuse*. In Chapter 15, I look at the possible reasons behind the reconciliation between these two essentially irreconcilable opponents which took place early in 1624.

Chapter 16 steps outside the quarrel between Garasse and Ogier to look at a closely-related polemical work with the self-explanatory title of *L'Anti-Garasse* (1624). Written on behalf of the Pasquier family, probably by Antoine Rémy, their lawyer, it is a riposte to Garasse's attacks in a series of polemical works on Étienne Pasquier. *L'Anti-Garasse* has a number of elements in common with Ogier's *Jugement & censure*.

Chapters 17-20 examine Garasse's last works: the *Nouveau Jugement* (1625), a brief postscript to his quarrel with Ogier, and *La Somme théologique*, a thousand-page re-statement of his polemical and theological convictions, which makes his position on a number of issues much

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7 The British Library holds the second edition of this book, entitled *L'Anti-Garasse, divisé en cinq livres: I Le Bouffon II L'Imposteur III Le Pedant IV L'Injurieux V L'Impie* (Paris: Baragnes, 1627). It was attributed to A. Rémy, the Pasquiars' lawyer, who wrote the book at their behest. The privilège grants permission to print on behalf of Nicholas Pasquier, Sieur de Minxe and Guy Pasquier, Sieur de Bussy, a book called *Deffence pour Estienne Pasquier, vivant Conseiller du Roy, & Advocat General en la Chambre des Comptes, contre les Impostures & calomnies de Francois Garasse*, and is dated 23rd March 1624.

8 *Nouveau jugement de ce qui a esté dict et escrit pour & contre le livre de la DOCTRINE CURIEUSE des beaux esprits de ce temps, &c* (Paris: Quesnel, 1625).
clearer. This work, ridiculed by the future founder member of the Port-Royal movement, Saint-Cyran, in *La Somme des fautes et faussetes capitales contenues dans la somme théologique de Garasse* (1625), led to Garasse's exile to Poitiers, where, caring for the sick, he became ill and died in 1531.

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CHAPTER 1

HUMANISTS AND SCHOLASTICS IN THE RENAISSANCE AND SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

1. Pierre Charron

Pierre Charron was a humanist and philosophical sceptic. His central belief - the sceptical tenet to which Garasse objected particularly - was the idea that all assertions and assimilations should be doubted. Garasse did not believe that this view could be compatible with a belief in the doctrines of the Catholic Church. Christian sceptics suggested that the truth of Christianity could not be proved by rational means, but should be accepted as an article of faith, along with all the teachings of the Church. It was Garasse's belief that this statement was a ruse by which Charron, as well as other sceptics, sought to avoid censure. A first question arises as to whether or not Charron was sincere in his professions of total submission to the authority of the Church. A second and more difficult question to answer is whether Charron, however sincere in his own beliefs, may have unintentionally caused people less devout than himself to draw atheistic conclusions from his work. If so, this might explain at least in part the violence of Garasse's attacks on Charron as a libertine influence.

Charron's works were an examination of both religious and human knowledge. His first book, Les Trois veritez, argued in favour of the Catholic Church against Reformers.¹

¹ Pierre Charron, Les Trois Veritez contre les Athées, Idolatres, Juifs, Mahumetans, Heretiques, & Schismatiques. Le tout traitcez en trois livres (Bordeaux: Millanges, 1593).
The three truths were the existence of God, that Christianity was the true religion, and that the Catholic Church was the true representation of Christianity. His Discours chrestiens is a collection of Charron’s sermons, and is a theological work, exploring the nature of God, and the nature of divine providence in worldly affairs. In De la Sagesse, a work of secular philosophy, Charron examines the nature, and possible extent, of human knowledge. It is written with the assumption that, as God is unknowable to human minds, human wisdom is immeasurably inferior to divine wisdom, to the extent that the human, in essence, can be certain of nothing.

The importance of this conclusion, as we shall see, lies in part in the fact that it threw doubt upon the values of scholasticism. The scholastics, teaching the Christianised Aristotelianism of Thomas Aquinas, dominated teaching in French schools and universities throughout the Renaissance and the seventeenth century. It was believed by most scholastics that their knowledge came from a source so deserving of respect and deference that it was their duty to preserve it in its entirety. They taught by rote-learning and by instilling in their pupils the rhetorical skills needed to support and defend scholastic principles, and to quash any variations from them. Charron states, in De la Sagesse, that there could be no human authority for truth:

La Vérité ne dépend point de l’authorité ou témoignage d’homme: Il n’y a point de principes aux hommes, si la divinité ne les leur a revelés: tout le reste n’est que songe & fumée. Or ces Messieurs ici veulent que l’on croye & reçoive ce qu’ils disent, & que l’on s’en fie à

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He attacks the method of teaching by rote-learning (p.88), and states explicitly that he does not use scholastic rhetoric in his work:

je traite & agis icy non scolastiquement ou pedantesquement ny avec estendue de discours, & appareil d’éloquence, ou aucun artifice: La Sagesse [...] n’a que faire de toutes ses façons pour sa recommandation, elle est trop noble & glorieuse: mais brusquement ouvertement, ingenuëment: ce qui (peut estre) plaira pas à tout. (the second of two p.14s in the text)

Given that Garasse was himself a teacher in a Jesuit school, and therefore taught scholasticism, and that Ogier devotes considerable space to defending the humanist and sceptic Charron, it is hardly surprising that their quarrel has many of the features of the wider quarrel between scholastics and humanistic sceptics.

2. The humanist-scholastic debate

The quarrel between humanists and scholastics has recently been studied in depth by Erika Rummel. She paints a picture of two groups who became increasingly polarised. In its initial stages, from the late fourteenth century, the debate centred on the importance of language studies and the use of classical writers in the search for wisdom:

Generally speaking, humanists supported classical learning, gave weight to stylistic considerations, and emphasized the importance of linguistic skills in biblical studies; scholastics took the opposite view. (Rummel, p.14)

As Rummel points out, positions were not always so clear-cut:

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However, the protagonists were usually too sophisticated to speak in unqualified terms. Thus humanists supported classical learning, acknowledging however [Rummel's italics] that pagan authors lacked the light of faith; scholastics cautioned against classical learning, acknowledging however that pagan wisdom could be adapted to Christian purposes. (Rummel, p.14)

The debate was characterised by the invective which was used by both sides. The substance of debates between humanists and scholastics was often obscured by the language of combat:

In the radicalized language of the debate [...] the battle lines were drawn and the stereotypes established: all scholastic theologians were obscurantists who had never read classical authors, wrote atrocious Latin, and were interested only in esoteric quibbles, while all humanists were grammarians and wordspinners, interested in form rather than substance, pseudo-Christians whose brains had been addled by reading pagan literature. (Rummel, p.11)

In the period before the Reformation, the battleground between humanists and scholastics was the universities, and the battle centred on the university curriculum. The stakes were, however, raised by the rise of Luther and his split from the Roman Church. In remarking that 'it is not permitted these days to open one's mouth about things that earlier one could debate on either side', the humanist Erasmus draws attention to the fact that the Reformation changed the nature of the debate. 'For scholastics, it was a short step to equate humanism with Lutheranism.'

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4 Erasmus, Opera Omnia (Lugduni Batavorum, 1706), X, Col 1334 A - B.

5 Rummel remarks that scholastics 'eagerly seized on certain humanistic elements in Luther's program - his call ad fontes, his support for language studies, his denunciation of scholastic Aristotelianism - to blur the distinctions and kill two birds with one stone: suppress the "heretic" and saddle the humanistic upstarts at the universities with a reputation for supporting heresy' (Rummel, p.128).
an equally short step to state that opposition to
scholasticism was synonymous with opposition to the
Church. 6

As we shall see, these two equations, and the use of
invective, were characteristic of Garasse’s attack on
humanistic scepticism in 1623. Garasse’s attack, however,
complicates the picture still further by drawing no
distinction between humanists who embraced Lutheran reform,
and those who sought to integrate humanistic and sceptical
ideas into a worldview which remained faithful to the
Catholic Church.

The background to Garasse’s attacks on the humanist
Charron goes back to the earliest days of humanism. It is
too vast for me to give an adequate analysis of it here.
However, in order to place certain patterns of thought
before our minds as we look at the philosophical,
theological and polemical positions taken up by Charron,
Garasse and Ogier, it is useful to look very briefly at some
of the figures who helped to shape Charron’s thinking, and
who inspired Garasse’s strong dislike. Three of the most
important are Erasmus, Pomponazzi and Montaigne.

3. Desiderius Erasmus (1467 - 1536)

The importance of Erasmus in the history of humanism and

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6 Rummel cites, for example, the view of the scholastic
Melchior Cano, in De locis theologicis (1563), who
states:
No one can despise scholasticism without danger to
the faith. Ever since the rise of scholasticism,
there has always been (and there is now) a
connection between disrespect for the school and
pestilential heresy. (p.232 (ed. Padua, 1734),
translated by Rummel, p.82)
scepticism is a reflection not only of his great contribution to Biblical and patristic scholarship, but also of the fact that he lived and wrote at the time of the early Reformation when the minds of Christians, particularly in northern Europe, were in a state of some ferment and uncertainty. Erasmus was a major voice in the humanists' campaign against the scholastics, and he, more than any other, etched out the direction humanism and scepticism were to take in the post-Reformation age.

Born in Rotterdam, and so a humanist of northern Europe, Erasmus was one of the greatest scholars of his age. His early experiences, in which he became a monk and attended the University of Paris, left him, from the evidence of his future works, with a distaste for the monastic life and with a profound disapproval of scholastic scholarship and methods of education. Both are criticised in his *Praise of Folly*: theologians have complicated the teaching of Scripture to the point where its original exponents would have difficulty

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7 For example, Richard Popkin makes Erasmus the starting-point for his history of scepticism. See Popkin, *The History of Scepticism from Erasmus to Spinoza*, rev. edn. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979). Popkin sees in the 'Intellectual crisis of the Reformation' (Chapter 1) the time when ancient sceptical ideas began to be used to promote the idea, against Luther, that rational knowledge was impossible: Martin Luther's views and his quarrel with Erasmus may be briefly considered as an indication of how the Reformation spawned the new problem [of the possibility of knowledge]. This is not to suggest that the issue arose only at the time of Luther's break from the Catholic Church. Rather, that time is an arbitrary starting-point for tracing the sceptical influence in the formation of modern thought, a time which points up not only the conflict between the criteria of religious knowledge of the Church and of the Reformers, but also the type of philosophical difficulties the conflict was to generate. (p.1)
understanding it:

Such is the erudition and complexity they all display that I fancy the apostles themselves would need the help of another Holy Spirit if they were obliged to join issue on these topics with our new breed of theologian.®

Erasmus makes it clear that he is attacking the absurd jargon favoured by the scholastics:

These subtle refinements of subtleties are made still more subtle by all the different lines of scholastic argument, so that you’d extricate yourself faster from a labyrinth than from the tortuous obscurities of realists, nominalists, Thomists, Albertists, Ockhamists, and Scotists - and I’ve not mentioned all the sects, only the main ones. (p.127)

Monks were similarly practising a religion which bore no resemblance to the original faith described in the New Testament:

The happiness of these people is most nearly approached by those who are popularly called ‘religious’ or ‘monks’. Both names are false, since most of them are a long way removed from religion, and wherever you go these so-called solitaries are the people you’re most likely to meet. (p.130)

Erasmus was a leading figure in the humanists’ campaign for the promotion of language studies. His knowledge of Greek enabled him to read the New Testament in its original language, and to interpret it in ways which were lost to the scholastic theologians, and indeed had been to Thomas Aquinas, whose works were seminal to scholasticism, who knew only Latin. Erasmus advocated the learning of the languages originally used to write the Bible:

Our first care must be to learn the three languages, Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, for it is plain that the mystery of all Scripture is revealed in them.

In doing so, Erasmus criticised both ‘the ignorance of the

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teachers', and their laziness in not being open to new ideas:

In my opinion, we must not listen to those who grow old and stale involved in sophistical nonsense, saying: "Jerome's version suffices". For those who give this answer are most likely people who make no effort even to learn Latin, so that Jerome's version is wasted on them.  

Erasmus's championing of new developments and translations of the Bible gained him enemies among scholastic theologians, who associated him with Luther. For example, the Paris theologian Pierre Cousturier suggested that

Erasmus's views verged on heresy:

We do not need a knowledge of foreign languages for an understanding of Holy Writ and for this reason it is vain and frivolous to spend time on learning them. Nor is it necessary to learn them for the purpose of producing a new translation of Scripture, for the Vulgate translation is quite sufficient [...] It is completely insane and smacks of heresy for anyone to affirm that one should sweat over foreign languages for this purpose.

The accusation that Erasmus held the same views as Luther was scotched by Erasmus's *De libero arbitrio* (1524), in which he argued against Luther, particularly on the subject of free-will. Erasmus's ideas were aimed at reform, not schism. His works were syncretistic and sceptical. His *Adagia*, which first appeared in 1500, and which he expanded throughout his life, were a collection of proverbs, taken from classical literature and applied to the world of the Renaissance, often with a corresponding biblical reference. Margaret Mann Phillips remarks that the *Adagia*

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9 Erasmus, *Ratio seu compendium veram theologiam*, (1518), seventh page and ninth page (of unpaginated text). The translations are from Rummel, p.112 and p.113.

were a handbook of ancient wisdom:

The book was a treasure-house of style. But the essential aim was to recapture, in this handy portmanteau form, the outlook and way of life of the classical world, through its customs, legends, and social institutions, and to put within reach of a modern public the accumulated wisdom of the past.  

Erasmus aimed to show that the wisdom of the ancients was the same wisdom which appeared in the Bible. Their wisdom was divinely inspired, for 'the Adages lend themselves [...] to Erasmus's favourite view of learning, as an edifice of reason crowned by the revelation of God' (Mann Phillips, p.10).

Socrates is the principal ancient source of sceptical arguments. His statement that the only thing that he knew was that he knew nothing re-echoes throughout Renaissance sceptical writings. This belief was the cornerstone of Erasmus's satirical Praise of Folly, in which he sets out his own sceptical ideas. Folly mocks all those who aspire to knowledge, including Socrates himself, on the grounds that this aspiration betrays ignorance of the human condition and human capabilities. The voice of Folly of course cannot always be trusted, but, in a hyperbolic manner, she reflects the real scepticism Erasmus felt about much scholarship. Socrates is praised by Folly because of his awareness of his own ignorance:

On one point the man was sensible enough - he refused to accept the epithet 'wise' but attributed it to the god. He also held the view that the wise man should steer clear of taking part in politics, though maybe he should have gone further and advised anyone who wants to be counted a man to keep well away from wisdom. (Collected

The first part of Folly's statement here is undoubtedly Erasmian; on avoiding wisdom she perhaps speaks with the licence permitted to Folly.

If humans lived in the simplicity and ignorance which was their natural state, they could then hope to discover true knowledge in the form of divine revelation. A belief in this state of 'Christian folly', which Erasmus backs up with several examples from the Bible, played an important part in the development of scepticism in the sixteenth century.  

12 Charron, too, taking his views from Montaigne’s Essais, praised Socrates for the recognition of his simple, human nature:

Un grand maistre & admirable docteur en la nature a esté Socrates, comme en l’art & science Aristote. Socrates par les simples & naturels propos, par similitudes & inductions vulgaires, parlant comme un paisan, une femme, fournit des preceptes & regles de bien vivre, & des remedes contre tous maux, tels, si forts & vigoureux, que tout l’art & science du monde ne scauroit inventer, ny y arriver. (De la Sagesse, p.360)

For Charron, too, this recognition was in response to the knowledge of human ignorance:

Il n’y a rien de certain que nous ne sçavons rien, qu’il n’y a rien en nature que le doute, rien de certain que l’incertitude. (p.331)

13 See M.A.Screech, Ecstasy and the Praise of Folly (London: Duckworth, 1980). Screech points out that madness lies at the heart of all Christian belief: Erasmus worshipped a God who saved the world by an act of divine madness: the mission of his Son as the incarnate Christ. God incarnate also acted like a madman. So did his chief disciples. And so too - according to Erasmus - do his true followers in all ages. (p.xviii)

Like many of Erasmus’ beliefs, this was a view familiar to those who knew the work of Greek theologians such as Origen, rather than those of Western Catholicism who worked from Latin texts.

In supporting the doctrine of Christian scepticism, both Montaigne and Charron suggested that the mind should be emptied of worthless human opinion, so that it could be filled with divine grace. See Montaigne, ‘Apologie de Raymond Sebond’, Essais, (Paris: Garnier Flammarion, 1969), II, 12, p.172, and Charron, De la Sagesse, p.338. An illustration of the sceptical method
Erasmus's conclusion to the text contrasts the state of the happy Christian fool with the self-loving state of numerous figures to be found in the world, not only theologians and monks, but also pedants (p.122) and philosophers (pp.125-26). They all believed that they had discovered a foolproof system for living, but were in fact characterised by the folly of those who suffer from philautia (p.116).

Erasmus's criticisms are largely based on his belief that the Catholic Church and its theologians had become too far removed from their original authority, which was above all the New Testament. His belief that worship was often reduced, by rote-learning of Scripture, teaching and prayers, to superstition was to be repeated by later sceptics. Nowhere, however, did he propose or even hint at the rejection of the Church. Recent scholastic interpreters, not the authority of the Church, were his targets. His desire was for the return of the sort of humility shown by Socrates, for the recognition of the

in action can be found in Rabelais's Tiers Livre. The character Judge Bridoye decides all his cases by trusting to the roll of a dice. Rabelais informs us that the only decision ever reversed on appeal occurred because the Judge's failing eyesight caused him to misread his dice. See Rabelais, Oeuvres Complètes, 2 vols (Paris: Classiques Garnier, 1962), II, pp.565-84, and M.A.Screech, Rabelais (London: Duckworth, 1979), pp.265-77.

14 Erasmus states:

But could anyone be so foolish - or, I suppose, so happy - as those who promise themselves supreme bliss for repeating daily those seven short verses of the holy Psalms? (p.114)


15 Erasmus repeatedly insisted that his work did not in any way oppose the Church. See, for example, his apologia to the revised edition of his annotations on the New Testament (1522), in Opera Omnia, IX Cols 1069D, 870D.
weakness and insignificance of the human race in the face of
the divine in all its manifestations.

We shall find in Charronian thought three of these
interlocking elements from the work of Erasmus: the
systematic use of sceptical arguments to confound scholastic
argument; a hatred of superstition masquerading as
Christianity; and a strong conviction that Christians and
Christianity had much to learn from classical wisdom.

4. Pietro Pomponazzi (1462 - 1525)

Pomponazzi was an Italian scholar who studied for many years
at the University of Padua, which became a major centre for
humanistic studies during the Renaissance. His work is
important in that, unlike his contemporary Erasmus, he was
primarily an Aristotelian scholar. However, he, too,
formulated Christian sceptical ideas, similar to those of
Erasmus, and, like Erasmus, became a focus for controversy:
some of his books were published only posthumously, and it
was suggested that he was an atheist. Pomponazzi himself
always professed himself a Christian who submitted to the
authority of the Church - and he received a Christian
burial.

Pomponazzi's two most important works were De
Immortalitate animae (1516) and De Incantationibus (1520).
Both works sought to reconcile Christian beliefs - in the
immortality of the soul and in miracles - with Aristotelian
philosophy. In the first book, Pomponazzi sets out various
proofs of the soul's immortality, but rejects them all,
concluding instead that this issue is unprovable by rational
means, but must be accepted as an article of faith:
that the soul is immortal is an article of faith, as appears from the Apostle's Creed and the Athanasian Creed; hence it ought to be proved by what is proper to faith. But the means on which faith relies is revelation and canonical Scripture. Hence it is proved truly and properly only by them.  

In De Incantationibus, Pomponazzi attempts to offer explanations for occurrences normally ascribed to demons or spirits. Again, he finds rational means inadequate for the task, arguing that certain miracles described by ancient authors such as Pliny can be explained by natural causes, while others cannot. Using the same criteria, parts of the Gospel can be similarly explained, which Pomponazzi finds unacceptable as this contradicts the teaching of the Church (p.149). Ultimately, he felt that as some miracles, such as the feeding of the five thousand, are clearly supernatural, it is best to accept that all those events considered miraculous by the Church are indeed so:

Bref, tout ce qui aura été tenu pour miracle par l'Église, il faut le croire fermement miraculeux; ce qu'elle affirme non miraculeux, il faut aussi le croire non miraculeux, car rien n'est décreté par l'Église catholique si ce n'est sous l'action de la parole de Dieu et du Saint-Esprit. (p.156)

Stories of pagan origin can be attributed to such explanations as cures by people skilled in the use of natural medicines (p.134), the power of the human imagination (p.126), or simply the fact that they had been invented as fables in order to educate the populace (p.214).


The question of Pomponazzi's sincerity arises partly from his method of scholarship. He sometimes follows the kind of pro et contra construction favoured by scholastics, meaning that his work contains a number of ideas which he at first suggests as being possible, but then - presenting the contra stage of the argument - rejects as being incompatible with the teachings of the Church.  

Pomponazzi's sincerity is also questioned, in the minds of those determined to find atheism in sceptical works, because some of his ideas are later to be found in the work of other sceptical writers, notably in Charron's De la Sagesse. These ideas include the belief that people should cultivate their own individual nature and work towards their own individual goal (De immortalitate animae, p.356, see De la Sagesse, pp.376-80), that virtue is its own reward in this life, regardless of what happens to the soul after death (p.362, see De la Sagesse, p.372), that much Christian worship has become superstitious (De incantationibus, p.236, see De la Sagesse, p.389), and that God is by definition unknowable to human minds (p.202, see Charron's 'Discours de

18 For example, Chapter 7 of De immortalitate animae is entitled, 'In which there is set forth a way affirming that the mortal and the immortal are the same in existence in Man, but that the essence is unqualifiedly immortal, while relatively mortal'. Pomponazzi notes that this is the view proposed by Thomas Aquinas, and justifies his statements by quoting Aristotle. Chapter 8 is entitled, 'In which doubts are raised concerning the aforesaid way'. While producing a number of objections to Aquinas, Pomponazzi nevertheless states his own position, which is to rely on the judgment of the higher authority of Scripture: Of the truth of this position there is for me no doubt at all, since the Canonical Scripture, which must be preferred to any human reasoning and experience whatever, as it was given by God, sanctions this position. (p.302)
la connaissance de Dieu' in the *Discours chrétiens*).

It is not in any absolute sense possible to judge the genuineness of Pomponazzi's adherence to the Church and its doctrines. We can only consider the evidence available. It seems to me, however, that there is no good reason to question the sincerity of Pomponazzi's quite clear and sensible distinction between what is knowable through the exercise of human reason and what is knowable through divine revelation, through the gift of faith. While we cannot know Pomponazzi's innermost thoughts, my policy is to believe what writers say provided there is no clear evidence for not doing so. The view given by Pomponazzi's publisher Grataroli in his preface to *De Incantationibus* seems to be a realistic interpretation of Pomponazzi's standpoint:

Cet auteur, comme il l'a fait ailleurs pour l'immortalité de l'âme, a paru avoir dans ce livre des sentiments assez peu orthodoxes sur certains miracles couramment reçus dans la religion chrétienne. Mais on aurait dû se souvenir en lisant ses livres ou en écoutant ses leçons qu'il répétait volontiers que comme philosophe, c'est-à-dire comme disciple d'Aristote dont il se recommande toujours, il ne croyait pas absolument à l'immortalité de l'âme, ce dogme ne pouvant se soutenir par la doctrine d'Aristote; mais que comme chrétien il ne s'écartait pas de la doctrine catholique. (p.110)

Pomponazzi's stance was to consider the revealed knowledge of the Church as sacrosanct, while exploring, as a secular philosopher, the possibilities of rationally-based, human knowledge.

5. Michel de Montaigne (1533 - 1592)

The work of Montaigne is the most important in the history of Christian scepticism in sixteenth and seventeenth-century France. It reflects many of the ideas of Erasmus and
Pomponazzi. The *Essais* are the principal source for Charron's brand of Christian scepticism. He learned the Socratic method of questioning every assumption more from Montaigne than from the Socratic dialogues themselves. Montaigne, for example, gives a sharper focus to the issue of self-knowledge, because his work is about himself, the only subject about which he felt qualified to write. Montaigne set out to 'assay himself', that is, to see how classical thinking fitted in with his own individual experience. As M.A.Screech states, the result was an exploration of human wisdom, in which the wisdom of the Church, though accepted as sacrosanct, was set aside as Montaigne explored other avenues:

He wanted to find out, by human inquiry, how he should live and how he should die. The Church supplied the answers in her own terms. Montaigne, especially after the Roman censors gave a friendly jog to his arm, protested his complete acceptance of her conclusions and then - in the *Essays* - set them firmly aside, to be brought in when solutions were sought, not at the outset or when he was enjoying the chase. He acknowledged his Church's right to censor, but he also asserted that Theology (with a capital T) best kept her dignity by remaining apart from the mere humanities. As a humanist he enjoyed seeking after truth, even though truth, by human means alone, can seldom if ever be found within this life. Such an attitude strikes some as insincere, as though Montaigne were writing tongue-in-cheek. But Montaigne, in one respect, shared something with those university Aristotelians who were called Nominalists. They, like him, maintained that human inquiries and Theology were better kept apart for their mutual good. Then Theology could display her truths and have them accepted on the Church's impregnable authority, while human inquiry proceeded to explore doubtless lesser truths in humbler and more tentative ways. Of course, such a claim opens the way to cynical lip-service to one sort of truth and a real concern with the other. That is not, however, the essence of this claim.\(^{19}\)

The chapter which deals most specifically with sceptical

ideas is the ‘Apologie de Raymond Sebond’, in which Montaigne seeks to discover whether the Christian faith could be proved using rational means. He comes to the same conclusion as Pomponazzi:

les chrétiens se font tort de vouloir appuyer leur créance par des raisons humaines, qui ne se conçoit que par foi et par une inspiration particulière de la grâce divine. (II, 12, p.107)

With reason proving insufficient for the task, Montaigne explores the best way to approach a knowledge of God. Although a full knowledge of God is impossible given that the majesty of divine affairs is quite beyond human understanding (II, 12, p.184), people can help themselves by adopting a humble countenance in keeping with their lowly human state (p.155), by practising moderation in their behaviour (p.223), and by approaching all human opinions with an attitude of doubt. Montaigne believes Pyrrhonism to be the best way to prepare for the receipt of divine grace:

...il n’est rien en l’humaine invention où il y ait tant de verisimilitude et d’utilité. Cette-cy présente l’homme nud et vide, reconnaissant sa foiblesse naturelle, propre à recevoir d’en haut quelque force estrangere, desgarni d’humaine science, et d’autant plus apte à loger en soy la divine, aneantissant son jugement pour faire plus de place à la foi; ny mescreant, ny establissant aucun dogme contre les observances communes; humble, obeissant, disciplinable, studieux; ennemi juré d’hæresie, et s’exemptant par consequent des vaines et irreligieuses opinions introduites par les fausses sectes. (p.172)

The use of scepticism as a tool for defending orthodoxy is important and, it seems to me, makes nonsense of allegations that calls to accept the teaching of the Catholic Church above all other considerations were made purely to avoid censure. Montaigne, like his sceptical predecessors, distinguished between the revealed wisdom of the Church, which was beyond doubt, and flawed and incomplete human
wisdom which was the legitimate domain of secular philosophers.

Having stated the importance of a balanced mind and body as an important facet of the wise person, many of Montaigne's chapters dealt with impediments to this balance. In doing so, Montaigne often makes the same criticisms, and against the same targets, as Erasmus had done. For example, in 'L'Institution des enfans', Montaigne rejects scholastic methods of education in favour of a system which places more importance on the understanding and social utility of knowledge than on knowledge itself (I, 26, p.206), while scholastic notions of truth and certainty are attacked in 'De l'art de conférer' (III, 8, p.142). 'Des prières' attacks selfishness and insincerity in prayers (I, 56, p.378), while 'De la præsomption' reiterates the belief that recognition of our own ignorance is the first goal of philosophy:

La philosophie ne me semble jamais avoir si beau jeu que quand elle combat nostre presomption et vanité, quand elle reconnaît de bonne foy son irresolution, sa foiblessé et son ignorance. (II, 17, p.297)

These are only a few of the issues raised in the Essais, where Montaigne, like Erasmus in the Adages, explores human nature, measuring it against sources from classical literature. The Essais are very much an experimental work, exploring some of the uses of scepticism and other ancient philosophies, but they were never intended as a unified and ordered philosophy. It was Charron who was to attempt to codify the work of Montaigne, and others, into a recognisable and coherent doctrine. This was to be the next stage in the development of scepticism.
6. The question of Charron's faith

The importance of Pierre Charron lies not only in his position as a humanistic thinker, but also in the fact that, since Garasse's attack on him, he has been the focus for those who equate Christian scepticism with the birth of libertinism. De la Sagesse presents the various strands of humanist, sceptical thought, the majority of which are to be found in Montaigne's Essais, as an ordered doctrine. The presence in Charron's doctrine of the three philosophies which most influenced the Essais - scepticism, stoicism and Epicureanism - can be judged by reading his chapter headings. Charron cites as three of his goals the sceptical ideal of 'universelle & plaine liberté de l'esprit, tant en jugement qu'en volonté' (Book 2, Chapter 2), the Stoic's ideal of freedom from the passions, 'exemption &

20 It would be difficult to overestimate the importance of Charron's work. His books, especially De la Sagesse, were published in numerous editions in the seventeenth century, the catalogue for the Bibliothèque Nationale listing thirty-nine in all for De la Sagesse. This work was also successful in England, being translated for the first time in 1608. For much of this time, Charron's work proved to be more popular than that of Montaigne, a fact which Charron's biographer J.B. Sabrié ascribed to Charron's more structured arguments and less personal tone. See his De l'Humanisme au rationalisme: Pierre Charron (1541 - 1603): l'homme, l'oeuvre, l'influence (Paris: Alcan, 1913), p.490.

21 Sabrié identifies five major sources of De la Sagesse. In addition to Montaigne, he also names the humanistic scholars Guillaume du Vair and Justus Lipsius (whose influences Charron acknowledges on p.113 and p.487 respectively), the Spanish doctor Jean Huarte and the jurisconsult Jean Bodin. The debt to Lipsius and du Vair is part of a much wider debt to ancient learning in general. The ideas which Sabrié attributes to Huarte and Bodin, namely the need for individuals to cultivate their own natures, and the need for a structured hierarchy in society where individuals live according to their natures, could equally be said to derive from Montaigne's Essais.
affranchissement des erreurs & vices du monde & des passions' (Book 2, Chapter 1) and the Epicurean ideal of pleasure through self-regulation, 'regler ses desirs & plaisirs' (Book 2, Chapter 6). Charron's view was that he had no reason to be ashamed of such borrowings; his aim was to teach wisdom, not to write a clever and original book and he found the Essais invaluable. He stamps his individuality on Montaigne's discursively presented ideas by incorporating them into an ordered document. Montaigne's self-questioning Que sais-je? of the Essais became, in Charron's hands, a definite statement which said Je ne scay.

It is this ordering which Sabrié, after listing a large number of sources of De la Sagesse, describes as the 'originalité de Charron' (Chapter XI, pp.276-84).

Perhaps as a direct result of this orderly presentation of his ideas, Charron was the writer who was singled out by Garasse as being representative of the atheistic and libertine tendencies allegedly inherent in the sceptical movement. Garasse went further, suggesting Charron was himself an atheist, and that his own lifestyle reflected the atheistic and libertine values which Garasse believed that his work promoted.

It is important, as Garasse's attacks have had considerable influence over the way Charron has been viewed right up to modern times, to review such evidence as there

22 Charron defends his borrowing from du Vair on the grounds that du Vair had dealt with the calming of the passions so eloquently that it was best to repeat his views:

Et n'ay point veu qui les depeigne plus naivement & richement que le sieur du Vair en ses petits livrets moraux, desquels je me suis fort servy en ceste matiere passionnée. (De la Sagesse, p.113)
is on Charron’s life. The primary source for the biographical details of Pierre Charron is the preface to the second edition of De la Sagesse (1604), in which Gabriel-Michel de la Rochemaillet gives a résumé of his life. It must be remembered that at the time of writing, La Rochemaillet was fighting to maintain Charron’s reputation and to secure the right to publish his work, and it was therefore in his own interests to portray Charron as a good sound Catholic. Consequently, La Rochemaillet’s conclusion that Charron was an exemplary person is hardly surprising:

Pour conclusion, ce qui a esté touché cy dessus est assez suffisant pour montrer et tesmoigner combien le sieur Charron estoit Religieux, conscientieux & craignant Dieu, qu’il estoit homme bien vivant & charitable, sage, prudent & avisé, grand Philosophe & insigne Orateur, & qu’il estoit richement orné & doué des plus rares & excellentes vertus, tant morales & humaines, que Chrestiennes & divines, qui rendront sa memoire honorable, & grandement recommendable entre les gens de bien & d’honneur jusques à la perfection du monde & consommation des siecles. 23

La Rochemaillet’s account informs us that Charron attended the University of Paris (p.i), qualified as a lawyer (p.ii), taught himself theology ‘à la lecture des Peres & docteurs de l’Eglise’ (p.ii), and became an acclaimed preacher:

par ce qu’il avoit la langue bien pendue & qu’il s’estoit formé un stile libre & relevé par dessus le commun des Théologiens, il s’exerça à la predication de la parole de Dieu, par permission des Curez & Pasteurs, où incontinent il parut & s’acquit une merveilleuse réputation entre les plus doctes de ce temps là, mesmes à l’endroit de plusieurs Evesques & grands Prelats qui estoient lors en ceste ville, & y avoit presse entr’eux à qui le pourroit avoir en son Evesché ou Diocese. (p.ii)

Charron held posts at Bordeaux, Cahors and Condom, and at

23 Gabriel-Michel de la Rochemaillet, Eloge véritable ou Sommaire Discours de la vie de Pierre Charron, Parisien, vivant docteur ès droicts, p.xv. This work can be found in the 1613 edition of De la Sagesse.
the time of his death in 1603, was considering accepting a post from Claude Dormy, Bishop of Boulogne.

Further research was needed to confirm the statements about Charron made by La Rochemailllet, and two very different accounts have been submitted by Sabrié and Alfred Soman. Sabrié sought to reconcile La Rochemailllet's version with verifiable facts, and concluded that his account was essentially accurate, even if certain aspects of Charron's life had been given greater prominence than they deserved. For example, whereas La Rochemailllet suggested that Charron's interest in humanism derived from his university studies (p.i), Sabrié, noting criticisms of university education in De la Sagesse, suggests that it was more likely that Charron had a love of books engendered in him by his father, who was a publisher. Soman, on the other hand, presents La Rochemailllet as a 'legal hack and dabbler in the humane letters' (p.63), and states that:

> a rigorous examination of the few existing sources and an insistence upon internal consistency of the evidence makes it possible to suggest an alternative hypothesis to the traditional interpretations. (p.59)

Soman presents Charron as an insignificant figure, who, at least at the time of publication, influenced neither atheists nor erudite believers. De la Sagesse, Soman suggests,

> despite certain passages which may seem rationalistic and libertine to us [his italics], was probably intended as a handbook of humanistic ethics for the non-erudite Christian. (p.77)

In order to judge the relative merits of the two

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approaches, it is worth pausing to consider another aspect of Charron's life: his alleged friendship with Montaigne. According to La Rochemaillet, Charron 'vescut fort familièrement avec Messire Michel de Montaigne' (p.v). The evidence for the friendship is, firstly, to be found in the Bibliothèque Nationale, in the form of a copy of Bernardino Ochino's Catechisme, in which is written Charron, ex dono dicti domini de Montaigne, in suo castello. 2 Julii, anno 1586; secondly, Charron left money to Montaigne's daughter in his will. Sabrié states these pieces of evidence, and accepts that their friendship was logical:

Montaigne était l'auteur des Essais, Charron était un prédicateur apprécié. Il serait étonnant qu'ils n'aient pas éprouvé l'un et l'autre le désir de se connaître. De plus, leurs fonctions ont pu assez facilement les mettre en rapport. Comme délégué du chapitre ou comme écolâtre, il est assez naturel que Charron ait eu affaire avec le maire de Bordeaux. (p.44)

Soman, on the other hand, insists that the inscription in the Ochino book was written by Charron himself, although he concedes that the signature of Montaigne is genuine, and that the bequest in his will could equally signify that Charron was acquainted with Montaigne's son-in-law, rather than with Montaigne himself.

My own view is that La Rochemaillet's account of Charron's career is in the main sound enough. No-one has questioned its general outline or offered evidence to counter the view that Charron was a devoted and hard-working priest. The issue of the degree of his friendship with Montaigne remains open - and, for the purposes of this thesis, is not an important one. Whatever their personal relations might have been, it is clear from their works that there is a significant relationship between the ideas of
Montaigne and Charron: much of this is the consequence of Charron’s obvious admiration for the *Essais*; some of it is the result of a shared devotion to classical learning.

Soman’s belief that La Rochemailllet’s account is largely fictitious is unrelated, it seems to me, to his assertion that Charron’s ‘ethical and political ideas have only very minor significance for historians of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries’ (p.77). Charron’s works clearly had a great significance for thinkers such as Gassendi, Naudé and La Mothe le Vayer, who all acknowledged their debt to him, and Garasse’s attacks on Charron are in fact based much more on his texts than on allegations concerning his life.  

It is to the texts, then, that I shall look for evidence of Charron’s faith, and this evidence can be found in both of his major texts, which are designed as a unified whole. *Les Trois veritez* deals with divine wisdom, while *De la Sagesse* concerns human wisdom.

In *Les Trois veritez*, Charron sets out to prove that it is in the Catholic Church that divine wisdom is to be found. Charron’s arguments against reformist churches are based on the conviction that only the Catholic Church can be the church of which all the prophecies in the Bible were made,

25 It is interesting to note that Popkin saw no need to change his account in the light of Soman’s allegations. His *History of Scepticism* was first published in 1960. For the revised edition of 1979, Popkin pauses only to say that ‘more data might help determine if the official version is correct, or if Soman’s suggested revision is’ (p.57).

26 Charron explains in *De la Sagesse* that divine wisdom is not the subject of this second text:  
De ceste sagesse divine n’entendons aussi parler icy, elle est en certain sens & mesure traitée en ma premiere verité, & en mes discours de la Divinité. (*De la Sagesse*, p.4)
it being the church which was set up by the apostles and to which Scripture was given (pp.366-91). More importantly, Charron expresses the belief that the institution of the church was more important than the weaknesses of its individual members. Like Erasmus before him, Charron argues that it was reform, and not schism, which was required, pointing out that stories from the Bible always concerned the calling of people back to faith rather than calling people to set up new churches (pp.510-13).

Charron uses sceptical thought as an instrument for persuading people to see the need for strict adherence to orthodox doctrine. Admitting that Scripture can be difficult to understand, Charron advocates that the best solution is to follow the words of the Church, which are based on the Holy Spirit and the divinely-inspired words of saints who had come since (p.284). This is so much better than the flawed human wisdom being expounded by reformist theologians. Indeed, at the very heart of the Christian faith are facts which cannot be explained in rational terms:

Le Chrestien croid ce que sa propre raison & tout l’ordre des choses luy desconseillent de croire, & que la nature ne peut supporter: toute sa religion & creance est monstrueuse: ce qu’il croid, ce qu’il espere & en quoi il se fie, il ne sçait du tout que c’est, sinon qu’il sçait que ce sont toutes choses en soy & selon nature & raison non croyables non esperables, non fiables. (p.165)

People should follow the example of St Augustine, whom Charron cites as saying that he would not have believed the words of the Gospel, if the Catholic Church had not told him that they were true (p.257).

Les Trois veritez, therefore, is a work of Christian scepticism. Charron, like other sceptics, advocates the
acceptance of all the teachings of the Catholic Church, while calling into question all else, as, outside the divinely-inspired church, all is confusion and error:

Dont ressuite ceste conclusion derniere & ceste grande & universelle verité, qu’il y a un Dieu; lequel s’est manifesté aux hommes par la Religion Christienne & Catholique, lequel il faut recoignoistre, adorer, & servir, pour parvenir à salut, & que hors ceste verité n’y a partout, que mensonge, imposture & vanité. (pp.3-4)

In De la Sagesse, in spite of Charron’s assertion that this treatise on human wisdom is not intended to concern itself with theology, Charron pauses on numerous occasions to insist that his work is in no way designed to overrule the teachings of the Catholic Church. In general, however, De la Sagesse is designed not for the clergy, but for lay people:

Si j’eusse entreprins d’instruire pour le cloistre, & la vie consiliaire, c’est à dire professions des conseils evangeliques, il m’eust fallu suivre, ad amussim, les avis des Theologiens; mais nostre livre instruit à la vie civile, & forme un homme pour le monde, c’est à dire à la sagesse humaine & non divine. 27

At every stage, Charron is careful to make sure that he does not contradict Scripture. For example, he describes fear as a human weakness, but distinguishes it from the righteous fear of God which was recommended in the Bible (pp.150-51). Elsewhere, he stresses that the doubt that he recommends for worldly matters does not stretch to the teachings of the Church:

par toutes choses, & aucune chose (car il est dit, juger toutes choses, ne s’asseurer d’aucune) nous n’entendons les veritez divines qui nous ont esté revelées,

27 De la Sagesse, p.7; this can be compared to Montaigne, who stated in ‘l’Apologie de Raymond Sebond’ that the proving of the Christian faith by theology ‘seroit mieux la charge d’un homme versé en la Theologie, que de moy qui n’y scay rien’ (Essais, II, 12, p.107).
lesquelles il faut recevoir simplement avec toute humilité & submission, sans entrer en division ny discution, là il faut baisser la teste, brider & captiver son esprit, captivantes intellectum ad obsequium fidei."

However, just as De la Sagesse is intended as a supplement to Les Trois veritez, Charron’s doctrine for attaining human wisdom is also intended to help people to attain divine wisdom. It is his belief, as it was for Pomponazzi and Montaigne, that approaching all affairs with an attitude of doubt, ridding the mind of vanity and presumption, leaves the soul in the best possible condition for the reception of divine grace:

c’est la chose qui fait plus de service à la piété, religion, & operation divine que toute autre qui soit, bien loin de la heurter: service, di je, tant pour sa generation & propagation que pour sa conservation. La Theologie, mesmes la mystique, nous enseigne que pour bien preparer nostre ame à Dieu, & à l’impression du S. Esprit, il la faut vuider, nettoyer, despouiller, & mettre à nud de toute opinion, creance, affection; la rendre comme une carte blanche, morte à soy & au monde, pour y laisser vivre & agir Dieu, chasser le viel possesseur pour y establir le nouveau. (p.337)

Charron’s notions of human wisdom are, therefore, inextricably linked to his notions of revealed knowledge.

Charron’s notion of piety is compatible with his doctrine of

28 De la Sagesse, p.323; Montaigne also advocates this, and suggests that an attempt at doubting any part of the Catholic Church was doomed to failure:

Ou il faut se submettre du tout à l’authorité de nostre police ecclesiastique, ou du tout s’en dispenser. Ce n’est pas à nous à establir la part que nous luy devons d’obeissance. Et davantage: je le puis dire pour l’avoir essayé, ayant autrefois usé de cette liberté de mon choix et triage particulier, mettant à nonchaloir certains points de l’observance de nostre Eglise, qui semblent avoir un visage ou plus vain ou plus estrange, venant à en communiquer aux hommes scavans, j’ai trouvé que ces choses là ont un fondement massif et très-solide, et que ce n’est que bestise et ignorance qui nous fait les recevoir avec moindre reverence que le reste. (‘C’est folie de rapporter le vray et le faux à nostre suffisance’, I, 27, p.230)
emptying the mind of human opinions. Religion, for Charron, is reduced to a level of superstition when God is humanised in prayer (p.390), and confession is suffused with the desire to appease God by ascetic gestures which are contrary to human nature (p.203). Such actions betray a fundamental ignorance not only of the human condition, but also of the nature of the divine, which is impossible to judge because it is incomprehensible to the human intellect (p.392). In short, De la Sagesse concerns the human approach to divine affairs, as well as to worldly matters, and its author advocates a Christian sceptical approach.

7. Garasse: scepticism seen as a cloak for atheism
Two events occurred in the years prior to the publication of La Doctrine curieuse, which, Garasse believed, gave substance to his view that atheism was common at the time: in 1619, the Italian exile Lucilio Vanini was executed in Toulouse for atheism; in 1622, a volume of obscene verse, entitled the Parnasse satyrique, and bearing the name of the poet Théophile de Viau on its cover, was published in Paris. Garasse makes numerous references to these two individuals in his work, presenting them as proof of the existence of a secret and spreading body of atheists. More importantly, Garasse asserts that they were inspired by those thinkers to whom he continually refers as sources of atheism in the 1620s, most notably Pomponazzi and Charron. Vanini was not another Charron, but neither was he the villainous atheist presented by Garasse. A study of the texts of Vanini presents a considerably more complicated picture than that given in La Doctrine curieuse. Two works
of Vanini survive: his *Amphithéâtre* (1615) and his *Dialogues* (1616). The *Amphithéâtre* is an assertion that God exists, and plays a part in human affairs at all times. The Christian worldview is contrasted with various philosophical doctrines. Vanini criticises, one by one, the doctrines of Diogoras, whom he describes as an atheist (pp.49-56), Protagoras, who believed in God, but denied divine providence (pp.56-75), Cicero, who, he said, wrote against divine providence in promotion of human free-will (pp.75-87), Epicurus (pp.92-120), certain interpreters of Aristotle (pp.143-79), and the stoics (pp.179-96). All, according to Vanini, are contrary to the letter of the teaching of the Catholic Church. The *Dialogues* encourage a liberal interpretation of stories of miracles to be found in ancient literature, suggesting that many miracles (though not those in the New Testament) could be attributed to natural causes.

An immediate problem arises because of Vanini's readiness in the later *Dialogues* to question the sincerity of material in the *Amphithéâtre*. Vanini's mouthpiece in the dialogues, Jules César, later identified as Vanini himself (p.261), pronounces:

> J'ai écrit dans cet ouvrage [l'Amphithéâtre] bien des choses que je ne crois pas; ainsi va le monde. (p.279)

This admission raises questions as to what extent any conclusion may be drawn from Vanini's texts. On occasions, Vanini's views are those of a Christian sceptic. Divine

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29 These works have been translated into one volume. See *Oeuvres philosophiques de Vanini, Traduites pour la première fois, par M.X.Rousselot* (Paris: Gosselin, 1842). While Vanini claims to have written other works, the only evidence of any other publication is in Garasse, who claimed to have read Vanini's *vraie sagesse* (*La Doctrine curieuse*, p.1015).
affairs can neither be comprehended by human minds, nor can the existence of God be proved by rational means:

Dieu n'est donc pas cette intelligence première qui meut l'univers, mais quelque chose de supérieur et en dehors de tout mouvement; c'est pourquoi, si par une investigation naturelle j'arrive au premier moteur, celui-ci ne me donnera pas encore la preuve de l'existence de Dieu, ce n'est que par une voie supranaturelle que j'atteindrai mon but. (L'Amphithéâtre, p.2)

Vanini is also keen to have the approval of the Church:

Je soumets toutes [mes] paroles au jugement de la sainte Église catholique, à qui l'Esprit saint a donné pour interprête notre saint père Paul V, de l'illustre maison de Borghèse; s'il y trouve quelque chose d'inconvenant, ce que j'ai peine à croire, que cela soit considéré comme non avenu. (Dialogues, p.321)

The Dialogues resemble Pomponazzi's De Incantationibus. Indeed, in his preface to Pomponazzi's work, Henri Busson remarks that:

le de Arcanis [Vanini's Dialogues] n'est pour une grande part que la reproduction du De Incantationibus. Si j'avais l'espace nécessaire pour confronter les deux textes, je pourrais très certainement retrouver dans le livre quatrième du traité de Vanini 50 pages du livre de Pomponazzi. (p.80)

It is true, as Busson states, that Vanini borrowed arguments from Pomponazzi, but I would argue that there is a striking difference in tone between the works of the two authors. Vanini's arguments and his writing are much less rigorous and orderly than those of Pomponazzi and Charron. There is no doubt that he used sceptical ideas, but Vanini makes no mention of Charron and shows no evidence of having read any of his works; secondly, his approach to the material treated earlier by Pomponazzi is markedly different. While Pomponazzi was a major thinker dealing with central problems of epistemology, Vanini was merely a dabbler in ideas over which he had little intellectual command or control. Vanini
certainly reflected much of the sceptical and secular philosophy that was in the air at the time, but, had he not been executed for atheism, I suspect he would have left no visible mark on the history of ideas. Garasse's implication that Vanini was part of a tradition inspired by Charron is wholly unsubstantiated, based solely on his own assertions that both wrote against atheists as a ruse to cover up their own atheism and protect them from censure.  

The case of Théophile de Viau presented complications for Garasse because, as he was still alive, he was able to defend himself. La Doctrine curieuse was not Garasse's only means of attacking him. Garasse, with his fellow Jesuit Voisin, was instrumental in gathering evidence of atheism against Théophile and in bringing him to trial. Théophile, aided by powerful patrons, was able to fight back. Firstly, he obtained an injunction against the printers of the Parnasse satyrique, on the grounds that they had slandered him by placing his name on the front cover (Adam, p.350). He stated further that he could not be held responsible for the first edition of his works, which was in circulation at the

30 In La Doctrine curieuse, Charron is described as 'combattant en secret la verité de la Religion Chrestienne' (p.274); Vanini 'avoit tant de peur d'estre estimé Libertin, qu'il a faict des livres contre eux' (pp.972-73).

31 An account of the trial of Théophile is in Frédéric Lachèvre: Le Libertinage devant le Parlement de Paris: Le Procès du poète Théophile de Viau (11 juillet 1623 - 1er septembre 1625): Publication Intégrale des pièces inédites des Archives nationales, 2 vols (Paris: Champion, 1909). Lachèvre condemns Théophile, but an alternative view can be found in Antoine Adam, Théophile de Viau et la libre pensée française en 1620 (Paris: Droz, 1935). Adam suggests that Théophile was the victim of political intrigue and of Garasse's need to find a scapegoat to support his views that atheism was rife in Paris in the 1620s.
time Garasse started to pursue him, as they had been published without his supervision (Adam, p.384). Subsequent events vindicated Théophile. Although he was tried in absentia in August 1623, found guilty and condemned to death, a second trial was ordered after his capture. This trial lasted for two years, and ended with Théophile condemned only to exile, while the Jesuits were ordered to exile Voisin. The comparatively light sentence imposed on Théophile suggests that there was only slim and uncertain evidence of his atheism.  

The picture of Théophile which emerges from the work of Adam and Lachèvre is that of a modish young poet, who, possibly because of the political persuasions of his patrons, found his works under scrutiny from enemies. Henri Busson remarks that critics, both in the seventeenth century and in modern times, have unjustifiably read atheistic meanings into his work:

*Il est pitoyable de voir avec quelle ignorance (si ce n'est de la mauvaise foi) ses accusateurs s'ingénient à trouver des blasphèmes dans ses vers les plus innocents. Et certains de nos contemporains n'y montrent pas beaucoup plus de discrétion que Garasse.*

32 Much of this evidence had also been gathered by underhand means. Garasse's key witness was Louis Sageot, who had known Théophile since 1611, and informed Garasse that Théophile was an atheist, and was the chief of a libertine sect. The trial collapsed when Sageot withdrew his evidence, accusing Garasse of having revealed what was in fact his confession of being involved in atheism. Moreover, part of his statement was in Garasse's own handwriting (Adam, pp.265-68). Garasse later explained this by saying that he completed the statement when he noticed that the state adviser, Cardinal de la Rochefoucauld, was becoming tired and having difficulty writing (Garasse, Mémoires, edited by Charles Nisard (Paris: Amyot, 1860), p.76).

It is interesting that Théophile’s reaction was two-fold: firstly, he converted to Catholicism; secondly, he presented himself, broadly-speaking, as a Christian sceptic. His initial conversion of 1622, from the evidence of a letter to his brother, was undertaken for reasons of expediency, but it appears that he underwent a more sincere conversion in prison. The nearest thing to an expression of a philosophy in the works of Théophile is his Traité de l’immortalité de l’âme (1621), a translation of Plato’s Phædo. Garasse used this as evidence that Théophile was following in the footsteps of Charron and Vanini, disguising his atheism for fear of censure (La Doctrine curieuse, p.886).

The inclusion of Vanini and Théophile in Garasse’s attack on Charron and others, I suspect, has no justification beyond their usefulness to his own project. There is very little to connect them with the humanistic sceptics that Garasse also attacked. The execution of Vanini, for Garasse, was proof that atheism existed, and the Parnasse satyrique proved that atheism had not died with him. They appear, therefore, as the links in the chain between Charron and the 1620s, and were intended to demonstrate that Garasse’s attack on Charron, twenty years after his death, was still a task vital and relevant to his

34 These two letters are in Oeuvres complètes de Théophile, 2 vols (Paris: Jannet, 1856). See Ad Paulum Fratrem Charissimum (II, pp.433-36), and Ad Dominum Lulerium (II, pp.416-17). Adam suggests that during his imprisonment, Théophile’s thought came to resemble the thinking of Christian sceptics (Adam, p.418). It should be remembered that, even if Théophile did hold such views, this dated from a later time than the publication of La Doctrine curieuse linking Théophile to Charron.
time.

Garasse lumped all his opponents together: apologists for the Reformation, humanists and scholars who appeared to throw everything, including religion, into doubt, and writers of anthologies of verse who allegedly mocked religious institutions and encouraged paganism. All of these, including Luther and Calvin, Charron and Pomponazzi, and Vanini and Théophile, were placed in what Garasse described as the bibliothèque des libertins (La Doctrine curieuse, p.1012). Garasse’s work was, I believe, intended as a counter-blast against all those whom he viewed as enemies of the true Church, and as a reassertion of the scholastic values which most of his enemies had questioned, and to which he still adhered. Garasse’s work, however, has been interpreted in many ways. He has long been viewed as a key figure in the history of libertinism. In my next chapter, I review Garasse’s fortunes in the hands of historians of ideas.
CHAPTER 2
THE HISTORY OF CRITICISM OF GARASSE

1. Garasse's 'bibliothèque des libertins'

The inventory of atheistic thinkers which Garasse draws up in *La Doctrine curieuse* has had an important influence on the shaping of scholarship on the period of the early seventeenth century. Critics have made use of his list to draw quite different conclusions. Because Garasse included thinkers from both France and Italy, the subject has been studied by scholars and historians of ideas working on both of these countries. Scholars have approached the same material from different angles, bringing different preconceptions to their readings. Firstly, they are divided as to the level of influence to be accredited to French or Italian writers in the development of libertinism in France; secondly, as to the part played by Charron, and more specifically as to whether his influence was intentional; thirdly, as to the amount of weight to be given to the arguments and allegations of Garasse.

An overview of existing scholarship on Garasse is essential if we are to understand the strikingly divergent views which still persist on the question of the birth and growth of libertinism in France at the beginning of the seventeenth century. Histories of libertinism have flourished from the middle of the nineteenth century to the present day. Scholars have built up a picture of a sceptical philosophy, which either influenced libertinism, or was itself thought to be libertinism. I shall look at the key works chronologically in order to show their developing thought, the continuing arguments between scholars, and the
parallels and oppositions which exist between criticism approaching the history of ideas from the angle of Italian Renaissance philosophy and the work of French historians who tend rather to work back from the later development of free thinking in France in search of the origins of the libertine movement.

2. Garasse in the nineteenth century

The first modern writer to suggest that the Paduans were irreverent was Ernest Renan in 1852. Renan’s thesis was that Averroism branched out into two directions:

Ce fut le sort d’Averroès de mener de front dans l’histoire une double destinée, l’une dans l’enseignement classique, l’autre parmi les gens du monde et les libertins. (p.268)

By a process of interpretations, and interpretations of interpretations, a chain of thought led from Aristotle to Averroès, and on to libertines:

L’histoire de l’averroïsme n’est, à proprement parler, que l’histoire d’un vaste contre-sens. Interprète très-libre de la doctrine péripatétique, Averroès se voit interprété à son tour d’une façon plus libre encore. D’altération en altération, la philosophie du lycée se réduit à ceci: Négation de surnaturel, des miracles, des anges, des démons, de l’intervention divine; explication des religions et des croyances morales par l’imposture. (p.345)

Renan sees Pomponazzi as the pivotal figure. It was he, according to Renan, who first used ideas of natural religion and philosophy to question existing religion:

Jusqu’ici [1495] la philosophie padouane s’est tenue dans les termes d’une métaphysique fort inoffensive [...]. Pomponat, au contraire, représente réellement la pensée vivante de son siècle. C’est la personnalité de l’âme humaine, c’est l’immortalité, c’est la providence

1 Ernest Renan, Averroès et l’Averroïsme (Paris: Durand, 1852).
et toutes les vérités de la religion naturelle qui sont mises en cause, et deviennent dans le nord d'Italie l'objet du débat le plus animé. (p.281)

For Renan, this questioning of religious truths led to the formation of a doctrine. Renan’s definition of Averroism is recognisable as the libertinism which Garasse described in La Doctrine curieuse:

La philosophie italienne, se dégageant des discussions abstraites du moyen âge, en était venue à se résumer dans quelques questions d'un matérialisme fort simple: que l'immortalité de l'âme a été inventée par les législateurs pour maintenir le peuple; que le premier homme s'est formé par des causes naturelles; que les effets miraculeux ne sont que des impostures ou des illusions; que la prière, l'invocation des saints, le culte des reliques sont de nulle efficacité; que la religion n'est faite que pour les simples d'esprit. Voilà ce qu'on appelait averroïsme, voilà ce que les gens d'esprit soutenaient dans les cours et dans les cercles lettrés, affectant de mettre le représentant de cette doctrine au-dessus des évangelistes et des apôtres, et de faire de ses écrits leur lecture favorite. Cet averroïsme des hommes du monde est bien celui de Pomponat. 2

Renan’s views are the result of an interpretation of Pomponazzi’s work, which, it seems to me, relies heavily on assuming his libertinism. Pomponazzi’s opinion on the immortality of the soul, which Renan repeats, is that of a Christian sceptic:

Pomponat, philosophe, ne croit pas à l'immortalité, mais Pomponat, chrétien, y croit. Certaines choses sont vraies théologiquement, qui ne sont pas vraies philosophiquement. (p.286)

Renan’s interpretation of this opinion, that it was untenable and insincere, not only echoes the words of

2 Renan, pp.284-85. In La Doctrine curieuse, Garasse states that many of these tenets were libertine doctrines, namely that the existence of heaven and hell had been invented to subjugate the populace (p.312), that the first man was formed by natural causes (pp.650-51, and p.698), that miracles can be explained in natural terms (pp.301-31), and that the libertines themselves were too wise to be deceived by the ruses of religious leaders (p.312).
Garasse: it was also to shape twentieth-century views on the cause and nature of libertinism:

Pendant quatre siècles, les libres penseurs ne trouvèrent pas de meilleur subterfuge pour excuser leur hardiesse aux yeux des théologiens. (p.286)

One senses in Renan's work a reliance on Garasse, which goes much further than the two specific references to him. Renan's use of Garasse as a source was not, however, typical of his age; in general, Garasse had a poor reputation in the mid-nineteenth century. For example, the entry for Garasse in the Nouvelle biographie générale of 1857 refers to 'la triste célébrité qu'il conserve encore de nos jours', and suggests that Garasse's polemics were tasteless and ill-judged:

s'il n'eût écrit que sur des sujets peu importants, on lui eût passé ses turlupinades en faveur de ses bonnes intentions, mais la gravité des sujets qu'il choisit et les intérêts dont il se fit le champion ne permettent pas de lui appliquer cette excuse. Garasse était certainement plein de zèle et même de bonne foi, mais son zèle n'était réglé ni par le jugement ni, ce qui est plus grave, par la charité. (19, p.426)

His lack of judgment is compounded by groundless attacks on individuals and by an utter disregard for accuracy:

ce livre n'a pas la moindre méthode: il y a plus d'injures bouffonnes que d'arguments, et il est rempli, comme tous ses ouvrages, de mauvaises preuves, de faits peu exacts et de citations peu concluantes. (19, p.427)

3 Renan quotes Garasse's opinion of Vanini as 'ce méchant belistre, ce chercheur de repues franches, cet enragé, le plus endiablé vilain qui fut jamais' (Renan, p.338), and bemoans the use of Garasse by David Durand, in La vie et les sentiments de Lucilio Vanini (Rotterdam, 1717), pp.52-54, who suggested that Vanini was an Averroist (Renan, pp.342-43). Renan is not attacking the use of Garasse as a source for the existence of libertinism in the 1620s; he denies only that the source of this libertinism was Averroès.

The poor judgment and lack of method to be found in Garasse's work are also the traits to which Charles Nisard drew most attention in 1860. Nisard's work is a study of polemical writings, and his interest was more in Garasse's style than in his intentions. His method was to consider all of Garasse's texts in turn, and judge each on its own merit. His conclusion is that Garasse was best suited to writing purely satirical works, but that even these are dull:

S'il en fût demeuré là [dans le genre de satire], il est à croire que sa notoriété n'eût jamais franchi les murs de son couvent. Quelque esprit qu'il y ait dans cette satire, elle manque d'invention et d'originalité. Garasse nous fera rire à plus de frais. (II, pp.223-24)

Nisard notes that La Doctrine curieuse, on account of its more serious subject-matter of the battle against atheism, was a more ambitious project than Garasse's earlier tracts against individual Jesuit enemies. The failings of La Doctrine curieuse were the inevitable result of an untalented writer approaching a difficult and important subject. Nisard's conclusion was that Garasse should be condemned not for his intentions but for his lack of judgment and moderation:

je ne crois pas que Garasse fût un méchant homme. Mais il était excessif en tout, et avait peu de jugement. Il eût été, je pense, un mauvais sujet, s'il n'eût pas fait choix d'un état où les passions n'ont ni liberté, ni excuse, et où c'est un crime, je ne dirai pas de s'y abandonner avec excès, mais seulement d'y obéir dans la limite permise à tout le monde. (II, pp.374-75)

3. Garasse as chronicler of libertinism

It was around the turn of the century that more attention

began to be given to Garasse's work, and in particular it was studied as historical evidence on the growth of libertinism. This is the case in the work of Fortunat Strowski, who studied its development as part of his work on Pascal. Strowski's thesis is shot through with assumptions which stem directly from La Doctrine curieuse. Like Garasse, Strowski is in no doubt that the libertine movement found its justification in the works of Charron:

On a appris que la religion est distincte de la sagesse; que l'une est intéressée et basse, l'autre désintéressée et noble, l'une dangereuse et pleine d'hypocrisie, l'autre droite et raisonnable; et maintenant on voit qu'il y a une infinité de religions, qu'elles ont toutes même origine, qu'elles recourent aux mêmes moyens pour s'étendre, qu'elles sont toutes des inventions humaines et des mensonges, toutes fausses. (p.196)

Oddly, Strowski says this while concurring with Mersenne's view that Charron's influence on libertinism had been unintentional.  

Strowski's answer to the complex question of Charron's views is largely to ignore him; he does not pay close attention to Charron's work, preferring to dismiss him as a plagiarist. Instead, he focuses on Vanini, whom he views through Garasse's eyes. Vanini proved so attractive to

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7 Strowski, p.183; see Marin Mersenne, L'Impiété des Deistes, et des plus subtils Libertins découverte, & refutée par raisons de Théologie, & de Philosophie (Paris: Billaine, 1624), p.204.

8 Strowski denigrates Charron by suggesting that 'Charron n'était qu'un ramasseur de lieux communs' (p.166), by quoting Garasse's view (in his Somme théologique) that Charron plagiarised Montaigne (p.176), and by referring to Alain Delbouille's 'Charron plagiaire de Montaigne' Revue d'Histoire Littéraire de la France, 7 (1900), 284-96 (Strowski, pp.176-77).
followers because he could couch his ideas in erudite terms (Strowski, pp.142-43, see Doctrine curieuse, pp.987-88). He ingratiated himself with patrons in order to be able to spread his ideas (Strowski, p.146, D.c., p.145). He practised Christianity externally while remaining an atheist at heart. 9 He published a version of his Dialogues which was different from the one he submitted to the Sorbonne in order to obtain a privilège (Strowski, p.149, Doctrine curieuse, p.999).

It is Strowski's belief that the libertine movement failed because, for all Vanini's cunning, there was no firm foundation for his beliefs. His works were inconsistent, primarily because he was wont to say whatever was required by his patrons (p.145). As for Garasse, Strowski believes that he had extreme views, that the picture he painted was not entirely accurate, and that he was stylistically a poor writer, but that his work was nevertheless important because of the relevance of his subject:

Il ne faut pas trop s'attacher aux révélations sensationnelles du père Garasse: les maximes qu'il prête aux beaux esprits, il les leur prête en effet, elles ne leur appartiennent pas toutes. La société secrète, la Confrérie des Bouteilles, où il les dit engagés, est une invention de sa verve bouffonne. N'importe! La caricature qu'il nous montre est ressemblante, comme une caricature; elle met en valeur les traits caractéristiques du modèle. Si le père Garasse est suspect, qu'on ouvre l'étrange roman de Francion. Sorel n'y peint pas ses jeunes hommes autrement que Garasse ne fait des beaux esprits. Pour compléter, qu'on y ajoute les œuvres de Théophile, et sa biographie par Mlle Schirmacher ou par Garrison; une même image s'anime devant vos yeux: celle d'un jeune homme débauché et épicurien, fort entiché de poésie et de jolies pensées, au demeurant insoucieux de toute science ou philosophie, tant par dédain que par paresse; et c'est en deux mots l'image du libertinage et du bel esprit. (p.130)

9 Strowski, p.158, see Garasse, La Somme théologique, p.16.
Strowski was backed up by Frédéric Lachèvre in the *Procès de Théophile de Viau* in 1909. This book was part of a large project, which chronicled the history of libertinism in France, and dealt in detail with Garasse’s part in the condemnation of Théophile de Viau for atheism. Lachèvre is in no doubt that Garasse’s words about the nature of libertines could be accepted, provided a certain allowance was made for exaggeration:

Nul doute que si certains traits sont exagérés l’ensemble n’en soit exact. On a, en lisant cette satire, la vision nette de l’existence de ces jeunes gens, de leurs orgies où s’étalaient leur orgueil, leur ignorance, leur incrédulité qui n’étaient qu’insouciance et moquerie. (I, pp.148-49)

Lachèvre also insists that the end of Garasse’s work justified the means, and that the threat that atheism in general, and Théophile in particular, posed to religion necessitated excessive polemic (pp.xxxv–xxxvi, and p.86). Lachèvre justified this statement by arguing that even the execution of Vanini in 1619 had not had the desired effect of ridding France of atheism, a point which he attributes to the fact that the execution of Vanini took place far from Paris (p.xxxiv).  

10 It is interesting to note that Sabrié’s monograph on Charron (1913) does nothing to refute the views of Strowski and Lachèvre. Sabrié, after stating that Charron was in no way a libertine himself, agrees that it was undeniable that his works could be used to foster atheistic beliefs (p.422). Equally, with regard to Garasse, Sabrié agrees that, despite his lack of moderation, Garasse’s accusations were necessary and justifiable:

Il convient donc de parler avec respect du P. Garasse, en se souvenant que les ridicules incontestables de ses écrits sont surtout d’ordre littéraire et que l’époque en est responsable au moins autant que le tempérament exubérant du fougueux polémiste. (pp.407-08)
4. Charbonnel: libertinism as Italian naturalism

The work of Roger Charbonnel placed a different emphasis on the issue of the origins of libertinism, as he followed up the work of Renan, by looking at the part played by Italians in the spread of libertinism. 11 Charbonnel argues that Garasse's 'libertine library' places most importance on the work of Pomponazzi and Machiavelli (p.9). In concentrating on these two writers, Charbonnel offers an alternative specifically to the view of Strowski, who had placed the blame on Charron (p.10). Charbonnel's first chapter refers to a large number of writers, including Garasse, who considered Machiavelli to have been an atheist (pp.11-124). Charbonnel's point is that the views for which Charron was attacked existed before him, predominantly in the work of Italian thinkers. Charbonnel traces a chain of thought which directly linked Pomponazzi, Cardano and Vanini, a link which Garasse made in La Doctrine curieuse. 12


12 Garasse linked these three thinkers on the grounds that they all believed that the human race was formed by natural causes (p.651), and were all hypochondriacs (p.785). The link, however, is not proven. Renan remarked that Vanini's claim to be a pupil of Pomponazzi was unreliable, both literally and figuratively:

Il semble [...] que Vanini ait pris à tâche de mystifier le public sur le nom de ses maîtres. Il se donne sans cesse comme élève de Pomponat; or, Pomponat mourut en 1525, et Vanini naquit en 1585. Vanini n'avait même pas lu avec beaucoup d'attention les livres de son divin précepteur, comme il l'appelle; car loin d'en conclure qu'en vertu de la métempsycose Averroès avait dû passer dans le corps de Pomponat, il y aurait trouvé à chaque page la réfutation d'Averroès. Vanini n'y regardait de si près. Cet esprit bizarre se prenait à tout ce qui pouvait servir ses fanfaronnades d'impiété. (pp.335-36)

Charbonnel's inclusion of Girolamo Cardano (1501 - 1576) in discussions on alleged Paduan atheism is a little
Charbonnel applies to Pomponazzi the accusation that Garasse applied repeatedly to Charron, that a libertine who was obviously intelligent was particularly dangerous:

Pomponace était un Athée, ou du moins un Libertin très dangereux, parce qu'il avait de l'esprit.  

Charbonnel develops this line of reasoning, stating that, while the notion that faith and reason were incompatible had existed before him, it was Pomponazzi who was bold enough to draw atheistic conclusions from their incompatibility:

Avouons, [...], que la plupart des philosophes padouans n'ont point poussé à fond l'étude de ce problème; soit qu'ils aient manqué de pénétration, soit (et cette hypothèse est plus probable) qu'une timidité soudaine les ait empêchés d'être entièrement sincères et d'affirmer un choix; ils ont trop souvent négligé, sinon de marquer la méthode, la direction ou les limites réciproques de l'interprétation religieuse, du moins, de dire en quel sens il fallait opter, lorsque certains faits d'expérience positive soulevaient entre elles deux un flagrant désaccord. (pp.273-74)

Charbonnel's contention is that these ideas were developed and spread by other successors to Pomponazzi, who either felt the same way, or who held stronger views. He traced the development of naturalism - that is, the notion that the apparently supernatural can be explained in natural terms - through the writings of such thinkers as Cardano and Vanini. In Charbonnel's account, Pomponazzi is a 'théoricien' of Paduan Averroism (pp.220-74), while Cardano and Vanini are its 'vulgarisateurs' (pp.274-389).

Charbonnel's view is that the Paduans secularised surprising. Cardano studied for one year at Padua (1524/25), but most of his studies were at Pavia. Cardano's fame is based less on his work as a philosopher, than on his career as a physician.

13 Charbonnel, p.62. See Garasse, La Doctrine curieuse, p.1015, his Apologie, p.135, and his Somme théologique, pp.35-36.
knowledge. Their explorations of human wisdom, which they regarded as an entirely separate field from theological studies, were a cause of the spread of libertinism:

[La philosophie italienne de la Renaissance] s'est trouvée logiquement conduite à opposer, sur certains points, sa conception de la Nature et de l'Homme à celle de l'Église, qui découlait de la scolastique thomiste. Elle a, de la sorte, donné une "voix", sinon ouvert des voies, aux tendances libertines: à tout le moins, elle a précisé et enrichi la substance doctrinale du libertinage intellectuel. (p.719)

By 'intellectual libertinism', Charbonnel was referring to the work of Gabriel Naudé and François de la Mothe le Vayer, who, in the period immediately following the quarrel between Garasse and Ogier, produced work which used ideas from both Charron and the Paduan school, and which, they claimed, belonged to the respectable tradition of Christian scepticism. Charbonnel is in no doubt, however, that these works were secretly irreligious, and suggests that scepticism in its essence was a Machiavellian philosophy:

Si, par hasard, l'on doutait encore de la liaison qui existe entre les Dialogues [by la Mothe le Vayer] et les Coups d'État [by Naudé], entre le scepticisme et le machiavélisme, il suffirait de se souvenir du troisième livre de la Sagesse. Grâce au pyrrhonisme, la Vertu de Charron pactise avec la perfidie, enseigne l'art d'excuser la tyrannie, de côtoyer l'honneur sans lui tourner le dos, de coudre ensemble la peau du lion et celle du renard. Montaigne avait déjà dit: "En toute police, il y a des offices nécessaires [...] Le bien public requiert qu'on trahisse et qu'on mente et qu'on massacre: résignons cette commission à gens plus obéissants et plus souple". 14

14 Charbonnel, pp.59-60. Charbonnel cites De la Sagesse, Book 3, Chapter 3, Section 9 (pp.524-25), entitled 'Contre l'injuste autorité & tyrannie', where Charron discusses 'les moyens justes & honnestes au souverain, pour maintenir avec la bien vueillance l'autorité, & se faire aimer, craindre, & redouter tout ensemble' (p.524), and Montaigne, Essais, 'De l'utile et de l'honneste', III, 1, p.6.
5. Busson: French christianisation of Italian atheism

Henri Busson covered much the same ground as Charbonnel, but his treatment of the material differed considerably. In *Le Rationalisme dans la littérature française de la Renaissance*, Busson states his belief that rationalism developed in Italy through the work of Pomponazzi, and was introduced to France by French students visiting Padua, who were eager to assimilate controversial views. Busson sees Montaigne's Christian scepticism as directly descended from Paduan thought:

*L'Apologie de Raymond Sebond est l'aboutissement de tout le mouvement padouan, compliqué de l'apport de la pensée française pendant cinquante ans. (p.407)*

While Busson was prepared to accept that Montaigne was sincere in his professions that he combined scepticism in human affairs with faith, this does not alter Busson's view that this was a dangerous process:

La sincérité de son caractère est évidente. Il a seulement parcouru, à la suite des padouans, le cercle dangereux qui n'éloigne la philosophie de la foi que pour l'y ramener, le conduisant de la foi au fidéisme, du fidéisme au scepticisme, du scepticisme à la nouvelle académie, de la nouvelle académie au pyrrhonisme, et, par une brusque volte-face, du pyrrhonisme à la foi.  

As for Charron, Busson considers that he merely repeated the beliefs of Montaigne, but in more ordered fashion (p.479). The result is that Charron's doctrine was one of Paduan fideism:

*Comme les padouans et tous leurs disciples, il a mis la*

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16 Busson, p.415. This is another idea that was prevalent in the 1620s. See Jean Boucher, *Les Triomphes de la religion chrestienne* (1628), p.131. See also below, Chapter 11.
religion hors de l'atteinte, mais aussi hors du contrôle, de la raison, il a réussi à garder l'équilibre entre son besoin de tout raisonner et la nécessité de croire; comme eux, il fait de l'immortalité un dogme de foi et non un article de philosophie.  

Busson draws on a number of sources to present his conclusion that Pomponazzi was the source of controversial ideas on the immortality of the soul in the seventeenth century. He cites Garasse firstly to prove that atheistic ideas were being professed in the seventeenth century, and secondly to point out that Garasse's 'libertine library' contained predominantly sixteenth-century thinkers (p.601). Busson pauses on the figure of Vanini: on the grounds that 'tout Pomponazzi est passé dans Vanini que l'on lit beaucoup' (p.601), and despite Busson's view 'qu'il n'était qu'un plagiaire' (p.601), Vanini succeeded in bringing Pomponazzi's poisonous views to the French educated classes:

L'élégance de la présentation, la clarté de l'exposition, la fidélité de l'adaptation décuplaient l'action du padouan, offrant à la génération lettrée issue de la Renaissance le même venin que des méthodes scolastiques et une langue barbare avaient insinué dans les veines de la génération de 1520. (p.601)

In his Pensée religieuse française de Charron à Pascal (1933), Busson examined the effect of rationalism on seventeenth-century France. Busson states that he was seeking to improve upon the work of Lachèvre, whom he criticises for taking an over-simplified view of the

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17 Busson, p.481. The picture that Busson paints is complicated by his citing Charron, on account of Les Trois veritez, as a leading Christian apologist (pp.575-79). Busson hints that rationalism was being used to defend Christianity, but still feels that Charron's fideism was a hindrance to his promotion of the Catholic faith.
libertines described by Garasse (p.476). 18 Busson does not
deny the existence of atheists, and particularly deists, in
the early 1600s, and his speculation concerning the roots of
this atheism includes the suggestion that it may well have
been encouraged by Charron:

Le trait dominant, ce me semble, des esprits au début du
siècle, c'est une immense lassitude. La scolastique,
épine dorsale de toute la théologie aux siècles passés,
est brisée par le triomphe du péripatétisme padouan;
l'unité chrétienne est déchirée par cinquante années de
disputes et de guerres fratricides; la confiance dans la
raison humaine elle-même dissoute par le pyrrhonisme si
populaire de Montaigne et de Charron. La conscience
religieuse se trouve ainsi dans un moindre état de
résistance et dans un déséquilibre qu'elle ne retrouvera
pas d'un demi-siècle. 19

Busson's interest was in tracing the effects of the
philosophical argument that the immortality of the soul
could not be proved. In general, the reaction to this

18 This conclusion is backed up by Antoine Adam in his book
on Théophile de Viau (1935). Yet, although Adam wrote in
order to defend Théophile, and to propose that he was an
important poet with a recognisable philosophy, he is
unwilling to condemn Garasse totally, suggesting that La
Doctrine curieuse was

un exposé très intéressant, très curieux, des
théories philosophiques et exégétiques de la libre-
pensée. (p.7)

Adam is similarly reverent about the works of Lachèvre.
Despite disagreeing with him on many matters, Adam still
states that 'cela n'enlève rien à l'admiration que nous
inspire ses travaux' (p.7). Adam's book nevertheless
provoked an angry response from Lachèvre. See Un second
cas d'envoûtement littéraire - M.Antoine Adam et
Théophile, Auteur de Francion? (attribué à tort à
Ch.Sorel) avec la réfutation (en ce qui nous concerne)
de sa thèse Théophile de Viau et la libre-pensée
française en 1620 par Frédéric Lachèvre (Paris:
Margraff, 1937).

19 Busson, pp.14-15. Busson does, however, also suggest
that Charron was himself a religious man:

Je crois pour mon compte que la verve de Charron
part d'un sentiment très religieux. Mais si l'on ne
doit plus ni connaître, ni prier, ni craindre Dieu,
quelle différence entre le Dieu du chanoine Pierre
Charron et celui d'Aristote, de Cyrano ou de
Voltaire? (p.48)
argument took the form of a large number of religious apologies in the first half of the seventeenth century. As Busson points out, these works did little to advance the issue, for Pascal, like everyone else, still did not have the desired means to prove the immortality of the soul by rational means. He asks if

c’est la question de l’immortalité qui est au point de départ des Pensées, que c’est son incertitude qui cause le désespoir de Pascal, que ce sont les conclusions non seulement des libertins, mais de tous les philosophes qui le révoltent? Et enfin l’accusera-t-on lui aussi d’être libertin s’il a comme tout le monde décidé que la raison n’en pouvait rien savoir? (pp.163-64)

Busson presents the influence of Montaigne and Charron as a two-edged sword: on the one hand, they can be considered to have developed a ‘pyrrhonisme chrétien’ (pp.202-18), but on the other Busson quotes Mersenne’s view that sceptics were difficult to distinguish from libertines (p.220). However, Busson’s willingness to accept the possibility that philosophers who adopted a fideistic position were sincere leads him to suggest that a less dismissive treatment of those Charbonnel described as ‘intellectual libertines’ might be considered. Busson

20 See Busson, Chapter 3, Section 1, ‘Les problèmes padouans I L’immortalité de l’âme: Popularité de ce problème au XVIIe siècle. Liste des traités de l’âme de 1600 à 1660’ (pp.115-21). Busson remarks that: Le problème de l’immortalité s’était débattu contre les averroïstes du XIIIe siècle au XVIe siècle; depuis 1516 il était engagé contre Pomponazzi. Il n’est guère d’écrivain au cours du XVIe siècle qui n’ait ferraillé plus ou moins pour ou contre Pomponazzi, il n’est pas un philosophe ni un moraliste qui n’ait écrit son traité de l’immortalité. (p.116) Busson gives a list of sixty-five texts, both for and against Pomponazzi’s position, ‘qui ne prétend pas être complète, mais dont la seule énumération montre déjà la hantise que ce problème a exercée sur les cerveaux de 1600 - 1660’ (p.119).
suggests that the works of these thinkers could be an attempt to christianise various philosophical codes which had developed from non-Christian sources. However, his closing question makes it clear that, even while believing in the sincerity of many seventeenth-century philosophers' insistence that they were faithful Christians, Busson believes that they were probably mistaken:

Non seulement les défenseurs de l'Église tournent comme leurs adversaires dans un cercle cent fois parcouru, mais la doctrine qu’ils défendent s’adultère. Elle absorbe tous les systèmes adverses: le stoïcisme, le rationalisme cartésien, le pyrrhonisme, l’atomisme, l’épicurisme même. Opération difficile et qui marque sa vitalité; opération dangereuse et qui risque, si j’ose dire, de l’intoxiquer. Du Vair, Descartes, la Mothe le Vayer, Gassendi, qui ont attaché leurs noms à ces essais de fusion, sont-ils encore, malgré leurs protestations, même sincères, des chrétiens? (p.611)

Busson presents the elements of a case for believing that Charron, Montaigne and their successors were seeking to harmonise human scepticism with their Christian faith. However, once again one finds creeping into his analysis the disconcerting view that such rigorous lovers of the truth as Descartes and Gassendi may not even have known that they were not really Christians. It is difficult for the historian of ideas to answer such arguments. My own policy will be to steer clear of the kinds of judgment which imply that a twentieth-century reader can know the innermost thoughts of thinkers from the past better than they did themselves.

6. Pintard’s ‘Libertinage érudit’

In 1943, René Pintard published Le Libertinage érudit, which has come to be regarded by many as the definitive work on the period. Pintard’s work resumes and extends many of the
ideas to be found in earlier critical works. Renan’s and Busson’s ideas on the atheism of Paduan thought, Lachèvre’s views on the libertine poets of the 1620s and Charbonnel’s ideas on the atheism of intellectuals such as Naudé and La Mothe le Vayer are all developed to form a picture of the early seventeenth century. Pintard’s thesis is that Charron and Vanini developed an atheistic doctrine, Charron by misinterpreting Montaigne (p.61), and Vanini by reiterating ideas from Pomponazzi (p.245). This doctrine was practised first by the satirical poets attacked by Garasse, and later, more importantly, by intellectuals.

Pintard explains how the two groups differ by making explicit a causal link between overt and covert, or erudite, libertines. The trial and condemnation of Théophile de Viau led other atheists to adopt a systematic policy of concealing their atheistic views (p.37): hence the professions of faith - in Pintard’s view hypocritical - made by the likes of Gassendi, Naudé and La Mothe le Vayer.

Pintard is in no doubt that Charron was the major influence on libertinism, and rejects the notion that this influence was unintentional. Charron, he says, was responsible for libertinism because of his views on the unprovability of the immortality of the soul, and because, according to Pintard, he encouraged belief in the soul’s immortality for reasons of social utility. Pintard comments:

*En vérité, quand un théologal satisfaisait à si bon compte, fallait-il que les laïcs fussent très exigeants?* (p.46)

Charron’s attacks on superstitious worship were the motivation behind deism:

*Charron, dans la Sagesse, donnait [aux déistes] plus*
Meanwhile, Charron's doctrine in general was an Epicurean one:

Qu'était-ce, pour lui, que le souverain bien, "fruit et couronne de Sagesse"? Nullement la sainteté, mais la "tranquillité d'esprit" des philosophes anciens. Et en quoi consistait la vraie vertu? Non pas dans le refus des voluptés, mais dans leur acceptation prudente, dans une loyale et mesurée jouissance des plaisirs terrestres. (p.61)

In Pintard's view, the connection which Garasse made between Charron and Vanini was persuasive. Pintard's vision of libertinism is of a two-fold, atheistic philosophy embracing deism and naturalism:

A la même génération que Vanini incitait à nier Dieu par les raisons de la philosophie, Charron enseignait méthodiquement, en morale, le moyen de se passer de lui. (p.61)

As for Garasse himself, Pintard takes the view of Strowski and Lachèvre that, given the gravity of the situation, Garasse's lack of moderation was not only excusable, but also necessary:

[Garasse] feint, lui, de ne pas croire à la désaffection du peuple à l'endroit de la religion; il traite même avec un mépris cavalier les prétentions philosophiques de ses adversaires; il raille leur petit nombre et les destinées cruelles auxquelles ils se vouent; et cependant il y a de l'inquiétude sous sa jactance. Son énorme pamphlet, ardent, savoureux, exubérant, absurde, sa Doctrine curieuse à la fois bouffonne et pathétique, qu'est-ce d'autre qu'un grand tocsin sonné par mille cloches, et ameutant les fidèles pour la défense de leur foi menacée. (p.32)

Pintard, more than any scholar, accepts Garasse's words as a sincere and necessary call to arms. His agreement with Garasse on the question of Charron's works colours his whole thesis, in which he states that intellectual circles existed in the first half of the seventeenth century, led by figures
such as Marie de Gournay, Gassendi and La Mothe le Vayer, who sought to reduce the importance of religion and to replace it with a life guided by the precepts of secular philosophy. Pintard’s depiction of Charron as an enemy of faith lends a sinister colouring to the fact that so many other writers cite Charron as a major influence on their ideas.

Pintard’s picture of the secret and subversive libertins érudits is compounded by their connection with the University of Padua. One of their number, Gabriel Naudé, studied there for many years, while keeping up a correspondence with his friends in France. By portraying libertine thought as being drawn partly from French thinkers, and partly from Italians, Pintard fuses together the French and Italian influence on libertinism, and makes clear his view that this was an on-going process. The Italian sources were, as well as Pomponazzi, a growing army of his spiritual successors at Padua.

Pintard concedes that not all of these ‘erudite libertines’ were atheists, but he does insist that they were all irreligious to a degree, and therefore were all deserving of censure. More importantly, the work, for example, of Gassendi, whose piety Pintard admits was not insincere, carried on Charron’s work through its anti-scholastic bias:

Le "raisonnement humain" appliqué à l’examen de l’existence de Dieu et de ses attributs, de la nature de l’âme et son immortalité, de la Création et de la Providence, voilà bien en effet ce que Gassendi, de dix en dix ans, et à trois reprises, contre l’aristotélisme christianisé de l’École, contre la religion naturelle d’Édouard de Charbury, contre la métaphysique de Descartes, condamne et s’applique à ruiner. (p.486)
Pintard, who objects to Charron's separation of faith and reason, remains consistent in his condemnation of any thinker who followed in Charron's footsteps in this matter. Where Busson recognised an attempt at the Christianisation of philosophical codes in the works of Gassendi and La Mothe le Vayer, Pintard interprets these same works as being attacks on religion, precisely in the same way as Garasse had done in his attacks on Pomponazzi and Charron; for Pintard, as for Garasse, nothing except the letter of Catholic doctrine is acceptable, if a writer is not to be classed as a libertine.

7. Kristeller: a defender of Pomponazzi

Pintard's ideas were challenged by Paul Kristeller in 1953. Kristeller's starting-point is the history of ideas in the Italian Renaissance. He refutes the suggestion that Pomponazzi and other Paduan thinkers were atheists, and criticises those who had alleged that they were. He believes that, although Renan had not been particularly hostile to the ideas of free-thought, his work had been taken further by people who held strict Roman Catholic views, and who were instinctively hostile to those who appeared to challenge such views (p.338). Most of all, Kristeller criticises Charbonnel, Busson and Pintard for using poor sources:

Kristeller is in no doubt that *La Doctrine curieuse* is unsuitable as a source text, describing it as being:

plein d'histoires et d'accusations infondées, il manque d'ordre et de conceptions claires et emploie parfois les mêmes expédients d'une mauvaise propagande qui n'ont pas plus de valeur en théologie, en philosophie ou dans la recherche érudite qu'en politique. (p.343)

In particular, Kristeller believes that there was only a tenuous link between Pomponazzi, Machiavelli, Cardano and Vanini, and that their appearing together in Garasse's 'libertine library' was insufficient justification for Charbonnel's treatment of them, along with Cremonini, with whom Naudé studied at Padua, as a united group (p.344).

Busson is criticised for using Charbonnel's conclusions, even though he stated that Charbonnel was a flawed writer (p.338), while Pintard's methods for proving the continuing Italian influence on libertinism are considered to be reminiscent of the Inquisition:

[Pintard] insiste par de subtiles allusions qui parfois approchent les méthodes de l'inquisition, sur la large diffusion du libertinisme à cette période, en en attribuant de nouveau la responsabilité à des influences italiennes, spécialement dans le cas de Gabriel Naudé. (p.339)

Kristeller seeks to show that Pomponazzi's atheism was a myth by reconstructing the fortunes of his ideas and tracing them stage by stage back to the original text, and by showing that the myth became less believable as he regressed towards Pomponazzi's works. In general, Kristeller concludes that, in addition to the poor sources used by later
scholars, there were a number of misapprehensions circulated regarding Pomponazzi. Firstly, he was not the first person to separate philosophy from theology, this having long been considered reasonable in Italy in the Middle Ages (p.341). Secondly, what was interpreted as mockery in Pomponazzi’s work was in fact part of an Italian tradition for using jokes even in serious literature, which was absent from equivalent French writing. Thirdly, Pomponazzi was condemned because critics assumed that his professions of faith were written only out of expediency (p.341).

Kristeller’s conclusion is that, firstly, the serious scholar should only ever use the texts known to be wholly written by the author concerned, and that speculation as to a writer’s secret thoughts is futile:

J’avoue que je croie [sic] qu’en tant qu’historiens nous devons nous en tenir au document écrit. Des pensées secrètes qui ne sont pas traduites en mots sont hors de la portée de l'historien aussi bien que du juge. Nous devons reconnaître bien sûr, d'après la banale expérience de chaque jour, que le document écrit ne représente toujours qu'une image partielle et parfois fausse à l'égard de la vie d'une personne actuelle. (p.347)

Secondly, he suggests that if the Paduans did influence atheism, the fault lay not with them, but with those later French thinkers who interpreted their work to their own ends (pp.346-47). Kristeller does not deny the existence of atheism in seventeenth-century France, nor does he speculate on the thoughts and motives of Charron or any other French thinker, but he does cast serious doubt on the validity of

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22 Kristeller, p.341. Note that Fumaroli suggested that Garasse was condemned by the Sorbonne partly because he broke an unwritten rule of French literature by mixing two incompatible types of writing, in his case satire and irony with serious investigation (l’Age de l’éloquence, p.328).
existing scholarship on the matter.

8. Popkin: the 'libertins érudits' as Christian sceptics

While Kristeller focuses on what he perceives as Pintard's error in affirming Pomponazzi's atheism, Richard Popkin suggests that the history of libertinism, as told by Pintard and others, contains broader misconceptions on the origins and history of scepticism. In his *History of Scepticism* (1960), Popkin recognises a rise in the popularity of sceptical ideas, but disagrees entirely with the view that there was a strong Italian influence, whether atheistic or pious, on their development. The history of scepticism, he argues, runs parallel not with the history of atheism, but with the history of humanism:

Although there was no doubt some joint development, the Aristotelianism of the Italian thinkers was far removed from sceptical thought except for its final fideistic conclusion. The Paduans were confirmed rationalists, whose views in philosophy were the result of accepting a certain philosophical framework and the rational constructions within it. The sceptics, on the other hand, denied or doubted the entire procedure and basis of the Aristotelians [...]. The few discussions of scepticism before 1562 may have occurred historically in the context of Paduan influences, but the ideas stem from ancient discussions about scepticism. Rather than being the culmination of Italian Aristotelianism, as Busson suggests, they appear to be due to isolated rediscoveries about Hellenistic philosophy. Those who write on scepticism do not seem to have studied each other, nor do they seem to be too concerned with serious philosophical analysis of sceptical problems. It is only after the works of Sextus were published that scepticism became an important philosophical movement, especially as a result of Montaigne and his disciples. (p.33)

These views on the development of scepticism in France from ancient sources add weight to the argument that it was Garasse's books which shaped Pintardian ideas. Popkin suggests that Garasse's 'libertine library', which provides the initial source for those who linked Paduan thought to
French seventeenth-century thinkers, was not an accurate reflection of the books and authors most frequently consulted by contemporary thinkers, but an inventory of writers of whom Garasse himself disapproved. Popkin comments that, in Garasse’s work, ‘almost any type of view other than Garasse’s constitutes atheism, from the views of Calvin to those of the Pyrrhonists’ (p.112).

Popkin, in his interpretation of Charron’s works, gives no weight to Garasse’s assertions that he was an atheist. Charron appears in Popkin’s work as the Churchman who was able to present Montaigne’s works in the form of a recognisable doctrine:

Because he was a professional theologian, Charron was able to connect the scepticism of Montaigne more systematically with the main anti-rational currents in Christian thought, thereby providing a more thoroughgoing Christian Pyrrhonism by uniting the doubts of Pyrrho with the negative theology of the mystics. Also, since Charron was a learned doctor, he could present the case for a new Pyrrhonism in a way in which it could be studied by those trained in the schools, rather than in the more rambling, and for its day, more esoteric, method of the French Socrates. (p.56)

In Popkin’s work, Charron’s scepticism appears not as atheism but as Christian scepticism. Popkin is in no doubt that Charron, and the libertins érudits, were sincere Christians. The predominant sceptical belief was the impossibility of certainty, but Popkin has no difficulty in accepting the tenets of fideism. More importantly, Popkin recognises that Charron and Gassendi used sceptical arguments to attack not the Catholic Church, but the scholastics who sought to explain its mysteries in terms comprehensible to the human mind:

Gassendi, in his first work, one of the strongest anti-Aristotelian documents of the time, marshalled all the routines of the Pyrrhonian tradition into one vast
denunciation, concluding that nothing can be known, and no science is possible, least of all an Aristotelian science. One finds that one of the common characteristics of the 'new philosophers' is their acceptance of the Pyrrhonian critique of sense knowledge, and its employment as a crucial blow against Aristotelianism. (p.84)

9. Post-Pintard defenders of Charron

Following Pintard's interpretations of Charron's work accusing him of double standards, attempts have been made to rehabilitate his reputation. In 1960, Jean Daniel Charron sought to do so by establishing him as a philosopher in his own right, independent of Montaigne, and suggested that allegations of libertinism were part of the long-running misinterpretation of Pierre Charron, which started with the assumption that his work was wholly dependent on Montaigne. 23 His is an odd reversal of Garasse's view that, while Montaigne's scepticism was acceptable, Charron's was not. He rather misses the point that, if Montaigne was sincere in his faithfulness to the Church, it is much more likely that Charron was, too. In 1972, Renée Kogel sought to place the emphasis back on to the morality of Charron's ideas, by studying them in depth, and stressing that these ideas in themselves did nothing to encourage libertinism. She suggests that Charron's reputation for libertinism derived from a half-educated readership either unwilling or unable to interpret his ideas in their proper context. Kogel suggests that whereas the likes of Gassendi and La Mothe le Vayer had the necessary erudition to interpret and develop

Charron's work correctly, the people whom Garasse criticised as libertines did not. More recently, others have questioned the reliability of Garasse's polemical writings as a source of information on earlier thinkers, in particular Andrew Calder in his book on Molière, and Michel Adam in his Études sur Pierre Charron.

10. Garasse the rhetorician and polemicist

Some recent work has focused on Garasse's rhetorical techniques. Fumaroli's Age de l'éloquence questions Garasse's judgment in resorting to the use of excessive invective in the fight against atheism:

La Doctrine curieuse fut donc l'occasion d'une Querelle de la "raillerie", où la question fut posée de la légitimité et des limites chrétiennes de l'invective. (p.327)

Fumaroli also notes that the Jesuits were to fail consistently to write works of polemics which won the sympathy of the public:

l'art d'attaquer sans se rendre odieux échappera le plus souvent aux disciples de Loyola. Experts de l'art de l'éloge, et de la célébration, ils se montrèrent régulièrement maladroits dans l'art du pamphlet. Ils surent se faire admirer, et parfois craindre: ils ne surent jamais mettre de leur côté le rire des "honnêtes gens", ce qui à Paris, à la longue, ne [se] pardonner


25 Calder states for example that Garasse 'has constant recourse to loud and facile ridicule, so ill-focused that his point of view is lost in verbiage' (Molière: The Theory and Practice of Comedy (London: Athlone Press, 1993), p.187).

26 Michel Adam, Études sur Pierre Charron (Bordeaux: Presses Universitaires de Bordeaux, 1991). Adam states that one finds in La Doctrine curieuse 'des arguments ad hominem d'assez bas étage' (p.14). Adam puts the emphasis firmly on the secularity of Charron's works (pp.137-83), and on his influence on Descartes and Pascal (pp.192-202).
Recent articles by Louise Godard de Donville and Marcel de Grève focus, too, on his rhetorical techniques, and suggest that Garasse can be regarded, if not as a reliable historian or theologian, at least as a talented polemicist. Grève states that 'le P. Garasse n'était peut-être pas un éminent théologien, mais il était assurément poète et sensible à la valeur affective des mots' (p.185). Godard de Donville asserts that Garasse failed because he attempted to do too much:

Garasse a tenté d'être simultanément dans La Doctrine curieuse ce que ses confrères comme Richeome étaient successivement: polémiste éclairant au besoin le réel par un détour dans l'imaginaire, moraliste définissant par contraste le catholique fidèle, et théologien se servant du réel pour initier à une vérité cachée. L'échec peut ainsi apparaître en partie dû à la superposition dans un même discours d'aspirations communes à l'époque aux meilleurs des fils de saint Ignace. (p.204)

Godard de Donville gives a fuller picture of her views on Garasse and La Doctrine curieuse in Le Libertin des origines à 1665. She presents the text as a representative example of a seventeenth-century polemic:

l'originalité du procédé de l'auteur, qui s'adresse à l'opinion publique en joignant deux "genres" aussi différents que la dénonciation judiciaire et l'apologétique a trop longtemps fait considérer cet ouvrage comme un témoignage irremplaçable, et direct, sur son époque, alors que l'analyse nous permettra d'évaluer le rôle énorme que jouent, la rhétorique d'une


part, les modèles traditionnels de l’autre, dans sa représentation de l’actualité; [...] ce théologien compose dans la Doctrine curieuse une véritable "somme" de tout ce qu’on peut trouver, épars, dans les textes antérieurs et contemporains traitant des libertins. (pp.30-31)

Godard de Donville regards La Doctrine curieuse as a work which aimed to persuade its readers of the dangers of atheism, rather than as an account aiming at historical accuracy. The libertine described in its pages is a fictional character, but, she argues, the real-life character of Théophile de Viau is never far from the minds of both author and reader as the figure behind this portrait of the atheist:

On voit comment, peu à peu, le projecteur se rapproche à Théophile. Qui ne sait en effet que Théophile est le maître à penser de ces prétentieux impies? Garasse n’a même pas besoin de le rappeler, pour que le lecteur impute au poète l’extravagante prétention de tous ces écrivains réunis, entre lesquels le Jésuite a ménagé un constant crescendo. L’effet produit est celui d’une hyperbole, sans que l’objet auquel elle s’applique soit directement nommé. (p.122)

11. My own methodology

There remains very wide disagreement on the subject of Garasse among scholars. This is due partly to the confused nature of La Doctrine curieuse, which allows itself to be interpreted in any number of ways. For example, several figures have been suggested as the main focus of Garasse’s wrath and satire: Godard de Donville states that it was a fictitious but recognisable portrait of Théophile de Viau; Grève suggests his focus was Rabelais; Calder that it was Charron. 29 According to the theses of Busson and Charbonnel,
libertinism originated in Paduan ideas spread by Vanini, while Pintard suggests that the alleged libertinism of the poets attacked by Garasse was to be kept alive by the writings of such figures as Gassendi, Naudé and Le Mothe le Vayer.

The methodology best suited to making sense of this confusion, it seems to me, is that of Kristeller. He examined texts in the light of the period and context in which they were written, and was more interested in earlier texts likely to have influenced them than in combing through them for evidence of later developments. Secondly, he studied the texts themselves rather than other writers' opinions on them. Thirdly, he felt that it was futile to attempt to uncover the innermost thoughts of writers. Though the historian of ideas should be alert to irony and convictions expressed in the works being studied, Kristeller has shown that the notion that Paduan Averroism was atheistic was diffused by historians of ideas drawing upon secondary texts and repeating one another's assertions, rather than by the process of studying the original documents. In the case of Garasse and Ogier, scholars have concentrated on *La Doctrine curieuse*. Garasse's later texts, however, contain material, which, as he intended, clarifies the earlier work. I have looked at the later works, too. *La Doctrine curieuse* can usefully be studied alongside contemporary texts, either which attack it, as is the case with Ogier, or which contain parallel attacks on atheists, as in works by Mersenne and Boucher. Ogier's work in *Juan*, *Seventeenth-Century French Studies*, 8 (1986), 101-14, p.102.
particular has been frequently either ignored or misunderstood. By examining the responses of a number of critics to Garasse's texts at the time when they were written, a much clearer understanding of the weight and meaning of *La Doctrine curieuse* will emerge.

A close study of these works should also serve to clear away the assumptions which have built up around them in previous studies. The works of Lachèvre, Busson, Charbonnel and Pintard were all written, it seems to me, from the starting-point that Garasse was correct in his assertions about the rampant progress of atheism in the 1620s. This assumption has led to a predisposition to believe in the atheism of the individuals he attacked. Where there is so much atheism, the argument runs, there must be atheists and atheistic writings. Atheists, like any minority group, must have stuck together and pledged themselves to secrecy. As scholars, therefore, we must not naively expect the atheists to confess their atheism openly. There is an element of plausibility in all of these arguments, but very little certainty. My aim is not to prove that earlier conjectures were wrong, or to supply alternative conjectures, but simply to look at the key texts in their historical and polemical context and clear away as many misconceptions as possible. The atheism of Charron, for example, seems to rest on Garasse's testimony, with those scholars who agree with Garasse paying more attention to Garasse's insistence that Charron influenced atheism than to Charron's own texts. My

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30 Michel Adam remarks that scholars' conclusions on the alleged difficulty of reconciling scepticism with faith depend on their attention to Charron's texts:

*S'ils accordent quelque crédit aux énormités du*
aim is to discover what each writer said, and to interpret them according to their words, avoiding reliance upon their unknowable inner, unwritten thoughts.

I begin with a few biographical details on Garasse and Ogier, and a brief overview of their published work. My purpose is to provide a background to the texts, which remain the most useful and abundant source of evidence on their differing polemical standpoints. I shall return to a closer examination of the most important of their works in later chapters.

P.Garassee, ils tendront au maximum cette disjonction. S’ils s’en tiennent aux textes de Charron, ils ne s’étonneront pas de voir Saint-Cyran parmi les défenseurs posthumes de Charron. (p.89)
CHAPTER 3

FRANÇOIS GARASSE

1. Garasse’s early life

A study of the work of François Garasse is in many ways sufficient to build up a picture of him as a person. His books reveal a man who rigidly adhered to the doctrines of scholasticism, and who was fiercely loyal to the letter of the teachings of the Catholic Church. The biographical information which is available on Garasse does nothing to change this picture, and indeed shows that the path to this position was a straight and logical one.

Garasse was born in Angoulême in 1585, at the height of the Wars of Religion. His father was not only a member of the ligue, the Catholic extremist group who pledged loyalty to the Pope above the French King, but was also killed in action in 1588, an event which may go some way to explaining Garasse’s hatred of all non-Catholic Christian denominations, and of those writers, such as Charron and Étienne Pasquier, who wrote against the ligue.

Garasse entered the Society of Jesus at the age of fifteen, and became a teacher in Bordeaux and Poitiers. His early career was therefore spent learning and teaching scholastic methods of education, and shaped the loyalty he was to show in his books both to these methods and to the Society of Jesus. He also became one of the Jesuits’ most outspoken preachers, and this led to his becoming a writer, whose books proclaimed the same outspoken and unshakable belief in the Roman Catholic Church, but more importantly an undying hatred for those whom he perceived as its enemies. It was not important to Garasse if his opponents’ hostility
to the Church were denied, as he tended to treat any
departure from what he considered correct scholastic
thinking as an overt statement of hostility to the Church.

2. Garasse’s early works

The first works published by Garasse were Latin poems, on
which Charles Nisard gave the following judgment:

 Ces vers ne valent pas grand’chose, bien qu’ils ne
manquent ni d’esprit, ni de feu; mais le latin en est
incroyablement dur et le goût détestable; les pointes y
abondent, et la grammaire et la prosodie au lieu d’y
commander ne font souvent qu’obéir. Ce sont des élégies
sur la mort d’Henri IV, sur le sacre de Louis XIII, un
parallèle entre le soleil et la justice, en un mot, la
muse d’un écolier de rhétorique.¹

Garasse’s talents were to be put to better use in the
writing of satires, as his biting sarcasm and bitter irony
found their place in his mocking criticism of the Jesuits’
enemies. His first two works, the Horoscopus anticotonis and
the Elixir Calvinisticum, exploited these devices to the
full.² The first of these works tells the story of how the

1 Charles Nisard, Les Gladiateurs de la république des
lettres, II, p.211. Nisard’s monograph on Garasse is
particularly useful, because, unlike later critics, he
writes in order to give an independent analysis of
Garasse’s texts, and not to promote - or to oppose - his
ideas on the development of libertinism.

2 The full titles of these works are Horoscopus
Anticotonis eiusque Germanorum, Martillerii et
Hardivilleri, Vita, Mors, Cenotaphium, Apothosis, Anti
Jesuitis, et omnibus Calvini Catulis Ministris,
Vigilantiis, Dormitantiis, Antiquis, Novis, Novantiquis,
Informibus, Reformatis, Mistricosariis, Cardanibus,
Hortulariis, Vespillionibus et toti Excucullatorum gregi
(Antwerp: Verdusius, 1614), and Elixir Calvinisticum seu
lapsis Philosophiae reformate, a Calvino Genera primum
effosus, dein ab Isaaco Casaubono Londini politus. Cum
Testamentario Anti-Cotonis Codice nuper invento, et ad
fidem M.S. membranae castigate reformatoque. Ad Anglico-
gallicanos præsumptæ reformationis fratres (Charenton:
Molitores, 1615). Both claim to be written by André
Scioppius, brother of Gaspar, but are listed as being by
Garasse by Augustin de Backer, Bibliothèque des
stars predicted that the book, entitled the Anti-Coton, was destined to a very short life, would have no lasting value or influence and that its writers and supporters were doomed to damnation. The second work predicts a similar fate for the books of the distinguished Protestant scholar Isaac Casaubon.

It is not difficult to understand the motives behind these works. Pierre Coton was a celebrated Jesuit, who became confessor to Henry IV, and whose erudition and eloquence played a prominent part in promoting the status of the Order in France, helping to bring about the reopening of their college at Clermont, and to procure the right of Jesuits to preach in Paris. His Lettre déclaratoire de la

Écrivains de la Compagnie de Jésus, 3 vols (Liège, Paris, 1869), and by Carlos Sommervogel, Dictionnaire des ouvrages anonymes et pseudonymes publiés par des religieux de la Compagnie de Jésus (Paris: Librairie de la Société bibliographique, 1884). Backer states that 'Gaspar Scioppius n'a point eu de frère qui ait écrit; le style satyrique et mordant de Garasse, assez semblable à celui de Gaspar, lui a fait apparemment choisir ce masque' (Backer I, col. 2032). In addition, Sommervogel points out that, as there were only Protestant printers in Charenton in 1615, the place of publication, too, for the Elixir Calvinisticum was probably false. Gaspar Scioppius (c.1577 - 1649) was a Protestant-born Catholic convert who wrote polemical works against several non-Catholics, including Joseph Scaliger (1607), James I of England (1611), Duplessis-Mornay (1612) and Casaubon (1615). For an analysis of Scioppius's life and works, see Nisard, Les Gladiateurs, II, pp.1-206.

This work was entitled Anticoton ou refutation de la Lettre déclaratoire du Pere Coton: Livre où est prouvé que les Jesuites sont coupables, et auteurs du Parricide execrable, commis en la personne du Roy tres chrestien Henry IIII d'heureuse memoire (1610). It includes a 'lettre à la Royne' signed by one P.D.C., whom Backer identifies as Pierre de Coignet (I, col. 2032). The commonplace allegation that the Jesuits approved of regicide, and were responsible for the assassination of Henry IV, has received a modern examination by Roland Mousnier. See L'Assassinat d'Henri IV: 14 mai 1610 (Paris: Gallimard, 1964), pp.197-212.
doctrine des pères jésuites, conforme aux doctrines du concile de Constance, published in 1610, defended the Society and set out their beliefs, but it was challenged, anonymously, in the Anti-Coton, which reaffirmed accusations that the Jesuits condoned regicide. As for Casaubon, he was a Protestant theologian, who held important posts firstly at the University of Paris and later as keeper of the King's library. The Jesuits had campaigned against these appointments on the grounds that Casaubon was an heretic, and Casaubon made his own attack on the Society in 1611. The death of Henry IV had led to Casaubon's departure to England, where he was employed by James I to write a reply to Coton's Lettre dédicatoire. A response was made to this text the following year, in which the writer expressed surprise at Casaubon's uncharacteristically polemical tone:

j'eusse estimé qu'il n'y avoit de luy en tout l'ouvrage que le nom, tant il y a de contrariété entre ces deux images de son Esprit, celle que nous represente son Epistre escrite en Angleterre, & celle qui paroissoit par sa conversation en France.

As Nisard points out, much of Casaubon's polemic was aimed at the Jesuits, and included the suggestion that they condoned regicide:

L'auteur y entre dans les plus grands détails sur les reproches qu'on adressait alors aux jésuites, sur leurs intrigues, leurs libelles, leurs attentats à la morale, à la religion, aux individus, enfin sur tout ce qui faisait des jésuites, à la veille des guerres civiles alors près de se rallumer, un objet à la fois de crainte


5 P.M.P., Discours en forme de lettre missive, sur le sujet d'une Epistre du Sieur Casaubon (n.p: n.pub., 1612), p.1 verso. I have not been able further to identify the anonymous writer.
et d'horreur. Il touche en passant et pour la justifier, l'exécution des jésuites Garnett et Oldcorn, pendus à Londres en 1606 pour avoir, ayant connu la conspiration des poudres, négligé de la révéler.  

3. The 'Banquet des sages' and the 'Rabelais reformé'

Garasse's first works, therefore, aimed to defend his Order against those who had attacked it, and his status as a Jesuit meant that such counter-attacks were hardly surprising. The same can be said of his first two prose works, the Banquet des sages and the Rabelais reformé, which were written respectively against Louis Servin and Pierre du Moulin. Servin was a magistrate, appointed avocat général of the Parisian parliament by Henry III in 1589, whose work combined fierce loyalty to the King and promotion of the Gallican Church. He was a strong supporter of the decision,


7 Le Banquet des sept sages, dressé au logis et aux dépens de Louis Servin, auquel est porté jugement tant de ses humeurs que de ses plaixcouys, que de ses plaixoyés, pour servir d'avant-goust à l'inventaire de quatre mille grossières ignorances & fautes notables y remarquées (n.p.:n.pub.,1617) and Le Rabelais reformé par les ministres, et nommement par Pierre du Moulin ministre de Charenton, pour response aux bouffonneries inserées en son livre de la vocation des Pasteurs, (Brussels: Girard, 1619). Although the former is signed by 'le sieur Charles de L'Espinail', it is listed by Backer and Sommervogel as being by Garasse. Nisard accepts this as evidence, and notes that the risk involved in attacking a magistrate necessitated anonymity (Les Gladiateurs, II, p.249). Nisard dismisses Garasse's denial that he was the author as sophistry: Garasse claimed that he never wrote against magistrates (Apologie, p.198), a claim which does not preclude him from having written against one particular magistrate (Nisard, II, p.251). Nisard also notes that Garasse stopped short of an outright denial that he wrote the work, saying only:

   il y a des hommes qui se glorifient de l'avoir fait, je ne m'en vantay jamais, & je revere trop la personne & la qualité de Monsieur Servin pour en venir là. (Apologie, pp.202-03)
in 1611, to prevent the Jesuits from teaching at the University of Paris. 8 In the Banquet des sages, Servin is portrayed in his house, where he has invited a group of Reformers to dinner; their views are satirised by being associated with the unappetising food served, and with the tasteless furnishings of Servin’s house. 9

Pierre du Moulin was an eminent Protestant theologian who had been a professor at the University of Leiden, and minister at Charenton. He was considered to be the greatest of the reformist thinkers in France in the early 1600s and

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8 This decision was taken on 22 December 1611. The Jesuits had been prevented from teaching in Paris following the assassination attempt on Henry IV in 1594, but were allowed to return in 1603, a decision prompted by Henry’s satisfaction that the Jesuits were not unfriendly towards him (Mousnier, p.210). The 1611 decision, under the cover of protecting the interests of France, was motivated by the University’s desire to protect their curriculum:


It is interesting to note that the desire to protect - or alter - the curricula of universities had played a very important part in the debate between scholastics and humanists. See Rummel, pp.63-95.

9 Nisard notes that, while the idea was original, its satirical power was weakened by Garasse’s lack of finesse:

On n’avait pas fait encore, que je sache, au moins d’une manière aussi soutenue, la critique des opinions, de la vie et des écrits de quelqu’un, en les représentant sous l’emblème des plus méchants produits de la cuisine. L’idée est donc originale, et Garasse en a tiré bon parti. L’exécution en eût été meilleure, si la plume eût été plus fine, plus exercée et plus sobre. (Les Gladiateurs, II, p.246)
was on a number of occasions directly opposed to the Jesuits in staged debates between Catholics and Protestants. The purpose of Garasse's work against him was to compare him to Rabelais, suggesting that the main source for his Vocation des pasteurs was not the Bible, but Rabelais's Chronicles:

J'appelle cet ouvrage LE RABELAIS REFORMÉ, pource que c'est sur les idées de Rabelais que du Moulin s'est tellement formé, qu'il en retient les inventions, les sournettes & locutions entières, ainsi que vous verrez au progres de ce livre. (p.8)

In the book, Garasse follows Du Moulin's work chapter by chapter, combating it and drawing comparisons with Rabelais's works. Garasse considered Rabelais to be an heretic primarily because of the way in which he was perceived to have mocked religion and the Roman Church in his books, and it was this demeaning treatment which Garasse believed was being continued by the Reformers, who - he alleged - falsified Scripture with the aim of condemning the Catholic Church. This book also saw the introduction of


Quand ils [les Jésuites] voyaient une personne de haut rang, [...] ils tentaient de la convertir, puis quand, par leurs promesses autant que par leurs raisons, ils l'avaient gagnée à leur cause, ils l'obligeaient à ne se déclarer qu'après une dispute entre deux théologiens des deux religions. [...] À plusieurs reprises, les Jésuites usèrent de cet expédient avec du Moulin. (p.215)

11 For example, Garasse comments on Du Moulin's statement that:

Le Pape peut donner pour une fois huit cens soixante six mille ans, & tant de jours de pardon.
(Du Moulin, p.111)
Garasse compares this remark to the three thousand and one soldiers of Panurge, and the 'vingt sept cens mille huit cens trente & un moutons' in the Abbey of Thelema (Le Rabelais reformé, p.170).
stylistic traits which were to be so striking in Garasse’s later works. Much use is made of clumsy puns, as for example when Du Moulin is compared to a windmill which was powered by four sails, which are:

les bouffonneries, les impertinences, les impietez, & les ignorances, & le manche qui les anime par derriere, & prend le vent pour moudre, c’est la vaine gloire qui est vostre grande machine. (p.21)

Another charge against Garasse which was to recur in both seventeenth-century polemics and modern commentaries on Garasse was that he persistently made use of digressions, which made it difficult to follow his arguments. Nisard gives a clear picture of this feature of Garasse’s expository style:

un mot, un trait à double entente, un certain assemblage de syllabes, moins que cela, une simple assonance; il n’en faut pas plus pour ôter aux railleurs toute envie de raisonner, et les faire choir du côté où ils penchent. C’est ce qui arrive à Garasse. Il ne s’arrête pas à creuser les objections de son adversaire, il s’en prend à ses mots; il en tire mille conséquences inattendues; il s’enfonce dans des digressions qui font perdre de vue le principal objet, et d’où il ne revient que par de véritables tours de force. Puis, après avoir égaré le lecteur à le suivre, il le laisse se reconnaître comme il peut dans le chaos où il l’a entraîné. (Les Gladiateurs, II, p.261)

4. The ’Recherches des recherches’ and ’Doctrine curieuse’

Garasse’s Recherches des recherches were written against Étienne Pasquier. On the one hand, this represented a continuation of his earlier works in that Pasquier, who had written more than one book specifically against the Jesuits, was, like Servin and Du Moulin, a well-known enemy of the

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Society. On the other, this latest work was a more controversial project, as Pasquier was not only a highly respected scholar, lawyer and historian, but a public figure at the heart of French political life, and, unlike his book against Servin, it was published under his own name. For Garasse, however, Pasquier was merely an enemy to be ridiculed, as he shows in his introduction, where he states that Pasquier was to be condemned because of five traits:

I le Mesdisant, auquel j'exposeray une partie des mesdisances de Maistre Estienne Pasquier contre les Papes, les Roys de France, les Cardinaux, & Chanceliers, II L'Impertinent, qui contiendra une partie de ses Impertinences & humeurs extravagantes de son espirit, III L'Ignorant, qui deduira une partie de ses ignorances authentiques en toutes sciences & professions, IV Le Libertin, qui fera voir les erreurs & libertinages de ce gros Chrestien en matiere de Religion, sans toucher à ses meures & deportemens particuliers, laissant ces espis pour le glanage de ceux qui auront plus de loisir que moy, V le Glorieux, Auquel je rapporteray quelque centaine de ses jactances ridicules choisies d'un million de bavardises & puerilitez. (pp.xiv-xv)

Pasquier - like Servin - played an important part in promoting the interests of France and its King above those of Rome and the Pope, a policy directly opposed to that of the Jesuits, who had sworn a special fourth vow of loyalty to the Pope. His Recherches de la France were an attempt to promote the status of France by recording its history, while his Gallicanism lay at the heart of his Cathéchisme des

13 The controversial nature of the text is demonstrated by the fact that this was the first of Garasse's texts to which a response was made. See Antoine Rémy, l'Anti-Garasse, Divisé en cinq livres: I Le Bouffon II L'Imposteur III Le Pedant IV L'Injurieuse V L'Impie (Paris: Baragnes, 1627). Pasquier became a lawyer at the Paris parliament in 1549, and was asked to represent the University of Paris against the Jesuits in 1564. In 1585, he was named avocat général at the chambre des comptes, and followed Henry III to Tours in 1589, where he became spokesman for the parliament which remained loyal to the King.
Jésuites, which derived from his work as lawyer to the University of Paris in denying the Jesuits the right to teach there. Garasse’s work was part of a long-running quarrel between the Jesuits and Pasquier, and an important aspect of this quarrel was the question of whether Catholicism demanded absolute loyalty to the Pope, as the Jesuits insisted, or whether loyalty firstly to the French crown and a Gallican Church was more important to French subjects.

In Garasse’s work, the issue of Gallicanism ran parallel with the issue of scepticism. For Garasse, both of these standpoints were pernicious: the first opposed the authority of the Roman Church, while the second cast doubt on the scholastic system of thought in which Roman Catholic theology was often expressed. The offence was the more keenly felt by Garasse, himself a teacher, as the scholastic system also formed the basis for all teaching in Jesuit schools. Garasse tarred both Pasquier, and, in La Doctrine curieuse, Charron with the brush of libertinism, Pasquier on account of his Gallicanism, and Charron for his (Christian) scepticism. The equal importance which Garasse gave to the condemnation of Gallicanism and scepticism is an unchanging element in his definitions of the libertine in succeeding

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14 This is not a link made by those who attacked Garasse. While it is true that Rabelais supported the Gallican cause, this is not typical of Christian sceptical figures. In the episode of the Papimanes in the Quart Livre, Rabelais attacks in particular the authority of the Pope over monarchs (see Rabelais, II, pp.179-202, and Screech, Rabelais, pp.404-10). However, both Ogier and Rémy also condemned Rabelais. Beyond the statement that Pasquier was a ‘bon françois’ (Rémy, p.112), neither alluded to the Gallicanist aspects of Pasquier’s work.
polemical tracts. He condemned as a libertine trait the
placing of nationality above religion. Therefore, Pasquier
is a libertine because:

Pour se purger du soupçon d'heresie, il adjoustera, avec
un geste & une voix asseurée, je dis cecy, non que je
sente l'Huguenot, car je suis plus Catholique que le
Pape, mais je suis bon François. (p.687)

In La Doctrine curieuse, Garasse emphasises Charron's
nationality by describing him in typical punning fashion as
'un franc ignorant' (p.27), and characterises his
libertinism by equating the sceptic's suspension of judgment
with indifference to a person's religion; according to
Garasse, 'il tenoit toutes Religions pour indifferentes'
(p.28).

Garasse's Doctrine curieuse further expanded the
definition of a libertine. He aimed to demonstrate that
Charron's scepticism had spawned a libertine movement in
France in the 1620s, one which was not only indifferent, but
also openly hostile to Christianity, and to its moral code.
Charron was only one of a number of sources, both Catholic
and non-Catholic, from which, Garasse asserts, the
libertines drew their inspiration.  
15 The Proteus-like definition of a libertine is not
confined to Garasse. Detailing the development of this
shady individual in her Le Libertin des origines à 1665,
Louise Godard de Donville states that the libertine was
'hérétique dans un texte de 1545, épicurien dans
d'autres textes dix ans plus tard' (p.46). In the case
of Garasse, having defined the libertine in 1622 as
'Huguenot, (mauvais) catholique, politique' (p.112), 'un
an plus tard, [...] l'auteur aura simplement ajouté les
"incrédules" épicuriens, athées, déistes, rationalistes,
beaux esprits lecteurs de Charron et de Pomponazzi'
(p.113). The whole picture is designed to equate the
"curious doctrine" with Satanism:

Le vrai sujet de la Doctrine, c'est ce qu'il se
cache sous les apparences: en 1623 comme dans les
premiers temps de l'Église, Satan mène le jeu.
(p.197)
Doctrine curieuse in much greater detail in later chapters, but for now it is worth taking a preliminary glimpse at Garasse's method of study there. His technique was to establish a chain of reasoning based on a series of tenuous surmises and invisible links. The event which prompted him to write La Doctrine curieuse was the publication of obscene verses in the Parnasse satyrique, which he attributes to Théophile de Viau, and which he assumes on this evidence was the handbook for Théophile's libertine group, who (again he assumes) were dedicated to spreading atheism through their poetry and their lifestyles. They had, Garasse asserts, developed their philosophy by studying the works of a number of atheists, who formed his bibliothèque des libertins (p.1010). The first 'shelf' contained Pomponazzi, Paracelsus and Machiavelli, the second Cardano, Vanini and Charron, and the third the Parnasse satyrique and Rabelais. Garasse seeks, therefore, to link the atheistic behaviour of the 1620s with the teaching of a number of diverse writers, whom he groups together as atheists. Not only were the beliefs liberally bestowed by Garasse on these figures hard to find in the original texts, but also any kind of a link between the very different authors in his list would have been extremely difficult to demonstrate.

5. The 'Apologie' and the 'Somme théologique'

In his Jugement & censure du livre de la doctrine curieuse, Ogier set himself the goal of demonstrating the absurdities of Garasse's arguments; this led in turn to Garasse's Apologie, in which he gives a more detailed explanation of his views and a more structured attack on his targets. He
makes it clear that he believes that the three people from whom atheists principally draw their inspiration are Charron, Vanini and Théophile, and that in the case of Charron in particular both Les Trois veritez and De la Sagesse are equally to blame. I shall return to an examination of the reasons he gives for these convictions, to his direct response to Ogier's attack, and to other issues arising from the Apologie in later chapters.

Following his quarrel with Ogier, and the Pasquiers, Garasse sought to write the definitive version of his theology, which he published as La Somme théologique. This work includes a refutation of those parts of Charron's works which Garasse considered to be heretical.

The aspects of La Somme théologique which touch upon Charron and his views will be studied later, but it is worth noting at this stage that this work too met with determined opposition: it was refuted by Saint-Cyran, later to be one of the founders of the Jansenist movement, and, as a result, was banned by the Sorbonne.  

6. Garasse in exile

The banning of this book, combined with the disgrace that Garasse suffered on account of the part that he played in

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16 Popkin, p.115, quotes the Sorbonne's view that La Somme théologique contains many heretical, erroneous, scandalous, rash propositions, and many passages from Holy Scripture and the Holy Fathers badly cited, corrupted and turned from their true sense, and innumerable buffooneries which are unworthy to be written or read by Christians and by theologians. (Censure de la Sacré Faculté de Theologie de Paris, contre un livre intitulé La Somme theologique des veritez capitales de la Religion Chrestienne, par R.P.François Garassus (Paris, 1626), pp.12-13)
bringing Théophile to trial, led the Jesuits to exile Garasse from Paris. Garasse was to go to Poitiers, where he died in 1631, tending the victims of an epidemic.

One more of his works remained, his Mémoires, which were published by Nisard in 1860. These were presumably written during Garasse's exile, and are of interest primarily because they make barely any mention of his literary career. Instead, he devotes his attention to defending himself, and the Jesuit Order in general, against the accusations made about his conduct during the trial of Théophile. In addition to claiming that part of Sageot's confession, a piece of evidence crucial to the prosecution of the poet, was in his handwriting because the state adviser was having difficulty in writing, Garasse states that Sageot retracted his confession because he was persuaded to do so by Théophile's friends (p.76). He also claims that Rémy apologised to him for writing the Anti-Garasse, and had undertaken to write a new book in favour of the Jesuits (pp.252-53).

Garasse's Mémoires were in fact an apology for the Jesuits. Garasse was determined to portray the Society in the best light possible, to the extent that his discussion of the trial of Théophile was primarily aimed at denying accusations made against the Jesuits as a whole rather than those directed against himself and Voisin as individuals. On another matter, Garasse wrote about two tracts written against the King and Richelieu, 17 which in some quarters

17 G.C.R. Theologi, ad Ludovicum XIII Admonitio, fidelissimme, humillime, verissime facta, et ex gallico in latinum translata, qua breviter et mervose demonstratur Galliam foede et turpiter impium foedus unissse, et injustum bellum hoc tempore contra catholicos movisse, salvaque religione prosequi non
were attributed to Garasse himself; Garasse insists that Richelieu was happy firstly that the *Admonitio ad regem* was not of Jesuit origin (p.123), and secondly that the *Quæstiones politicae* were not written by Garasse (p.180). Garasse’s focus, once again, was not on self-justification but on defending the good name of the Jesuits as a whole.

This renewed attempt to promote the Jesuit Order may well have been motivated by a desire to be forgiven and recalled to Paris. It is certainly true that his career ended as it had begun, with Garasse writing works which were intended to vindicate the Jesuits and to wound their enemies. Garasse therefore continued to preach to the end what he always had, namely, loyalty to the Jesuits, and the Papist, Thomist ideas which they upheld. It is this viewpoint which was constant in his work.

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posse, Augustæ Francorum, anno 1625, and *Quæstiones politicae, quodlibericæ, agitandæ in majori aula sorbonica, diebus saturnalitiis, mane et vespere, proesidente illustriissimo cardinelli de Richelieu, sive de Rupella, anno 1626, cum facultate superioriorum*. 
CHAPTER 4
FRANÇOIS OGIER

1. Ogier's life and works

François Ogier was born in Paris around 1599, the son of a procureur at the Paris parliament. He became a priest, and at the time of his quarrel with Garasse held a post at Chomeil. He was also a man of letters, much of his time having been spent in study. Writing to seek reconciliation with Garasse in 1624, Ogier defended himself on the grounds that the life he had led had been far from frivolous:

De 25 ans qu'il y a que je suis au monde, j'en ay passé la moitié partie à l'apprentissage des langues par les voyes ordinaires desquelles on se sert [...] partie à l'estude des sciences de la Philosophie et de la Théologie.¹

Ogier first came to prominence as a result of his Jugement & censure du livre de la doctrine curieuse, and its highly polemical tone was to prove typical of his early works. The reconciliation with Garasse, as will be explained, resulted more from political expediency than from genuine acceptance of Garasse’s good intentions. Ogier went on to write an Apologie pour M. de Balzac in 1627, and in 1628 he provided a preface for Jean de Schelandre’s Tyr et Sidon, in which he argued against the concept of the three unities.²

Ogier clearly had a talent for public speaking, evidence of which is to be found in his remaining works, of which many were publications of his sermons, funeral speeches and

² Ogier, Apologie pour M. de Balzac (Paris: Jolly, 1663), and the preface to Jean de Schelandre, Tyr et Sidon (Paris: Estienne, 1628).
elegies. He enjoyed a high reputation, and he was unlucky not to be better rewarded for his eloquence, as was shown by Gui Patin’s high praise of him in 1670:

Le roi a bien ri des vers de M. Ogier, qui me semble bien vieillir. Il n’a pourtant soixante-douze ans; il a toute sa vie étudié, il est devenu fort savant et fort vieux, et puis pour satisfaire la nature il faut mourir. Le cardinal de Richelieu lui avait promis un évêché, mais il mourut quinze jours après. La reine-mère, Anne d’Autriche, lui en avait promis autant, l’an 1643, pour la harangue funèbre du feu roi Louis XIII, qu’il avait récitée dans Saint-Benoît, avec l’applaudissement et l’admiration de tout Paris, et néanmoins elle ne lui a rien donné: mais il a été quelquefois payé d’une pension que le roi, par gratification, fait tous les ans payer à quelques savants. Il fit, il y a quelque temps, une oraison funèbre sur la mort de Philippe IV, roi d’Espagne, qui fut fort bien reçue. Ses panégyriques sont imprimés en deux tomes. Bref, il est fort usé, grâce à l’étude et aux veilles qui ruinent ordinairement la santé.  

2. Ogier’s philosophical position

The most important aspect of Ogier’s Jugement & censure was his opposition to scholasticism, and Ogier can be regarded as being part of a movement of the time, which sought to promote a sceptical way of thinking in direct opposition to what many saw as an outdated scholastic system. The few biographical facts which are available to us show that Ogier was part of Marie de Gournay’s sceptical literary circle of poets and scholars who saw themselves as heirs to many of the ideas and attitudes of Montaigne. Michel de Marolles wrote that:

la bonne Damoiselle comptoit au rang de ses meilleurs Amis M. de la Mothe le Vahier, M. le Prieur Oger, & M. son frère; Mess. les Haberts, Cerisal, Lestoile, Boisrobert, de Revol, Colletet, Malleville, tous assez

3 Gui Patin, Lettres ... Nouvelle édition augmentée de lettres inédites, 3 vols (Paris: Baillièra, 1846), Lettre DCCCVI, III, p.741. Patin also described Ogier as ‘un des plus savants hommes de Paris’ (III, p.574).
connus dans la République des lettres.  

Evidence that Ogier himself wrote poetry is given by l'Abbé Goujet, who states that Ogier's first success was in writing French adaptations of Ovid.  He quotes Ogier as saying that he ceased writing poetry after the Garasse affair:

> ce démêlé [...] arrêta mes fureurs Poétiques, & me fit penser à des études plus réglées & plus sérieuses. (Goujet, XVII, p.221)

In considering the figures with whom Ogier was connected, it is possible to build up a picture of Ogier's own philosophical stance. Marie de Gournay, as the fille d'alliance of Montaigne, and the editor of the definitive edition of the Essais, was a leading humanistic figure. Marolles and his friends were 'tout occupés de la "pureté de la langue" de la " netteté d'expression"' (Fumaroli, p.329), and were also closely allied with leading Jesuit scholars such as Fronton du Duc.

Meanwhile, Ogier's own works show that his loyalties lay with humanistic writers. His Jugement & censure, as shall be seen, was largely a defence of Charron and his humanistic stance in De la Sagesse, and equally his Apologie pour M. de Balzac was a call for a more open-minded approach to works which expressed new ideas. In particular, it is interesting to note that Ogier defended Balzac against the charge of plagiarism on the grounds that the assimilation of the ideas of others into one's own work was a humanistic trait:

> Cette façon de faire des Livres a esté encore pratiquée

4 Michel de Marolles, Mémoires (Paris: Sommaville, 1656), p.58. The entry is dated 1623.

de nostre temps par Charron, lequel en sa Sagesse n’a esté que comme le Secrétaire de Monsieur du Vair, et de M de Montaigne, sous lesquels il semble qu’il ait écrit ce qu’ils lui dictoient, tant il a fait peu de scrupule de se servir de leurs inventions, et de leurs propres paroles. (pp.16-17)

In addition:

C’est Montaigne lui-mesme, qui confesse que Seneque et Plutarque ont composé ses Essais. (p.17)

In the Apologie, Ogier sought to defend Balzac’s classicism, which could be described as the promotion of the French language through the revival and imitation of Ciceronian eloquence. Fumaroli noted that this art had its roots in Montaigne’s Essais:

Avec une lucidité critique à laquelle l’histoire littéraire n’a pas assez rendu justice, Balzac a suggeré, sinon dicté, à François Ogier, la théorie de cette "étoile nouvelle au Ciel de l’Éloquence" dans l’Apologie de M. de Balzac. La "belle" lettre selon Balzac, héritière de l’épistola cicéronianiste, a une généalogie proprement française: pour l’invention, elle doit beaucoup à l’essai montaignien; pour l’élocution, elle doit beaucoup à Malherbe; mais pour l’idée que se fait de lui-même l’épistolier à l’étroite dans un genre de Cour, elle doit beaucoup à l’idéal de l’Orateur-Magistrat reprise par Du Vair à Cicéron. (p.699)

In the preface to Tyr et Sidon, Ogier, calling for an end to adherence to the three unities, cited such ancient writers as Sophocles and Terence as examples of great authors who had broken away from convention. He also went on to attack those whose only reaction to new ideas was condemnation:

Aussi n’est-ce pas la raison que nostre Poëte soit exempt de la fatalité qui accompagne les meilleurs escrivains d’aujourd’huy [...] il trouvera sans doute des Aristarques, [...] qui ne se contenteront pas de censurer & de passer un trait de plume sur un mechant vers, mais qui poursuivront par armes le Poëte qui l’aura composé: Car voilà certainement le point auquel en est venue la fureur de certains pedans, qui ne pouvant rien faire qu’esgratigner les escrits des honnestes gens, deschirent leur reputation, et les persecutent à mort, pour ce seul crime qu’ils ne sont pas de leur opinion. (p.xxx)
Ogier's scepticism was essentially a strategy for loosening the stranglehold of scholastic thinking, and letting in new ideas. His dedication to the development of new ideas, both in his own work, and in that of the people with whom he was friendly, was the most striking element of Ogier's early work. He was therefore a natural opponent for Garasse, who was just as dedicated to the maintaining of the scholastic point of view. In terms of his work and ideas, Ogier was directly descended from humanistic sceptics such as Montaigne and Charron, and it was this standpoint which shaped his arguments.
CHAPTER 5

'LA DOCTRINE CURIEUSE' (1):

THE TEXT

1. Garasse’s targets

The most famous - indeed notorious - of the texts in the polemical debate on libertinism in the 1620s was Garasse’s Doctrine curieuse (1623). It was made up of eight books, each of which discussed one of the eight maxims which Garasse believed to be those held by a libertine group which was meeting in Paris at the time of writing. Garasse gave no precise source for these maxims, but he used examples of the words and deeds of people he considered to be atheists to illustrate the maxims in action. He believed that the libertine group he was attacking took their cue from the Parnasse satyrique, which Garasse believed to be the glorification of an immoral lifestyle which was fundamentally opposed to the teaching of Scripture and of the Catholic Church.

By Garasse’s definition, ‘libertines’ are essentially dissolute layabouts in need of guidance:

J’appelle Libertins nos yvrognets, mouscherons de tavernes, esprits insensibles à la pieté, qui n’ont autre Dieu que leur ventre, qui sont enroolez en cette maudite confrerie, qui s’appelle la Confrerie des Bouteilles. (p.37)

Garasse is careful to distinguish them from the incorrigible impies, who were responsible for the Parnasse satyrique:

J’appelle impies & Atheistes ceux qui sont plus avancez en malice, qui ont l’impudence de proferer d’horribles blasphemes contre Dieu: qui commettent des brutalitez abominables, qui publient par Sonnets leurs execrables forfaicts, qui font de Paris une Gomorrhe, qui font imprimer le PARNASSE SATYRIQUE, qui ont cet advantage mal-heureux, qu’ils sont si desnaturez en leur façon de vivre, qu’on n’oseroit les refuter de poinct en poinct, de peur d’enseigner leurs vices, & faire rougir la
Garasse’s aim is to provide guidance to those who were merely libertine:

il y a plusieurs degrés d’Atheisme, & [...] le corps de mon livre vise en général contre toutes les parties de ce monstre; mais nommément contre les LIBERTINS, tant à cause que c’est la grande confrérie de ceux que j’appelle les beaux Esprits pretendus, comme à cause que n’estant pas encore du tout ATHEISTES, il peut y avoir quelque peu d’esperance à leur conversion, pour laquelle ma conscience m’a obligé de prendre ce travail. (pp.38-39)

Garasse believes that the Parnasse satyrique developed from a reading of the works of a large number of atheists, whose thoughts had been turned into an ordered doctrine. It is the dangers of this doctrine that he is anxious to communicate to those who might be persuaded that the anthology described an attractive lifestyle. Garasse therefore links the ideas contained within the Parnasse satyrique with the ideas of known atheists and known enemies of the Catholic Church. Some of his targets are Reformist theologians. Others had written merely against the Jesuits. Garasse goes further, however, by also making a link between the Parnasse satyrique and certain figures whom he brands as atheists, but who in their lifetime expressed faith in the Catholic Church. Garasse also attacks humanistic thinkers who had challenged the rigid Thomist interpretation of Scripture, which was the mainstay of scholastic theology.

2. The maxims

A glance at the maxims themselves reveals that Garasse’s quarrel was with those whose views on Christianity differed from the accepted beliefs of scholastic theologians. In Garasse’s mind, Christian worship was characterised by
certainty, by the unquestioning acceptance of and adherence to the teachings of the Catholic Church as he understood them. It is this certainty which Garasse perceives as being under attack, as he considers any questioning to be the first step towards outright denial of belief. Any departure from the orthodox and commonly-held viewpoint is seen as proof of a writer’s secret allegiance to an atheistic doctrine.

Four of the maxims are concerned with his allegation that the beaux esprits considered themselves to be an intellectual elite, and were therefore justified in viewing religion differently from the way in which it was presented to the common people. Firstly:

Il y a fort peu de bons Esprits au monde: & les sots, c’est à dire, le commun des hommes, ne sont pas capables de nostre doctrine, & partant il n’en faut pas parler librement, mais en secret, & parmy les Esprits confidans & cabalistes. ¹

Secondly:

Les beaux Esprits ne croyent point en Dieu que par bien-seance, & par Maxime d’Estat. ²

Thirdly:

Un bel Esprit est libre en sa creance, & ne se laisse pas aisement captiver à la creance commune de tout plein de petits fatras, qui se proposent à la simple populace. ³

Fourthly:

Il est vray que le livre qu’on appelle la Bible, ou l’Escriture Sainte, est un gentil livre, & qui contient force bonnes choses: mais qu’il faille obliger un bon esprit à croire sous peine de damnation tout ce qui est dedans, jusques à la queuë du chien de Tobie, il n’y a

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¹ Maxim 1. This was discussed in La Doctrine curieuse, pp.1-98.
² Maxim 2: La Doctrine curieuse, pp.99-204.
³ Maxim 3: La Doctrine curieuse, pp.205-326.
point d'apparence.  

Garasse believes that the area where the beaux esprits differ most from the teachings of the Catholic Church was in the matter of divine providence. Rather than being under the influence of a benign, caring God, they believed that their destiny was fixed:

Toutes choses sont conduites & gouvernées par le Destin, lequel est irrevocable, infaillible, immuable, nécessaire, éternel & inévitables à tous les hommes, quoy qu'ils puissent faire.  

Similarly, there was no link between the human and the divine, and indeed the immortality of the human soul was far from certain:

Pose le cas qu'il y ait un Dieu, comme il est bien-seant de l'advertir, pour n'estre en continuelles prises avec les superstitions, il ne s'ensuit pas qu'il y ait des creatures qui soient purement intellectuelles & séparées de la matiere: Tout ce qui est en nature est composé; & partant il n'y a ny Anges, ny Diables au monde, & n'est pas asseuré que l'ame de l'homme soit immortelle, &c.  

Given the fact that there was no divine influence in the world, the beaux esprits believed that the only course to follow was the course of nature:

Il n'y a point d'autre divinité ny puissance souveraine au monde que la NATURE, laquelle il faut contenter en toutes choses, sans rien refuser à nostre corps, ou à nos sens, de ce qu'ils desirent de nous en l'exercice de leurs puissances & facultez naturelles.  

For the final maxim, Garasse sets out what he believes to be the basic libertine belief, that it was unnecessary to obey any moral rules, but that it was important to behave publicly in such a way that censure should be avoided:

4 Maxim 5: La Doctrine curieuse, pp.469-674.
5 Maxim 4: La Doctrine curieuse, pp.327-468.
6 Maxim 7: La Doctrine curieuse, pp.793-946.
7 Maxim 6: La Doctrine curieuse, pp.675-792.
Il est vray que pour vivre heureux il faut esteindre & noyer tous les scrupules: Mais si ne faut-il pas paroistre impie & abandonné, de peur de formaliser les simples, ou se priver de l'abord des Esprits superstitieux.  

Garasse sees his project as being to answer this maxim: he seeks to display for all to see the atheism which, he believes, is inherent in the works of his opponents, and to show that their professions of faith in the Catholic Church were merely hypocritical ruses designed to save them from censure.

3. The ‘expositions & preuves’ of the maxims

Garasse structures La Doctrine curieuse by beginning each of the eight books with a brief paraphrase of each maxim which he describes as being an exposition & preuve. The purpose of these expositions & preuves is to spell out more clearly the ideas under attack, before refuting them at much greater length. In them, he often makes use of ancient authors cited as sources. For example, Diagoras, Epicurus, Democritus, Pliny, Lucretius, Lucian and Seneca are all held up as writers who believed in God only because it was state policy to do so (p.100). The maxim of following nature as a divinity is ‘un avorton de l’eschole d’Epicure’ (p.675), while the idea of abandoning morals can be found in several ancient writers:

Doncques, disent les Libertins, il faut neyer tout cela [les scrupules] comme une engence de viperes, & le meilleur expédient c’est de les estouffer dans le vin & dans la bonne chere; [...] Anacréon qui estoit un galand homme, le faisoit ainsi, Horace qui estoit un bon esprit nous exhorte à cette practique: & les plus sages Philosophes, qui n’ont eu rien que le Ciel devant les yeux, comme sont Lucrece & Manilius, nous donnent cette

8 Maxim 8: La Doctrine curieuse, pp.947-1025.
leçon, comme un des principes nécessaires à nostre bonheur. (pp.949-50)

At other times, Garasse’s expositions touch on theological matters, and he is prepared to admit that the words of the Bible could back up the beliefs of the libertines. He accepts that the idea of being liberal in one’s beliefs originated in the words of the early apostles:

Telle mesme fut la procedure des Apostres, qui ne chargeoient pas les nouveaux convertis de beaucoup d’articles: d’autant qu’ils cognoissoient le naturel de nos Esprits qui veulent estre libres, & se contentent de croire les choses essentielles; Car c’est ainsi que Saint Pierre se banda contre les Pharisiens aux Actes des Apostres Chap.XV. Disant qu’il suffissoit de croire, Verbum Evangelij, Quant au reste, que c’est, Imponere jugum super cervices discipulorum, quod neque Patres nostri, neque nos portare potuimus. (pp.206-07)

In the fifth book, Garasse admits that the Bible contains stories that are difficult to believe, such as the Flood and the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (p.471), and in the seventh book, the idea that angels and devils do not exist was justified by the absence in Genesis of stories of fallen angels (p.794).

Such concessions read oddly in a polemic which pours scorn on opponents making similar points. Garasse appears to believe that such observations cease to be dangerous when made by right-thinking figures like him. This oddity can be partially explained by the fact that Garasse was drawing on his training in scholastic theology and method, and that his polemic utilised time-honoured scholastic principles. Firstly, a large part of Garasse’s training as a teacher of scholastic theology was devoted to enabling him to explain the theological problems which he saw raised by the beaux
esprits. Secondly, the structure of La Doctrine curieuse, comprising both justifications and refutations of the alleged maxims, follows the scholastic method of offering pro et contra arguments to a given question.

4. The 'refutations' of the maxims

Garasse's intention is to sink the arguments of the beaux esprits under the sheer weight of his mockery, contempt and insults. His refutation of the first maxim involves asserting that there was a long history of cases of people who, believing that they possessed superior intelligence and knowledge, brought disaster on their countries. He cites two men, both called Théophile, who attempted to instigate atheism in royal courts of the past, and compares them directly with Théophile de Viau (pp.5-18); the reader is

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9 See L.W.B. Brockliss, French Higher Education in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987). Brockliss states that while positive theology taught the history of the Bible, 'the second, known as scholastic theology [...] was specifically devoted to the examination of theological problems. Under the title of dogmatic theology, this second science determined the right conclusion to a number of doctrinal questions concerning God, Man, Christ, and the Church' (p.228).

10 This scholastic method had its roots in the solving of theological problems but had come to be applied to all arguments. In the New Catholic Encyclopedia, Prepared by the Catholic University of America, Washington D.C., 15 vols (U.S.A.: McGraw Hill, 1967), J.A. Weisheipl explains that: the scholastic questio disputata seems to have arisen at Laon in the early 12th century from conflicting patristic interpretations of Scripture. Authorities pro and contra were disputed, noted in the margin of the text, and a tentative solution proposed. By the middle of the 12th century these occasional digressions became extremely numerous and elaborate. Collections of sic and non authorities were made not only in theology, but also in law, grammar, and logic. (XII, p.1145)
invited to conclude from this remarkable coincidence that the modern Théophile is a deeply wicked and dangerous man. Garasse describes as atheism the reformist views of Margaret and Joan of Navarre, and blames them for the French Wars of Religion (p.17). Belief in their possession of superior knowledge was, according to Garasse, at the heart of the views of Cardano (p.26), Charron (pp.28-29) and Vanini (pp.31-33), who encouraged the libertines to believe that they were superior to others, suggesting that the human race could be divided up according to the strength of their souls.

Garasse's method is always to use inference to make his point; he tends then to make connections which lack clear justification. His technique is illustrated in the series of deductions which begin with a remark on Luther. He says, 'Martin Luther parfaict sot accusa tout le monde d'estre sot' (p.56); he then assumes that Luther excepted himself from this judgment, and goes on to compare his superior attitude to those of Cardano, Charron, Vanini and the beaux esprits, inviting the reader to convict all the figures named of hubris. Moreover, the libertines, by meeting in secret, can be further compared to people such as Luther, plotting to bring down the Catholic Church. Garasse's inference is clearly that they are all as dangerous as Luther and need to be dealt with immediately:

Et pour nous faire sages aux despens de nos ancestres qui ont esté trop simples, il ne faut que rompre cette ligue pernicieuse des beaux esprits pretendus, [...] malheur à nous, si nous n'apprehendons ce danger evident, mal-heur à nous, si la postérité nous accuse de mesme nonchalance en la naissance de ce mal’heur, que nous avons accusé nos ancestres en la naissance des Heresies. (pp.17-18)
The violence which Garasse advocates towards his enemies is matched by the insulting language which he uses against them. This procedure is designed to produce in the reader a mixture of hatred and indignation, while at the same time stressing that atheistic ideas are the product of small, insignificant minds. Thus:

Hierosme Cardan, l'un des plus raffinés Atheistes que le monde porta jamais, avoit le tymbre de la cervelle aussi feslé comme la conscience tarée. (p.24)

Garasse's description of Charron is designed only to belittle him:

C' estoit un franc ignorant, & semblable à ce petit oyseau du Pérou qui s'appelle le Tocan, & qui n'a rien que le bec & la plume. (p.27)

This belittling of alleged atheists from both modern and ancient times is contrasted by the exalting of believers. Responding to the second maxim - that religion should be followed only in order to avoid censure - Garasse lists a number of people, both ancient, such as St Augustine (p.104), and modern, such as Ronsard (pp.126-27), who had written against atheism, as well as Plato, Aristotle, Cicero and Seneca (pp.113-19), who, despite having no access to Scripture, nevertheless believed in a deity with Christian characteristics. Garasse's point is that these were people

11 It is interesting that Seneca appears as both a good and bad exemplar of belief in God. Garasse contrasts his statement that Seneca believed in some form of God (p.119), with the opinion 'de Remond Sebon, de Cardan, & de quelques autres esprits fantasques qui se sont esgarez en leurs imaginations pour obliger les Payens en leur creance' (pp.118-19). His earlier suggestion that the libertines held Seneca to be an atheist was based on their alleged qualification 's'il est entendu comme il faut' (p.100). Without wishing to dismiss Seneca completely, Garasse is clearly unhappy with the canonisation of ancient, non-Christian, thinkers by syncretists.
of the highest intelligence, and he therefore contrasts them with those who did not believe in God, and who, he concludes, must be wrong. He goes on to state that atheists had been executed, such as Vanini (pp.144-47) and Jean Fontanier (pp.147-53), and concludes from this that their professions of faith were hypocritical. Throughout the Doctrine curieuse, the execution of Vanini in particular is presented to readers less as a consequence of his atheism than as the proof of it. Garasse therefore condemns the beaux esprits because they were following in the foolish path of the atheists.

Garasse's response to the third maxim can be summed up in the title of the first section of the third book:

La vraye liberté de l'Esprit consiste en la simple & sage créance de tout ce que l'Eglise luy propose indifferemment, & sans distinction. (p.208)

Garasse believes that there are two differing alternatives to such an acceptance:

En cet affaire comme en toute autre vérité de la Religion il y a deux extremitez contraires, moins dangereuses l'une que l'autre. La premiere de quelques esprits hypocondriaques, qui se font fort de monstrer le mystere de l'Incarnation par raisons naturelles: La derniere des Libertins, qui font estat de n'en rien croire, ny par raison naturelle, ny par convenance morale, ny par tesmoignage de l'Escriture Saincte. (pp.268-69)

The first reaction to belief is specifically attributed to Raymond Sebond, the second appears to be Garasse's

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12 This point is noted by Godard de Donville, in her Le Libertin des origines à 1665, as part of her thesis that La Doctrine curieuse is designed more to give an exemplar of atheism than a precise portrait of an individual. She states that 'l'athéisme de Vanini (supposé prouvé, puisqu'il l'a conduit au bûcher) n'a pas à être prouvé' (p.144), and 'ce qui transforme la vanité de Théophile en "signe" de l'athéisme, c'est qu'elle s'exprime... dans l'oeuvre d'un athée!' (p.145).
interpretation of the sceptical position. Garasse’s refutation goes on to list examples of Christian beliefs which libertines had supposedly cast into doubt. He states that Charron considered it unworthy to attribute human characteristics to God, and hence refuted the divinity of Christ (p.274-75), and that Vanini denied the resurrection (p.304). Acting on such inferences, the libertines had, according to Garasse, decided that all the miracles in Scripture had been invented as a political device:

Que tout ce qui se raconte parmy nous de l’Enfer & du Paradis ne sert pour autre chose que pour contenir la populace en son devoir, & en une crainte mechanique, & que tous les beaux esprits en sont là logés, qu’ils ne croyent non plus ces choses que ce qui se raconte des champs Elyziens, & de l’Acheron: Que neantmoins c’est une bonne finesse politique pour avancer les affaires d’estat, d’autant que les sots se prennent par là comme des enfans à la veuë d’une pomme ou d’une image, & les larrons à la presence d’un gibbet, mais que pour eux, ils ont graces à Dieu trop bon esprit pour se persuader ces choses. (p.312)

Garasse’s method of refuting the idea of human lives being entirely determined by destiny is to ascribe this belief to Calvin:

Par cette Maxime les Libertins font justement comme font les Calvinistes; car ceux-cy font des marmiteux en matiere de Religion, & ceux-là font des maupiteux en matiere des destins. (p.356)

13 Note that Garasse’s statement that Vanini denied the resurrection is an interpretation of Vanini’s discussion of pagan miracles. Garasse’s assumption that Vanini was insincere, based on the fact that he was executed, is one way to square the incompatibilities of Vanini’s texts (see above, Chapter 1, Section 7). In this case, however, Vanini specified that he was referring to Pagan fables of resurrections:

Il ne faut admettre comme réelles que les résurrections dont parlent l’Écriture et les décrets des pontifes de l’Église: au reste, ceux que vous [Alexandre, with whom Vanini is having his dialogue] avez cités n’étaient réellement morts, mais seulement tombés en syncope. (Dialogues, p.302)
For Garasse, this is proof enough that a belief in destiny was a sign of atheism. He uses this to infer that because of their views on destiny, such scholars as Jules Cesar Scaliger (pp.376-77), Isaac Casaubon (p.388), Pomponazzi (p.465), as well as his more usual targets, such as Cardano and Vanini (p.465), were all atheists.

A similar method is used for the idea that the Bible is not to be entirely believed. Here, Luther and Calvin are cited as those who first placed areas of Scripture in doubt, and therefore the continuation of such a practice is directly linked to their heretical and atheistic designs. Vanini in particular (pp.650-51), but also Pomponazzi, Cardano and Étienne Pasquier (p.599) are believed to have suggested that the Bible contains passages in which it is impossible to believe and which should therefore be discarded. The libertines of the 1620s, meanwhile, according to Garasse, were only too happy to accept these ideas because of their distaste for the moral code contained within Scripture.

In refuting the notion of nature being the best code for living, Garasse states simply that following nature should mean obeying the Will of God (p.692). He continues by reiterating his belief that the libertines were leading a life in which they indulged their base human instincts for uncontrolled pleasure to the full (pp.736-66). Moreover, he ascribes this way of life, and the record of it in the form of the Parnasse satyrique, to an imitation of the life and works of such as Luther, Calvin, his successor Théodore Beza, Pomponazzi, Cardano and Vanini (pp.767-92).

The book's pattern continues in the seventh refutation,
where, once again, Garasse states his own views on the subject of the immortality of the soul, before detailing the number of writers who propagated atheistic beliefs. On the question of spiritual beings, the libertines used atheistic writers to twist the truth in order to deny human immortality:

Le syllogisme de nos nouveaux Epicuriens est du tout semblable à celui de ces vieux Atheistes; car ils disent: Dieu, s’il y en a, c’est une nature tres-pure, tres-intellectuelle, tres-spirituelle, tres-esloignée de matiere: Cette proposition est tres-veritable. Ils adjouxtent, Tel est le privilege de cette essence infinie: Cette proposition est fausse absoluemment, entendu comme ils l’entendent, sçavoir, qu’il n’y peut avoir autre nature intellectuelle, que Dieu seulement: puis ils adjouxtent: Doncques il n’y a point d’autres natures spirituelles que la divine: cette consequence est evidemment fausse & injurieuse, tant à Dieu, qu’à la nature Angelique. (pp.806-07)

Once again, Garasse lists those who allegedly denied the existence of angels, namely Paracelsus, Pomponazzi, Cardano, Agrippa and Vanini, while stating that:

Apres tous ces mal’heureux Escrivains sont venus les nouveaux Libertins de nostre siecle, qui ont enchery sur le marché de Cardan & de Lucilio, en ce que publiquement, & sans honte ils avancent cette maudite Maxime, Qu’il n’est pas asseuré que l’ame de l’homme soit immortelle. (p.885)

Garasse’s final refutation brings together all of his previous complaints. He feels that the libertines were justifying their beliefs by using the work of writers who were atheistic and hypocritical. The list of writers in the bibliothèque des libertins encompasses the most important libertine beliefs which Garasse wishes to refute. Moral laws were condemned by the libertines as devices of the Inquisition (pp.965-66); Machiavelli, Pasquier and Vanini taught that religion was a device to control the common people (pp.986-87); Cardano denied the immortality of the
There are two reasons for Garasse's overt and uncompromising condemnation of these writers. Not only did Garasse believe that they were atheists, but he believed he had discovered that they were being widely believed. It is Garasse's opinion that the libertines aimed to follow in the footsteps of Vanini, who was held up as an example of the best way to spread atheism. He ingratiated himself with the nobility in order to gain entry into the court. He always spoke by implication in order to be able to claim he had been misinterpreted if challenged. He then went on to live, and justify, an immoral lifestyle (pp.1003-10). Meanwhile, Charron had succeeded in making his work appear acceptable:

par quelques pensées aucunement subtiles, & plausibles, par un langage doucement immodeste, il se glisse insensiblement dans le coeur des lecteurs, avec un tel ascendant sur leur esprit qu'il y en a qui ne jurent que par luy. Et je confesse que je me suis trouvé en peine de persuader à quelques jeunes Seigneurs de tres grande qualité, que Charron fust un livre dangereux, car pour eux ils le prenoient en qualité de livre spirituel, sans s'appercevoir des impietés qui luy sont, ou par

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14 This statement must be countered by evidence from Cardano's own work. In his autobiographical De Vita propria liber, Cardano cites as one of his familiar sayings: 'I know that the souls of men are immortal; the manner I know not' (Cardano, The Book of my Life, Translated from the Latin by Jean Stoner (London: Dent, 1931), p.265). His De immortalitate animarum, described by W.G.Waters, in Jerome Cardan: A Biographical Study (London: Lawrence & Bullen, 1898), as the one work of Cardano's in which materials for a charge of impiety might most easily be found, was described by Cardano himself as having been written 'more for the purpose of a study of the subject than as an expression of final opinion' (The Book of my Life, p.227). As with Vanini, Garasse uses Cardano's imprisonment for impiety as the proof, rather than as the result, of this impiety. The work of Alan Wykes, in Doctor Cardano, Physician Extraordinary (London: Muller, 1969), suggests that Cardano was imprisoned more because he had enemies in Bologna, than because he was genuinely impious. It should be noted that Cardano's works were approved by the Cardinals in Rome in 1562 (Waters, p.282).
ignorance, ou par malice eschappées de la plume, comme sont celles qu’il avance touchant le mystere de la tres-saincte Trinite de l’Incarnation de JESUS-CHRIST, de l’exécution des hommes defaicts par justice, à laquelle tout le monde court, &c. Sa sagesse, & sa Divinité en sont quasi toutes pleines. (p.1015)

La Doctrine curieuse was not well received. It led immediately to Garasse receiving a great deal of criticism, notably from Ogier, Rémy and Théophile de Viau. They felt that his first mistake had been to publish the maxims of the atheists, as well as their plausible expositions: it was too easy, according to his critics, for an undiscerning reader to concentrate only on these parts of the book, and thus be given a succinct introduction to atheism. This fault was compounded, in their view, by the weakness of the refutations of the maxims, which they considered to be badly structured and lacking in logic and accuracy. Each believed that Garasse was being slanderous: Ogier defended Charron, Rémy criticised Garasse’s continuing condemnation of Étienne Pasquier, while Théophile defended himself.

Modern historians of ideas, in particular Pintard, have been more generous than early critics, discerning in the Doctrine curieuse, behind the obvious weaknesses in Garasse’s polemical technique, a substantial case against Charron and others as advocates of atheism. In the following chapters, my aim is to look closely at the allegations of Garasse and at the writings of those he attacked, especially Charron, to seek to discover as precisely as possible what Garasse was attacking, and whether or not the ideas he condemns were actually expressed by the victims of his polemical campaign.
CHAPTER 6

'LA DOCTRINE CURIEUSE' (2):

THE MAIN BUTTS OF GARASSE’S POLEMIC (1):

THÉOPHILE DE VIAU AND LUCILIO VANINI

1. Garasse’s uncontroversial targets

As shown in the previous chapter, one of Garasse’s methods for stressing the danger of atheism was to focus on targets whom no French Catholic would be prepared to defend. This was particularly true of his linking of the beaux esprits to Luther and Calvin. It was part of Garasse’s project to prove that there was a link between these people and those of his own generation and, in Théophile and Vanini, he found two figures who were useful to his purpose. Théophile’s name had appeared on the cover of the Parnasse satyrique, and much of Garasse’s work was based on the assumption that Théophile was the leader of the new atheistic sect spreading in France in the 1620s. From December 1621, Garasse gathered evidence against him, not only for the purposes of his book, which was published in August 1623, but with the aim of having him tried, convicted and executed for atheism, a conviction which he hoped would confirm his account of the true nature of Théophile’s literary group. As for Vanini, his execution in Toulouse in 1619 had given him the same status as Luther and Calvin, that of a known enemy of the Church. Garasse believed that by linking Vanini, not only to these heretics, but also to Théophile, he would further discredit the libertine group, and would be able to prove that it was working to bring down the Church.
2. Garasse’s treatment of Théophile de Viau

Garasse’s condemnation of Théophile was complicated by the injunction that the poet won against the publishers of the Parnasse satyrique for placing his name on its front cover. This occurred while Garasse was preparing his text. It seems that Garasse was able to make some changes to his manuscript in the light of this injunction, but the index of the Doctrine curieuse reveals that most of Garasse’s criticisms, written before the injunction, were based on the conviction that Théophile was himself responsible for the anthology. The index describes Théophile as the ‘autheur du Parnasse Satyrique’ and an entry entitled ‘son impiétè’ refers back to a passage from the collection.

Garasse tells us of Théophile’s position as a much courted figure in society, referring to him as ‘Theophile, qui est estimé l’un des principaux chefs de la bande Libertine’ (p.885). Moreover, Garasse assures us, he acted as a mentor to others:

Theophile est environné de certains Atheistes, quasi aussi meschans que luy, qui apprennent de luy à proferer d’horribles impieteze. (p.874)

Garasse’s preface makes it clear that the injunction meant nothing in his eyes, and that, even if Théophile had not written the Parnasse satyrique, he was still responsible for the works published under his own name, and he would have to perform acts of public penitence before he could convince Garasse of his innocence.  

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1  The first edition of Théophile’s works to be published appeared in February 1621. A second edition, which has subsequently been lost, appeared the following year. In 1623, a third edition appeared in two parts: the first is entitled Oeuvres revues, corrigées et augmentées, troisième édition, (Paris: Billaine, 1623); the second
amongst other things,

il aura faict publiquement brusler non seulement le Parnasse Satyrique, boutique de toute impiété & saleté, qui porte son nom en teste: mais encore la seconde partie de ses œuvres, livre auquel feignant de desavouer ce qu'on luy met sus, il le confirme trop clairement par un grand nombre de propositions indignes d'une plume Chrestienne, & tracées par une plume trempe dans l'atheisme, l'impiété & le libertinage, comme je luy monstreray clairement en la seconde partie. ('L'Auteur au Lecteur', p.iii)

From the evidence of this and the main body of La Doctrine curieuse, however, it seems on the whole that Garasse considers Théophile to be more of an incorrigible impie than a libertine.

While the description of the beaux esprits pretendus as drunkards recurs throughout Garasse's book, specific complaints about Théophile's works make up only a very small part of the book as a whole. Garasse is most indignant at the poet's flippancy when dealing with religious matters of the utmost seriousness, particularly when Théophile compares himself to Job because of the torment he had to endure during his exile from Paris, and when he describes chastity, abstinence and absence from the Paris taverns as eternal damnation. For Garasse, the reference to Job, a

was published by Jacques Quesnel and Pierre Billaine, and appeared in June 1623. It is to this edition that Garasse refers in the preface to La Doctrine curieuse (p.iii).

2 Garasse quotes, correctly, from Théophile's 'Au Roy, sur son exile':

Job qui fut tant homme de bien
Accusa le Ciel d'injustice
Pour un moindre mal que le mien.

(Garasse, p.873; Théophile, I, pp.136-37)

The order to exile Théophile was signed on 14 June 1619. Théophile was officially punished for corrupting youth by his poetry, but, according to Adam, the 'reproche d'impiété et d'immoralité était un simple prétexte, et [...] la vraie cause de la disgrâce était toute politique' (Théophile de Viau, pp.161-62). Théophile
trivialisation of an important biblical text, is typical of the way in which Théophile and his group were seeking to impose a new set of values on human society:

Les Autheurs du Parnasse de Théophile [...] posent leur Paradis en leurs impudicitéz, & leur Enfer en l'esloignement de la Cour, & faisant bonne chaire deux fois le jour, disent que Job n'a jamais enduré un martyr pareil au leur, qui est une profanation tres-impie de l'Escriture saincte. (pp.890-91)

Garasse also considers Théophile to be guilty of the crime of which he accuses many of his targets, that of pretending to write pious words which were in fact atheistic. Garasse is unimpressed by Théophile's *Traité de l'immortalité de l'ame*:

il s'est apperceu que c'est la commune creance de tout le monde, & que pour effacer ses anciennes flestrissures il n'y avoit un plus souverain remedé que de faire l'hypocrite aux despens de Socrate, & faire suer les presses d'Imprimerie un peu plus honnestement qu'il ne sua jadis par ces anciennes sueurs, dont il se vente luy-mesme en la premiere page du Parnasse Satyrique. (p.886)

However, the reader has only Garasse's repeated assertion that Théophile was an atheist to persuade him of the poet's atheism; the evidence he presents against him is extremely flimsy. Garasse's handling of his case against him is seriously flawed, in that the majority of his quotations are from work which Théophile had not written; once it is accepted that Théophile was not responsible for the *Parnasse satyrique*, it is difficult to find evidence for his atheism. The result is that Garasse's attempts to convict

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had, Adam asserts, written on behalf of people opposed to the King. Théophile was to return to Paris in the Spring of 1620 (Adam, p.180), and Adam speculates that he never actually left France (pp.161-80).

3 Antoine Adam's search for evidence of atheism in Théophile's work seems to have been carried out through a desire to see Garasse's point of view. Given that part
Théophile through the medium of his book are as flawed as his attempts to pursue him through the courts. The mainstay of Garasse’s case is the repeated allegation that Théophile was a drunkard, but this — whether true or false — is irrelevant to questions of religious orthodoxy. If every contemporary of Garasse who was in the habit of drinking too much when in convivial company is to be convicted of libertinism and atheism, then the ranks of unbelievers must indeed have been well filled. Adam has pointed out anyway that these so-called low taverns were probably nothing more sinister than modish eating-places:

La taverne joue dans la société d’alors le rôle du café de nos jours. Il y a la taverne qui n’est qu’un pauvre cabaret où viennent boire les gens du peuple. Il y a aussi la taverne à la mode, celle que Garasse appelle le cabaret d’honneur. C’est là que va Théophile avec les jeunes seigneurs auxquels il s’est lié. Les profusions incroyables, les collations à la moderne où les perdrix sont entassées par douzaines n’auraient pas de sens autrement. (p.291)

Adam’s criticism was directed at modern scholars who had sought to join Garasse in denigrating Théophile, but it is

of Adam’s thesis involved showing that Théophile’s enemies could only prove his atheism by underhand means (see above, Chapter 1, Section 7), it seems strange that he then proceeded to speculate that he may have been an atheist anyway. This process involved to a large extent reading religious meanings into secular material. Alan M. Boase, in The Fortunes of Montaigne: A History of the Essays in France, 1580 – 1669 (London: Methuen, 1935), while agreeing that Théophile’s protestations of orthodoxy were made for reasons of expediency, concludes that his attitude to religion was characterised by indifference rather than hostility (p.142).

Boase comments, for example, that: an impartial reader of the documents published by M.Lachèvre will rapidly convince himself that obscenity and probably personal intrigue have as much to do with the case as Théophile’s alleged anti-religious opinions. (p.139) Boase is referring to Lachèvre’s Le Procès de Théophile de Viau (see above, Chapter 2, Section 3).
worth noting, too, that Garasse, by portraying Théophile moving in elevated intellectual circles, could stress that the danger of atheism was most acute right at the top of society. Garasse’s evidence on Théophile’s dissolute life was to founder because he gained much of it from Louis Sageot, who was to be discredited at the trial. When Garasse later denied indignantly Ogier’s suggestion that he had himself partaken in the debauchery which he had described (Apologie, p.89), he was in fact admitting that he could have had no first-hand evidence about Théophile’s lifestyle. Combined with the knowledge that Théophile was not the author of the Parnasse satyrique, it is clear that Garasse’s evidence of Théophile’s atheism was thin indeed.

3. Garasse’s treatment of Vanini

Criticism of Lucilio Vanini forms a large part of La Doctrine curieuse. Garasse was on safer territory here as Vanini was unlikely to be defended by anybody, having been burnt at the stake for atheism. For Garasse, this made him ideal for his purposes. Vanini was proof that atheism existed, that it had been publicly condemned, and that its perpetrator had met with exemplary punishment. However, Garasse undermines his own argument because he draws two conflicting portraits of Vanini, and atheists like him. On the one hand, they were poor specimens of little brain, and therefore, one would assume, unlikely to attract followers. Moreover, they had all been hanged or burnt, so it is difficult to understand why it was so urgent to guard against them if they were all dead:

Tous ceux qui ont tasché de nostre temps d’introduire
On the other hand, Garasse then proceeds to argue that Vanini, far from being 'despourveu de sens', was cunning, and acted in Toulouse in precisely the way in which he claims that the libertines were now trying to act in Paris, skilfully disguising his impiety in order to gain people's trust:

Cet homme disoit de si belles curiositez, des propositions si nouvelles, des pointes si agréables, qu'il s'attacha aisement à Francon [the man who denounced Vanini to the Toulouse parliament] par une sympathie de ses humeurs hypocrites, souplies & serviables: Ayant faict l'ouverture par ses pointes, il commença à monstrer l'estouppe; peu à peu il laschoit des Maximes ambiguës, dangereuses, à deux revers. (p.145)

Eventually, Garasse asserts, Vanini's ruses were uncovered and he confessed to the true nature of his mission as he was being executed. His alleged confession is a truly remarkable and colourful piece of self-condemnation: it contains all the material Garasse needed in order to be able to show that the libertine campaign had been organised on an international scale and with military precision. The reader's scepticism is deepened further by the style of the confession: Vanini appears to have listed his misdeeds with the fulsome venom and taste for sensational detail which characterise Garasse's habitual polemical style when vilifying his opponents:

Aussi tost après sa condamnation il leva le masque, & voyant qu'il n'y avait plus d'esperance pour luy, dit & publia que pour luy il estoit en cette creance, Qu'il n'y avait point d'autre Dieu au monde que la Nature, profera plusieurs impietez contre Jesus-Christ, advoüa qu'il estoit sorty de Naples avec onze compagnons, lesquels comme douze Apostres de Satan, s'estoient departis en divers endroits de l'Europe, pour introduire cette nouvelle creance, & que la France luy avoit escheu pour quartier: qu'il avait compose des livres touchant
les principes de sa Doctrine, qui estoient comme l'introduction à l'Athéisme. (pp.146-47)

This account, as one might expect, is unsubstantiated, and is contradicted by Gramond's testimony that Vanini professed his faith in the Catholic Church to the end. However, the alleged confession encouraged Garasse to feel he could condemn everything Vanini wrote, and assume that any profession of faith in the Church - uttered by Vanini or any of his alleged fellow-libertines - was hypocritical.

Armed with Vanini's 'confession' that his works were intended as an introduction to atheism, Garasse proceeds to use them continually to illustrate the presence of atheism in France and to demonstrate a link between the writers of the *Parnasse satyrique* and known atheistic writers. Vanini is presented as a major influence on them in the section entitled:

De la ruse & hypocrisie que tiennent les Atheistes pour semer leurs maudites Maximes.  

Firstly, according to Garasse, Vanini was adept at introducing atheistic ideas while pretending to be devout:

dans ses Dialogues il discourt en parfait Atheiste, en

5 See Émile Vaise, *Lucilio Vanini: sa vie, sa doctrine, sa mort* (Extrait des mémoires de l’Académie Impériale des Sciences, Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, VIE série, Tome II, pp.313-42), (Toulouse: Douladoure, 1864). Vaise states of Vanini’s alleged confession: Rien n’est moins fondé que cette imputation, puisqu’il est constant que, devant le Parlement, Vanini nia avec fermeté l’accusation d’athéisme et qu’il la repoussa par un discours dont on a conservé quelques fragments. (p.11) Vaise also notes the exaggerated nature of the accusations, whose origin he states was Mersenne’s *Questiones celeberrmae in genesim*, p.671. He also makes the point that the hostility of Mersenne, and Vanini’s other attackers, means that the account of his confession cannot be taken at face value.

6 *La Doctrine curieuse*, Book 8, Section 9, pp.1003-17.
sorte neantmoins qu'il peut desadvoüer toutes les
impietés, d'autant qu'il se couvre d'un sac mouillé, il
les faict prononcer à son disciple Alexandre. [...] Sa
finesse git en ce qu'il avance des propositions
horribles, disant je me trouvay à Geneve, où je vis un
mal'heureux homme, qui soustenoit telle & telle Maxime,
qui disoit tel & tel propos scandaleux, & prouvoit son
dire par telles & telles raisons, mais je luy respondis
bien, & luy remonstray, qu'il faut en cela se spoubmettre
au jugement de la sacrosaincte Eglise Romaine.
(p.1008)

Secondly, says Garasse, his assertions that he wrote against
atheists were false:

Lucilio Vanino, esprit enragé contre Dieu, a fait de
livres abominables, lesquels en apparence sont contre
l'Atheisme, car son Amphiteatre porte nommément pour
titre ADVERSUS ATHEOS, & neantmoins le dedans n'est
qu'une pure introduction à l'Atheisme. (pp.1008-09)

This statement reveals further the extent of Garasse's
confused thinking: although all of the criticisms of Vanini
are based on his Dialogues, it is l'Amphithéâtre - a book in
which, Garasse had admitted a page earlier, Vanini 'parle en
Catholique' (p.1008) - which Garasse describes as an
introduction to atheism. Yet l'Amphithéâtre contains
criticism of the doctrines of Diagoras (Chapters 9-11),
Epicurus (Chapter 27) and Seneca (Chapter 48); all of these
thinkers had been described by Garasse as libertine
influences, because, in his estimation, they had expressed
faith only in order to conform to state policy (La Doctrine
curieuse, p.100).

7 It seems to me that there is some substance to this
particular criticism of Vanini. For example, Vanini's
interlocutor Alexandre asks for Vanini's opinion on the
view, explained to him by an atheist in Amsterdam, that
Christ's prophecy of the coming of an Anti-Christ was a
ruse designed to prolong Christianity indefinitely as
'l'Antéchrist ne paraissant pas, la loi chrétienne resta
debout' (p.221). Vanini in fact offers no explanation,
other than that he has dealt with such matters in other
texts, texts which are lost to us, and, indeed, may
never have been published.
This is an example of how Garasse's judgments on Vanini's works show no interest in their contents; all his comments stem from the assumption that Vanini was attempting to put across atheistic ideas. Hence, Garasse was in no doubt that Vanini's opinions on miracles and resurrections from pagan religions were designed to explain away those from the Gospel:

\[\text{il va ruinant tant qu'il peut, & proditoirement la vérité de ce Mystère, [...] rapportant une infinité de Resurrections feintes & fabuleuses, qui ont esté néanmoins estimées veritables parmy les Payens, pour dire par après que c'en est le mesme, de celles que nous estimons veritables. (p.302)}\]

Garasse uses the same suspect logic to insist that Vanini discounted many of the beliefs and sacraments of the Christian faith. Without presenting his evidence, Garasse feels quite justified in drawing the broad conclusion that Vanini believed that the beliefs of Christianity, like those of all religions, were invented to subjugate the populace:

\[\text{Lucilio Vanino [...] faict semblant de se plaindre [...] que tout ce qui se raconte parmy nous de l'Enfer & du Paradis ne sert pour autre chose que pour contenir la populace en son devoir, & en une crainte mecanique. (pp.311-12)}\]

The importance of Vanini in Garasse's project is the link that Garasse made between him and others, including 'les nouveaux Libertins de nostre siecle, qui ont enchery sur le marché de Cardan & de Lucilio' (p.885). Vanini is linked with Pomponazzi, Cardano and Charron. Pomponazzi is described as 'son maitre' (p.880), and is considered to have provided Vanini with his views on the immortality of the

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8 In fact, Vanini specifically stated that he was referring here to pagan, and not to the Christian, religion (see above, Chapter 5, Section 4). Garasse is assuming Vanini's insincerity, which is not borne out by Vanini's text.
soul. As for Charron, Vanini separated people according to the strength of their souls in the same way that Charron did:

On void trois especes d'Esprits par le monde, scavoir des Esprits SUPERSTITIEUX, qui respondent aux esprits de Bestes introduits par Cardan, & aux esprits Bas inventez par Charron: des esprits POPULAIRES, qui sont en effect les esprits Mediocres de Cardan, & les esprits Communs de Charron: En somme il se void des esprits DE DEMON, qui sont à son dire, les mesmes que Cardan appelloit esprits de Prophetes, & Charron, esprits Escartez. (pp.31-32)

Such a division of different kinds and degrees of understanding in fact reveals nothing about the soundness or unsoundness of the beliefs of those who propose it.  

Garasse, however, leaps to the conclusion that such similarities between the ideas of Charron and Vanini were no accident. Garasse invites the reader to assume that they are all part of a libertine plot. He writes of how an individual confessed to him the workings of the sect:

Estant doncques eschappé du danger, il faisoit comme ceux qui sont sortis de la Galere ou d'une longue prison, il ne se pouvoit souler de me parler de son infortune, & nommément ne se pouvoit il estancher quand il estoit question de parler du meschant & abominable Lucilio, lequel il avoit pratiqué, & en compagnie & dans

9 Cardano's division of people can be found in his De Subtilitate. See Henry Morley, Jerome Cardan: The Life of Girolamo Cardano, of Milan, Physician, 2 vols (London: Chapman and Hull, 1854):

There are three kinds of men, he says - the divine, which neither deceive nor are deceived; the human, which deceive but are not deceived; and the belluine, which cannot deceive but are deceived. Men who deceive and are deceived belong to a compound sort; they are part human and part belluine. (II, p.66)

Cardano himself 'did not count it [De Subtilitate] among the works upon which he relied most for immortality; it was of a kind, he said, to please the public; but there were other of his writings more likely to satisfy the wise' (Cardano, De Libris propriis, lib. ult. I, p.72; Morley, II, pp.69-70)'

For details of Charron's division of people, see below, Chapter 7, Section 2.
Once again, no argument or evidence is produced. The reader has to accept unquestioningly that this 'brave jeune homme', as Garasse calls him, has had a lucky escape. As with Théophile, Garasse condemns through rumour and allegation, unable to present any proof of Vanini's wickedness.

It is no part of my argument that Vanini did not play a part in spreading atheism, simply that there is nothing in Garasse's work to indicate that he did in fact do so. In Garasse's mind, the example of Vanini, coupled with the judgment of the court in Toulouse, was sufficient to prove that atheism was rife in 1620s Paris. The problem is that Vanini's work, taken at face value, is open to various interpretations, and Garasse's thesis has value only if it be accepted that Vanini was being hypocritical, a conclusion which can be reached only through the uncorroborated evidence of Vanini's confession.

Garasse's opponents, like, for example, Ogier, preferred to ignore Vanini, making only the point that Garasse had unnecessarily and excessively publicised his views. Ogier presumably felt that to defend him would have done his cause no good. Garasse was clearly preaching to the converted when he condemned Vanini. Why, then, devote so much time to a figure already so widely discredited? Part of the answer is that the condemnation of Vanini went some way to giving his project some respectability, as to condemn Vanini was in no way liable to bring criticism. More importantly, however, Garasse wished to suggest that Vanini's work had connections with the work of others whom Garasse wanted to attack. These
included Pomponazzi and Charron, respected philosophers whom he sought to condemn by association. This polemical technique was to attract particularly strong censure from his polemical adversaries.
CHAPTER 7

‘LA DOCTRINE CURIEUSE’ (3):

THE MAIN BUTTS OF GARASSE’S POLEMIC (2):

PIERRE CHARRON

1. Garasse’s direct references to Charron

Garasse criticises Pierre Charron in his Doctrine curieuse both directly and implicitly. When dealing with Charron by name, Garasse writes in venomous terms which are designed to belittle him, but he never in fact focuses sharply on any of his texts. His attacks on Charron’s ideas are to be discerned rather in the more general diatribes directed against the ‘beaux esprits prétendus’ in the rest of Garasse’s work. This indirect criticism, reflecting Charron’s thought without alluding to precise passages, takes up far more space than references to Charron by name.

Garasse’s initial description of Charron himself as a Peruvian toucan is combined with his comparing of his works to a broken wheel:

> on peut dire que les œuvres de ce Charron ressemblent à une vieille roue toute rompue & desmembrée, laquelle tant plus on tasche de sanger & de retenir avec des cordages, tant plus elle eschappe & s’en va en pieces. (p.27)

This description, which is a pun on Charron’s name, is typical of the tone of Garasse’s work, in that he pays more attention to using plays on words and to insulting his targets than to challenging them with serious, constructive criticism.

2. The three categories of people

Where Garasse mentions Charron by name, apparently referring to specific arguments, the corresponding passages in De la
Sagesse reveal a different meaning to that which Garasse infers. This is the case in the first of his attacks, where Garasse criticises Charron’s separation of people into categories according to their souls, which are labelled ‘bas’, ‘communs’ or ‘escartez’, a distinction which Garasse alleges was also made by Vanini, and which became a doctrine of the libertines. According to Garasse’s interpretation of Charron, the ‘esprits bas’ are the common people:

qui se laissent aller comme des bestes, & mener comme des buffles par prejugez & par opinions anticipées, de croire sans s’enquester plus outre, s’imaginant que le meilleur est de se laisser aller au torrent. (p.28)

The ‘esprits communs’ are those a step higher up the scale:

qui ont un peu plus de sens que les pecores de la populace, car ils s’apprêtoient bien de la matte, ils voyent bien le defaut des susperstitions qui sont parmy le peuple, que la plus part des hommes vivent en bestes, mais ils n’ont pas assez de force pour rompre ce lien qui les tient attachez à cette servitude. (p.28)

According to Garasse, Charron considered himself to be one of the ‘esprits escartez’:

qui ne vont pas le grand chemin battu par la populace, tel fut Socrate parmy les Grecs, Seneque entre les Latins, & Charron entre les François. Il veut dire que la plus grande sagesse qui soit au monde, c’est de ne tenir pas le grand chemin, mais d’aller par des sentiers escartez, ne juger jamais suivant le sens commun, aller toujours à costé, biaiser, & se former une nouvelle route tant en matiere d’affaires, que de sciences & de Religion. (pp.28-29)

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1 The accusation of elitism aimed at the humanists was not new. Responding to criticism that the scholastics’ language was a vulgar form of Latin, the Louvain theologian Frans Titelmans suggested that there is a [...] kind of eloquence, [...] magnificent, sublime, and grandiloquent, weighing words in a marvelously majestic manner, balancing phrases and adorning them with wonderful human conceit. The wise men of this world use this kind of style to describe their wonderful wisdom in such obscure terms that it is accessible to the smallest possible number of readers. It is that worldly wisdom - an exceptional style, in which the wise men present their doctrines to the world in magnificent
Garasse's words are an interpretation of a passage in De la Sagesse in which Charron described people's differing temperaments:

En l'un & le plus bas sont les esprits foibles & plats, de basse & petite capacité, nez pour obéir, servir, & estre menés, qui en effet sont simplement hommes. Au 2. & moyen estage sont ceux, qui sont de mediocre jugement, [qui] font profession de suffisance, science, habileté, mais qui ne se sentent & ne se jugent pas asséz, s'arrestent à ce qu'on tient communément, & on leur baille du premier coup, sans d'avantage s'enquérir de la vérité & source des choses, voire pensent qu'il ne l'est pas permis. [...] Au 3. & plus haut estage sont les hommes doués d'un esprit vif clair, jugement fort, ferme & solide, qui ne se contentent d'un ouy dire, ne s'arrestent aux opinions communes & reçuees, ne se laissent gaigner & preoccuper à la creance publique, de laquelle ils ne s'étonnent point, sachant qu'il y a plusieurs bourdes, faussetez & impostures reçuees au monde avec approbation & applaudissement, voire adoration & reverence publique, mais examinent toutes choses qui se proposent, sondent meurement, & cerchent sans passion les causes, motifs, & ressorts jusques à la racine, aymants mieux douter & tenir en suspends leur creance, que par une trop molle & lasche facilité ou legereté, ou precipitation de jugement, se paistre de fausseté & affirmer ou se tenir assurez de chose, de laquelle ils ne peuvent avoir raison certaine. Ceux-ci sont en petit nombre, de l'eschole & ressort de Socrates & Platon, modestes, sobres, retenus, considerans plus la vérité & realité des choses, que l'utilité, & s'ils sont bien nez, ayans avec ce dessus la probité, & le reglement des moeurs ils sont vrayement sages, & tels que nous cerchons ici. (De la Sagesse, pp.241-43)

It is important to note the differing tones of Charron's words and the interpretation given to them by Garasse.

Charron's first group is a commonplace description of the classical vulgus, of the common people born to serve and obey, for whom it is better to follow precisely what they are told. The third group is recognised as an elite, of which all people, Charron included, should strive to be a

* fashion - that pushes aside the humility of Christ's cross. This is a style that Paul was proud not to possess. (Collationes quinque super epistolae ad Romanos (Antwerp, 1529), p.121-22, translated by Rummel, pp.121-22)*
part. Contrary to Garasse's statement, Charron did not include himself among examples of this elite. The ideas which Charron suggested should be doubted were precisely those which were 'opinions communes & reçuees au monde': it was worldly opinions, not heavenly decrees, which were to be doubted, and Garasse is wrong to infer from this passage that Charron was advocating the formation of a new path in religion.  

It is in the treatment of the second group that another aspect of Garasse's quarrel with Charron becomes clear. Charron believed that the people of the 'moyen estage' had attained some knowledge, but had no understanding of it, and in fact, after the manner of scholastic writers and philosophers, granted worldly knowledge far more importance than it deserved:

Ils s'asservissent aux opinions & loix municipales du lieu où ils se trouvent des lors qu'ils sont esclos, nonseulement par observance & usage, ce que tous doivent faire, mais encor de coeur & d'ame: & pensent que ce qu'on croit en leur village est la vraye touche de verité (ceci ne s'entend de la vérité divine revelée, ni de religion) c'est la seule, ou bien la meilleure regle de bien vivre. Ces gents sont de l'escole & du ressort d'Aristote, affirmatifs positifs, dogmatistes, qui regardent plus l'utilité que la vérité, ce qui est propre à l'usage & trafic du monde, qu'à ce qui est bon & vray en soi. (p.242)

More importantly, this class of people were in charge of

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2 Note that Charron found this idea in the work of Montaigne:

Toutes choses produites par nostre propre discours et suffisance, autant vrayes que fauces, sont subjectes à incertitude et debat. C'est pour le chastiement de nostre fierté et instruction de nostre misere et incapacité, que Dieu produisit le trouble et la confusion de l'ancienne tour de Babel. Tout ce que nous entreprenons sans son assistance, tout ce que nous voyons sans la lampe de sa grace, ce n'est que vanité et folie. (Montaigne, Essais, 'Apologie de Raymond Sebond', II, 12, p.218)
education, and the blind and unreflecting rote-learning that they imposed upon their pupils was useless because it did not encourage understanding:

De cet erreur populaire est venue la mauvaise instruction de la jeunesse qui se void par tout: Ils sont toujours après pour lui faire apprendre par coeur (ainsi parlent-ils) ce que les livres disent, afin de les pouvoir alleguer, & à lui remplir & charger la memoire du bien d’autrui, & ne se soucident de lui resveiller & aiguiser l’entendement, & former le jugement pour lui faire valoir son propre bien & ses facultez naturelles, pour le faire sage & habile à toutes choses: Aussi voyons-nous que les plus scâvants qui ont tout Aristote & Ciceron en la teste, sont plus sots & plus ineptes aux affaires, que le monde est mené & gouverné par ceux qui n’en scâvent rien. (p.88) 3

Charron’s criticism, therefore, was directed at methods of education. A picture of the standard curriculum in French higher education in the seventeenth century is to be found in Brockliss’s book. He describes a curriculum which divided the teaching of theology into two parts: positive theology, which ‘taught the history of God’s people and God’s revelation to man through the study of the Bible and Church history’ (p.228), and scholastic theology, which was ‘specifically devoted to the examination of theological problems’ (p.228); scholastic theology was itself divided into two further parts: dogmatic theology, which ‘determined the right conclusion to a number of doctrinal questions concerning God, Man, Christ, and the Church’ (p.228), and moral theology, which ‘dealt with questions of human behaviour [...] to determine the proper form of Christian

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3 See also Montaigne, ‘De l’institution des enfans’: Scâvoir par coeur n’est pas scâvoir: c’est tenir ce qu’on a donné en garde à sa memoire. Ce qu’on scâit droittement, on en dispose, sans regarder au patron, sans tourner les yeux vers son livre. Facheuse suffisance, qu’une suffisance pure livresque. (Essais, I, 26, p.200)
conduct when confronted by moral dilemmas’ (p.229).

There are two important points here: firstly, there was an overwhelming bias towards the teaching of dogmatic theology:

In the faculties the emphasis was almost exclusively on scholastic theology, a subject which baccalaureands at the beginning of the period [the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries] were expected to have studied for five years but as the seventeenth century progressed only for three. The scholastic professors provided instruction indiscriminately in dogma and casuistry, for separate chairs in moral theology were only to be found in Paris and Avignon. (Brockliss, p.230)

These separate chairs in moral theology were founded in Paris in 1612, and in Avignon in 1719, while the only chair in positive theology was founded in Paris in 1606 (Brockliss, p.230). At the time when Charron wrote, therefore, there were chairs only in dogmatic theology. The emphasis on scholastic theology was also to be found in Jesuit schools. Although their Ratio studiorum of 1586 had set out a balanced syllabus, ‘there was a heavier emphasis on scholastic theology than the Jesuit educationalists had originally intended’ (Brockliss, p.231).

While Charron’s notions of divine, revealed wisdom, of which he advocated the unquestioning acceptance, corresponded to positive theology, with its emphasis on biblical history, his De la Sagesse challenged scholastic notions of moral theology, by offering a different approach to human behaviour. Brockliss’s study confirms Charron’s view that scholastic teaching was often cursory, excessively formal and ritualised, and characterised more by rote-learning than by understanding of the issues:

Initially the seminaries only taught moral theology. In the business of specifically training parish priests, their immediate interest was in producing a clergyman
who could preach a sermon and take confession, not in training a controversialist or Biblical exegete. In a course too that seldom lasted more than six months in the first part of the period, the analysis of moral problems was necessarily perfunctory. (p.231)

The syllabus for scholastic theology had remained largely unchanged for centuries. ‘Courses in moral and dogmatic theology attempted to cover all the pertinent theological problems dealt with in the *Summa* of Aquinas’ (Brockliss, p.233). Teaching was dull and ossified:

It was the thought of Aristotle, Aquinas, Justinian, and Gregory IX that was the fundamental subject of analysis, not the moral and metaphysical sciences *tout court*. Even Protestant theologians had difficulty in escaping from the shadow of St Thomas. In the second place, the way in which the texts of these authors were treated almost always followed the same standardised and highly predictable route. The teaching of the moral and metaphysical sciences, then, was not simply structurally conservative but more importantly intellectually stagnant. (Brockliss, p.331)

Charron’s separation of people into different types was, therefore, designed in part to draw attention to his view of the status of scholastics, distinct firstly from those who had no education at all, and secondly from those who had passed beyond scholastic rote-learning and were striving to achieve true understanding of the world. He pointed out that some receive no education at all, while many misuse their education and abuse the powers of reasoning that they possess. It is vitally important, when considering Garasse’s accusations of atheism against him, that Charron stressed continually that he was not discussing the interpretation of revealed religious knowledge, but the status of worldly opinions.  

The emphasis on educational methods reveals a

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4 See *De la Sagesse*, pp.4, 7, 323, 354, and the *Petit traicté de sagesse*, pp.9, 48, 52-53.
fundamental clash between the ideas of the scholastic Jesuit schoolmaster Garasse and those of the humanist Charron. Garasse's polemical intention, it appears, is to throw sand in the eyes of his readers, to draw attention away from criticism of scholastic methods by presenting Charron's Christian and humanistic scepticism as libertinism. The separation of earthly and divine wisdom ran counter to the unified and integrative system of scholastic theology. Garasse implies that the development of new ideas, both in theology and in philosophy, was unnecessary, and states that wisdom lay in the acceptance of current thinking:

Je conclus contre Charron, & dis que la plus grande finesse & la meilleure preuve d'un bon esprit c'est de marcher son grand chemin, tant en matière de sciences que de Religion, se tenir sur les opinions communes, les bien deffendre par de nouvelles pensées. (pp.30-31)

3. On the humanity of Christ

Garasse's second specific criticism of Charron involved what he saw as the denial of aspects of Christ's life, and in particular an insistence on the infinite nature of divinity which encouraged a disbelief in the human incarnation of Christ:

ce personnage d'humeur extravagante, & qui avoit la teste pleine d'escrevisses combattant en secret la verité de la Religion Christienne par des maximes qu'il n'entendoit pas, dit en quelque lieu de sa Sagesse, que c'est faire tort à Dieu de concevoir de luy quelque chose si basse, comme sont un gibbet, une estable, une naissance ordinaire. (p.274)

Garasse's words, for which no specific reference to De la Sagesse can be given, are an example of his taking Charron's words out of context. Charron was appalled by what he saw as the perpetual recreation of God in the image of petty superstitious men. The superstitious, he argued, invested
God with human frailties:

Le superstitieux ne laisse vivre en paix ny Dieu, ny les hommes; il apprehende Dieu chagrin, despiteux, difficile à contenter, facile à se courroucer, long à s'apaiser, examinant nos actions à la façon humaine d'un juge bien severe, espiant & nous guettant au pas. (De la Sagesse, p.389)

God was generally dragged down to the human level instead of being exalted:

Generalement toute superstition & faute en religion, vient de ce que l'on n'estime pas assez Dieu, nous le rappelons & ravallons à nous, nous jugeons de luy selon nous; nous l'affublons de nos humeurs: quel blaspheme! (p.390)

Garasse's way of answering this Christian sceptic's argument - which he, as a scholastic, considered dangerous - is to misrepresent it and then dismiss it by labelling it as atheistic. The question of the nature of God was of vital importance in the wider quarrel between certain humanists and scholastics, with the humanists making use of sceptical arguments and speaking of God as a hidden God, whose nature, motives and behaviour could not be known to human minds precisely because of the gulf which existed between the human and divine conditions. The scholastics, arguing that God is visible in every part of creation, offered much more accessible pictures of a God perceptible to the eye and the ear. It is interesting to note how Pascal, in his defence of Christianity against the libertines, resolves this apparent clash of views by pointing out that God is visible in all

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5 Again, this idea can be found in Montaigne: qu'est-il plus vain que de vouloir deviner Dieu par nos analogies et conjectures, le regler et le monde à nostre capacité et à nos loix, et nous servir aux despens de la divinité de ce petit eschantillon de suffisance qu'il luy a pleu despartir à nostre naturelle condition? (Essais, 'Apologie de Raymond Sebond', II, 12, p.178)
things for those who believe, but invisible for those who do not:

voulant paraître à découvert à ceux qui le cherchent de tout leur coeur, et caché à ceux qui le fuient de tout leur coeur il a tempéré [...] sa connaissance, en sorte qu’il a donné des marques de soi visibles à ceux qui le cherchent et non à ceux qui ne le cherchent pas. Il y a assez de lumière pour ceux qui ne désirent que de voir, et assez d’obscurité pour ceux qui ont une disposition contraire.  

Garasse, however, cannot, or prefers not to, address the sceptics' argument that the superstitious invent God in their own image, and attempts once again to cast Charron in the role of an atheist wishing to deny the humanity of Christ.

While refusing to offer any constructive response to his opponent, Garasse, in his final reference to Charron, expresses his alarm that Charron was being taken seriously in certain quarters. If this was the case, and if Charron's arguments were being used against the Church, Garasse should perhaps have prepared a serious scholastic response to the questions raised by Charron. However, he restricts himself to outright condemnation, while using the testimony of others to justify his all-out attack on Charron's works. Garasse reasons that if Charron's writings were outwardly pious, then it is important to emphasise the dangers lurking within them. His attempts to do so, however, are undermined by Garasse himself, as he so wilfully misinterprets the ideas under attack. The result is that Garasse's book fails to present in any depth the reasoned scholastic objections which might have been levelled against Charron's sceptical

ideas. Instead, the reader is asked to take Garasse's word for it that Charron's works are atheistic and, given the weakness of Garasse's specific arguments against Charron, there is no good reason to do so. Garasse's combination of vagueness and venom undermines his authority as a propagandist, leaving the reader to ask if there can be anything solid in his broader attacks against the unnamed armies of 'beaux esprits prétendus'.

4. Charron and the maxims

The extent to which Garasse's polemical aim is to undermine the ideas of Charron can be judged by comparing the libertine maxims listed in *la Doctrine curieuse* with the aspects of Charron's doctrine from which they appear to stem. A study of the content of Charron's work reveals that, here too, much of Garasse's criticism misses its mark, as it derives from misinterpretation, or, more importantly, from a refusal either to follow Charron's arguments or to accept his sincerity.

In the case of the first maxim, attacking libertines for their hubristic dismissal of ordinary Christians as simple-minded and superstitious, it is indeed true that Charron suggested that only a few were capable of true wisdom, and that his work was not written for the common people:

*d'autant que la Sagesse n'estant commune ny populaire, & venant à descier & condamer d'authority, & jure suo singulari, les opinions communes & populaires, comme la pluspart erronées, ne peut qu'elle n'encoure la malegree & l'envie du monde, tellement que ce livre n'est point pour le commun & bas etage, & s'il eust esté populairement receu & accepté, il se fust trouve bien descheu de ses pretentions. (Petit traicté de sagesse, p.1)*

We have seen that it was Charron's view that the 'esprits
bas' lacked the necessary education to grasp human wisdom (see above, Section 2). Garasse's assertion that Charron preached that the elite should discuss their ideas in private hardly squared with the fact that Charron wrote and published his views in full in *De la Sagesse*, which quickly ran to many editions.

The second maxim, that it was only through state decree that religion should be accepted, also has some connection with Charron's work. Garasse probably developed this maxim from Charron's view that it is absurd to assume that only the customs, practices and assumptions of one's own country are sound:

> Est-il possible que de tant de loix, coutumes, opinions, ceremonies, differentes & contraires aux nostres qu'il y a au monde, il n'y ayt que les nostres bonnes? Que tout le reste du monde se soit mesconté: Qui l'osera dire? Et qui doute que les autres n'en disent tout autant des nostres? (*Petit traicté de sagesse*, p.23)

If one ignores Charron's repeated insistence that the Christian religion is of divine origin, and, therefore, not to be classed among human institutions and customs, it is easy to see in this passage an invitation to view the Christian religion as nothing more than a local custom, regulated by the state. For Christian sceptics, each human opinion was as valid as any other, on the basis that each, being of human invention, was equally subject to error.  

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7 For example, the basis of Montaigne's 'Des cannibales' was that at first seemed barbarous could be considered to be as valid a way of life as that of Renaissance France:

> Or, je trouve, pour revenir à mon propos, qu'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; comme de vray il semble que nous n'avons autre mire de la verité et de la raison que l'exemple et idée des
But, of course, Charron reminds us: 'ceci ne s'entend de la vérité divine révélée, ni de religion' (see Section 2).

Also, together with frequent calls to follow the teachings of the Church, Charron insisted that the wise person would do nothing to offend the sensibilities of others:

Or suivant ceste leçon, le Sage vivra sans offense d'autrui, sans heurter le public, ny le particulier, sans scandaliser les foibles & imparfaicts & populaires. (Petit traicté de sagesse, p.16)

Garasse's third maxim, that the intelligent person should not let himself be taken in by or share the beliefs of ordinary people, is another distortion of Charron's call for a suspension of judgment in human affairs:

Les choses qui plus empêchent & troublent le repos & tranquillité d'esprit sont les opinions communes & populaires, qui sont presque toutes erronées, puis les desirs & passions qui engendrent une delicate & difficulté en nous: laquelle fait que l'on n'est jamais content, & icelles sont rechauffées & esmuëes par les deux contraires fortunes, prosperité & adversité, comme par vents impetueux & violens: & finalement cette vile & basse captivité, par laquelle l'esprit (c'est à dire le jugement & la volonté) est asservi & detenu esclave comme une beste, soubs le joug de certaines opinions & regles locales & particulières. (De la Sagesse, p.477)

Again, it is Garasse's refusal to recognise Charron's distinction between divine and human wisdom which leads to his misinterpretation. Charron made it quite clear that the ideas to be avoided were 'les opinions communes & populaires', but Garasse applies Charron's words to the acceptance of the common teachings of the Church.

Perhaps the most misunderstood of Charron's doctrines is his call to cultivate one's own nature, and find one's own contentment. Garasse alludes to this idea in his opinions et usances du pais où nous sommes. Là est tousjours la parfaict e religion, la parfaict police, perfect et accomplly usage de toutes choses. (Montaigne, Essais, I, 31, p.254)
interpretation of the fourth alleged libertine maxim - that of a belief in an irrevocable destiny. Garasse states that the libertines use this belief to justify two ideas. Firstly, that people have an individual, unchangeable nature, which dictates their every action:

La Destinée s'attache à la personne invariablement dès le jour de la naissance: en sorte que tout despend du point & minute de la Nativité. (La Doctrine curieuse, p.376)

Secondly, according to Garasse, belief in destiny was the libertines' justification of the life of unashamed, uncontrolled pleasure-seeking, which Garasse constantly ascribes to them:

il faut aller son grand chemin sans se soucier de chose quelconque, ny de foy, ny de salut, ny de vertu, ny de bonnes oeuvres, ains seulement de jouyr de ses plaisirs & se donner du bon temps. (La Doctrine curieuse, p.354)

It is very possible that Garasse believed that these two beliefs derived from Charron.° However, Charron stressed that while one's individual nature should indeed be cultivated, this consideration was secondary to that of living in keeping with the collective human race, which in

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8 It is interesting to note that Alan Boase, who argues that Théophile de Viau read, and was influenced by, Montaigne, believes that Théophile encouraged just such an amoral interpretation of the idea of cultivating his own nature:

It is wrong to blame a man for following his own tastes. Let him be whole-hearted in his dominating passion, whether it is money-getting, ambition, war, hunting, or love. The notion is amoral, but in the idea on whole-heartedness as a necessity to happiness, Théophile has got hold of one of the conditions of personality. The attitude is a reaction from the idea of conflict and an abstract universal ideal, things deemed essential to morality and overstressed by Christian ethics. The end of the satire completes the expression of this view; to follow one's bent, one's individual nature, this is bonnes moeurs. The great source of vice is imitation of others. (Boase, p.140)
turn was best achieved by fitting in with the wider patterns of nature as a whole. This was the basis of Charron’s call to follow nature:

La regle qu’il faut tenir en jugeant, & en toutes choses est nature, la naturelle & universelle raison, suyvant laquelle on ne peut jamais faillir. (De la Sagesse, p.330)

Garasse presents such encouragement to follow nature as a call to indulge one’s baser instincts for pleasure to the full, and he links this notion with his habitual accusation that the beaux esprits are easily recognised by their drunken behaviour. However, it is clear from De la Sagesse that to follow nature is to avoid excess rather than indulge in it. Excess, according to Charron, is a barrier to wisdom; he condemns

ces monstres qui par la violence des vices, desbauches, volontez trop desreglées & perverses, l’estouffent [la nature], esteignent tant qu’est en eux sa lumiere, mortifient ses semences. (De la Sagesse, p.361)

More importantly, although the avoidance of excess was of paramount importance to Charron, his attitude to bodily pleasures represented a fundamental objection to the view that the body was corrupt and, therefore, the natural enemy of the soul. Charron believed that the health of the soul was linked to the health of the body, and that the body needed to have its natural desires satisfied in order to be healthy. Therefore, Charron’s only objection was to excess:

Cette action [of making love] donc en soy & simplement prinse, n’est point honteuse ny vicieuse, puis que naturelle & corporelle, non plus que les autres pareilles actions: voire si elle est bien conduitte, juste, utile, necessaire, pour le moins autant que le manger & boire. Mais ce qui la fait tant decrier, est que tres-rarement y est gardée moderation. (De la
Sagesse, p.132) 

This was probably seen by Garasse as being in opposition to the rigorist Jesuit denial of the pleasures of the flesh. Loyola emphasised the value of the purity of the body, and called on the Jesuits to aim for angelic purity. The idea that asceticism was in itself a good thing was specifically attacked by Charron:

le second chef & témoignage de sa misere est au retrancher des plaisirs, si petits & chétifs qui lui appartiennent (car des purs, grands & entiers il n'en est capable, comme a esté dict en sa foiblesse) & au rabattre du nombre & de la douceur d'iceux: si ce n'est qu'il se face pour Dieu, quel monstre, qui est ennemy de soy-mesme, se desrobe & se trahit soy-mesme, à qui ses plaisirs pesent, qui se tient au malheur? Il y en a qui evitent la santé, l'allegresse, la joye, comme chose mauvaise.

However, Charron, like Montaigne, takes care to make it clear that he is not condemning Christian asceticism, adding, 'si ce n'est qu'il se face pour Dieu'.

The question of the immortality of the soul is one which

9 See also Montaigne, 'De la solitude': ayant entendu les vrays biens, desquels on jouit à mesure qu'on les entend, s'en contenter, sans desir de prolongement de vie ny de nom. Voylà le conseil de la vraye et naifve philosophie. (Essais, I, 39, p.299)

10 De la Sagesse, p.203. Montaigne also attacked the widespread cult of asceticism: Cette impression se raporte aucunement à cette autre si ancienne, de penser gratifier au Ciel et à la nature par nostre massacre et homicide, qui fut universellement embrassée en toutes religions. (Essais, 'De la moderation', I, 30, p.249)

11 Montaigne stated, with reference to satisfying bodily desires:

Je ne touche pas icy et ne mesle point à cette marmaille d'hommes que nous sommes et à cette vanité de desirs et cogitations qui nous divertissent, ces ames venerables, eslevees par ardeur de devotion et religion à une constante et conscienteoue meditation des choses divines. (Essais, III, 13, 'De l'expérience', p.326)
exercised the mind of many of the Christian sceptical writers. The belief which Garasse attributes to them in his seventh maxim - that the immortality of the soul cannot be proved - is only half of their conclusion. The Christian sceptics believed that it could not be proved using human wisdom, but that it was contained in revealed divine wisdom, and had therefore to be accepted. This was the essence of Charron's belief. It was natural for people to believe in the immortality of the soul, and this belief was confirmed by religion, and while it could not be proved by rational means, this should be no barrier to its acceptance:

L'immortalité de l'âme est la chose la plus universellement, religieusement (c'est le principal fondement de toute religion) & plausiblement retenue par tout le monde, j'entend d'une externe & publique profession, car d'une serieuze, interne & vraye non pas tant, tesmoing tant d'Epicuriens, libertin's, & moqueurs; Toutesfois les Saduceens, les plus gros Milours des Juifs n'en faisoient point la petite bouche à la nier: la plus utilement creue, aucunement assez prouvée par plusieurs raisons naturelles & humaines, mais proprement & mieux establie par le ressort de la Religion, que par tout autre moyen. Il semble bien y avoir une inclination & disposition de nature à la croire, car l'homme desire naturellement allonger & perpetuer son estre, d'où vient aussi ce grand & furieux soin & amour de nostre postérité & succession. (De la Sagesse, p.63)

This example again shows Garasse taking a small element from Charron's doctrine, and then both misinterpreting it and ignoring the context in which Charron wrote. Garasse refuses to accept that Charron was being sincere; his whole attack on him relies on the assumption that Charron's professions of faith were designed only to save him from censure. As we have seen in other contexts, Garasse shows no desire to offer constructive criticism, or to give a reasoned scholastic response to sceptical objections to their doctrine. Most importantly, Garasse does not accept
that there was any difference between divine wisdom and human wisdom, and although this distinction was crucial to a good understanding of Charron's views in De la Sagesse, Garasse does not even approach the question in his work. The result is that, although La Doctrine curieuse reiterates strong opposition to Charron from a vaguely defined scholastic point of view, Garasse's book adds little to the debate on ideas which was prevalent at the time between the two groups.

5. Charron as libertine

While Garasse's attempts to portray Charron as an atheist are undermined by his misinterpretations of his work, it is perhaps a little easier to see how he came to classify Charron as a libertine. The definition of this term, which Garasse gave in his Recherches des recherches (pp.681-89), suggests that - for him at least - it embraced any form of Christianity which diverged from the strictly Thomist scholastic viewpoint, upheld by the Roman Catholic Church and by the Jesuits. The terms in which Garasse charges Étienne Pasquier with libertinism in the earlier polemic can also be found in his treatment of Charron - and other humanistic thinkers - in La Doctrine curieuse.

Firstly, it is part of Garasse's definition that, although the libertine is prepared to be outwardly rigorous on matters of church dogma,

apres avoir protesté qu'il est Catholique, pour faire plus favorablement glisser son venin, il dira: "Qu'il ne croyd pas neantmoins tous ces menus fatras dont on abbreuve le simple peuple". (Recherches des recherches, p.683)

This statement was to be repeated in modified form as the
third maxim of the beaux esprits, and was very much a
corruption of Charron's view that many people did not
worship in the correct fashion, but paid too much attention
to symbolic gestures, without considering their spiritual
meaning. 12

The second part of Garasse's definition presents the
libertine as a person who is too eager to see the good
points of religions other than Catholicism, and of people
other than Catholics:

Il soustiendra que Clovis ne fut jamais Chrestien
Catholique, mais qu'il mourut Arien, Que Beze estoit un
bel esprit, Que Calvin estoit un grand personnage, Que
Marot estoit l'ornement de son siecle: Qu'il faut
procéder doucement envers les Heretiques: Que c'est une
barberie de punir les Huguenots: Que l'Inquisition est
une cruauté de cannibales, &c. (Recherches des
recherches, pp.685-86) 13

While these words are aimed at Pasquier, they exemplify
Garasse's attitude towards not only Charron, but also to
many other humanists. Garasse alleges that, 'Charron tenoit

12 Montaigne had said very much the same thing as Charron
regarding, for example, confession:
Au lieu de rabiller nostre faute, nous la
redoublons, presentans à celuy à qui nous avons à
demander pardon une affection pleine d'irreverence
et de haine. Voylà pourquoi je ne loue pas
volontiers ceux que je voy prier Dieu plus souvent
et plus ordinairement, si les actions voisines de la
priere ne me tesmoignent quelque amendement et
reformation. (Essais, 'Des prières', I, 56, p.378)

13 The attempt to associate libertines with Calvinists is
reminiscent of the scholastic equating of humanists with
Reformers. Erasmus complained of being linked with
Luther, reminded the Inquisitors that, 'The imperial
edict arms them, not against the champions of letters
and language studies, but against heretics' (Opus
Epistolarum Des. Erasmi Roterodami, 12 vols, edited by
Ep.1300, 11.53-55) and complained that, 'They persecute
letters rather than Luther' (Ep.1345, 1.39). Rummel
notes that scholastic theologians deliberately combined
criticism of Luther and of humanists (p.128, see my
Chapter 1, Section 2).
toutes Religions pour indifferentes' (La Doctrine curieuse, p.28). The basis for this accusation is a corruption of several of Charron’s ideas, most notably those which suggested that true faith required introspection rather than external displays of worship:

de tant de diverses religions & manières de servir Dieu, qui sont ou peuvent estre au monde, celles semblent estre plus nobles, & avoir plus d’apparance de verité, lesquelles sans grande operation externe & corporelle, retirent l’ame au dedans, & l’eslevent par pure contemplation, à admirer & adorer la grandeur & majesté immense de la premiere cause de toutes choses, & l’estre des estres, sans grande declaration ou determination d’icelle, ou prescription de son service; ains la reconnoissent indefiniment estre la bonté, perfection, & infinité du tout incomprehensible, & incognoissable, comme enseignent les Pythagoriens & plus insignes Philosophes. (De la Sagesse, p.392)

For a Jesuit zealot like Garasse, devoted body and soul to the Society of Jesus and to the defence of the true Roman Church, working to keep the forms of worship and all the rituals and practices of the Church intact, determined to oppose innovation and heresy in all forms, hoping still to stamp out Protestantism, it is hardly surprising that such free talk of true religious experience being spiritual and internal rather than visible and external sounded wild and dangerous. Coming, as they did, from a Roman Catholic priest, Charron’s words must have sounded to Garasse like words of treachery calculated to destroy the things for which he lived and worked. Taken in isolation, Charron’s views in this passage could indeed be interpreted as an

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14 Montaigne justified this belief with reference to Scripture:

de toutes les religions que saint Paul trouva en credit à Athenes, celle qu’ils avoyent desdiée à une divinité cachée et inconnue luy sembla la plus excusable. (Essais, ‘Apologie de Raymond Sebond’, II, 12, p.179)
assertion that, so long as people cultivate their spiritual selves, the outer trappings of religion do not matter. For Garasse, it could easily have seemed that Charron was embracing the view that all sects and religions are of equal value.\footnote{Andrew Calder, in his book on Molière, makes the point that if a person were to follow Charron’s doctrine, but without his faith, Garasse’s fears would be justified: If people who did not share Charron’s faith, piety and moral sense were to adopt a pose of total scepticism in the face of divine and human law, then there would be little to restrain them in the pursuit of private pleasure and self-gratification. Worse still from the point of view of Garasse, who saw himself as a defender of the faith, such libertines could find the seeds of agnosticism and even atheism in the fearless questioning of accepted ideas which sceptics like Charron felt it their duty to carry out. (p.188)}

For Garasse, it is religion which is the primary defining quality of a person, and absolute loyalty to the forms and practices of strict Roman Catholicism is essential. In fact, while loathing the superstition which easily creeps into the practice of religious ritual and worship, Charron, like Montaigne, called for unswerving loyalty to Rome and the Catholic Church. They were not Gallicans, and both were opposed to schism.\footnote{The equating of Gallicanism with libertinism was made by Garasse in his Recherches de recherches. There he states that the libertine ‘à chaque periode […] fera ressonner le mot de LIBERTÉ GALLICANE’ (pp.685-86). For the distinction between Gallicans and Ultramontanes, see Brockliss (pp.266-76), who stated that ‘the first stressed that supreme authority in the Church lay with a General Council, the second that it was in the hands of the Pope’ (p.267). The Gallican articles, which granted autonomy for the French Church, were sanctioned by Louis XIV in 1682, but ‘in the first half of the seventeenth century the quarrel between Gallicans and Ultramontanes was muted’ (Brockliss, p.267). There is no evidence that the tolerance displayed towards other cultures and religions in Charron’s - and Montaigne’s - work was connected to support for the Gallican movement, and it seems that Garasse uses the term ‘Gallican’ as another}
his opposition to Reformers by writing *Les Trois veritez*, where he specified his opposition to any form of schism:

L'Eglise Catholique Romaine est la vraye, certaine souveraine, reigle, & juge de la doctrine & creance Christienne, la maison de verité, en laquelle il faut vivre & mourir, pour avoir part au salut éternel, & de laquelle il n'est jamais permis de sortir & se separer. (p.190)

Garasse's attack assumed that Charron's ideas were designed to challenge the teachings of the Catholic Church. In fact, Charron was anti-scholastic, but not in the least anti-Catholic. Like other humanists before him, he challenged the rigid Thomist interpretation of Scripture, and the teaching of this interpretation which allowed little room for debate, or even understanding of the issues involved. Like Rabelais and Montaigne before him, and indeed pre-figuring the Pascal of the Pensées, Charron used the weapons of scepticism to remind scholastics (theologians, philosophers and scientists) of the fallibility of human reasoning and the dangers of pedantry and arrogance. Garasse condemned Charron without devoting close attention to his works. His use of the term libertine, extended to include anybody who deviated from the rigid position of scholastic theologians, gave Garasse a narrow and blinkered model of the true churchman against which he found it easy to condemn Charron on every front.

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17 Similarly, M.A.Screech says of Montaigne: His arguments for the truth of Roman Catholicism are those of natural reason: since truth should be the same everywhere, the variations of the Protestants must be wrong; the schismatic English must be wrong, too, since they change their church by act of Parliament. (*Montaigne and Melancholy*, p.18)
6. Garasse’s treatment of other humanists

Garasse’s condemnation of Charron by association with the ideas of Théophile de Viau and Vanini is repeated in his treatment of other important humanistic thinkers. In writing La Doctrine curieuse, Garasse accumulates innumerable stories and examples of atheism, and suggests that they were part of the inspiration for Théophile and his libertine group. Several important sceptical figures appear in Garasse’s text, all accused of writing material which contravened the teachings of the Catholic Church. Garasse simply treats Christian sceptics as atheists.

Erasmus, for Garasse, is an atheist canonised by libertines. Christ, Garasse reminds us, is the only road to salvation:

\[
\text{il n’estoit pas donques raisonnable que les libertins sans autre commission, canonisassent des personnes qui ont esté infames en leurs vies, Atheistes en leur creance, impudiques en leurs escrits, comme sont Horace, Socrates & quelques autres, pour lesquels Erasme & Zvingle deux tiercelets d’atheisme se sont rendus caution. (La Doctrine curieuse, p.251)}
\]

Erasmus is also criticised for mocking the words of the Bible:

\[
\text{Telle fut aussi l’impertinance d’Erasme, qui se laissa par les incongruitez pretenduës de l’Escriture saincte, traiser jusques à l’impiété, au rapport de Godefroy Tilman en sa Preface Apologetike pour les oeuvres de saint Denis. [...] Et de ces commencemens il se precipita jusques dans les abysmes de l’impiété & de la bouffonnerie, traduisant les choses sainctes en risée, & faisant des parodies messeantes sur le texte des sainctes Escritures. (p.647)}
\]

This criticism of Erasmus is based on his commentaries on the New Testament, where, drawing on his knowledge of Greek, he drew attention to errors in the Vulgate used by scholastic exegetes. Erasmus touched, for example, on the vexed question of the immortality of the soul. M.A.Screech
writes:

The Sorbonne theologians had asserted their belief in the immortality of the soul on the basis of specific texts of the Vulgate. In his *Annotations* Erasmus quietly showed how silly they were. He too believed that the soul reigned with God after death, but he would not allow ignorant theologians to reach unwarranted certainties which were no such thing. (*Ecstasy and the Praise of Folly*, p.138)

Garasse attacked in Erasmus the humanistic critic of scholastic learning and authority. 18 His assertion that Charron was an atheist should be judged in the same light as his assertion that Erasmus, too, was an atheist. In both cases, he is attacking humanists and Christian sceptics who were hostile to scholastic learning.

The gratuitous nature of Garasse’s attacks is equally apparent in the case of Pomponazzi. Because Vanini cited him - and Cardano - as influences, Pomponazzi is introduced into Garasse’s argument on each occasion that he criticises an idea that Vanini claimed to have learned from him. For example, all three are considered to be afflicted by madness:

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18 The suggestion that Erasmus wrote specifically to challenge the scholastics has been made by Popkin: Erasmus seems to have been shocked at the apparent futility of the intellectuals in their quest for certainty. All the machinery of these scholastic minds had missed the essential point, the simple Christian attitude. The Christian Fool was far better off than the lofty theologians of Paris who were ensnared in a labyrinth of their own making. (*The History of Scepticism*, p.6)

Meanwhile, the *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique*, 15 vols (Paris: Letourzey et Ané, 1939) says:

Entre Érasme et la scolastique, l’opposition est foncière et irréductible; c’est la théologie médiévale tout entière, hommes et choses, esprit et forme, méthode et conclusions, qu’Érasme dénonce et maudit. Génie spéculatif, déduction logique des idées et précision rigoureuse des termes, ossature enfin du cadre religieux, la scolastique est aux antipodes d’Érasme. (V, p.396)
The belief that Pomponazzi was responsible for Vanini's ideas is the only basis for Garasse's accusation that he was 'un Atheiste parfaict' (p.849). Garasse later admits that Vanini is his only source for accusing Pomponazzi of atheism, for he himself had not read Pomponazzi's works:

pour le Pomponace je n'en puis dire autre chose, sinon que c'est un tres-meschant homme à ce que je puis voir dans le miserable Lucilio, car n'ayant jamais graces à Dieu perdu le temps à la lecture de ses impies, je n'en scçauroisporter tesmoignage sinon sur le rapport d'autruy. (p.1013)

Pomponazzi is significant because his works, far from constituting attacks on scholasticism, were themselves written as explorations of philosophical and theological matters in the style of scholastic thinkers. The method of Pomponazzi, himself a university teacher, was scholastic in origin. The difference was that Pomponazzi sought to

19 Note that Garasse's criticisms of Rabelais are also not based on Garasse's own reading of his text. Garasse states:

Je proteste en conscience que je n'en ay jamais leu quatre lignes de suite, mais à voir ce qui est rapporté de luy dans les Oeuvres de Maistre Estienne Pasquier, lesquelles j'ay assez diligemment feuilletées, j'estime que Rabelais est un tres-maudit & pernicieux Escrivain, qui succe peu à peu l'esprit de pieté, qui desrobe insensiblement l'homme de soy-mesme, qui anéantit le sentiment de Religion. (La Doctrine curieuse, pp.1016-17)

20 See Paul Oskar Kristeller, Eight Philosophers of the Italian Renaissance (London: Chatto & Windus, 1965): Pomponazzi's style is as far removed from humanist elegance as it can be, and represents a rather harsh example of scholastic terminology and argument, although he is at times capable of concise formulation and caustic wit. (p.77)
provide philosophical, rather than theological, responses to theological problems. Kristeller states that Paduan Averroism, of which Pomponazzi was a product, dealt with secular matters, and distanced itself from - without opposing - theology:

This tradition must be called Aristotelian on account of its sources and authorities, and also scholastic on account of its terminology, method, and style. Yet it was thoroughly secular, and, if you wish, naturalistic, because of its close ties with medicine and its lack of connection with theology (though it was not opposed to theology, let alone to religion, as has often been claimed). (p.74)

Pomponazzi's *De immortalitate animae* (1516) was an example of a discussion of theological matters in a philosophical context. Pomponazzi explains that he wrote the treatise because a student requested that he resolve a disagreement between Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas:

you [Pomponazzi] set forth the position of St Thomas Aquinas on the immortality of the soul. Although you were in no doubt that it is true and most certain in itself, yet you judged that it is in complete disagreement with what Aristotle says [...]. Leaving aside revelations and miracles, and remaining entirely within natural limits, what do you yourself think in this matter? (On the Immortality of the Soul, p.281)

For Pomponazzi, the teachings of the Catholic Church were sacrosanct, but it was possible to offer discussions of all other matters. The interest in theology displayed in his works is therefore restricted to knowing where the Church stood, while he continues his studies into secular affairs. His conclusion on the immortality of the soul is that, in secular terms, it could not be proved by rational means, but that it was to be accepted because, and only because, it was part of the divine authority of the Catholic Church.

The works of Cardano reveal a secular viewpoint which was similar to that of Pomponazzi. Cardano's biographer,
Henry Morley, is in no doubt that Cardano's works were in no way either theological or atheistic:

While he was true to the Church, and faithful to the priestly class by which he was throughout life supported liberally, and which, it should be observed, included his best patrons [...] he did not find this allegiance inconsistent with much bold speculation upon things divine. His speculation, however, was of that harmless and fantastic kind that may amuse philosophers, but never can infect the crowd. It attacked no Church interest, and did not hurt him, therefore, in his intercourse with cardinals and bishops. (Morley II, p.159)

Cardano himself states that, even when writing on the subject of the immortality of the soul, his project was philosophical rather than theological:

I consider that, in the number of those who have made their humble contributions to a discussion of the immortality of the soul, I have written quite naturally, and in a manner by no means at variance with Plato, Aristotle, or Plotinus, and in no way opposed to reason or understanding. (The Book of my Life, pp.79-80)

Garasse's condemnation of Erasmus, Pomponazzi and Cardano for atheism is indicative both of his simplistic approach to his subject and of the thinness of the evidence for the accusations he makes. In all three cases, study of their texts reveals none of the opposition to the Catholic Church which Garasse perceived. Erasmus sought to clarify the foundations of the Church by studying its sacred texts in their original language; Pomponazzi separated religious revealed truth from secular philosophy and wrote about the

21 In classifying his works in The Book of my Life, Cardano refers to his De Immortalitate animarum as a work of physics, and none of his works are described as theological. He states that theology was a subject about which he had no interest in writing:

In geography, in philosophy based on controversy, in the doctrine of morals, in jurisprudence and in theology I have not exerted myself; for I considered their matter too comprehensive, not in accord with my purpose, and of such a nature as to claim a man's undivided interest. (p.168)
latter; Cardano barely approached theological matters, and he is most famous for his works on mathematics, medicine and scientific inventions.

It is a recurring feature of *La Doctrine curieuse* that Garasse fails to address himself to the contexts of the works which he condemns. In the case of those secular philosophers who can broadly be described as sceptics, a part of the context is the fact that their texts are in no way designed to attack the Church, but are instead designed to offer differing approaches to the Christian religion within the Catholic Church. The significant fact is that their opinions are frequently contrary to the teachings of scholastic theology. Erasmus suggested that the Vulgate, the base text for scholastic scriptural exegesis, was inaccurate, \(^{22}\) Pomponazzi saw a need to write a treatise questioning aspects of Thomas Aquinas’s interpretation of the ideas of Aristotle, and Charron was one of many who criticised scholastic education for making no effort to teach true wisdom to its students. \(^{23}\)

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22 Brockliss suggests that it was still the case in the seventeenth century that little effort was made to acquaint students with the original biblical text: only one faculty, Douai, ever offered instruction in Hebrew, a language whose importance was recognized by both Catholic and Protestant exegetes. (Brockliss, pp.230-31)

23 Certain ideas of Cardano broadly correspond to those of Charron. He believes that virtue and wisdom should be the continuing study of Christians:
If men would have reverence for the commands of heaven, if they considered how richly they might enjoy the blessed satisfaction of having remembered to observe God’s will, they would live more devoutly and would lead exemplary lives. But I realize that I am labouring at an extremely unpopular task in wishing to ordain for mortals a commandment of wisdom. (*The Book of my Life*, p.79)

He also delivers an oblique attack on scholastic rote-
It was this opposition to the rigid teachings of scholastic theology which led Garasse to condemn so many distinguished humanists as atheists. Charron is the focus of Garasse's attack, because his opposition to scholasticism was so total and so explicit. It is clear - and highly significant - that Ogier, in providing the swiftest response to Garasse's work, considered the major issue to be Charron's opposition to scholasticism, rather than his alleged atheism. As will be seen in subsequent chapters, Ogier concentrated on portraying Garasse as the epitome of the scholastic pedant, and Charron as the antithesis of pedantry. Allegations of atheism and connections with the likes of Théophile and Vanini were, Ogier implied, irrelevant embellishments, designed as part of Garasse's attempt to give substance to his baseless accusations.

learning. The second of his 'familiar sayings' is: Schoolboys should be obliged to give ready responses, to the end that they may concentrate, and not simply for the purpose of giving an answer, in passing, to the questions asked. (The Book of my Life, p.266)
CHAPTER 8

'JUGEMENT & CENSURE DU LIVRE DE LA DOCTRINE CURIEUSE' (1):

THE TEXT

1. The structure of the 'Jugement & Censure'

The book which Marc Fumaroli has described as 'la réplique la plus efficace à la Doctrine curieuse' (L'Age de l'éloquence, p.329) appeared in September 1623, less than two months after the appearance of Garasse's book. This was François Ogier's Jugement & censure du livre de la doctrine curieuse, whose main thesis was that Garasse was such a vain and silly writer that his works could be worthy of no attention whatsoever. This polemic was designed to belittle Garasse, and the invective directed against him was aimed at persuading the curious reader that the book was not worth even a cursory glance. Equally, Ogier was careful to stress that his argument was with Garasse alone, a maverick who could not be considered to represent the views of any group, unless, Ogier suggests, one were to constitute a group made up entirely of pedants and worthless writers. Ogier wrote from the point of view of a learned man, who was appalled at Garasse's treatment of major thinkers. Ogier's position as a member of a group of Christian sceptics in the circle of Mlle de Gournay, Montaigne's editor and admirer, and his loyalty to the sceptical movement in general, were not reflected in his polemical stance. He was keen to represent the quarrel as being the response of an honest man (Ogier) to the malicious nonsense of a fool (Garasse), rather than a serious debate between a Christian sceptic and a scholastic.

Ogier's text has three introductory sections, followed by the main body of text, entitled Censure du livre de la
doctrine curieuse. The introductory sections are entitled, in order, 'Epistre aux Reverends Peres de la Compagnie de Jesus', 'Advertissement au Lecteur', and 'Jugement du Livre de la Doctrine Curieuse'. The Censure consists of thirteen chapters and is 193 pages long, the introductory sections being made up of 23 unnumbered pages. There are also three poems in Latin, the first between the 'Advertissement au Lecteur' and the 'Jugement du Livre de la Doctrine Curieuse', the second after Chapter 11, and the third appearing at the end of the book.

2. The prefatory documents

The letter to the Jesuits (pp.i-xi) deals with Ogier’s reasons for writing, and he starts by talking about what he views as the terrible fault of not believing in God. Far from denying the danger of atheism, Ogier is in no doubt that atheists exist, and agrees with Garasse as to where they congregate and flourish:

Voila ce qui fait craindre que l’Atheisme, marchant dedans les traces de son avantcouverriere l’Heresie, ayant premierement grondé à cachette dans les cavernes (ou plutost dans les tavernes) comme elle; ne sorte d’oresnavant en place publique enyvré de blasphemes, pour les dégorger contre Dieu, à la face de tout le monde. (pp.ii-iii)

Having quickly established his credentials as a believer, Ogier comes to his motivation for writing, which is to discredit Garasse. He tells the Jesuits that, although they have always upheld the faith, they have allowed one of their number to launch an unwarranted attack, which purports to be against atheists, but which is in fact:

un cloaque d’impiété, une sentine de profanations, un ramas de bouffonneries, & de contes facetieux, une Satyre de malignité & de mesdisance, contre infinis gens
Ogier believes that La Doctrine curieuse is not against atheism, but that in fact Garasse was merely giving vent to 'son humeur profane, bouffonnesque & medisante' (p.vi), and Ogier's aim, therefore, is simple. He wishes to expose Garasse's words as empty mockery, show how groundless are many of his accusations, and question the motivation behind his whole project:

"Mon dessein n'est autre que de monstrer combien c'est une chose indigne de souffrir que la Religion soit traitée de la sorte; les mystères les plus saints eschauffaudsez & profanez, sous couleur de les defendre, & les plus gens de bien injuriez & mocquez par un bouffon tel que Garasse. (p.vii)

But Ogier is careful to distinguish between Garasse and his masters, and expresses great reverence for the Jesuit Order, citing the example of leading French Jesuits such as Coton, Séguiran and Fronton du Duc to show that Garasse was exceptional in his poor writing.¹ He is sure that the Order

¹ Ogier, p.viii. For information on Coton, see Chapter 3, Section 2. Gaspar de Séguiran (1568 - 1644) was the confessor to Louis XIII from 1621 - 1625. Ogier's remark draws attention to the important point that many Jesuits were themselves humanistic scholars. Michel de Marolles, a fellow-member of Mile de Gournay's literary circle, speaks of his friendship for the 'Jesuites du College de Clermont, les celebres Peres Fronton du Duc, Jaques Sirmond, & Denys Petau' (Mémoires, p.40). Fronton du Duc was the librarian at the Jesuit College of Clermont, and devoted much of his life to the editing of the works of the early Greek fathers. He also wrote, like Charron, against Duplessis-Mornay. See Inventaire des fautes, contradictions, fausses allegations du sieur du Plessis, remarquées en son livre de la Sainte Eucharistie, par les theologiens de Bordeaux, 2 vols (Bordeaux, 1599 - 1601), and Réfutation de la prétendue Vérification et réponse du sieur du Plessis (Bordeaux, 1602). Fumaroli states that the work of Fronton du Duc was designed to aid the Counter-Reformation by erudition and reconciliation, rather than condemnation. Jesuit scholarship, he states, se fixe pour tâche de réconcilier Rome et Paris par la mise à jour d'une histoire, d'une littérature et d'une doctrine sinon communes, du moins compatibles.
as a whole, unlike Garasse, will apply itself to the struggle against atheism in the proper and honourable fashion:

Vous, Messieurs, comme vous estes (je le dis sans flatterie) des premiers & des plus forts champions de la Vérité, n'avez pas oublié à vous presenter incontinent à un si honorable combat. (p.iv)

By this, Ogier may well have been referring to the staged debates in which the Jesuits took part against Reformers such as Du Moulin, which were in obvious contrast with Garasse, who had written a book against Du Moulin in the same vituperative style as La Doctrine curieuse. ²

In his 'Adverdissement au Lecteur' (pp.xii-xvii), Ogier sets out his two-fold aim. Firstly, he is hoping to restore the reputation of the honourable men attacked by Garasse. It is for this reason he avoids repeating Garasse's accusations, as to do so would have served only to propagate his views (pp.xii-xiii). He asks readers to choose between his work and that of Garasse, and his defence of Charron, Justus Lipsius, Pasquier and the Scaligers, described as 'ces noms consacrez à l'immortalité' (p.xv), is an integral part of his quarrel with Garasse.

Secondly, Ogier makes no apology for his own polemical

Il s'agit en somme de faire contrepoids à l'influence protestante sur l'érudition gallicane. (Fumaroli, p.253)

² For information on Du Moulin and staged debates, see above, Chapter 3, Section 3. Later, Ogier contrasts Garasse's attack with those of great scholars, also suggesting Garasse is fighting a battle which has already been won:

Aprés que le sieur du Plessis, du Moulin & les autres ont esté défaicts & renversez par tant de braves champions à coups de plume, ce poltron survient à grandes huées, qui s'imagine de les achever à coup de bec & de langue; à forces de brocards, d'injures, & de bouffonneries. (p.123)
style. He does not believe that Garasse deserved to be spared insults, and he hopes that the vigour of his attacks would make him climb down from his position.

The poem that appears after the 'Advertissement au lecteur' is entitled, In Librum de Doctrina Curiosa F. Garassi, and makes much of Garasse's habitual use of calumny to expose the allegedly squalid side of his subject, alluding to his repeated references to the taverns where the libertines gathered. The poem concludes with the suggestion that, rather than curiousus, the book is cariousus, or rotten.

The 'Jugement du Livre de la Doctrine Curieuse' (pp.xix-xxiii) carries the sub-title 'Extrait de la lettre de L.R.L', and was clearly inserted to show a second opinion on Garasse's work, and one with which Ogier evidently agreed. Certainly, it provides a neat summary of Ogier's main arguments, while introducing important criticisms which the latter was to explore in more detail later. L.R.L. criticises Garasse for his low, vituperative rhetoric, but also suggests that his book was more likely to teach about atheism than to combat it. He accuses Garasse of describing supposed inaccuracies in the Bible, and of answering these objections so inadequately that the arguments against the Bible were more convincing than those in favour of it.

Garasse's descriptions of debauchery, according to L.R.L.,

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3 Beyond Garasse's suggestion that this section was written by 'Le Ridicule Logicien' (Apologie, p.91), I have found no firm evidence with which to identify Ogier's correspondent. Garasse suggested that L.R.L. - and I.P.G., who contributed the third of the three poems in Ogier's text - remained anonymous because ils ne veulent pas estre connus, pourcé qu'à mon avis ils ont honte de leurs fautes pueriles qu'ils ont fait à la quantité des vers, & des impudicitez couchées dans leurs Priappées. (Apologie, p.9)
reveal that he must have taken part in such activity himself. He concludes that Garasse was not qualified to write against atheism, and was in no position to damn his enemies, particularly as much of what he condemned had not even been condemned by the Church.

3. The 'Censure du livre de la doctrine curieuse'

The main body of the text, the Censure du livre de la doctrine curieuse de François Garasse, aims to show that, as a writer, Garasse misuses literary devices, is poorly read, and is a pedant, and that, as a person, he is stupid, a liar, and malicious. In the first chapter, 'Rhetorique de Garasse' (pp.1-5), Ogier suggests that Garasse is incapable of original thought, and gives as his evidence the fact that Garasse's style is as buffoonish as the style of the tavern-haunters he attacked:

qu'est-ce de prendre leur habit [des bouffons], & de se couvrir de leurs haillons ridicules, au prix de se revestir de leurs humeurs, emprunter leurs mots de gueule & de bordel, ne faire parade que de leurs rencontres mordantes & satyriques, n'avoir autres allegations en bouche que de leurs auteurs, ny autre eloquence que leur médisance. (p.1)

Ogier's point is that Garasse's use of rhetoric was misplaced, as his words were not suitable for a book designed to be read by educated Frenchmen. His view is that Garasse, regardless of what he was trying to say, is a bad preacher.

The attack continues in the second chapter, 'Contes facetieux de Garasse' (pp.5-13), where the target shifts from Garasse's empty rhetoric to his use of anecdotes, of which La Doctrine curieuse was full. Ogier feels that these stories were designed only to make people laugh and were
completely irrelevant to the fight against atheism. His examples are the story of Jean Conaxa,⁴ that of the cowardice of Huguenot ministers before the Jesuits,⁵ and that of a man taking his donkey's bag in order to lighten the animal's load, only subsequently to climb on the donkey himself.⁶ According to Ogier, these stories were all foolish, the first because it did not fulfil Garasse's claim of being 'un bon exemple à la postérité pour les enfans mescognoissans, & pour les peres trop faciles' (La Doctrine curieuse, p.931), the second because it was ridiculous and untrue to suggest that Huguenots would fear Jesuits more than soldiers, the third because it merely portrayed Garasse's (understandable) fascination with donkeys.

Equally, all showed that Garasse was concerned only with making people laugh, which was not becoming in somebody with

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⁴ In La Doctrine curieuse, pp.926-31, Garasse told the story of how Conaxa, by pretending to be richer than he was, gained the affection of his two daughters, whose only desire was to receive a large inheritance. In fact, he left what money he had to the Church.

⁵ La Doctrine curieuse, pp.898-99. Garasse recounts how two Jesuits had arrived by chance in a town where Huguenot ministers were holding a synod meeting. According to Garasse,

> le plaisir fut, que sur cette nouvelle sans s'informez plus avant, s'estant persuadez que ces Jesuites estoient là venus expres pour disputer avec eux, & troubler leur Synode, ils mirent l'alarme au camp, ils deslogerent promptement, & firent savoir à leurs compagnons qu'Annibal estoit aux portes, & qu'ils se gardassent bien d'approcher: d'autant qu'asseurément il y avoit de la trahison. (p.899)

⁶ See La Doctrine curieuse, p.240. Garasse compared the man to the beaux esprits:

> ils veulent retrancher des livres de l'Escriture Sainte, pour soulager leur esprit, & ils n'ont pas l'esprit de cognoistre qu''ils le chargent davantage; d'autant qu'il n'y a rien de plus chagrin, de plus pesant, & de plus chargé en soy mesme, qu'un esprit mescreant & Atheiste. (p.240)
designs on writing a great book.

One of the reasons why Garasse was ill-equipped to make good use of literary devices, according to Ogier, was that the books that he read were not of a high standard, and he develops this line of attack in the third chapter, ‘Bibliothèque de Garasse’ (pp.14-30). In particular, Ogier accuses Garasse of having read Le Parnasse satyrique. He argues that, had Garasse disliked this collection of poetry, he would have seen that his duty was to ignore it and try to ensure that it did not come to public attention. Instead, Garasse ne se contente pas d'avoir lu le Parnasse, & d'en faire son rapport en termes généraux, mais en cite en divers endroits de tres-detestables & vilains passages. (p.17)

Ogier cites the example of a Roman censor, who burnt a book without telling anybody about it, and of Cassius Severus, who asked to be burned along with his friend's books as he knew them by heart. In other words, Ogier finds Garasse guilty of having taken too much interest in Le Parnasse satyrique.

Ogier uses much the same logic to infer that Garasse liked Régnier and Rabelais, even though he had specifically condemned Rabelais in La Doctrine curieuse. Ogier, 7

7 The story of Cassius Severus and the burning of his friend's books is told by Montaigne in 'De l'institution des enfans'. Montaigne tells how the books of Labienus, 'personnage de grande valeur et autorité', were condemned to be burned. Montaigne explains that: Cassius Severus, homme très-éloquent et son familier, voyant brusler ses livres, croyait que, par mesme sentence, on le devoit quant et quant condamner à estre bruslé tout vif; car il portait et conservoit en sa memoire ce qu'ils contenoient. (II, 8, p.72)

8 Ogier's comparison of Mathurin Régnier (1573 - 1613) with Garasse is particularly biting since allegations against Régnier were similar to those made by Garasse
however, notes that one of Garasse’s previous works was called Le Rabelais reformé, and takes this as evidence of its being named after one of Garasse’s literary heroes (p.28). As for Régnier, Ogier’s evidence is that reference to Régnier was a recurring feature of Garasse’s work: lines from Régnier appear in Garasse’s Banquet des sages as the epitome of bad poetry; Garasse reproduces in the Recherches des recherches and in La Doctrine curieuse the epitaph which Régnier allegedly wrote for himself. Ogier’s argument is

Gabriel Raibaud states:

Nous savons, car il nous l’a dit lui-même, qu’il eut de nombreux ennemis; qu’il les harcela de mordantes épigrammes; que ses adversaires répliquèrent avec une violence habituelle aux combattants de la plume depuis les grands rhétoriqueurs: vérolé, athée, sodomite, tel apparaît, dans les Recueils collectifs satyriques, la victime de ces vengeances. (p.xxii)

Ogier’s desire is to stress that Régnier is an unworthy object of admiration for a Jesuit:

Qui croira ce que je m’en vais dire? qu’un Religieux d’un Ordre en qui reluit tant de pieté & de gravité, face gloire & se vante d’estre imitateur des boutades d’un infâme Poëte Satyrique & mesdisant, tel que Renier. (p.23)

See La Doctrine curieuse, p.907:

J’ai vescu avec nul pensement,
Me laissant aller doucement
À la bonne loi naturelle
Et si m’estonne fort pourquoy
La mort daigna songer à moy,
Qui n’ay daigné penser en elle.

Ogier’s point is that the repetition of this epitaph leads to the conclusion that ‘nous pouvons justement appeller [cest authour] le mignon de Garasse, son plus familier amy’ (Ogier, p.19). However, it is a matter of contention whether it was actually written by Régnier. The epitaph can be found in Mathurin Régnier, Oeuvres complètes: Texte établi et présenté par Jean Plattard (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1954), p.193, but Plattard adds in a footnote that ‘cette épitaphe se trouve pour la première fois dans les Recherches des recherches du P. Garasse, jésuite’ (p.268). Gabriel Raibaud left the epitaph out of the 1958 edition, stating that it was ‘composée par un envieux pour convaincre notre chanoine de libertinage’ (Introduction, p.xxii).
that Garasse was totally unsuited to the task of literary
criticism, as his judgments on books were as unsound as his
judgments on people. He accuses Garasse of using the fiction
that he was attacking atheism as a cloak to cover up all the
calumnies and false allegations in his text:

Ainsi Garasse encore qu'il ait souillé le papier de
toutes sortes de profanations, contes facetieux,
allégations très-impudiques, de mesdisances & calomnies
contre infinies personnes d'honneur: Il s'imagine,
pourvue qu'il écrive en apparence contre l'athéisme,
qu'il est au bout de tout cela, virginius pater chartæ.
(p.30)

Ogier next concentrates on specific deficiencies of
Garasse's style of writing. In Chapter 4, 'Stile
bouffonesque de Garasse' (pp.30-44), Ogier examines his
handling of a story of how a woman giving a dinner-party
trusted God to provide the necessary food and was
subsequently forced to see her guests go home hungry, and
compared it to the way Florimond de Ræmond told the same
story. In doing so, he shows that Ræmond's version
inspired compassion for the victim, while Garasse's only aim
was to mock her. Ogier cites the example of Saint Basil, who
had encouraged the use of humour to add spice to a
narrative, but who condemned an excessive reliance on
humour. In general, Ogier accuses Garasse of

10 See L'Histoire de la naissance, progrez et decadence de
l'hérésie de ce siècle, divisée en huit livres, par
Florimond de Ræmond, Conseiller du Roy en sa Cour de
parlement de Bourdeaux, 2 vols (Paris: Chastellain,
1605), Book 2, Chapter 4, pp.96-97.

11 Note that Florimond de Ræmond introduced the story of
the German woman by stating:
Voicy une plaisante histoire que j'ay bien voulu
enfiler icy pour assaisonner mon ouvrage d'une
agréable diversité, & luy ôter l'ennuy que la
continuation d'un même fil & la suite non
interrompue d'un même propos, luy pourroit apporter.
(p.96)
insensitivity, of using offensive language and of resorting to archaisms. Ogier argues that these techniques served to make Garasse appear ridiculous, rather than to make fools of the people he was mocking.

The accusation that Garasse was a pedant is developed in two chapters, which are both listed as Chapter 5, ‘Stile Pedantesque de Garasse’ (pp.44-54), and ‘Garasse Pedant’ (pp.54-65). Here, Ogier lists examples from La Doctrine curieuse which show Garasse’s pedantic use of language. The classic pedant is someone:

qui employe en serieuse matiere des mots de halle & du pont-neuf, & des trippes de Latin; qui fait des confusions & des chaos de discours dont on ne se peut tirer: qui se sert de metaphores extravagantes & de catechreses insupportables, de sarcasmes hors de saison: en fin de liaisons dignes de mocquerie. (p.44)

All of these things, says Ogier, were to be found in abundance in Garasse’s work.

Yet this in itself, according to Ogier, is only half of the evidence of his pedantry; the more conclusive proof is his opposition to Pierre Charron, a declared enemy of pedantry. Ogier had been baffled by this opposition, given Charron’s outstanding writing, sermons and blameless life, but considered that it was precisely his qualities that made him so odious to Garasse:

il mesprise Charron, d’autant que c’est un escrivain serieux, qui n’entend pas raillerie, dans la lecture duquel Garasse ne trouveroit jamais un seul bon mot [...] & qui d’avantage [...] bat en ruine, & fait une guerre irreconciliable aux Pedans, tels que Garasse. (pp.55-56)

In condemnation of Garasse, Ogier quotes St Basil’s remark:

Il faut, dit-il, In Asceticis, cap 12, qu’un Religieux s’abstienne de toutes sortes de plaisanteries & de discours facetieux. (Ogier, p.38)
For Ogier, it was easy to find examples of 'vanité', 'ineptitude' and 'l'humeur de censure' - terms which Ogier took directly from Charron's *Petit traicté de sagesse* as the three signs of a pedant - in the work of Garasse. He delighted in his own verbosity, Ogier asserts, believing that the loudness of his own voice was sufficient to defeat his enemies, when in fact much of his work was made up of pointless anecdotes. Worst of all was Garasse's love of judging and condemning, so that he was acting in an inherently unchristian manner:

*d'où vient finalement qu'il juge sans crainte d'être jugé, contre le commandement exprès de Jesus Christ? Cela ne vient d'ailleurs, que de ceste maudite humeur de censure.* (p.64)

Garasse was not merely a poor judge of literature. He was also a fool, and most foolish for not realising that he was a fool. In Chapter 7, 'Subtilité d'esprit de Garasse' (pp.65-77), Ogier argues that his weakness is his inability to accept that there is something which he does not know. Philosophers who did acknowledge their ignorance, from Socrates and Seneca to Charron, are mocked on the grounds 'qu'ils ne s'entendoient pas eux-mêmes' (p.65). Seneca was attacked for suggesting that God was subject to destiny, but Ogier's view is that it is wrong to treat Seneca's use of the term without first taking into account its value as a poetic device, where the word 'destiny' could have many different meanings (p.76); it is therefore wrong to challenge Seneca on the basis of one example. Moreover, to attack Seneca on the matter is to bring into question a great many other poets, both ancient and modern (p.74). Garasse was showing a profound ignorance of poetry, and his
condemnation of modern satirical poets lost value as a result.

In the next chapter, also entitled Chapter 7, 'Deux plaisantes preuves de Garasse' (pp.77-86), Ogier gives two specific examples of Garasse's inadequate powers of reasoning: his proof that devils existed and that those who claimed otherwise were precisely those who had seen them (Ogier, p.78, Garasse, p.836), and, secondly, his proof that astrology was a false philosophy (Ogier, p.82, Garasse, pp.430-34). Ogier considers the first to be an example of unwarranted and silly mockery in the battle against atheism, and compares it to Nero's fiddling while Rome burned; he describes the proof as 'la reyne, & la plus esclatante de ses ineptes bouffonneries' (p.80). On astrology, Ogier believes that Garasse was being too literal in his interpretation. While he might be right to say that it was impossible to read the stars and write down at birth everything that was going to happen to an individual, this was because the stars were an unintelligible book, which contained stories of all that had happened and was to happen, a book which could not be interpreted by human minds (p.84).

The next accusation made by Ogier is that Garasse was a liar, and Chapter 8, 'Insigne fausseté de Garasse en l'allegation de G. Fabricius' (pp.87-98), focuses on his allegedly false accusation that Fabricius altered the words of the Gospel in order to justify the abandonment of the Eucharist. As Ogier points out, the notion that Christ would say, 'This is not my body', was ridiculous, and appeared
only in La Doctrine curieuse. In fact, Ogier states, Fabricius was mocking the Calvinist Theodore Beza, suggesting that he had changed so many Christian beliefs at the Conference of Poissy, that he might as well have denied the Eucharist too. For Ogier, the point is that, by

Garasse cites as his source Fabricius's *In response ad Apologiam Bezae*. It appears that Garasse did not possess the text, for the title he gives is incorrect (see below), and the quotation is not accurate. Garasse claims that, in the book:

discit-il [it is not clear whether this refers to Beza or Fabricius], je vous advise, Messieurs, qu'il s'est glissé une faute essentielle dans le Nouveau Testament és paroles de la consecration: car au lieu que nous lisons, Hoc est corpus meum; Hic est calix meus: il faut lire asseurément avec une negative, Hoc NON EST corpus meum, Hic NON EST calix meus, & que c'est ainsi que JESUS-CHRIST l'avoir prononcé en termes expres. (La Doctrine curieuse, p.283)

For an account of the Conference of Poissy, see H. Outram Evennett, *The Cardinal of Lorraine and the Council of Trent: A Study in the Counter-Reformation* (Cambridge: University Press, 1930), pp.283-393, and Alphonse, Baron de Ruble, 'Le Colloque de Poissy (septembre - octobre 1561' in Mémoires de la société de l'histoire de Paris, Tome XVI (Paris: Champion, 1889), pp.1-56. The conference was called by Queen Catherine of Medici in an attempt to affect a theological compromise between Catholics and Huguenots, and so avert the French Wars of Religion. The conference was dominated by discussion about the Eucharist. Evennett states that Beza might have avoided disaster had he not, warming to his subject, let fall the assertion that since Heaven was the sole abode of our Lord’s risen and glorified Body, whereas the Eucharist was but celebrated on the Earth, the Body of our Lord might rightly be said to be as far removed from the bread and wine as Heaven was from earth. (pp.308-09)

The Catholics held this view to be heretical, and the conference ended with no agreement or compromise reached. Civil war broke out four months later.

Ogier, p.94. Ogier cites as his source Fabricius's *Responsio ad Bezam Vezeliam Ecaboliam* (Paris: Frémy, 1567), p.17. Fabricius attributes the following words to Beza:

Imo hæc toties repetita verba, Hoc est corpus: perinde accipiendi esse, acsi dictum scriptumque esset, Hoc non est corpus. (Fabricius, p.17)

While the reference contradicts Ogier’s statement that the denial of the Eucharist was to be found only in La Doctrine curieuse, Ogier’s point is that Garasse, unlike
repeating the allegation, Garasse was merely propagating it, and, as he had the details wrong anyway, he was in effect peddling an untruth. In addition, Garasse was displaying both his ignorance of such important religious events as the Conference of Poissy, and his willingness to sacrifice truth, inventing his facts to suit his arguments. Such actions serve only to show up his inadequacy as a writer, and can play no part in bringing atheists and heretics back to the faith:

having dealt with a specific example of Garasse's printing of a dangerous idea, that of denying the validity of the Eucharist, Ogier turns to a general discussion of the 'Profanations de Garasse' in Chapter 9 (pp.98-119). Garasse had written in self-justification:

Ogier concludes, however, that it was in fact Garasse who exposed himself to 'la risée de tout le monde' (Ogier, p.100). Ogier's belief is that, though profane books are self-condemning, to retail their contents is to authorise them in some way. Instead, they should be condemned in

Fabricius, uses it as a serious proposal. Ogier's conclusion that these words represent an ironic comment on Beza is based on his belief in Beza's (misplaced) religious sincerity.
general terms and not quoted.

Ogier also addresses himself to Garasse's claim that he was following in the footsteps of Saint Epiphanius in his descriptions of heresy, and replies that the two are not comparable on several counts. Firstly, Epiphanius was describing the dogma of a movement and not the individual actions of wayward people:

les Gnostiques & Carpocratiens avoient fait de la desbauche & de la paillardise une Religion: Luther, Calvin, Beze, Castalion ont fait au contraire (pour ainsi parler) de la Religion une desbauche. (p.109)

At the same time, Ogier contrasts Garasse's attitude to that of Epiphanius by citing the latter's insistence that he did not enjoy wallowing in other people's depravity:

je n'oserois publier entierement, si par accident je n'y suis porté par la necessite de la dispute; tant mon ame est saisie de douleur & d'estonnement, jettant les yeux d'une part sur leurs actions detestables, & considerant de l'autre, en quel abysme de malheur de Diable ennemy des hommes, precipite ceux qui se sont asservis a luy, [...] je crains [...] qu'il n'arrive que la lecture de mon ouvrage ne soit plastost a la perte & a l'empirement de ceux qui le liront, qu'au profit & correction des errans. (Ogier, pp.111-12)

He asserts, too, that Epiphanius wrote only for the intelligentsia. Ogier gives the example of Saint Irenaeus, who wrote in Greek, whereas Garasse wrote in the vernacular and for a curious readership, his style being designed to appeal to the common people. The result is that the contrast between the two could not be greater:

les livres des Peres sont un recueil de dogmes & articles de Religion, qu'il faut publier a certaines personnes discretement, & combattre necessairement, & que les siens ne sont rien qu'une sentine, un ramas, un esgout public de profanations, d'impietez & de faceties qu'il faut celer judicieusement, & juger tres-severement. (p.119)

Some of the things that Garasse printed can have resulted, according to Ogier, from nothing more than pure
malice, and it is this feature of his work that Ogier explores in Chapter 10, ‘De la malignité de Garasse’ (pp.120-42). Garasse uses strong words of abuse when kinder ones would be sufficient, and often when such harshness is completely unjustified. For example, he launches unwarranted attacks on some of the great French scholars:

le Sieur du Plessis, Gentilhomme d’honneur, l’une des meilleures plumes de France, de l’industrie de laquelle les Ministres ont abusé, dit Monsieur le Cardinal du Perron, au dire de Garasse est un Pedant & un ignorant. (p.122)

Similarly, Garasse labelled Isaac Casaubon ‘un petit Grammairien’ (p.122), Justus Lipsius ‘un faiseur de chimeres’, Barclay ‘un fantasque’, Charron ‘un franc ignorant’ and Pasquier ‘un radoteur, ignorant, libertin, Athee’ (p.124). Ogier is critical of the random nature of these criticisms, noting Garasse’s tendency to stray from his point in order to launch attacks, particularly against Étienne Pasquier and Joseph Scaliger. In doing so,

15 For a note on the lives and works of Casaubon and Pasquier, see Chapter 3, Sections 2 and 4 respectively. Justus Lipsius (1547 - 1606) was a Belgian-born humanistic scholar, who held posts at Jena, Leiden and Louvain. Fumaroli describes him as ‘un héritier d’Érasme’ (p.125), and states:

Rallié à la Réforme catholique, ami des Jésuites de Louvain, Lipse a créé en sa personne et en son œuvre un type d’humaniste laïc, à la fois supérieurement savant et supérieurement artiste, qui se voit reconnaître, dans la culture catholique, une place légitime et éminente, en son ordre, aux côtés du théologien et du prédicateur. (p.158)

William Barclay (1543 - 1606) was a Scottish-born jurisconsult in France, who was adamantly opposed to the ligue and to ultramontanes. Of the five names mentioned by Ogier, three had been involved in controversy with the Jesuits. In addition to Casaubon and Pasquier, Barclay refused to allow his son to enrol in the Society, for which he was accused of heresy.

16 Joseph-Juste Scaliger (1540 - 1609) was another humanistic scholar who had clashed with the Jesuits. Fumaroli refers to ‘l’impitoyable verve anti-jésuite de
Garasse, while disrupting the argument of his own text, profaned the memory of the dead, so that he was like a dog picking the skin off a dead lion he would not have dared approach were it alive (p.142). However, Ogier makes it clear that he is not reproaching Garasse for disagreement as such, but for resorting to insults instead of reasoned arguments. Indeed, Ogier believes that it is inevitable that there should be disagreements among so many minds:

\[\text{il est impossible qu'\'ils n'ayent quelque contestation ensemble à cause de la diversité des testes qui est si grande; mais leurs disputes doibvent avoir je ne sçai quoi de noble, & estre exemptes des injures qui se rencontrent \& contestations viles et populaires. (p.139)}\]

Ogier follows this up in Chapter 11, ‘Mesdisance de Garasse’ (pp.142-69), where he studies examples of people who had been particularly unjustly attacked by Garasse, namely Joan of Navarre, Charron and Justus Lipsius. His attack on the grandmother of Louis XIII, accused of heresy, is condemned because it was disrespectful to the King, and would in any case have been better left unmentioned, particularly as Garasse is not an historian but a theologian.  

17 Ogier’s words turn round a common complaint made by scholastics against humanists, that they use their erudition to encroach on the area of theology. Erasmus’s use of linguistic skills to criticise the Vulgate was attacked by the Louvain theologians Maarten van Dorp (Collected Works, Ep.347, l.167) and Jacques Hasard (See Hasardi agiani apologia (Louvain, 1520), p.b iii verso) on the grounds that it was wrong for theologians ‘to put their sickles into other men’s grain’, an adage which,
grounds that he led an exemplary life, and was held in high
regard by many, including the Père Recteur of the Jesuits of
Bordeaux (p.154). Garasse’s attack on Justus Lipsius was
based firstly on the allegation that he held heretical views
on destiny, and secondly on the allegation that he committed
the profane act of building a mausoleum for his dogs, 18 to
which Ogier’s reply is that this hardly constituted a crime,
and that Garasse’s book was far more damaging to the
Christian religion. In general, these figures are contrasted
to ‘un chetif Garasse, une morte-paye de l’ignorance & de la
mesdisance’ (p.154). This chapter is backed up by another
Latin poem, entitled In Francis Garassum pro Paschasio,

Rummel points out, ‘became the catchphrase of
theologians protecting their own turf’ (p.84).

18 Ogier uses Garasse’s condemnation of Justus Lipsius on
the question of destiny to remark on the inconsistency
of Garasse’s text. Ogier states that Garasse’s
description of Lipsius as ‘un faiseur de chimères’
derives from a chapter heading in La Doctrine curieuse
(p.343):

Je lis au titre de la section troisième du livre 4
Destinée de Lipsius, est une vraye chimere sans
fondement. (Ogier, p.156)

This allegation, however, bears no resemblance to the
substance of the text:

Ce qui me fait estonner, qu’ayant mis ces paroles au
titre d’une section, vraye chimere, au lieu de la
combattre comme un brave Bellerophon, il ne se
souvient plus de la Chimere ny d’aucun autre monstre
quelconque [...] et dit seulement que quelques
nouveaux Stoiciens establissant une quatrième sorte
de destin, abusent des termes. Voila en quoy se
resoult toute ceste pretendue chimere de Lipsius.
(Ogier, p.157)

Ogier also argues:

la quatrième sorte du destin de Lipsius n’est autre
chose que le décret de la providence Divine, en tant
qu’il s’exécute. (Ogier, p.159)

The allegation that Lipsius built a mausoleum for his
dogs is in La Doctrine curieuse, p.904, and appears in a
sub-section entitled, ‘Impertinence de ceux qui ont fait
des Epitaphes pour des bestes, il peut y avoir quelque
impie in cela, & exemples curieux rapportez à ce
subjet.’
Charrone, Lipsio, Scaligero, which contrasts the well-ordered minds of these great scholars with the foolishness of their attacker.

Ogier’s Chapter 13 - there is no Chapter 12 - is entitled ‘Ignorances & mescontes ridicules de Garasse’ (pp.170-93). This final chapter takes the form of a list of basic errors which occur in La Doctrine curieuse. The object is to show Garasse’s basic lack of knowledge, while asserting that this is but a minor problem compared to the ‘Ignorance de soy-mesme tres-pernicieuse, qui a enfanté ce monstre de livre, intitulé Doctrine Curieuse’ (p.172).

Having argued that Garasse was unqualified for the task of commenting on earthly matters, Ogier implies that he was even less suited to discussing the divine, the result being that his books were empty and worthless and should be discarded. Ogier’s book ends with a third poem, signed by an as yet unidentified I.P.G., entitled Indignatio in Librum Garassi Engolismensis de Doctrina Curiosa, which presents Garasse as a pagan writer writing about pagan things, whereas Ogier is seeking only to write about worthy subjects, and is forced to write against Garasse by the continuing silence of the Sorbonne, and their unwillingness to condemn him.
OGIER’S CRITICAL STANDPOINT

1. Ogier a self-knowing humanist

Although Ogier was bold enough to publish an attack on Garasse, it seems clear that he considered this action to be a risk. Aware of his status as an unknown writer, Ogier was very careful to argue that he was justified in putting pen to paper, and that his views deserved to be heard. He stressed from the outset that he was not writing out of any sympathy for the ‘beaux esprits’, who had been the target of Garasse’s wrath; nor did he wish to deny the very real danger of the spread of atheism at the time. Ogier set out instead to demonstrate that he was practised in the art of ‘letters’, showing that he had a good knowledge of both theology and philosophy, and that he was able to use his learning in developing his arguments. In particular, he sought to justify his own arguments by supporting them with those of great thinkers of the past. Equally, he was seeking to make it clear that he was writing as a self-knowing person whose judgment was not distorted by self-love. In both domains, he drew a contrast between himself and Garasse.

Ogier’s obvious knowledge of theology is a potent weapon in his work. His discussion on astrology, for example, centres on reasoned argument derived from the texts of theologians. ¹ When examining Garasse’s claim that he was

¹ Ogier, pp.81-86. Ogier refers the reader to St Augustine, Cité de Dieu, Book 5, Chapter 5, entitled ‘L’astrologie est une vaine science’. Augustine - like Garasse - argues that there is no correlation between
following in the tradition of St Epiphanius, he could show that his claims were false. Ogier, therefore, was not merely insulting Garasse, but, by drawing on his knowledge of history and by comparing texts, provided his readers with enough evidence to draw the conclusion that Garasse had been wrong to compare himself with Epiphanius. Ogier considered his own polemical vituperation, far from being gratuitous, as entirely justified in the circumstances.

Ogier was equally well-versed in philosophy and literature. His book contains many references to ancient writers, whom he used judiciously to illustrate his arguments, and to display his intellectual training. Thus, he used the ideas of Seneca when he said that Garasse’s character could be gauged from the way that he wrote, in that:

*la façon d’écrire & de parler de Garasse nous le fait reconnoistre tel qu’il est; bouffon, raillart, mocqueur*

time of birth and destiny: if people have different destinies, says Augustine, they were perhaps destined to be born at different times (Oeuvres de Saint Augustin, (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1959), Vol 33, p.661). Ogier’s criticism of Garasse is that, while arguing the same case, Garasse does not use Augustine’s arguments:

> Si vous eussiez suivi Saint Augustin, Saint Cyprian, & les autres, vous ne fussions pas tombé en ceste ineptie: [...] Ainsi vous estant mal à propos & de gayeté de coeur, privé du secours & des raisons de ce prodige de sçavoir, S. Augustin, & des autres, vous avez esté forcé de recourir, à je ne sçay quel artifice & vaine subtilité, digne de mocquerie. (p.86)

2 Ogier, pp.107-19. Ogier draws up a direct contrast between Garasse, and ‘St. Irenée, Tertullian, & particulierement Saint Epiphane’ (p.107). He refers in particular to Epiphanius’s Book 1, Volume 1, heresy 26 to show that Epiphanius wrote only against ordered religious doctrines (pp.107-10). Ogier went on to insist these writers wrote in a sober manner, would rather have ignored the heresies they came across (pp.110-14), and that they did not write for the common people (pp.114-19).
s'il y en eut jamais.³

Similarly, it was Seneca who stated that the recounting of a pointless anecdote or trivial fact was the action of a pedant, ⁴ and in describing Garasse's malignité, Ogier was following the example of Plutarch in criticising Herodotus.⁵ It was not Ogier, we are invited to conclude, but Seneca who could be said to describe Garasse as a buffoon and a pedant, and Plutarch who considered him as malicious.

In addition to using the arguments of great classical writers to back up his arguments, Ogier is also skilled in

3 Ogier, p.31. Ogier cites Seneca as saying 'Oratio vultus animi est' (Ogier, p.30), and states, 'la façon de parler & d'escrire de Mecenas, dit Seneque, l'accusoit & le faisoit recoignoire tel qu'il estoit; effeminé, desbauché, lasche' (Ogier, p.31). Ogier does not give references from Seneca's works.

4 Ogier states, again without giving references, that Seneca said that Apion, deemed the pedant's pedant by Tiberius, had filled four thousand volumes with pointless facts (Ogier, p.60).


Firstly, such a book is by

un écrivain qui, dans le récit des événements, utilise les mots et les expressions les plus désobligeants alors qu'il en existe de plus équitables. (Plutarch, p.141; see Ogier, p.120)

Secondly, [In the case of] un personnage qui a commis par ailleurs une mauvaise action sans rapport avec l'objet de l'enquête: l'écrivain s'en empare, l'introduit dans des événements où elle n'a rien à faire et utilise les digressions et les circonvolutions. (Plutarch, p.141; see Ogier, p.124)

Thirdly, such an author, 'parmi deux ou trois versions relatives au même événement', is liable to 's'attacher à la plus défavorable' (Plutarch, p.142, see Ogier, p.134).
the use of literary allusions, both classical and modern. These are not included to excess, but rather serve to illustrate a point succinctly. Ogier uses the myth of Apollo’s chariot flying too near the Earth to illustrate how the excessive use of threats, which could be an effective weapon, has the opposite effect in the case of Garasse:

Garasse est un Apollon pernicieux, qui au lieu de ramener doucement ces jeunes esprits, adirez, au bercaill de l’Eglise, les effarouche & les en escarte d’avantage par les traits de ses mocqueries & de ses maledictions.

In various places, Garasse is compared to Nero fiddling while Rome burned for his mocking tone when dealing with atheism (p.78); he is advised to follow the example of Midas’s valet - to repeat his dangerous secrets only where they could not be heard - when describing the heresy of Queen Joan of Navarre; he is compared to the Argonauts choosing Medea instead of Hercules because of his disagreement with astrologers (p.86); finally, he is compared to Enguerrand de Monstrelet’s Seneschal de Hainaud, who had promised to fight any gentleman he met, provided that he did not have to stray more than twenty leagues from

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6 Ogier, p.5. In Erasmus’s Adages, the image of Apollo’s chariot has a further meaning which Ogier may have wished to apply to Garasse. In Erasmus, the adage, ‘fallen from his chariot’, derived from the Apollo myth and is ‘applied to a man who forgets what he set out to do and adopts another plan, or who weakens in his resolve’ (Collected Works 33, Adage II, iii, 22, p.141 (translated by R.A.B. Mynors).

7 Ogier, p.148. The image of Midas’s ass’s ears has further connotations regarding Ogier’s view of Garasse. In Erasmus, they are used to personify calumny: Lucian, in his essay on Not Believing Slanderers, draws a portrait of Calumny and gives her Midas’s ears, because of her eagerness to eavesdrop and catch what other people are doing. (Collected Works, 31, Adage I, iii, 67 (translated by Margaret Mann Phillips), p.291)
his path, in that, by contrast, Garasse would go to any lengths to launch unwarranted attacks on his enemies (pp.124-25). In all these cases, Ogier successfully follows his own guidelines, and uses literary devices sparingly, in that the allusions serve to illustrate points in a concise manner, without distracting attention from the issues being discussed.

Throughout the book, Ogier insists that one of his main quarrels with Garasse was that the latter’s chosen method for combating the danger of atheism was itself dangerous and could lead to its increase, rather than its decline. In arguing in this way, he is pursuing the strategy he outlined in his letter to the Jesuits of seeking to undo the damage done to religion by Garasse’s unworthy mockery of it.

Ogier is seeking to appeal to Garasse’s Jesuit masters; Ogier’s praise of the Order as a whole may well have been designed to avoid antagonising this powerful group, but it also shows that he did not believe that they would stand by their member on this issue. Given that the Jesuits had to give their permission for a member of the Society to publish a book, Ogier would have been hoping that they would suppress Garasse’s book and prevent him writing another one, or at least distance themselves from Garasse’s work and play their part in persuading him to climb down from his position. 8 Certainly, two months later, senior Jesuits

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8 See the words of Pascal’s fictional Jesuit father in Les Provinciales, ou les Lettres écrites par Louis de Montalte à un provincial de ses amis & aux RR.PP. Jésuites (Paris: Garnier, 1965), p.157:

Il y a un ordre dans notre Société, par lequel il est défendu à toutes sortes de libraires d’imprimer aucun ouvrage de nos Fères sans l’approbation des théologiens de nos supérieurs. C’est un règlement
stepped in to censure Garasse's Apologie (see Chapter 12 below). Ogier recognises that there is only so much he can do in opposing Garasse, and that he has little chance of achieving anything if he has to take on the entire Jesuit Order.

2. Ogier as defender of Charron

Ogier's admiration for Charron shows in his work in two ways. Firstly, an important part of his polemic is a direct defence of Charron, and, secondly, many of Ogier's words and arguments reflect the influence of Charron's writings. Ogier is a humanist defending one of the most prominent of recent humanistic thinkers.

Ogier's defence of Charron is in keeping with his general treatment of Garasse's text. He does not dwell on the specific details of the accusations made, doubtless believing that these would serve only to promote unsubstantiated allegations against Charron. Instead, he concentrates on defending Charron on positive grounds. Firstly, neither he nor his works have ever been condemned by the Church, but had led to the veneration in which he was held by a great many people. Therefore,

les escrits, les predications, la vie & les deportemens [de Charron] ne nous ont faict paroistre autre chose, sinon qu'il estoit l'idée d'un tres-excellent Theologien, & d'un tres-sage Philosophe. (p.54)

By naming Charron both as an excellent theologian and philosopher, Ogier is implicitly praising both Les Trois

fait par Henri III, le 10 mai 1583, et confirmé par Henri IV, le 20 décembre 1603, et par Louis XIII, le 14 février 1612: de sorte que tout notre corps est responsable des livres de chacun de nos Pères.
veritez and De la Sagesse.

Ogier's defence revolves around showing that Garasse's accusations prove nothing. Ogier defends Charron's classing of people into low or high and foolish or wise by pointing out that there are examples of such differentiation in Scripture:

Charron a faict distinction des esprits en bas populaires & relevez ou escartez. O le grand crime! Si tous esprits se ressemblent & sont de mesme trempe, Garasse, dites nous de grace, pourquoi vous souhaitez si gentiment & profitablement pour vous, que Dieu donne de la cervelle à ceux qui n'en ont point? (D.c., p.382) L'Escriture sainte ne faict-elle point de difference entre les esprits? ne faict-elle point mention du sage & du fol? (p.149)

The suggestion that Charron was questioning the nature of the Trinity by saying that it was unknowable is dismissed out of hand on the grounds that Garasse could provide no reference from Charron's work to back up this accusation (p.150). Ogier is more interested in praising Charron's piety, his ultimate defence being that Charron always followed the teaching of the Church:

Charron a tousjours soumis son jugement à celuy de l'Eglise, & [... ] il a tousjours esté enfant d'obeissance, reconnoissant Dieu pour son pere, & l'Eglise Catholique, Apostolique, & Romaine pour sa Mere. (p.151)

3. Ogier as follower of Charron

Ogier's brief defence of Charron as an individual is backed by his similar defence of others whom he saw as sharing a similar stature. Ogier's quarrel with Garasse centres on their differing views on certain important thinkers; Ogier is outraged by Garasse's assertion that atheism in the 1620s was promulgated by humanistic philosophers who questioned or rejected scholastic modes of thought, argumentation and
pedagogy. The two do not disagree on the danger of the

Parnasse satyrique, nor on the dangers of atheism and its
development in France at the time. The area of contention is
the large number of people whom Ogier saw as great scholars,
and whom Garasse denounced either as purveyors or examples
of atheism, figures such as Charron, Justus Lipsius, the
Scaligers, Isaac Casaubon and Étienne Pasquier. For Ogier,
as for other humanists and scholars, these figures
represented the cream of modern scholarship. Ogier did not
regard divergence from rigid scholastic theology as
incompatible with the teachings of the Catholic Church. Like
Charron and others, he had no problem in following his
profession of a priest, and maintaining an interest in
changing ideas on the best ways to attain human knowledge.

Ogier also, like Charron, showed a willingness to study
other cultures, aiming to give an accurate, non-judgmental
view of them. He criticised Garasse for not bothering to
check his facts. For example, it was important to Ogier as a
matter of accuracy to point out that the Turks would not
cook their food with bacon (p.185), and that it was the
Greeks and not the Arabs who believed that animals became
constellations (p.176). This knowledge of other cultures is

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9 The status of, in particular, Casaubon, the Scaligers
and Justus Lipsius as among the greatest of Renaissance
scholars cannot be doubted. Justus Lipsius was described
by Montaigne as 'le plus sçavant homme qui nous reste,
d'un esprit trespoly et judicieux' ('Apologie de Raymond
Sebond', II, 12, p.243). Fumaroli states:
les géants des "lettres", sous Henri IV et Louis
XIII, sont des érudits tels que Casaubon, Scaliger,
Saumaise, Sirmond, Petau. (p.19)
He described the Scaligers as 'l'oracle de l'élite
érudite gallicane' (pp.411-12). He also stressed the
importance of Justus Lipsius's contribution to
humanistic erudition (pp.152-59).
reminiscent of Charron’s discussion of different religions in *Les Trois veritez*, and of the differences in people from different parts of the world in *De la Sagesse*. Garasse’s sweeping definition of all but strictly orthodox Roman Catholics as atheists was in stark contrast to Ogier’s and Charron’s willingness to regard other Christian denominations with respect. Charron indeed used Duplessis-Mornay’s work as a source for *Les Trois veritez*.

10 See *Les Trois veritez*, Book 2, entitled, ‘De toutes religions la Chrétienne est la meilleure contre tous mescreans, Gentils, Juifs, & Mahumetans’ (pp.101-71). In Chapter 2, entitled, ‘Comparaison simple & generale desdites cinq grandes & capitales religions. Jugement sommaire d’icelles, & la proposition de ce livret’ (pp.104-108), Charron, while concluding that Christianity is the true faith, lists some of the beliefs of each major religion. The chapter is a pro et contra discussion of the religions based on knowledge of their doctrines.

11 See *De la Sagesse*, Book 1, Section 5.1, *Cinquieme & derniere consideration de l’homme par les grandes varietez et differences qui sont en luy, et leurs comparaisons* (Chapters 41-44, pp.231-47). Charron starts this section by suggesting that people who live in different climates will naturally be different from each other (pp.234-35). For example, La cause de toutes ces differences corporelles & spirituelles, est l’inegalité & difference de la chaleur naturelle interne, qui est en ces pays & peuples. (pp.238-39)

In Book 2, Chapter 8 (pp.423-37), Charron lists a number of apparently strange customs to be found in other parts of the world, such as ‘tuer par office de pieté ses parens en certain aage, & les manger’ (p.426). Charron’s point is that it is only fools who condemn behaviour which is unacceptable to their own culture, but acceptable in others.

12 For the sources of *Les Trois veritez*, see Sabrié, pp.200-206. Sabrié is in no doubt about the eclectic nature of Charron’s work: Il a lu Luther, Calvin, Théodore de Bèze, Sleiden, la Centurie du calviniste Bourgoing, les Centuriateurs de Magdebourg, et d’autres. Il a comparé entre elles les différentes éditions de l’Institution chrétienne de Calvin. (p.200)

Duplessis-Mornay in particular was an important source for Charron: il a mis largement à contribution le traité de *la*
Ogier, too, was eager to show that he could rise above sectarian prejudice: he put the record straight in the matter of the ‘insigne fausseté’ concerning G.Fabricius, and stressed that Calvinists such as Théodore Beza had no reason to falsify Scripture (p.89). Similarly, he was willing to defend Reformers such as Duplessis-Mornay and Casaubon if they deserved to be defended (p.122), and he criticised Garasse for making no distinction between error in doctrine and private immorality:

Je veux dire, qu’encore qu’ils soient heretiques d’ailleurs, que les profanations, impiete & desbauches de moeurs que leur impute Garasse ne sont point articles ny coutumes de leur Religion, ains sont survenues à eux & aux heretiques leurs semblables, comme la fievre apres la playe. (p.109)

Ogier’s work showed that he appreciated that Reformers were as capable of providing shining examples of human wisdom as Catholics. This was not to say that he did not consider them to be heretics in their religious beliefs, but he did believe that they deserved credit when it was due, just as Charron was capable of seeing the value of Duplessis-Mornay’s proofs of the Christian religion. This distinction placed Ogier firmly in the camp of the

Vérité de la Religion chrestienne de Duplessis-Mornay, pour les deux premières parties des Trois vérités. Notre chanoine faisait grand cas de ce livre, du moins à ce qu’il déclare lui-même. Il le regardait "comme digne d’être lu et considéré (combiens que ce subject ait esté dignement traicté auparavant luy par plusieurs catholiques de diverses nations)" (Vérité troisieme, p.346). Suivant son habitude, il a transcrit presque littéralement des passages du célèbre controversiste protestant. (Sabrié, p.202)

Sabrié gives the example of Duplessis-Mornay, De la Vérité de la religion chrestienne contre les athées, epicuriens, payens, juifs, mahumétans et autres infidèles (Anvers, 1581), p.294, which corresponds to Les Trois veritez, p.89.
humanists, the position from which he articulated his opposition to Garasse.
OGIER’S METHODS OF ATTACKING GARASSE

1. Ogier’s belittling of Garasse

Ogier aimed to belittle his opponent as a means of saving readers the trouble of reading his work. His principal method was, quite simply, the frequent use of insulting language when describing him. The frankness of Ogier’s words was no accident; in his view, insult and invective were the reasonable person’s response to Garasse’s excesses. His whole purpose was to allow no room for ambiguity, and his readers no room for uncertainty, on the nature of Garasse and his work. Thus, Garasse

est un esprit follastre & bouffon & qui n’a point de jugement: un homme qui s’attache indifferemment à tout ce qu’il lit bon ou mauvais. (Ogier, p.xix)

Ogier also criticised him for writing on false pretences, attempting to dupe his readers by claiming to be writing against atheism, while giving himself the licence to write all manner of untrue and disrespectful things:

Garasse charge en apparence sur lui la cause de Dieu, pour pouvoir impunément offenser & outrager toute sorte de monde, sans qu’on ose, ce luy semble, s’attaquer à luy, comme si la cause de la vérité & la sienne, estoient inseparables. (pp.vi-vii)

Secondly, he spoke ill of the dead who, had they been alive, would have had little difficulty in defending

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1 Ogier’s accusation is one which could be directed at protagonists on both sides of the humanist-scholastic debate in the Renaissance. Erika Rummel states that it was possible:

to find sixteenth-century controversialists pinning their personal peeves to prominent movements. They could thus claim that theirs was not a personal attack on X but an attack on a "champion of pagan humanism" or, conversely, one of the "scholastic barbarians". (p.73)
themselves against so unworthy an adversary:

Que Garasse & ceux de son humeur se meslent de faire des Rabelais reformez, des saillies & boutades semblables à celles de Renier, voire des prologues de Bruscambille, s’ils veulent, & qu’ils laissent en paix les habiles hommes, sans les interrompre par leurs injures durant leur vie, & les couvrir de calomnie apres leur mort. (pp.133-34)

This is in itself an appeal to the readers, an appeal to choose not only between Ogier’s book and that of Garasse, but also between Garasse and the scholars he attacks. The way that Ogier handles Garasse’s criticism of Casaubon, Lipsius and the Scaligers is significant. In fact, Garasse mentioned them very little, pausing only to say that the Scaligers falsified their family tree (La Doctrine curieuse, pp.671-72), Lipsius built a mausoleum to his dogs (p.904), and that Casaubon played a part in the Reformist rewriting of Scripture (p.388). Ogier was very keen to pick up on these criticisms, even though they made up only a tiny fraction of the total of Garasse’s work, because they were a

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2 Note that Montaigne had condemned the practice of speaking ill of the dead in ‘Couardise mere de la cruauté’:

Asinius Pollio, pour un honneste homme, representa une erreur pareille; qui, ayant escrit des invectives contre Plancus, attendoit qu’il fust mort pour les publier. C’estoit faire la figue à un aveugle et dire des pouilles à un sourd et offenser un homme sans sentiment, plus tost que d’encourir le hazard de son ressentiment. Aussi disoit on pour luy que ce n’estoit qu’aux lutins, de lutter les mors. Celuy qui attend à veoir trespasser l’auteur duquel il veut combattre les escrits, que dict-il, si non qu’il est foible et noisif. (Essais, II, p.356)

It is possible that Ogier had Montaigne in mind when he criticised Garasse, for Ogier’s image - of a dog picking the skin off a dead lion (p.142) - is to be found in this same chapter. Montaigne describes acts of cruelty by victorious soldiers, and compares them to les chiens couards, qui deschirent en la maison et mordent les peaux des bestes sauvages qu’ils n’ont osé attaquer aux champs. (Essais, II, pp.354-55)
clear illustration of his bad judgment. Equally importantly, it was doubly useful for Ogier’s purposes to name such giants among the victims of Garasse’s invective: firstly, it showed that Charron was only one of many distinguished figures under attack; and secondly, it cast Ogier himself in the role of ally of some of the leading humanists and scholars:

Il y a beaucoup de plaisantins & de bouffons, tels que Garasse & Schioppius; peu de Veronois, tels que les Seigneurs César & Josephe de l’Escale [Jules César and Joseph-Juste Scaliger], Princes de Verone. (p.134)

2. Ogier’s belittling of Garasse’s book

Ogier also seeks to demonstrate that Garasse’s project was at fault, because it made dangerous and profane matter readily available to those who were hostile to the Church. He criticises Garasse’s habit of citing false beliefs without stating explicitly why they were so bad, and at times making falsehood appear more reasonable than truth. Through the structure of La Doctrine curieuse, stating an atheistic maxim and giving a brief outline of its ‘exposition & preuve’, before writing a much longer refutation, Garasse was offering atheists and libertines a handbook for unbelievers. As Garasse’s refutations were rambling, confused and inadequate, the more terse ‘expositions & preuves’ of libertine principles were often

3 Ogier links Garasse and the polemicist Scioppius (Schioppius is the Latin spelling of his name), firstly because Garasse used the pseudonym André Scioppius, brother of Gaspar, in his first works (See Chapter 3, Section 2), and secondly, like Garasse, Scioppius refuted the Scaligers’ claim of a Royal ancestry. See Scioppius, Scaliger hypobolimæus, hoc est elenchus epistole Josephi Burdonis Scaligeri, De vetustate et splendore gentis scaligerææ, Mogunt, 1607.
more convincing.  

Ogier is equally scathing about Garasse's quoting of works unfit for the eyes of the public. For Ogier, the best course of action was to make brief reference to disreputable books, and then forget about them (p.17). This is what he did himself. He says of *Le Parnasse satyrique* that he himself had not read it, but insists that he did not need to, as firstly it had been banned, and secondly he had read all he needed to know in Garasse's book (p.15). He believes that all that could be achieved by quoting from the text and discussing the issues behind it was to excite the curiosity of undiscerning readers, and lead them into the dangerous action of seeking out a copy of the banned book. This is also why he does not quote directly from *La Doctrine curieuse*, as it is not his intention that it should be read, but rather that a reading of his *Jugement & censure* would provide a sufficient commentary on it, and might persuade the reader not to read it, leaving it soon forgotten (pp.xii-xiii). In the case of Vanini, Ogier appears to have taken the view that any reader who had not heard of Vanini's works could only be harmed by being alerted to their existence and their significance in the context of atheism, and hence refers to them only in passing as 'les Livres du detestable Lucilio' (p.ix). Indeed, so serious does Ogier consider the case of Vanini, that he does not even mock Garasse by placing him in the 'bibliothèque de Garasse'.

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4 See Chapter 5. This point was made by L.R.L. in the 'Jugement du livre de la Doctrine Curieuse' (p.xxiii), and was to be repeated by Antoine Rémy in his *Anti-Garasse* (see Chapter 16). It was also to be debated by Garasse himself in his *Nouveau jugement* (see Chapter 17).
Similarly, he makes only a very brief reference to the
‘beaux esprits prétendus’, and does not mention Théophile de
Viau at all. Moreover, Garasse’s habit of naming the
taverns in which they gathered, and the kinds of revelry in
which they indulged gave a kind of glamour to their lives.
Ogier mocks Garasse with the suggestion that he revelled in
their corruption. Certainly, Ogier devotes a minimum of time
and energy to examples of corrupt writing and behaviour. The
result is that his book, apart from the chapter,
‘Bibliothèque de Garasse’, draws only upon great ancient
writers and modern scholars.

3. Ogier’s views on Garasse’s defence of his polemical style

Garasse’s defence of his action in writing La Doctrine
curieuse was that it was necessary to use extreme means to
combat so extreme a danger as atheism. Ogier is, however,
unequivocal in his belief that nothing could justify
Garasse’s action, which was inadmissible because he was so
incoherent and uncharitable in his attacks. His invective
was malevolent and pedantic:

5 Ogier suggests that the ‘beaux esprits prétendus’, far
from having a secret agenda of promoting atheism, were,
as they appeared to be, merely poets:
Je ne pense pas que par ces beaux esprits prétendus,
il entend parler d’autres personnes que de ceux
qu’il blasme tant de fois de s’estimer tels pour
scavoir bien composer un Sonnet, un Ode &c. (p.74)
It is, however, of note that scholastics were
traditionally opposed to poetry. In his 1520 dialogue,
the Antíbarbarianos (Collected Works 23, pp.16-122),
Erasmus explains in the preface that the fourth section
of this work was to be a defence of poetry (p.16), but
the work was not completed. This is in response to the
view attributed to the scholastics by Erasmus’s defender
of humanism, which saw a simplistic correlation between
poetry and impiety: ‘Beware, they say, he’s a poet; he’s
no Christian’ (p.34).
Garasse se sert de sarcasmes & d’ironies envenimées & pedantesques, contre ceux qu’il pretend de persuader & d’instruire, qui est un artifice nonpareil de sa rhetorique pedantesque. (p.52)

In addition, it was directed at the wrong targets and, when he was describing profanity, he did so in a grotesque manner which ‘feroit rire mesme des mousches’ (p.113).

Ogier questions, too, whether the repetition of ancient heresy was in any way relevant to the immediate problem of atheism in the 1620s:

A quel dessein, je vous prie, de rapporter les anciennes profanations depuis quatre ou cinq cens ans, tant du plus que du moins; mesmes celles qui ont esté commises par des Ecclesiastiques, comme l’Evesque de Maience, sinon à scandaliser l’Eglise, & tirer de l’Enfer des blasphemes qui y estoyent justement ensevelis, comme ils y sont justement & rigoureusement punis? A quoy bon de refraischir ces anciens blasphemes, & de les mettre en parallele avec les nouveaux. (p.101)

Ogier dismisses all of the arguments Garasse uses to defend himself. The printing of ancient examples of heresy was merely giving publicity to bad things, like putting a bad painting on display (pp.100-101). For Ogier, there is nothing of relevance to the struggle against libertinism in Garasse’s book. On the one hand, Ogier refutes what he perceived as an attempt by Garasse to blame libertinism on scholars of the recent past. On the other, he argues that those writers who really were to blame should not be given additional publicity.

4. The influence of Charron on Ogier’s arguments

Ogier sums up Garasse’s weaknesses as vanité, inéptitude and humeur de censure. He states that these were the mark of the pedant, and that he borrowed the definition of the pedant from Charron’s Petit traicté de sagesse (Ogier, p.56). Ogier
concludes his attack with the assertion that

Garasse [...] est le Pedant le plus Pedant qui fut jamais, j'entends le plus vain, le plus inepte, le plus censeur. (pp.61-62)

This accusation has a particular resonance when spoken by a humanist such as Ogier. Montaigne’s ‘Du pedantisme’ gives a clear explanation of the sense in which the word is used. Montaigne first came across the term in his childhood:

Je me suis souvent despité, en mon enfance, de voir és comedies italiennes tousjours un pedante pour badin et le surnom de magister n'avoir guiere plus honorable signification parmy nous. (I, 25, p.181)

He noted that Du Bellay hated ‘par sur tout un scavoir pedantesque’ (Regrets, Sonnet, LXVIII), and that ‘Plutarque dit que Grec et escholier estoient mots de reproche entre les Romains, et de mespris’ (p.181). ‘Du pedantisme’ relates how the comic stereotype of the teacher who possessed knowledge, but not the wisdom to use it, was an accurate, if parodical, portrayal of the schoolmasters of Montaigne’s day. As teachers at the time taught the rules and methods of scholasticism, it was a short step to give the term the meaning of ‘teacher of scholasticism’, the meaning it continued to convey in the works of Charron and Ogier. This, of course, was precisely the formation and profession of Garasse, teacher in a Jesuit school. So, each time Ogier returns to accusations of pedantry, he is reminding Garasse and the reader that his opponent is no more than a boring, repetitive, unimaginative, petty and vindictive schoolmaster, unfit to stray beyond his classroom.

In suggesting that Garasse’s attack on Charron is inspired by Charron’s stated opposition to pedantry (pp.55-56), Ogier is inviting the reader to see that La Doctrine
curieuse was not simply an attack on atheism. This line of argument throws light, too, on Ogier’s hostility to Garasse: Ogier was associating Garasse directly with what he saw as the dogmatic and unbending scholastic attitude to learning and knowledge; Charron specified that his approach - of casting everything into doubt on the grounds that nothing could be certain except for divine truth which could be known only to God - was in contrast to the scholastics (De la Sagesse, the second of two p.14s). Given this contrast, it was no surprise that the Sorbonne proved to be vigorously opposed to the publication of De la Sagesse. 6 Charron left his readers in no doubt that the pedants to which he was referring were scholastic thinkers:

6 See Sabrié, pp.110-17. Sabrié states that the changes made by Charron for the second edition were made with a view to the book being given official approval by the Sorbonne. However, states Sabrié, Avant la mort de Charron, il s’était élevé au sein de la Sorbonne une très forte opposition contre la Sagesse. On la vit bien lorsqu’il fut question d’obtenir pour ce livre une approbation régulière. Charron une fois mort, l’opposition fut sur le point de triompher. Pour empêcher l’impression de la Sagesse, on mit en mouvement des personnages influents, le recteur de l’Université, plusieurs docteurs et même “messieurs des gens du roy, tant au Parlement qu’au Chastellet”. (p.130) Sabrié quotes one opponent, le nonce Buffalo, who stated, in a letter of 10 February 1604 to Cardinal Aldobrandini, that De la Sagesse was: composé par un chanoine de Condom que Dieu a puni de ses hérésies par une mort subite, comme un livre scandaleux, conforme à la doctrine de Machiavel et grandement nuisible à la religion. (p.131)
mestier, qu’un modeste & paisible qui doute. (De la Sagesse, p.333)

Throughout his attacks on *La Doctrine curieuse*, one is aware of Ogier using sceptical arguments which reflect the sceptical mind-set of Charron and Montaigne. Again and again, he seeks to puncture the spirit of affirmation and certainty which characterises Garasse’s views and opinions. Ogier demands the freedom to be able to argue against any human opinion in any domain:

Garasse, mon amy, cecy vous touche fort peu, mais sçachez toutefois qu’il est permis aux doctes d’escrire contre les opinions contraires, soit touchant les lettres divines, soit touchant les lettres humaines. (p.139)

Ogier’s criticism is that Garasse claimed that he was definitely right and others were definitely wrong, whereas, for the sceptics, Garasse’s opinions, like those of others, were human and should be doubted. For example, Ogier believes that there could be no disgrace in admitting ignorance on the nature of destiny, on which there had been so many different opinions in so many great minds:

après avoir confessé ingenuemment, qu’il ne peut comprendre ce qu’entendent les Philosophes & les Poètes par le mot de destin: & bien davantage, ayant avancé ceste hardie parole, qu’ils ne s’entendoient pas eux-mesmes; neantmoins il ne peut laisser eschapper de sa bouche ce mot de Nescio. (Ogier, p.65)

Garasse was, therefore, wrong to dismiss such great philosophers as Seneca, Epictetus and Trismegistus on the grounds that they contradicted one another. In the case of Seneca, however, Ogier belittles Garasse further by arguing that Seneca’s views on destiny had been shown to be consistent with Christian doctrine. St Augustine had cited Seneca’s ideas, and,

entend fort bien ce que Seneque veut dire par ce mot de
When Ogier presents his own views, they are based on Augustine's interpretation of Seneca. Ogier also believes that Seneca's opinions equated destiny with divine will:

Je réponds que Senecque ne veut dire autre chose en ce lieu, sinon que Dieu fait tout selon sa saincte volonté, & qu'il ne fait autre chose grand il agit, qu'executer continuellement ses arrests & descrets eternels, qu'il appelle fata. (p.70)

The implication, therefore, is that Ogier's book, in contrast to that of Garasse, is based on a patient and thorough reading of theologians such as Augustine, and philosophers such as Seneca.

There are other areas where Ogier criticises Garasse in terms which Charron might have used. Firstly, Garasse's aggressive condemnation of others confirmed Ogier's belief that:

ils [les pedants] veulent exercer une tyrannie sur les esprits, & les contraindre d'acquiescer à ce qu'ils disent. (Ogier, p.57)

This echoed Charron's portrait of the aggressive pedant:

celui, lequel non seulement est dissemblable & contraire au Sage, comme les precedans, mais qui rougement & fierement luy resiste en face, et comme armé de toutes pieces s'éleve contre luy & l'attaque, parlant par resolution & magistralement. (De la Sagesse, p.15)

Secondly, Ogier's focus on Garasse's extravagant language echoed the contrast Charron made between such pedantic

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7 Ogier, pp.67-68. In the section to which Ogier refers, Augustine states:

le poète [Seneca, Epist. 107, 11] désigne par destin ce qu'il avait nommé plus haut "volonté du Père souverain". Il s'y déclare prêt à lui obéir pour être conduit de bon gré, par crainte d'être entraîné de force; car "les destins conduisent qui leur obéit, ils emportent qui leur résistent". (Augustine, 33, p.671)
language and the simple words of a peasant:

Combien est-il plus beau d’ouyr un paysant, un marchand parlant en son patois, & disant de belles propositions & veritez, toutes seches et cruës, sans art ny façon, & donnant des advis bons & utiles, produits d’un sain, fort & solide jugement? (De la Sagesse, p.216)

Finally, Ogier’s suggestion that Garasse used the pretext of defending the Church to justify his vindictive denunciations of those with whom he disagreed is in keeping with another characteristic Charron attributed to the pedant:

Si vous leur dites qu’ils excédent & prennent les choses à gauche, pour ne les entendre pas bien, ils n’en croient rien, disant que leur intention est bonne (par où ils le pensent sauver) & que c’est par devotion. D’ailleurs ils ne veulent pas quitter leur gain, ny la satisfaction qu’ils en reçoivent, qui est d’obliger Dieu à eux.

Ogier’s dismissal of Garasse as a pedant is the central point of his argument. It was both an attack on Garasse and a defence of Charron. Garasse’s work, Ogier suggests, bore all the hallmarks of a pedant; its inherent condemnation of

8 Ogier described a pedant as one ‘qui se sert de métaphores extravagantes & de catechreses insupportables’ (p.44). The praise of the peasant’s language was also made by Montaigne:

La moins desdeignable condition de gens me semble estre celle que par simplesse tient le dernier rang, et nous offrir un commerce plus reglé. Les meurs et les propos des paysans, je les trouve communément plus ordonnez selon la prescription de la vraie philosophie, que ne sont ceux de nos philosophes. (‘De la præsomption’, II, 17, p.323)

9 De la Sagesse, p.219. It is particularly interesting to note that the question of good intentions outweighing sinful actions plays an important part in Pascal’s satire of the Jesuits in the Provinciales. Pascal’s fictitious Jesuit father states:

nous essayons de mettre en pratique notre méthode de diriger l’intention, qui consiste à se proposer pour fin de ses actions un objet permis. Ce n’est pas qu’autant qu’il est en notre pouvoir nous ne détournerions les hommes des choses défendues; mais, quand nous ne pouvons pas empêcher l’action, nous purifions au moins l’intention; et ainsi nous corrigeons le vice du moyen par la pureté de la fin. (Pascal, Les Provinciales, p.116)
Charron should be dismissed, therefore, as empty and vindictive pedantic rhetoric. Ogier felt that there was no need to make a detailed defence of Charron, for to have done so would have suggested that there was something in Garasse’s ideas which was worthy of a lengthy response.

5. Garasse and philautia

The way in which Garasse treated Charron in *La Doctrine curieuse* is in itself a revealing insight into the opposition between humanists and scholastics. Garasse either did not understand or preferred not to admit that it was not the Catholic Church, but the scholastic school of thought, and the pedantry which Charron believed it encouraged, which were under attack in *De la Sagesse*. In drawing attention to the pedantry to be found in *La Doctrine curieuse*, Ogier focuses his line of attack on the irony of the situation: Charron’s attack had been aimed at pedants, who, he had predicted, would object to his *De la Sagesse*. When Ogier came to study Charron’s attacker, he discovered precisely the figure Charron had described, a man whose work betrayed all the symptoms of narrow-mindedness and self-love which Charron had ascribed to the pedant.

The desire to promote self-knowledge - and to counteract its antithesis, philautia, or self-love - was a recurring theme of the humanistic work of, in particular, Erasmus, Rabelais and Montaigne, as well as of Charron. Issues of self-knowledge crop up in Ogier’s work, where, for example, Garasse’s desire to criticise others is seen as the primary mark of the self-loving pedant. In comparing Garasse to the man who could not see the mote in the eye of another because
of the beam in his own (p.172), Ogier is making use of the stock biblical illustration of the commonplace idea that knowledge of others could only develop from knowledge of the self. The humanists strove to remove the beam from their own eyes, the better to be able to judge others.

For Erasmus, the first step for people was to recognise their limitations:

On the one hand, it’s a true sign of prudence not to want wisdom which extends beyond your share as an ordinary mortal. (Praise of Folly, in Collected Works 27, p.103)

This was the first step to fulfilling the Socratic command to ‘know thyself’ on which Erasmus wrote:

Know thyself, which recommends moderation and the middle state, and bids us not to pursue objects either too great for us or beneath us. For here we have a source of all life’s troubles: every man flatters himself, and blinded by self-love takes to himself without deserving it all the merit that he wrongly denies to others. (Adages, I, vi, 95 in Collected Works, 32, p.62)

The example held up most often for imitation is that of Socrates, whose self-knowledge was demonstrated by his confession of total ignorance:

Socrates, when judged by the oracle of Apollo to be the only philosopher in Greece, though Greece was full of them, explained this by saying that the others professed to know what they knew not, and that he defeated them because he knew that he knew nothing, and that was the only thing he professed to know. (32, p.63)

In the case of Montaigne, his entire project in writing was one of self-discovery, and he made this clear very early on in the Essais:

Ce grand precepte est souvent allégué en Platon: "Fay ton faict et te cognoy." Chascun de ces deux membres enveloppe generalement tout nostre devoir, et semblablement enveloppe son compagnon. Qui auroit à faire son faict, verroit que sa premiere leçon, c’est coignostre ce qu’il est et ce qui luy est propre. Et qui se coignoit, ne prend plus l’estranger faict pour le sien; s’aime et se cultive avant toute autre chose; refuse les occupations superflues et les pensées et
propositions inutiles. (Essais, ‘Nos affections s’emportent au delà de nous’, I, 3, p.47)

The quest for self-knowledge revolves around combating self-love and vanity (‘De la præsomption’, II, 17, p.297), while the loss of self-knowledge is allied to the condemnation of others:

Noz yeux ne voient rien en derrière. Cent fois du jour, nous nous moquons de nous sur le subject de nostre voisin et detestons en d’autres les défauts qui sont en nous plus clairement, et les admirons, d’une merveilleuse impudence et inadvertance. (‘De l’art de conférer’, III, 8, p.144)

For Charron, too, self-knowledge was the starting-point of all knowledge:

le plus excellent & divin conseil, le meilleur & plus utile advertissement de tous, mais le plus mal pratiqué, est de s’estudier & apprendre à se cognostre: c’est folie non pareille que d’estre attentif & diligent à cognostre toutes autres choses plutost que soy mesme: la vraye science & le vray estude de l’homme, c’est l’homme. (De la Sagesse, p.19)

Charron, however, unlike Montaigne, was more inclined to focus on a lack of self-knowledge in others:

Je voy tous les jours gens qui tiennent rang, qui vont la teste levee, & font la leçon aux autres, que comme ils font profession, aussi sont ils en reputation de vertu & de sçavoir, si couverts & regorgeans de tares, de défauts & de vices, que toutesfois ils ne sentent aucunement, voire demeurent tant contents de leurs personnes. (De la Sagesse, p.15)

Ogier, in suggesting that Garasse was lacking in self-knowledge, was placing himself in the Socratic and sceptical humanistic tradition of Erasmus, Montaigne and Charron. Ogier’s specific criticism of Garasse that he was quick to condemn others while remaining blind to his own faults was the familiar reproach that scholastic pedants, while speaking as if they knew everything, could know nothing as they did not even know themselves.
6. Ogier’s use of invective

An apparent inconsistency in Ogier’s call for moderation, modesty and generosity in debate is his own use of invective. This invective sits oddly with his criticism of Garasse for his use of similar insulting language in La Doctrine curieuse. Ogier says, too, that

la plus religieuse & la plus exquise façon de montrer qu’on estime & qu’on honore quelque personne, est de l’imiter. (Ogier, pp.22-23)

Ogier’s criticism of Garasse’s invective could be levelled against his own: insults may be entertaining, but to seek merely to make people laugh is a misuse of humour, and, perhaps most importantly, the use of insults was unlikely to make anyone change their minds. However, a glimpse at the passage where Ogier decries the misuse of raillery will provide a key to his own policy:

la raillerie estant plus propre à delecter qu’à persuader, à irriter votre adversaire, qu’à l’instruire, il n’y a rien qui offense tant un homme de coeur, tels que sont d’ordinaire les gens de lettres, que le mespris, & n’y a point de mespris plus sensible & intolerable que celui qui est conjoint avec la risée. (pp.3-4)

10 The invective used by Garasse and Ogier was typical of the language exchanged between scholastics and humanists in the Renaissance. Erika Rummel states that feelings ran high and were expressed in uncompromising terms, often without the palliative of courteous speech. There are many examples of incendiary language used by both humanists and scholastics’ (Rummel, p.5). She cites, for example, the view of the humanist Johann Reuchlin, that scholastic theologians were ‘more inhuman than brute beasts [...] rather like pigs or sows delighting in their own filth and treading on the pearls of others’ (Defensio contra calumniatores suos Colonenses (Tübingen, 1513) p.Ci recto). An example of the scholastic response is to be found in Niccolaus Baechem, member of the Commission for the Extirpation of Heresy in Brabant, who called Erasmus and his fellow-humanist Lefèvre ‘cranes, asses, beasts, blockheads, and Antichrists’ (reported by Erasmus, Opus epistolarum, Ep.1192, 11.33-34).
Essentially, Ogier saw in Garasse neither ‘un homme de coeur’ nor ‘un homme de lettres’, but a stubborn and self-loving pedant whose ears were closed to the appeals of reason. This was certainly the case with the most complete portrait of a self-loving fool to be found in Renaissance literature, Rabelais’s Panurge. M.A. Screech points out that Panurge was oblivious to all wisdom:

The advice that Panurge was offered was cogent and mutually consistent. Yet his wise Prince fails to convince him; he remains unconvinced when confronted with the unanimous advice of men of integrity, most of them, in various ways, expounding ideas which derive from revealed wisdom or revealed knowledge. No wisdom, classical, Hebraic or specifically Christian, can penetrate through the devilish barrier erected by blind philautia. As a last resort, Christian wisdom gave way to the revelations of Christian folly. All to no avail. (Screech, Rabelais, p.280)

Montaigne believed that it was useless to reason with fools:

Il faut employer la malice mesme à corriger cette fiere bestise. Le dogme d’Hegesias, qu’il ne faut ny haïr ny accuser, ains instruire, a de la raison ailleurs; mais icy c’est injustice et inhumanité de secourir et redresser celuy qui n’en a que faire, et qui en vaut moins. J’ayme à les laisser embourber et empestrer encore plus qu’ils ne sont, et si avant, s’il est possible, qu’en fin ils se reconnoissent. (‘De l’art de conférer’, III, 8, p.152)

Ogier clearly felt that his scholastic antagonist, like the figure evoked in the passage from Montaigne, was best left to sink still deeper into his bog of confused argumentation.  

11 It is interesting to note that Garasse, too, in his Apologie, accepted the use of invective. His criticism of Ogier is that he should use such language only for irredeemable people:

Si vous m’aviez cogneu incorrigible, à la bonne heure, mon desespoir vous eust donné quelque droict de me traiter injurieusement. (p.31)
7. Ogier’s conclusion: that Garasse is a self-loving fool

Ogier invites us to see in Garasse a fool dominated by philautia. His lack of self-knowledge, according to Ogier, is combined with a lack of knowledge in general, and a lack of good judgment. Ogier’s polemic, therefore, is designed not to answer Garasse’s arguments, but to demonstrate that he is a fool, and all the more of a fool for not recognising the very strict limits of his ability.  

Ogier’s policy, therefore, is to mock Garasse for his lack of erudition: he devotes Chapter 13 to a list of factual errors; he mocks Garasse’s absurd presumption in imagining that he could do battle with scholars such as the two Scaligers:

deux esclatantes lumieres de ce dernier siecle en doctrine & en erudition, & particulierement Josephe, personnage tellement releve au dessus de la commune suffisance, qu’il semble que Dieu aye voulu monstrer en luy jusques ou peut donner la force & la capacite de l’esprit humain. (Ogier, p.128)

Garasse was unaware that his books were like grotesque paintings, unaware that his arguments would convince nobody and unaware that his work would have the opposite effect from that which he intended. His inability to stop himself from digressing showed him disregarding his own advice ‘allez toujours le grand chemin de peur de vous esgarer’

12 Major humanists agreed that the correct conclusion to study was the recognition of one’s own ignorance. In Praise of Folly, Erasmus held Socrates to be the wisest of humans for this reason (Collected Works 27, p.99). Montaigne stated:

L’ignorance qui estoit naturellement en nous, nous l’avons, par longue estude, confirmée et averée [...] les hommes ayant tout essayé et tout sondé, n’ayant trouvé en cet amas de science et provision de tant de choses diverses rien de massif et ferme, et rien que vanité, ils ont renoncé à leur presumption et reconneu leur condition naturelle. (‘Apologie de Raymond Sebond’, II, 12, pp.166-67)
Charron stated in his *Petit traicté de sagesse* that he expected his work to be misunderstood in some quarters and he composed this smaller work as a reply to them. He said that his books were for higher-minded individuals who had the intellectual capacity to use their faculties to the full and so attain the highest form of human wisdom (p.1). Charron expected *De la Sagesse* to be received badly by those who had received a purely scholastic training, and who as a consequence were filled with vanité, ineptitude and humeur de censure. For Ogier, Garasse's reception of *De la Sagesse* simply confirmed Charron's self-knowing and prudent foresight. Ogier writes with dismissive contempt:

Garasse mon amy [...] les livres de Charron sont un peu de trop haute gamme pour des esprits bas & populaires comme le vostre. [...] Laissez les œuvres de Charron trop sérieuses, pour des esprits plus forts & mieux rangez que le vostre. (pp.155-56)

This conclusion represents the final part of Ogier's belittling of Garasse, in that he judges that Garasse simply lacked the necessary intelligence to understand Charron. Ogier considers Garasse to be on the same intellectual level as the satiric poets whom he attacked, and whom Ogier clearly believed were not qualified to be reading the works of Charron either. This did not necessarily mean that he agreed that Charron was a dangerous writer if interpreted in the wrong way, but simply that it was a pointless task to read the works of a serious writer like Charron without the necessary intellectual capacity.

Ogier's method of attacking Garasse relied, therefore, on presenting his opponent as a pedant, and indeed as the type of pedant whom Charron had particularly attacked. He
also presented himself as a man qualified by study and aptitude to read and understand Charron correctly. For this reason, Ogier concentrated on the related themes of pedantry, self-love and lack of self-knowledge, the vices singled out by Christian sceptics. These emphases in turn identified him as a humanistic writer in the tradition of Erasmus and Montaigne, and his quarrel with Garasse was in fact a continuation of their writings against pedants.
CHAPTER 11

'JUGEMENT & CENSURE DU LIVRE DE LA DOCTRINE CURIEUSE' (4):

OGIER AND THE ISSUE OF ATHEISM

1. Ogier and Charron as defenders of Christian humanism

Ogier squarely tackles only one aspect of Garasse’s work, which is Garasse’s assault on the works of Charron as a cause of atheism. On the issue of the development of atheism in general, Ogier says little, but there are indications that he was aware of a problem. In his letter to the Jesuits, he speaks of the dangers of atheism (pp.ii-iii), which he compares to a cancerous growth on the body, while he frequently lists as a major weakness of Garasse’s book that it was unlikely to tempt people back to the Church.

It was in his approach to the growing problem of atheism that Ogier considered Garasse to be most seriously in the wrong. Ogier believed that the picture that Garasse painted was an inaccurate one, that Charron was a force for good, and that the dangers inherent in satirical poetry were not very serious (p.74).

Ogier sought to banish La Doctrine curieuse from people’s eyes and minds because it presented an outdated approach to the Christian faith; he sensed behind the aggressive and repressive rhetoric of Garasse the pressures of a scholastic theology which was annexing the Church, its doctrines and even God, and was turning them into a private fief, ruled over by the deadening and unwieldy apparatus of Thomist philosophy and rhetoric; his defence of Charron shows that he shared the latter’s distaste for excessive indulgence in an external and - in his view - often superstitious and superficial religiosity; above all, he was
appalled by Garasse's attempts to discredit so many of the giants of humanistic scholarship and thought. Ogier's portrait of Garasse suggests he saw in him one of those unwise people whose external displays of faith concealed internal impiety:

ils font piété couverture d'impieté, ils en font comme l'on dit, mestier & marchandise, & allèguent leurs offices de devotion, en attenuation ou compensation de leurs vices & dissolutions. (De la Sagesse, p.398)

Such a person was unsuited to the task of representing the position of the Catholic Church, and Ogier's appeal to the reader to choose between his book and that of Garasse was made on religious as well as philosophical grounds.

Ogier's work was designed to assert the truth of the Christian religion. La Doctrine curieuse, he believed, was more likely to spread atheism than combat it. He sought to produce a book which, by defending the Christian credentials of some of the great intellectuals of France, would attract educated unbelievers back to the Church. He makes these points in his initial address to his readers:

si ces noms consacrrez à l'immortalité te sont en honneur & en reverence, comme je n'en doute point, favorise, amy Lecteur, d'un bon accueil ce petit ouvrage qui part de la main de celuy, qui, si par la mediocrité de sa suffisance, il ne peut estre mis au rang des plus forts combattans, du moins par le bon-heur de sa diligence, s'estant présenté le premier sur l'arene pour choquer l'Aristarque de ce siecle, merite de tenir quelque lieu parmy les plus courageux. (pp.xv-xvi)

This emphasis on scholars is significant for two reasons: firstly, because it suggests that Ogier was aware that there were doubts about religion in intellectual circles, and that, as Garasse had stated, certain people were seeking to make use of sceptical arguments to justify these doubts; and, secondly, by reminding doubters of the
fact that the leading modern scholars and thinkers, though often disagreeing on details, were all believers, Ogier sought to promote the idea that there was no difficulty in reconciling progressive philosophical thought with loyalty to the Roman Catholic Church and its doctrines.

2. Other critics of 'De la Sagesse'

Subsequent developments in the debate on the influence of De la Sagesse show that Garasse was not alone in seeing danger in Charron's use of sceptical arguments. Ogier must have been aware that weightier figures than Garasse feared that Charron's arguments could be borrowed and turned to atheistic purposes. The most notable of these figures were Mersenne, whose L'Impiété des Deistes (1624) was published in the year following the publication of La Doctrine curieuse and Ogier's response, and Jean Boucher, in his Triomphes de la religion chrestienne (1628). However, the approach of these writers to Charron differed from that of Garasse. They accepted that Charron's encouragement of atheism was probably unintentional. Mersenne was prepared to accept Charron's faith, on the grounds that it was clearly expressed in his texts:

Ce qui nous pourroit faire ainsi juger de l'intention de Charron, est le livre des trois Veritez, auquel il monstre clairement contre les Athées, les Juifs, les Mahometans, & les Heretiques, qu'il n'y a aucune autre vraye Religion que la Catholique. Car lors qu'il est

question de juger l'intention d'un Autheur sur quelque point, ou controverse proposée, il faut avoir recours aux lieux, où il a traicté cette matière fort au long, & expressément, & non pas où il n'en a touché qu'un mot en passant, ou en quelque lieu, d'où on peut tirer des raisons pour & contre. (Mersenne, p.204)

Boucher's criticism of Charron centred on his belief that Charron's ideas were dangerous when read by the wrong people. It would be better to remain silent, states Boucher, than publish ideas that could be taken in the wrong way:

il [Charron] donne une licentieuse liberté à sa plume, car ses escrits sont remplis de propositions trop hardies & qui seroient meilleures ensevelies sous le silence, que publiées à plusieurs esprits, qui en tirent occasion de leur ruine. (Boucher, p.130)

Boucher's intention, therefore, was to warn readers of Charron - and of Montaigne - to proceed with care:

Je ne suis pas emancipé d'escrire ces choses pour ravir l'honneur que ces deux beaux-esprits Montaigne & Charron ont merité, pour avoir escrit plusieurs belles choses dignes d'estre leuës, mais c'est pour advertir ceux qui les liront désormais, de le prendre garde de succer en n'y pensant pas un doux venin qu'ils ont glissé par inadvertance dans leurs livres. (Boucher, p.131)

The question of Charron's sincerity, given emphasis in the works of Mersenne and Boucher, but absent from Garasse, is a key to understanding the debate on atheism in the 1620s. Modern hypotheses on the state of the beliefs of such thinkers as Gassendi, La Mothe le Vayer and Naudé rest on the question of the sincerity of their professions of religious belief, and on whether they are Christian sceptics or libertins érudits. The work of René Pintard has

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2 The ease with which the same facts can be made to fit either argument is illustrated by René Pintard's view of Marie de Gournay and her circle. The knowledge that Ogier and La Mothe le Vayer were both members could strengthen the view that Ogier's work was intended to defend Montaignian Christian scepticism, but Pintard believes that the group met to promote libertinism: on a pu croire, à consulter la liste de ses familiers, qu'héritière du pyrrhonisme de Montaigne,
reasserted the view that Christian sceptics were secret unbelievers. His views have been challenged by Richard Popkin, who suggests that Pintard's conclusions become false if we simply accept that Christian sceptics were honest people who meant what they said:

The long tradition of assuming that there must have been duplicity in the writings and actions of the libertins érudits depends, it seems to me, on the supposition that no other explanation of their views can be offered. But, as I have tried to indicate, another possibility exists, namely that men like Naudé, La Mothe le Vayer and Gassendi were sincere Christians. (Popkin, p.105)

If the sincerity of the Christian sceptics were accepted, Popkin argues, the argument that they were campaigning against Christianity would lose all its force:

If one considers the libertins érudits without any preconceptions as to their intent, can we decide positively either from their views, or their careers, or the circle of religious and irreligious figures within which they moved, whether they were the centre of a campaign against Christianity, or part of a sincere movement within the Counter-Reformation aimed at undermining Protestantism through the advocacy of

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3 Pintard describes, for example, La Mothe le Vayer as, extérieurement, un chrétien à la mode de son temps; intérieurement, un libertin, par sa mécréance, par la conscience qu'il en a, par le plaisir qu'il y prend. (p.147)

While Pintard accepts that, 'Gassendi n'est pas un athée, c'est bien évident' (p.177), he insists that in the "Tétrade" of Gassendi, La Mothe le Vayer, Naudé and Diodati, each contributed to the questioning of religious ideas:

Il y a une inspiration libertine de la "Tétrade", à laquelle les quatre amis se soumettent avec une égale ferveur. (p.177)
fideism? 4

Popkin’s defence of Gassendi, La Mothe le Vayer and Naudé echoes Ogier’s defence of Charron. 5 Equally, Popkin’s interpretation of Gassendi reinforces the point that the Christian sceptics were challenging not the Church, but scholastic theologians, who placed too much importance on Aristotle, and medieval glosses on his work:

After presenting his sceptical attitude in the preface, Gassendi criticized the insistence of the Aristotelians on their way of philosophizing. Instead, he called for complete intellectual freedom, including a recognition that Aristotle’s doctrines do not deserve any special or privileged position. The Aristotelians have (he said) become merely frivolous disputers instead of searchers after truth. (Popkin, p.101)

Popkin’s views are consistent with the texts of Ogier, Mersenne and Boucher. Ogier had suggested that Garasse’s opposition to Charron was based on Charron’s opposition to pedantry. The accusations of atheism levelled at Charron were the unreasonable reactions of a pedant, the sort of person against whom Gassendi was to direct his attacks. A more measured view of Charron could be found in the more reasonable assessments of Mersenne and Boucher, who stated

4 Popkin, p.106. The case of Naudé - and Guy Patin - emphasises Popkin’s point that libertinage érudit is more complicated than it appears in Pintard’s text. Popkin states:

I believe that it is almost impossible to determine what the religious views of Naudé and Patin were. They may have been true libertines, or they may have been mild fideists, who stayed on the Catholic side out of fear of Protestant dogmatism. In any case, if Naudé was truly irreligious, actively trying to undermine the Catholic Church, he managed to hide this pernicious side from his employers, Cardinals Bagni, Barberini, Richelieu and Mazarin. And both Naudé and Patin spent their lives in fairly constant association and friendship with leading Church figures. (p.90)

5 Ogier also defends Charron on the grounds of his views (p.151), his career (p.148), and his friends (p.154).
that Charron had not intended to harm the Catholic Church. They did not contend that Charron was irreligious, but that his approach to knowledge, based on questioning and opposition to scholastic theology, had to be condemned because it was dangerous when applied to religion.

Ogier's defence of Charron against Garasse would have been equally valid had it been a defence of him against Mersenne and Boucher. With his faith in the Catholic Church and his veneration of humanistic, sceptical writers, Ogier aimed to promote contemporary philosophy and to stress that a sceptical approach to religion was not incompatible with the decrees of the Catholic Church.  

Charron had stated that wisdom born of self-knowledge was a step towards religious faith:

\[ \text{la sagesse humaine est voye à la divine, la Loy de Nature à la grace, la vertu morale & Philosophique à la Théologale, le devoir humain à la faveur & liberalité divine. (De la Sagesse, p.369, see also Montaigne, II, 12, p.172)} \]

Ogier's work aimed to illustrate that Garasse was dominated by self-love, and lacking in any kind of human wisdom, with the result that his book, supposedly written to combat atheism, and recall the unfaithful to the Church, was so full of errors that it would succeed in convincing none. By promoting himself as self-knowing, and by defending Charron, Ogier sought to promote the Christian sceptical method as

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6 The approach to religion of Montaigne and Charron, which emphasised the unknowability of God, can be contrasted to that of Mersenne and Boucher. Mersenne "proves" the existence of God by contemplating human perfection:

\[ \text{Si on consideroit les perfections de l'homme comme il faut, qu'on n'advoiast incontinent qu'il est impossible que Dieu ne soit. (Mersenne, p.30)} \]

Boucher criticises Montaigne and Charron specifically because they stated that God should be thought of as an incomprehensible being (Boucher, p.127-29).
the most profitable approach to human knowledge and to religion, and as the most effective method for combating atheism.
CHAPTER 12

GARASSE’S ‘APOLOGIE’ (1):

THE TEXT

1. The two editions of the ‘Apologie’

Garasse’s response to the Jugement & censure du livre de la doctrine curieuse was to publish his own Apologie [...] pour son livre contre les Atheistes & Libertins de nostre siecle, Et Response aux Censures et calomnies de l’Autheur Anonyme in January 1624. There were two editions of this work, the first published in Poitiers, and the second in Paris, of which only the second is still in existence.

Henri Fouqueray offers an explanation for the existence of the two different versions.¹ The first version was condemned by the Père Général, who expressed his shock that the work had been allowed to appear:

Que Dieu pardonne à nos Pères du Collège de Poitiers qui ont laissé paraître ce livre, nouveau sujet de sollicitude pour moi.²

The Jesuits therefore arranged for a second less offensive version of the Apologie to be prepared:

Sur cette remarque, ou de leur propre initiative, les supérieurs supprimèrent la plus grande partie des exemplaires, tandis qu’une seconde édition se préparait à Paris. C’est la seule que nous connaissons et par suite nous ignorons en quoi elle différerait de la première. Sans doute les passages les plus vifs contre

¹ See Henri Fouqueray, Histoire de la Compagnie de Jésus en France des origines à la suppression 1578-1762, 5 vols (Paris, 1910-1925). His Volume 4, Chapter 4 (pp.84 -104) is entitled: ‘Attaques contre le Père Garasse (1625-1626)’.

It is clear that the Poitiers edition did exist in some form, for Antoine Rémy, in his *Anti-Garasse*, focused many of his criticisms on the Poitiers text. Rémy states explicitly that there were two versions:

Garasse pareillement a écrit plusieurs libelles diffamatoires, & deux Apologies, l’une à Poictiers, & l’autre à Paris. (Rémy, p.43)

He makes it clear that the two were substantially different:

En vain un Boufon s’en va à Poictiers faire des Apologies toutes contraires à celles qu’il fait imprimer à Paris. (p.50)

Finally, Rémy, too, names Jesuit pressure as the reason for the rewriting of the work:

Ce Jesuiste accuse Nicholas Pasquier dans son Apologie de Poictiers d’être criminel de leze-Majesté, & d’escrire des choses atroces pour lesquelles, s’il estoit poursiuyv en jugement, il n’en sortiroit qu’avec beaucoup de peine: (ce qu’il n’a osé imprimer en l’Apologie de Paris, par le conseil mesme des principaux de sa Compagnie, pour estre hors de toute raison). (p.766)

There is evidence that there had been concern about Garasse in some Jesuit quarters at the time of *La Doctrine curieuse*, and that efforts had been made to censor it. Fouqueray states:


(Fouqueray, III, p.568)

Garasse also disobeyed his superiors by not removing Théophile’s name from the text, and by not sending Vitelleschi a copy of the work before it was printed. Garasse arranged for the work to be published as he finished each section (Fouqueray, III, p.568).
2. The second edition

The words of Rémy and Vitelleschi allow speculation that Garasse’s first Apologie was written in the same vituperative register as La Doctrine curieuse. When he came to re-write his text, however, Garasse had clearly decided - or perhaps it had been decided for him - that a more methodical approach to the dispute with Ogier was required. The result was that, although Garasse was still highly critical of his opponent, he aimed in his revised Paris edition to respond to Ogier in a more reasoned and less insulting tone than the one in which he wrote La Doctrine curieuse. In the Paris Apologie, Garasse clarifies his motives for writing in the first place, and offers explanations for his attacks on certain individuals. His arguments here are much easier to follow than in La Doctrine curieuse.

Garasse is aware, he says, that his book has met with opposition in Paris, but that he would have remained silent had he not been forced to reply by the publication of a direct attack on him (pp.iii-iv). 4 It is his belief that Ogier is only one of a large number of authors who cooperated in writing the Jugement & censure, and that he wrote under the patronage, and indeed - he states later - under the instruction of a libertine group:

\[ \text{il [Ogier] l’a écrit & copié de sa main, il a rangé les} \]

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4 In a letter to M.Molé (14 November 1623), Garasse complains only of the opposition of the Pasquiers. It seems that, at this stage, Garasse was unaware of Ogier’s text, even though it had been published in September 1623. See Lachèvre, ‘Un mémoire inédit de François Garassus à Mathieu Molé, procureur général, pendant le procès de Théophile’, Revue de l’Histoire littéraire de France, 18 (1911), 900-39.
memoires qui luy ont esté communiqués par trois ou quatre personnes, que je ne nomme point, mais les pensées ne sont pas à luy. (p.14)

In his reply to Ogier’s polemic, Garasse reassures us, he will rely not on insults, but on the use of reason:

aussi tascheray je de me defendre par justice & de répondre par la seule force des raisons, non pas par la recrimination des injures: il me seroit & difficile d’aller au delà & m’esseyant de m’approcher de celles qui m’ont esté dites. (p.vi)

Moreover, Garasse states in his introductory ‘Jugement et descouverte generalle du Libelle intitulé la Censure & Jugement de la Doctrine Curieuse’ that he is going to reply to each of Ogier’s accusations, in the hope that Ogier would withdraw them, and, seeing the error of his ways, ask for forgiveness (p.xxi of ‘Jugement et descouverte...’).

Before doing so, however, Garasse makes a number of allegations about Ogier. As a person, he accuses him of being a frequenter of the taverns mentioned in La Doctrine curieuse (p.xviii of the ‘Jugement et descouverte’). As a writer, he accuses him of filling his books with grand statements, and of having ideas above his station. For example, he criticises the title of the work, giving his opinion that it is the work of parliament to make "judgments" and the Sorbonne to publish "censures". He believes that there is no evidence of any judgment in Ogier’s work, and that it is much in need of censure in its turn. The use of such grand terms lends the work an air of respectability which it does not deserve. Garasse is continuing a familiar line of argument. Just as he had accused Vanini, among others, of writing atheistic statements in a book whose title contained the words "adversus atheos", he now accuses Ogier of entitling his
book a Jugement & censure, when it contains no judgment and is itself deserving of much censure (pp.16-27).

3. The structure and content of the 'Apologie'

Garasse's defence of his work is structured in such a way as to reply to each of the accusations contained in Ogier's chapter headings. A key point raised by Garasse is that what Ogier referred to as his "bouffonneries" was in fact his use of eutrapelie:

qui est entre la trop grande severite, & la bouffonerie, par laquelle vertu un homme d'esprit faict de bonnes & agreables rencontres, qui resveillent l'attention des Auditeurs ou des Lecteurs, appesantie par la longueur d'une escriture ennuyeuse, ou d'un discours trop serieux. (p.41)

This was illustrated by his use of stories, which Garasse believes provided a more entertaining way of making a serious point, and added interest to his book. He also insists that, as the stories had been used before, he is not alone in judging them worthy of being told, so that Ogier would be forced to condemn a great many other writers as buffoons if he persisted in condemning Garasse (pp.61-69).

On the low-register language which Garasse was accused of using, he replies that he finds it difficult to know what is acceptable language and what is not, as he himself takes his cue from ancient writers who used words in their unsullied sense (p.107). He does however claim to have exercised a certain degree of censorship in quoting from the Parnasse satyrique by leaving blanks where he judged the language of the original improper, thus denying Ogier's assertion that he had quoted filth. His conclusion was that it was all a matter of viewpoint, in that 'toutes choses
Defending himself against the charge of pedantry, Garasse defends those writers whom Ogier had contrasted with Charron in his second Chapter 5, ‘Garasse pedant’ (Ogier, pp.54-55). Garasse admits to liking Régnier as light reading (pp.118-19), is proud to say that he enjoys reading Sainct Gelais (pp.119-21), and says he has only read a little of Marot (p.121). He categorically denies that he has ever read Rabelais (p.121), whom Ogier placed in the ‘bibliothèque de Garasse’. Ogier’s other evidence of Garasse’s pedantry is also dismissed. Garasse points out that Ogier was also guilty of mixing Latin and French, as indeed was Charron, who justified doing so in his work (Garasse, p.124). Garasse’s dismissal of Seneca as a man who did not understand himself is justified by Seneca’s fundamental flaw of not being a Christian (p.126), while Garasse justifies his listing of all of Calvin’s pseudonyms by saying that Saint Augustine had done the same in the case of Lucius (p.127).

On his supposed impieties, it is Garasse’s belief that the impious ones are Théophile, Charron and Vanini, and he was writing against them. Moreover, he believes that it is necessary to use strong terms. There are many people, in the case of Charron, who are duped by his undeniable intelligence and the persuasiveness of his arguments, and believe him to be pious. As a result, insists Garasse, many have been enticed away from devout Catholicism, in order to practise a form of Epicureanism:

Pour Charron je dis qu’il estoit en tous ses Escrits,
c'est à dire en sa Sagesse & en ses Veritez, un vray Atheliste, ce que je dis pour descharger ma conscience, voyant avec mon grand regret, qu'une infinité de jeunes gens, le lisant par foiblesse d'esprit, sans reconnoistre les maudites blasphemes qu'il seme à chaque page, & lesquelles je feray voir icy bas au chapitre de mes pretenduës mesdisances. Il est vray qu'il avoit l'esprit bon, & d'autant plus estoit il dangereux, pour ce qu'il estouffe & estrangle doucement, & comme avec un cordon de soye le sentiment de la religion, & mene ses lecteurs à un Philosophie Epicurienne. (p.135)

Garasse accuses Ogier of being a follower of Charron and dismisses Ogier's claims that Charron had led a blameless life. Firstly, Ogier had stressed that Charron was a widely admired and respected priest, but Garasse claims that this proves nothing. Ogier is a priest, quips Garasse, but it has not improved him; he is no "fort esprit". The defence of being a churchman would equally be insufficient in the case of such clear atheists as Luther and Calvin (p.138). Ogier had also defended Charron on the grounds that he had died a Christian, but Garasse denies the validity of this defence alleging that the last rites had been overseen by a Huguenot minister (p.139). Garasse also denies that Charron's will - which provided dowries for poor young women, and money for educating poor young men - was charitable, suggesting instead that it was a penance for all the lives that Charron had ruined during his lifetime (pp.139-40).

As for the publication of the maxims of the libertines, Garasse defends this action by saying that their works are freely available and well-known, so that their beliefs can easily be discovered by the undiscerning reader (pp.146-48). Garasse argues that there is no difference between his exposing of immorality and the similar actions of Saint Augustine (p.151).
On his alleged profanations, Garasse bases his defence on Ogier's habit of attacking Catholics and defending libertines and Reformers. Garasse particularly objects in this context to Ogier's criticism of Gaspar Scioppius:

A son dire Mornay Huguenot en Cramoysi estoit une des meilleures plumes de France, tres-honneste homme, bon esprit, Beze estoit habile homme, Hierosme de Prague n' estoit point heretique au point de l'Eucharistie: Scioppius bon Catholique, & homme connu en toute l'Europe pour ses bonnes moeurs & son excellent esprit, est au dire de nostre homme, le plus infame sycophante, le plus maudit vilain, l'ame la plus venale du monde. Maistre Pasquier libertin pour la vie, estoit un tres-bon Catholique, Charron un saint. (p.161)

Garasse's defence against the accusation that he was guilty of mesdisance is to deny Ogier's allegation that he condemned people indiscriminately. On the contrary, he claims that there were only four people that he condemned, namely Pasquier, Charron, Jules Scaliger and Théophile de Viau, and that he had had good reason for doing so. He denies that he condemned others such as Joan of Navarre,

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5 Garasse is responding to Ogier's Chapter 9. Ogier defined as the profanations de Garasse Garasse's publication of atheistic ideas and maxims, supposedly so that his readers would have a clear idea of what Garasse was attacking. Garasse claimed that he was following in the tradition of St Epiphanius, St Irenaeus and Tertullian; Ogier insisted that he was merely giving publicity to things better left unspoken.

6 Jerome (Hieronymus) of Prague was a Czech theologian and follower of the doctrine of Wycliffe. He was burnt as a heretic on 30 May 1416. For a note on the Catholic apologist work of Scioppius, see above, Chapter 3, Section 2. However, Scioppius was later to write against the Jesuits himself (see Nisard, Les Gladiateurs, II, pp.131-71). Garasse would have been shocked to know that, 'il amassait, dès l'année 1616, des matériaux contre les Jésuites' (Nisard, II, p.133), and that, from 1630, Scioppius wrote 'contre les Pères cette énorme quantité de libelles diffamatoires qui formeraient presque à eux seules une bibliothèque, et où il n'attaque plus seulement leur enseignement, mais leur institut, leurs doctrines, leur science et leurs moeurs' (ibid., p.135).
Louis Servin and Justus Lipsius, suggesting that they appeared in *La Doctrine curieuse* as a result of minor disagreements. He states that the heresy of Joan is a known fact, and that the accusation of heresy was the only thing he had said against her (pp.178-79). In the case of Servin, he had tried to edit out derogatory remarks about him, but a critical reference to him had been included by the printers by mistake.⁷

Garasse claims that he has no major disagreement with Justus Lipsius and the Scaligers. He simply disagrees with Lipsius on the nature of destiny (p.204), and refutes the royal ancestry of the Scaligers (p.209). Ogier therefore over-reacted to Garasse's words, and Garasse is happy to put the record straight. He says of Justus Lipsius:

\[
j'ay honoré & honoreray toute ma vie la memoire de Lipsius. \text{(pp.205-06)}
\]

As for the Scaligers, he states:

\[
J'ay tousjours estimé & loué l'erudition & l'esprit excellent de ces deux hommes, j'ay leu & admiré toutes les oeuvres. \text{(p.209)}
\]

It is with Pasquier, Charron and Théophile that he disagrees, and against whom *La Doctrine curieuse* was

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⁷ Ogier noted that the index to *La Doctrine curieuse* described the dinner party given by a German woman (see Ogier, p.32, and *La Doctrine curieuse*, p.428) as the "banquet des sages". As this is also the title of Garasse's book against Servin, Ogier deduced that Garasse had published this story in order to launch a further attack on Servin. Garasse, however, has a different explanation. He admits that the draft version of his book drew a parallel between the two banquets, but he changed his text because he decided that this would be too derogatory to Servin. Unfortunately, due to other commitments, he had been unable to be present when it came to be printed, and he discovered too late that he had forgotten to alter the index, with the result that the reference to Servin had remained. The details of the dinner party can be found above, in Chapter 8, Section 3.
written. Garasse reiterates his attacks on them, and goes into greater detail than before.

Garasse defends himself against the charges of having malices noires, meschancetez and subtilité d'Esprit, primarily by saying that he was provoked by Pasquier, given the latter's constant criticism of the Jesuit Order. He also insists that he was in no way motivated by personal dislike of Pasquier, or of his two sons. His desire is to protect the Catholic Church, by bringing to public attention the dangers of Pasquier's works:

si par fois je me suis laissé aller à quelque discours désplaisant ou prejudiciable à l'honneur qu'ils pretendent estre deu à la memoire de leur pere, qu'ils sachent que je ne l'ay fait que par le seul zele de la Religion, pour faire cognoistre à la France que ses livres sont de tres-dangereuse lecture, pour les raisons que j'ay deduites cy devant. (p.221)

This suggestion, although not consistent with his earlier description of both Charron and Pasquier as libertines, is nevertheless characteristic of the Apologie, which contains more accurate quotations from the books of Garasse's targets, and fewer unsubstantiated accusations about their lifestyles.

In addition, Garasse claims that he is capable of admitting his ignorance, and denies that he is lacking in self-knowledge (p.334). He seeks to explain some of his supposed errors, and to show at the same time that it is Ogier who is ignorant. Ogier should have realised that La Doctrine curieuse contained printing errors. For example, Ogier accused Garasse of not knowing that a 'caliph' was a type of ruler, and not a place. Garasse explains that the printers constantly misread '&' for 'de'. This led to the mistake of someone being described as a 'roi de Caliph'
instead of a ‘roi & caliph’. On other matters, Ogier was simply wrong, as Garasse insists that some constellations do have Arabic names (p.341), that Jerome of Prague was a heretic (pp.343-46), and that Gabriel Fabricius was not being ironic when he recounted Beza’s words, which denied the Eucharist (pp.349-52). Garasse is also keen to make Ogier look foolish. Ogier accused Garasse of not knowing that Turks, as Moslems, did not eat bacon, when he described defeated Huguenots as having more arrows in them than a Turkish hare had pieces of bacon. Garasse reasons that his original statement is true: if the hare were not covered in bacon, then it was indeed less covered in bacon than the defeated Huguenots were covered in arrows. Therefore, he, Garasse, was right and Ogier was wrong.

4. A conciliatory conclusion

The suggestion that Ogier was unable to follow through his own logic serves as evidence for Garasse’s rather surprising general conclusion, which is that neither he nor Ogier is a great writer, and that it would be better if neither were to write again. Furthermore, he insists that God is his witness that his intentions are honourable, both in writing against atheists and in seeking to convince Ogier of his innocence and to bring the two of them to reconciliation:

Vivons en paix, c’est ce que je luy demande: vivons en gens de bien. C’est ce que nous devons faire: vivons en bons Ecclesiastiques, c’est ce que tout le monde attend de nous: vivons en bons amis, c’est ce qu’il doit procurer & que je ne luy refuseray jamais. (pp.284-85)

This conclusion provides the most striking of contrasts between the Apologie and La Doctrine curieuse, with the final emphasis in the Apologie on reconciliation rather than
on condemnation, and on humility rather than arrogance. The way that Garasse focuses on his motives for writing also emphasises the greater care that he took in writing his new book, so that this focus and care become the most notable feature of the *Apologie*. For example, while it could be deduced from *La Doctrine curieuse* that Garasse’s main targets were Charron, Vanini and Théophile, it is only in the *Apologie* that this is made explicit. The *Apologie* has a recognisable structure, contains accurate quotations from the texts of those under attack, and relies on these, rather than on invective, for its criticisms. The *Apologie* contains a more articulate and more considered attack on Charron, and on sceptical writing in general.
CHAPTER 13

GARASSE'S 'APOLOGIE' (2):

GARASSE'S OBJECTIONS TO CHARRON AND SCEPTICISM

1. Garasse's reasons for attacking Charron

Ogier had had no doubt, in spite of the vagueness of Garasse's accusations, that Charron was a major focus of Garasse's satire in La Doctrine curieuse, and had hence devoted considerable space to defending him. The Apologie confirms that Ogier was not mistaken in his belief, and Garasse states that he had not gone into detail in his earlier book because he had wished to spare Charron too much humiliation. Now, however, on account of Ogier's importunity, Garasse makes explicit his reasons for considering Charron to be a particularly dangerous writer, whose views it was necessary to refute in the strongest possible terms (p.260). The presence of specific, accurate references from Charron's texts means that Garasse gives a more detailed, considered and coherent attack on Charron. Such an approach was necessary, Garasse repeated, because of the dangers inherent in Charron's appearance of piety:

*cet Escrivain est plus dangereux à la jeunesse & aux hommes du siecle qui ne sont que mediocrement sçavans, que les Livres de Theophile & de Lucilio Vanino, d'autant qu'il dit plus de vilainies qu'eux, les dit avec quelque peu d'honnesteté, c'est à dire d'autant plus dangereusement qu'il se tient sur ses gardes, & qu'on lit sa Sagesse comme un Livre devot. (Apologie, pp.261-62)*

Garasse's specific objections to Charron's work, which relate to both Les Trois veritez and De la Sagesse, provide a revealing insight into the differing viewpoints of a scholastic and a humanist. Most of the objections rely to a greater or lesser degree on a negative interpretation of
Charron’s words, when an alternative positive interpretation is possible. The ideas to which Garasse objects are not in fact those of Charron alone, but are common to many other humanistic thinkers.

2. Garasse’s objections to ‘Les Trois veritez’

The criticism of Les Trois veritez is based on four quotations from this text. Firstly, Garasse objects to Charron mentioning Christ in the same context as celebrated pagan martyrs, which he sees as a belittling of Christ, reducing him to the status of a mere honnête homme. The passage to which Garasse objects is:

Il n’y a rien en la vie de Socrates, Phocion, Seneque, Regulus, Papian, JESUS-CHRIST, les Martyrs, c’est à dire de tous les grands personnages, qui vaille leur mort, laquelle les empesche de mourir, & les fait vivre à tout jamais. (Garasse, p.263, quoting Les Trois veritez, p.83)

The point that Charron was making is that God knows when to recall great figures to him, and to preserve their immortality by having them die in the most striking way possible. Moreover, the naming of Socrates as, in many ways, a Christ-like figure was common among syncretists. For example, Erasmus (after Alcibiades) depicts Socrates as a perfect example of a silenus, that is, something which is grotesque on the outside, but concealing godliness within. Erasmus writes:

Had you opened this absurd Silenus, you would have found, you may be sure, a divine being rather than a man, a great and lofty spirit worthy of a true philosopher, one who despised all the things for which other mortals run their races, sail the seas, toil, go to law and fight in wars. (Collected Works, 34, Adagia, III, iii, i, p.263)

Other sileni named by Erasmus included Antisthenes,
Epictetus, Christ, John the Baptist, the prophets and the apostles.

Garasse’s second objection is to the suggestion that

*il faut plus de force & de roideur d’ame à rebuter & resoluement se despouiller de l’approhension & creance de Dieu, comme à bien & constamment se tenir ferme à luy.* (Apologie, p.263; Les Trois veritez, p.7)

According to Garasse, this statement only encouraged the young and rebellious in their belief that to be an atheist is to be a stronger and superior person. Vanini’s refusal to believe in God, he argues, was a result of this mistaken notion (p.264). Charron was, however, merely remarking that it took remarkable stubbornness not to believe in what, to him, was the obvious fact of the existence of God. Montaigne had characterised as ignorant and stupid the behaviour of those (who had once included himself) who felt it unnecessary to subscribe to all of the Church’s doctrines and observances (*Essais*, I, 27, p.230). Charron went still further, stating that an atheistic life was against nature, and was therefore worthless:

*Or sus donques il y a certainement un Dieu tout puissant & infini, provident & soigneux de nous, qu’il faut croire fermement, contempler attentivement, honorer & aimer perfectement, servir devotement. A tout cela, qui n’est autre chose que religion, il y a obligation naturelle, plaisir vray, plein & solide, qui seul peut remplir & contenter l’ame, profit perpetuel & infini.* (Les Trois veritez, p.95)

Garasse’s third objection is to the notion that God is incomprehensible and unknowable, specifically to the idea ‘que le meilleur est de ne parler jamais de Dieu, encore que nous en disions la verité’ (Garasse, p.265). He does not provide a precise reference in Charron’s text for this idea, but it is a concept which recurs in Charron’s work, and indeed the work of all Christian sceptics. In the first book
of Les Trois veritez, Charron considers at length various methods of proving the existence of a deity, but he finds them all insufficient. Such proofs rely on three kinds of argument: from earthly imperfection, which illustrates only what God is not, but cannot illustrate what God is; from the created world, which shows only a part of divine power; or from perfections in nature, which, being natural and belonging to the sublunar world, are not infinite. Charron’s conclusion is that unknowability is the defining quality of God:

La vraye cognoissance de Dieu est une perfecte ignorance de luy. S’approcher de Dieu est le cognoistre lumiere inaccessible; & d’icelle estre absorbe. (Les Trois veritez, p.24)

This subject is considered in more detail in Charron’s Discours chrestien de la cognoissance de Dieu. Charron reiterates his belief that God is unknowable, and insists that this conclusion was the result of careful study:

Ignorance tres-docte, qui surpasse toute science, car combien que l’ignorance soit un defaut, une laideur, une place vide & difforme en l’ame, mais en ceste affaire, ell’est au throne & lict d’honneur: c’est une souveraine science & sagesse, par laquelle nous reconnoissions fidelement & humblement que Dieu est ce qui ne peut ny ne doit estre conceu ni imagining par aucun esprit cree & fini. Dont tous les sages ont dit que Dieu se cognossoit mieux par ignorance que par science. Que bien le cognoistre, c’est savoir que l’on ne peut, ni l’on ne le doit cognoistre. (p.26)

Charron sees this conscientious ignorance of God as the best way to approach religion, and contrasts it with the impoverished vision of those whom he calls superstitious, who, he felt, invented a God small enough to fit their own limited understanding. The result was to bring God to the level of people, rather than, as in the sceptical method, to raise the eyes and minds of humans towards God:
that Charron encouraged indifference both to God and to religion. Charron's words were on the contrary aimed at preserving the divine in what he saw as its proper position, as a higher being consciously contemplated in human minds as unknowable.

Garasse's objection to Charron, therefore, was an objection to the very mind-set of the Christian sceptic. Equally, the humanising of God, turning him into a petty and vain tyrant to be placated by rituals and mechanically repeated prayers, was at the heart of many Christian sceptical critiques of the superstitious behaviour they attributed to those who observed the letter of Christian law but not its spirit. Both Erasmus and Rabelais satirised the automatic repetition of creeds and prayers, associated with scholastic teaching methods, as a way of teaching the Christian life.¹ Pomponazzi suggested that prayer was bifunctional. On the one hand, the individual sought the satisfaction of desires, and on the other an understanding of the very nature of prayer deepened religious experience. The problem is that, for most, it is only the former which is exercised:

¹ See Erasmus's Praise of Folly (Collected Works 27, p.114), and Rabelais's Gargantua, where Ponocrates sees that Gargantua's study 'selon la discipline de ses precepteurs sophistes' required only mindless recital from his breviary (pp.81-82).
Il est évident au contraire que selon les philosophes, il faut prier les dieux et que la prière n’est jamais vaine, puisqu’elle a en elle sa fin inséparable d’elle et beaucoup plus pure que celle qui lui est accidentelle. Mais pour le peuple, la prière est vaine s’il n’obtient pas ce qu’il demande. Il met le bonheur dans les biens du corps, parce qu’il n’estime que ceux-là. Ce n’est pas la vraie religion qui professe ces mensonges, mais le profane vulgaire. (Les Enchantements, pp.235-36)

Garasse’s fourth objection is to the view that ‘la Religion est une sage invention des hommes, pour contenir la populace en son devoir’ (Garasse, p.266), which is a summary of the chapter in which Charron suggests that religion had considerable benefits in controlling public behaviour. It is important to note, however, that this is a theory Charron ascribes to others; he probably had Machiavelli most particularly in mind:

cela ne porteroit pas grand coup contre telles gens, qui franchement & hardiment, autant que tous autres, enseignent que le vray moyen le premier et le plus fort, pour maintenir les republiques, & toute autre espece de societé humaine, pour regler les hommes en eux mesmes & envers autruy, les contenir en l’obéissance des loix & des magistrats, les enhardir aux dangers de guerre, les rendre modestes en paix, bref les faire souples & maniables à toutes choses, & faire joug aux superieurs, c’est la persuasion de religion, sans laquelle tous les autres moyens sont foybles & peu durables. (Les Trois veritez, pp.12-13)

Charron says of these theorists:

Ils ont dict, que la Religion avoit esté très sagement inventée, & persuadée aux peuples par les premiers & plus sages politiques & fondateurs des republiques, qu’elle estoit le fondement, l’ame, le nerf, & l’entretien des polices: que la religion & les republiques se font compagnie en biens & en maus. (p.14)

However, while recognising the sense behind such reasoning, Charron felt that such political explanations for the existence of religion were inadequate:

[...] pour tous ces discours politiques: il en faut trouver d’autres plus pressans & fondez plus en vérité qu’en utilité. (p.15)
In his treatment of *Les Trois veritez*, Garasse found only four examples of alleged atheism in a book of 532 pages, and all of these are to be found in the first book which deals only with the existence of God; he raises no objection to those sections which deal with the other two truths, namely that the Christian faith is the true religion, and that the Catholic Church is the true representation of Christianity.

It is, then, on the question of how to speak or think about God that Charron and Garasse disagree. A crucial area of contention is Charron's separation of human wisdom and divine wisdom, or faith and reason. The object of scholastic theology, to which Garasse adhered, was to provide reasoned explanations for ambiguities to be found in the positive theology of Scripture; the effect of the scholastic method was, by encapsulating theological mysteries in the verbal formulae of scholastic rhetoric, to give those who had mastered the method the illusion of understanding and control over matters which, by definition, are inaccessible to human perception and reason. As the glosses of commentaries on Aquinas led to an ever-growing accretion of abstract and recondite material, humanists like Erasmus, Montaigne and Charron increasingly challenged the authority of scholastic writings. They believed that the commentaries upon commentaries were perpetuating a verbal system which had become detached from the modest, scholarly search for true knowledge.  

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2 Erasmus criticised the scholastics' 'subtle refinements of subtleties' in his *Praise of Folly* (*Collected Works* 27, p.127). In 'De l'experience', Montaigne criticised the ever-expanding list of legal glosses in similar
open to interpretation: Erasmus showed that the Latin translations, used by Aquinas and the scholastic theologians who followed him, were sometimes inaccurate renderings of the original Greek text. Garasse, on the other hand, loyal to his scholastic training, still believed that uncertainty could be eliminated by exegesis: answers to obscurities could always be found in the Aristotelian system, Christianised by Aquinas and his successors. For Garasse, the suggestion that God was unknowable and incomprehensible stood out in flagrant opposition to the mass of material offering apparently precise, elaborately argued definitions of almost everything connected with God, the Church, and the relationship of the divine to the world. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that Garasse found it impossible to reconcile the two notions he found in Charron, namely the need to place everything in the domain of human understanding in doubt, while at the same time submitting to the teaching and authority of the Church on all matters.

3. Garasse's criticism of 'De la Sagesse'
The issue of the comprehensibility of God was also the cause of some of Garasse's objections to *De la Sagesse*. The terms; he suggested that the language in which they were couched had the effect of obscuring rather than explaining difficulties:

> On donne autorité de loy à infinis docteurs, infinis arrests, et à autant d'interprétations. Trouvons nous pourtant quelque fin au besoin d'interpréter? s'y voit-il quelque progrès et advancement vers la tranquillité? nous faut-il moins d'advocats et de juges que lors que cette masse de droit estoit encore en sa première enfance? Au rebours, nous obscurcissons et ensevelissons l'intelligence; nous ne la découvrons plus qu'à la mercy de tant de closures et barrières. (*Essais*, III, 13, p.278)
incomprehensibility of the divine being had led Charron to conclude that Christians should believe only the teaching of the Catholic Church, while doubting all else. Garasse considered this conclusion to be a cynical stratagem designed to hide his doubt in the Church, and to protect him from censure (p.265). Garasse came to the same conclusion on the matter of Charron’s revision of his work for the second edition. Charron altered parts of his work in order to make unequivocal his faith in the Catholic Church. While Garasse accepts that Charron exercised a certain amount of censorship by providing a revised version, he states that this potentially useful action had been nullified by the editors’ policy of placing the censored material in an appendix to the second edition. Garasse suggests that this was a deliberate ploy to bring the attention of the readers to the atheistic material contained in Charron’s text:

quelqu’un frappé du mal de Viaud & de Lucilio ayant leu Charron tres-exactement, mit à part toutes ses impietez dont il a fait un bouquet, & les a comme fleurs d’élite rangées à la fin du livre avec une Preface digne de l’auther, & ce titre, qui sert de bouchon pour inviter les lecteurs à voir les fleurs, & comme les plus excellentes pensées de Charron. (pp.146-47)

For example, the first edition had stated that:

Pour les particularitez tant de la creance qu’observance, il faut d’une douce submission & obeissance s’en remettre & arrester à ce que l’Eglise Catholique a de tout temps, universellement tenu & tient, sans disputer & s’embroutilier en nouveauté. (included in appendix to the 1613 edition, p.786)

For the second edition, Charron made his faith in the Catholic Church even more specific:

Pour les particularitez tant de la creance qu’observance, il faut tenir à la Chrestienne, comme la vraye, plus riche, plus relevée, plus honorable à Dieu, profitable & consolative à l’homme, ainsi qu’avons monstré en nostre seconde verité, & en icelle demeurant, il faut d’une douce submission [...]. (pp.396-97)
It is from this appendix that Garasse gathers his evidence of Charron’s atheism. Firstly, he objects to the suggestion that:

toute la coustume & conduitte humaine, mesmes encore en la Religion, est bastie & facicte de pieces maladives. (Apologie, p.267, quoting De la Sagesse, p.750)

The context to this sentence is that Charron believed that people committed bad deeds for supposedly good ends, and brought cunning into their dealings with God. His feeling was that this was an example of the humanising of God, that people were foolish enough to think that a divine being would not be able to see through their human trickery.

Garasse’s second objection derives from Charron’s statement that:

en la Religion, les plus grandes & solennelles actions sont marques honteuses, & remedes aux maladies humaines. (Apologie, p.267, quoting De la Sagesse (ed. Bordeaux, 1601), p.27)

A look at the context of this view reveals that Charron was talking about human and animal sacrifices, and the appalling misjudgment of the nature of the divine inherent in the belief that God can be appeased by the spilling of blood:

Quelle plus rage & manie peut entrer en l’imagination, que de penser appaiser & gratifier Dieu par le massacre & sang des bestes. (De la Sagesse, p.751)

His third objection concerns Charron’s reflections on the immortality of the soul. Garasse is taking up again the issue raised in the seventh libertine maxim in La Doctrine curieuse. Garasse illustrates his opposition to Charron by quoting from the appendix to the Paris edition of De la Sagesse:

L’immortalité de l’ame est la chose la plus universellement, religieusement, & plausiblement receue par tout le monde; j’entens d’une externe & publique profession, non d’une interne, serieuse & vraye creance:
This wording, used in the first edition, shows Charron taking up a position very similar to that of Pomponazzi in his *De immortalitate animae* (pp.377-79): the human mind has a natural propensity for believing in the immortality of the soul, and, in any case, this belief should be accepted on the religious grounds that it has been revealed by the teachings of Scripture; however, it is impossible to prove the soul's immortality by rational human means. Charron took great care to emphasise his unquestioning belief in this doctrine in his revised edition, stressing that those who do not believe in the immortality of the soul are specifically 'Epicuriens, libertin, & moqueurs' (p.63). Moreover, it was necessary to believe in it because it was part of the teachings of the Church:

*aucunement assez prouvée par plusieurs raisons naturelles & humaines, mais proprement & mieux establie par le ressort de la Religion. (p.63)*

It is hardly surprising, however, that Garasse remained dissatisfied with the revised edition; the relationship between reason and doctrine remained a key area of contention between scholastics and humanistic sceptics. For Charron, there was no contradiction in stating discrepancies between the truths of revealed wisdom, and the more limited truths which could be demonstrated by human reason. For him, the doubt that reason cast on the immortality of the soul was easily outweighed by the teaching of the Church. For Garasse, on the other hand, the very fact that any kind of doubt had been cast on such an important matter as the immortality of the soul was scandalous.
Charron’s strongly worded criticisms of those who believe in the wrong way or for the wrong reasons were the focus of Garasse’s fourth objection to De la Sagesse:

Charron censures mindless following of religious creeds and sacraments:

C’est descouvrir un autel pour en couvrir un autre, tant est courte & foible toute la suffisance humaine, qu’elle ne peut bailler ny recevoir un reglement certain, universel & constant à estre homme de bien. (Apologie, pp.270-71, quoting De la Sagesse, pp.749-50)

Charron was unequivocal in his opposition to the mechanical following of religion, and in this example he was referring to the way in which such worship corrupts Christianity to such an extent that it is often difficult to recognise the original religion in the actions of his contemporaries.

Charron echoed the thinking of Pomponazzi’s De Incantationibus (pp.235-36) in considering superstitious worship to be insulting to God and useless for the worshipper. Montaigne also considered that the religion being professed through prayers often resembled the incantations of witchcraft:

Il semble, à la vérité que nous nous servons de nos prières comme d’un jargon et comme ceux qui employent les paroles saintes et divines à des sorcelleries et effects magiciens. (Montaigne, ‘Des prières’, I, 56, p.385)

It is not difficult to understand why Charron’s words appeared to be so dangerous. For Garasse, his apparent denial of the worth of worship would lead people to abandon any attempts at achieving faith and salvation through attendance at Church services:

C’est abolir & estouffer le sentiment de Dieu, nous persuadant que l’adorer, le servir, le prier, qui sont les pieces essentielles de la Religion, ne sont que pieces de foiblesse, & maladies d’esprit. (Apologie, p.267)
Charron’s views on the differences between sincere and superstitious worship are reminiscent of his critiques of formal and mechanistic scholastic methods of learning, which he contrasted with the true learning which must be fully assimilated and tested by its users. He made a clear distinction between scholastic science and the sagesse he was seeking to promote in his major book:

La science & la sagesse sont choses fort différentes; & que la sagesse vaut mieux que toute la science du monde, comme le ciel vaut mieux que toute la terre, & l’or que le fer. (De la Sagesse, p.637)

The case of religious worship, for Charron, offered a similar contrast between the external clutter of terminology and ritual and the true inner substance. Charron did say that worshipping God could be a mark of weakness, but only when the worship was not carried out in the proper fashion. Charron’s aim in writing for educated people was to convert science into sagesse by persuading people to seek an understanding of the words they learnt. Scholastic training encouraged the recitation of prayers, so that followers could worship according to the letter, but insufficient emphasis, according to Charron, was given to understanding what was being said, so that worship was lacking in the spirit required for true faith. For Charron, conforming mechanically to the rituals of worship was of no use; Christians should work hard to acquire human wisdom. Then, the sound knowledge can be transfigured into the highest wisdom of all by the justifying grace of God:

C’est qu’après tout ce que j’ai dit, il reste encor une chose pour rendre l’ouvrage complet & parfait, c’est la grace de Dieu par laquelle ceste telle prud’homme, bonté, vertu est animée, mise à son jour, & reçoit son dernier trait visuel, est relevée, Christianisée, coronnée, c’est à dire acceptée, vérifiée, homologuée de
Dieu, rendue méritoire, & digne de recompense eternelle.
(De la Sagesse, pp.368-69)

The mistake that scholastics made in religion -
according to Charron - was the same one that they made in
learning. They learnt things by heart, as an aid to
displaying their knowledge and erudition, but neglected to
understand the issues behind the words they were learning
and reciting:

Ils font deux fautes, l'une qu'ils n'appliquent pas ce
qu'ils apprennent à eux mesmes, à se former à la vertu,
sagesse, resolution & ainsi leur science leur est
inutile: l'autre est que pendant ce long temps qu'ils
employent avec grande peine, & despense, à amasser &
empocher ce qu'ils peuvent desrober sur autruy
inutilement pour eux, ils laissent chommer leur propre
bien, & ne l'exercent. (De la Sagesse, p.645)

4. Charron: Epicurean Christian or atheist?
A pattern emerges from Garasse's objections to Charron. Many
of the points to which he objects, and which he adduces in
order to convict Charron of atheism - the unknowability of
God, the impossibility of proving the immortality of the
soul by rational means, and the insistence that prayer which
is not sincere is worthless - were typical opinions of
humanists who were seeking to undermine the inappropriate
degree of certainty which, they felt, characterised the
scholastic viewpoint. It is hardly surprising that Garasse,
himself a scholastic teacher, objected to these viewpoints
when Charron expressed them. The Apologie reaffirms what can
be inferred from La Doctrine curieuse, that Garasse's
accusations of atheism stem from his apparent conviction
that atheism is synonymous with opposition to scholasticism.

Garasse's remaining objections to Charron are based on
his opposition to humanistic views on following nature. He
is particularly dismayed by Charron's decrying of the virtue of total celibate chastity:

la plus grande recommandation qu'elle ait, c'est sa difficulté: car au reste elle est sans action & sans fruict, c'est une privation, un non faire, peine sans profit, la sterilité est signifiée par la virginité. (Apologie, p.278, quoting De la Sagesse, p.735)

Garasse quotes only this sentence, which is clearly contrary to the teaching of the Jesuits, who placed great emphasis on chastity. From Charron's point of view, looking at celibacy with the eyes of ordinary human reason, it is dangerous to deny one's human nature, especially when done with the blind conviction that such self-denial is virtuous, and liable to cancel out other sins. Forced celibacy, for Charron, is in itself a problem, and leads to still worse ones:

ce qui la descrie & rend tant dangereuse, c'est qu'elle n'est presque jamais seule: mais ordinairement accompagnée & suyvie d'autres plus grandes fautes. (De la Sagesse, p.736)

Charron was attacking what he saw as a superstitious clinging to chastity as a Christian virtue in itself. He believed that this sort of asceticism was usually contrary to the practice which he repeatedly advocated, which was to follow nature and develop one's humanity to the full:

Le bien, le but & la fin de l'homme auquel gist son repos, sa liberté, son contentement, & en un mot la perfection en ce monde, est vivre & agir selon nature. (p.364)

Charron argued that it was only in this state of contentment that the mind could achieve some form of true wisdom, a view he held in common with Montaigne:

Et, suyvant Epicurus, les voluptez me semblent à éviter, si elles tirent à leur suite les douleurs plus grandes, et les douleurs à rechercher, qui tirent à leur suite des voluptez plus grandes. ('De la ressemblance des enfans aux peres', II, 37, p.427)

However, both thinkers also stressed that it was important
for wise people to practise moderation in the satisfaction of bodily desires. Charron stated:

Ils suivent tout simplement les raisons & la conduite de nature, marchant tout doucement & mollement aux affaires, sans s’eschauffer ou s’eslever, et ainsi plus sainement. (De la Sagesse, p.360)

Montaigne’s words on the subject were:

La philosophie n’estrive point contre les voluptez naturelles, pourveu que la mesure y soit joincte, et en presche la moderation, non la fuite. (‘Sur des vers de Vergile’, III, 5, p.107)

The emphasis that Charron - like Montaigne - placed on the need for moderation answers Garasse’s claim that Charron had encouraged people to yield to their carnal desires. Garasse’s interpretation of Charron’s words on following nature and developing one’s humanity to the full were another example of his inability - or his refusal - to understand that Charron and Montaigne were advocating a form of controlled Epicureanism. This was not atheism; their call for people to satisfy their human desires was qualified first of all by a continuing assumption that, whenever conflict occurred, individuals should strive to follow the teachings of the Church, and, secondly, that desires and appetites should always be enjoyed with moderation. Charron’s words did not imply a lack of belief in God or of faith in the Catholic Church.

Garasse, with his scholastic training, believed that the Church trained people in theology in order to be able to teach the congregation what it was necessary for faithful Catholics to do, and what it was necessary for them to believe (see Brockliss, p.231). God had ordained prayers, sacraments and services to be followed, and scholastic theologians had provided admirable rulings on all matters of
doubt. The argument with Charron came about because of the latter’s method of challenging existing ideas by means of doubt and inquiry. Such an approach was anathema to the scholastics, with the result that the two camps, and indeed Garasse and Ogier, were locked in a battle between opposing perspectives and assumptions: in Garasse’s eyes, the conflict was between the comfortable certainties handed down by trustworthy authority and the stultifying doubt introduced by dangerously careless free thinkers; in the eyes of Ogier (after Charron), it was between the empty shell of a religion dominated by ritual and superstitious jargon and a living faith.

5. Garasse’s objections to scepticism in Ogier’s work
Garasse, as a scholastic, opposed Charron’s Epicurean confidence in nature and his frequent use of sceptical arguments. He was deeply hostile to every aspect of Charron’s thinking, and was keen to take every opportunity to condemn his work.

Garasse recognises that an attack on Ogier represented an attack on humanistic scepticism in general, and an oblique attack on Charron in particular. He refers to Ogier as a pupil and as an imitator of Charron:

Il adresse une Epistre à tout le corps de nostre compagnie, tissuë & rapieçée de lambeaux de la Sagesse de Charron. (pp.35-36)

Garasse makes use of the ideas of Charron to mock Ogier. Charron, like Montaigne, had used the sceptical parallel between humans and animals to show that, in almost every domain, one or other of the animal species could equal or surpass human abilities. So, when Ogier accuses Garasse of
being an elephant, Garasse can answer with glee that his master had a very high opinion of elephants:

Comment veut-il que je sois un Elephant, veu que Charron son bon maistre faict un Chapitre exprès dans sa Sagesse, auquel il dit que l’Elephant est le plus ingenieux animal du monde, luy neantmoins qui m’estime le plus brutal et le plus assoupy de l’Univers? (p.vii of ‘Jugement et descouverte...’)

Garasse repeatedly criticises Ogier for exercising bad judgment in defending certain individuals. For example, he believes that Ogier was wrong to defend Joan of Navarre and Étienne Pasquier. Again, Garasse’s handling of the issue illustrates that his criticism was aimed at Ogier’s Charronian viewpoint. He focuses on Ogier’s objection that, in attacking Joan of Navarre, Garasse was attacking a monarch; Ogier’s standpoint is the same as Charron’s in his Discours chrestien against the ligue, where Charron asserts that it was always wrong to rebel against the King; he takes the same line in De la Sagesse:

Nous devons la sujection & obeissance également à tous Rois, car elle regarde leur office: mais l’estimation & affection, nous ne la devons qu’à leur vertu. (pp.670-71)

Garasse retorts that it is ridiculous to ignore Joan of Navarre’s heresy, and, on the basis of Ogier’s logic, infers that it would be necessary to condemn others, such as St Paul, for criticising Nero (pp.179-80). Equally, for Garasse, Ogier’s judgment of Pasquier was inconsistent: he praised him for not joining the ligue, but failed to condemn him for his criticism of past kings in his historical writings (pp.192-93).

These attacks on Ogier’s judgment are a retort to his suggestion that Garasse did not possess self-knowledge, an accusation which Garasse rebuts:
si je suis ignorant, je vous promets que ce n’est pas de cette malheureuse ignorance dont vous m’accusés en la page 181, qui est l’ignorance de moy mesmes, car graces à Dieu je me connois pour estre plus meschant que vous ne m’avez qualifié dans vos Escrits. (p.334)

Even this statement betrays the differing definitions of self-knowledge in humanistic and scholastic circles.

Garasse’s words no doubt deliberately reflect the lesson of the parable of the pharisee and the publican, namely that the individual should be humble and never claim to be in a sinless state, in the certain knowledge that all are imperfect in the eyes of God. A genuine understanding of Charron’s works would have revealed to Garasse the true nature of Ogier’s accusation. For Ogier, Garasse’s lack of self-knowledge encompassed all of his faults, but in particular his desire to censure others for mistakes which he himself had made. Indeed, Garasse’s response of paying lip-service to one of Christ’s parables, while failing to comprehend the full implications of Ogier’s accusation, might have served as an illustration of the kind of self-righteous but un-self-knowing scholastic reaction which Charron claimed was typical of scholastic pedants.

Garasse’s attack on Ogier as a sceptic follows the same pattern as his attack on Charron. It ignores the purposes to which Charron and Ogier claimed to put their scepticism. His criticism is based on his determined belief that Charron was an atheist, and that, if Ogier agreed with Charron, then he must be an atheist too.

6. Garasse’s objection to the sceptic’s concern with the body

The differing treatments of the theme of self-knowledge had their roots in the entirely different approaches to
literature of Garasse and the humanists he was attacking.

The humanists followed the Socratic idea that the self was the point of departure for acquiring knowledge of the human race as a whole. Charron began his book on human wisdom with a description of the workings of the human body. The work of Montaigne was based on a study of the self, and his quest for self-knowledge led him to consider all aspects of his own human condition. Garasse states that this was not to his taste:

\[
\text{il est vray qu'il me fasche de parler de moy & de mes menuës occupations, d'autant que je ne suis pas de l'humeur de celuy qui descrivoit à la posterité son flux de ventre, sa fièvre quintaine, ses pilules & ses medecines avec leurs operations, son mulet & son malier, ses vendanges & les procez de sa chambrière: j'estime que mes estudes sont si peu afferantes au public, qu'elles ne valent pas la peine d'en discourir. (p.118)}
\]

This passage is a reiteration of Garasse’s attack on Étienne Pasquier in the Recherches des recherches, where Garasse’s irritation at Pasquier’s listing of his bodily ailments is exacerbated by his doing so in the context of a letter about the Jesuits:

\[
\text{Qu'il trouva un petit bois pavé de champignons, sur lesquels s'estant rué et ayant fait une débauche de gueule, il en eut une forte fièvre, laquelle il supporta au moins mal qu'il put, et cela fort à propos de la cause des Jésuites.} \]

Garasse, Recherches des recherches, pp.187-88. Garasse is quoting, without exaggeration, a letter written by Pasquier ‘A Monsieur Louys de Sainte-Marthe, Lieutenant general du Roy, en la Mareschaussée de France, au palais de Paris’ which can be found in Les Lettres d’Estienne Pasquier Conseiller & Advogat general du Roy à Paris, 2 vols (Paris: Sonnius, 1619), Book 21, Letter 1, (II, pp.663-76). Explaining how he came to write against the Jesuits, Pasquier tells how he gave up his career in law, because he had fallen behind his contemporaries as a result of the eighteen-month break necessitated by the illness cited by Garasse. As a result, Pasquier met the two theologians who recommended him to the University of Paris to act as their lawyer in their attempt to bar the Jesuits from teaching there (pp.669-71).
Equally, he criticised Pasquier for writing about his
domestic affairs:

Car il descend jusques aux plus bas & sordides offices
de sa maison au procez de sa chambriere, au mulet &
malier de son estable, & en fin jusques à ses lieux
privés, & garderobbes, qui est chose tres-honteuse, &
m'estonne que le papier n'a rougy se voyant couvert de
ses ordures.  

These criticisms could easily have been levelled at
Montaigne. In particular, his chapter, 'De la ressemblance
des enfans aux peres' addresses the issue of bodily
ailments. Montaigne tells of his own illnesses:

Je suis aus prises avec la pire de toutes les maladies,
la plus soudaine, la plus douloureuse, la plus mortelle
et la plus irremédiable. J'en ay desjà essayé cinq ou
six bien longs accez et penibles. (II, 37, pp.422-23)

At the same time, he spoke of, for example, a 'flux de
ventre':

Vous voyez souvent des hommes sains tomber en
vomissement ou flux de ventre par accident estranger, et
faire un grand vuidange d'excremens. (II, 37, pp.429-30)

In this chapter, Montaigne describes how he believed
that his own personal nature was immune to the powers of
artificial medicine. It formed a typical part of his
project, in that it dealt with themes of the natural and the
artificial, and dwelt on detailed aspects of the human
condition, in this case illness and its symptoms in the
body.  

5 Recherches des recherches, pp.329-30. Pasquier said in
his letter that his wife had been supportive of his
decision to leave the bar:
   elle au contraire avec une constance admirable me
dict, qu'elle trouvoit ma resolution tres-bonne.
   Qu'avions mulet & malier en l'estable, & assez de
   moyens pour vivre à nostre aise. (II, p.668)

6 Note that Ogier defended Pasquier's speaking of his
illnesses:
   Quant à Pasquier il n'escrit rien d'extravagant; si
   au sujet de sa maladie il parle des effects de ses
The issue of domestic affairs, too, could be found in, for example, 'De l'institution des enfans':

c'estoit une reigle inviolable que ny luy mesme, my ma mere, ny valet, ny chambriere, ne parloyent en ma compagnie qu'autant de mots de Latin que chacun avoit apris pour jargonner avec moy. (I, 26, p.221)

Montaigne drew up his picture of humanity by studying himself. If he had neglected to mention his illnesses and domestic servants, he felt, his portrait would have been incomplete.

The terms in which Garasse condemns Pasquier suggest that he disliked the penchant for writing about the self, just as he disliked the call for everything to be cast into doubt, which was to be found in Charron. Both of these ideas were central to Montaigne's work. Garasse chose not to attack Montaigne explicitly, but, by making these twin statements, showed that his arguments were not only with Pasquier and Charron, but with the whole tradition of humanistic sceptical literature which developed in the late sixteenth century, in the wake of Montaigne's Essais, and which the likes of Ogier and Balzac carried through into the 1620s.
CHAPTER 14

GARASSE'S ‘APOLOGIE’ (3):

GARASSE’S METHODS OF ATTACK

1. Garasse’s response to Ogier’s polemic

Garasse’s response to the Jugement & censure du livre de la doctrine curieuse in his Apologie was marked by a more structured and efficient approach to the targets of his polemic than had been evident in La Doctrine curieuse. Garasse pointed out (with some justification) that Ogier had used excessive invective in his work. He exposed examples of Ogier’s faulty logic: if the Bible was able to mention debauchery without condoning it, it was illogical to say that Garasse could not do the same (p. 89). Similarly, it was not rational of Ogier to assert that Garasse was an enthusiastic reader of Rabelais on the grounds that Garasse was honouring Rabelais by entitling a previous book Le Rabelais reformé, especially as the book was clearly so critical of Rabelais.

However, in other areas, the weaknesses in Garasse’s polemical techniques in the earlier work recur in the Apologie. For example, Ogier’s suggestion that La Doctrine curieuse contained too many digressions, and failed to address itself to the relevant subject-matter, can be levelled equally at the Apologie. It contains many points which are not really answers to Ogier’s accusations, but simply reiterations of Garasse’s previous arguments. The best example is Garasse’s continuing criticism of Théophile de Viau, who is irrelevant to the Apologie, given that Ogier’s text did not even mention him. Garasse, however, introduces the subject by assuming a false motive for
Ogier's work:

l’ame de son Libelle, sa prunelle, son intention n’est que pour justifier Théophile & faire voir que j’ay tort d’avoir publié ses maximes. (p.141)

This conclusion is offered without supporting evidence. He states firstly that Ogier is a libertine:

ils [les libertins] ont suborné un jeune homme de leurs parens & amys, pour profaner mon nom & tascher de me rendre comme la victime de la hayne publique. (p.iv)

He also makes repeated claims that Ogier is a friend of Théophile, referring to ‘Monsieur Ogier & son partyzan le Poëte Satyrique’ (p.24), describing Théophile as ‘l’Achates de nostre Ecclesiastique’, while the pair ‘ont par ensemble vuidé maintes bouteilles’ (p.141).

The assumption that Ogier was defending Théophile allows Garasse to pursue his own aims. He is able to redouble his attacks on the poet, and, stressing that Théophile disowned the Parnasse satyrique only out of expediency, seeks to justify his continuing attempts to have him convicted of atheism. He repeats his allegation that both Théophile and Ogier are followers of Charron, and attempts to discredit Charron further. Garasse’s views on Théophile are not only totally irrelevant to the task of replying to Ogier’s Jugement & censure, but they are all repeated from La Doctrine curieuse, and Garasse adds nothing new in his new book.

Garasse repeats much the same process in the case of Étienne Pasquier. Ogier devoted little attention to Pasquier, but that little which he did say in his defence prompts Garasse to suppose that he was working in partnership with the two sons of Pasquier, who were themselves shortly to produce a work which attacked Garasse.
This in turn enables the Jesuit to include attacks on them in the Apologie, and to justify himself further by detailing the wrongs done to the Jesuit Order by Étienne Pasquier. Again, this was only of passing relevance to Ogier's arguments, but it allows Garasse to present himself as a victim, deserving of sympathy, and justified in launching a counter-attack on his enemies. Moreover, it allows Garasse to restate his case for condemning Pasquier before the appearance of the defence of him that Rémy was shortly to publish.

The concentration on the figures of Théophile and Pasquier allows Garasse to emphasise his basic line of defence: he, Garasse, is a sincere Christian, carrying out the work of the Catholic Church, while his opponents are atheists and enemies of the Church. In defending Théophile, Garasse argues, Ogier proves that he was a Churchman only in name, that, in Garasse's words, 'ce jeune homme d'humour friponne n'a rien d'Ecclesiastique que le nom seulement' (p.182). In Garasse's eyes, Ogier's bad judgment is exemplified by his decision to defend Beza. Ogier felt that praise should be given where praise was due, but Garasse's belief was that, whatever the circumstances, a Catholic should never be criticised in favour of a Reformer:

Beze ne pouvot rencontrer un meilleur Advocat, que mon Accusateur: Accuser un Jesuite & defendre Beze sont deux adjoints fort considerables pour recommander un homme d'Eglise, quand mesmes il y auroit quelques defauts dans un Jesuite, & quelques bonnes qualitez en la personne de Beze. (p.58)

Garasse frequently falls back on this argument, producing it on several occasions as his defence, and so avoids dealing
Garasse’s answer to the accusation that he made factual errors is that Ogier himself made errors and that these were more serious, because Ogier had had more time to prepare his text (p.317). Otherwise, Garasse simply issues a flat rebuttal of Ogier’s accusations. He insists, as we have seen, that he is not lacking in self-knowledge (p.334), and that he never suggested that he could defeat his opponents by his presence alone (p.126). This is in spite of the fact that Ogier had provided a quotation from *La Doctrine curieuse* to show that he had:

> *je diray ce qui m’escheut ces jours passez dans une fort honorable maison de cette ville, car survenant à une bonne compagnie, en laquelle deux des beaux esprits pretendus avoient faict des merveilles discourant à perte de veuë [...] sans dire mot, je leur imposay tellement le silence, qu’onques depuis ils n’oserent quasi ouvrir la bouche.*

Another of Garasse’s weapons is to use Ogier’s own arguments against him. Alluding to Ogier’s assertion that there must inevitably be disagreements between the learned, Garasse claims that his disagreement with Justus Lipsius cannot therefore be seen as a weighty matter. His aim is

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1 This was precisely the argument he used to defend himself against his alleged profanations. It was wrong, Garasse stated, to criticise Scioppius, and defend Beza, Jerome of Prague, Duplessis-Mornay, Pasquier and Charron (p.161).


3 Ogier had stated that ‘il est impossible qu’ils n’ayent quelque contestation ensemble à cause de la diversité des testes qui est si grande’ (p.139). Garasse, with a further jibe at Ogier’s alleged tavern-haunting, says much the same thing:

> Mon calomniateur [...] doit apprendre que toutes & quantes fois qu’un Escrivain n’est pas de l’avis d’un autre, ou qu’il refute ses opinions, il ne
to show that Ogier did not think through the logic of his own argument; Garasse appears not to have noticed the irony inherent in his using what was essentially the sceptical argument that there is, on any topic, an almost limitless diversity of opinions.

Garasse’s principal tactic is to seek to belittle his opponent, making constant reference to his youth, and his implied youthful impetuosity in putting pen to paper, which is designed to give Garasse the appearance of a wise older man under attack from a young and foolish writer. Garasse states that it is only on account of Ogier’s youth that he is prepared to be fair to him:

> il est vray qu’il vient assez tost pour estre mal traicté si je n’avois compassion de ses jeunesses. (p. 35)

Garasse also believes that Ogier’s immaturity allowed him to be duped into writing his book:

> Tout Paris sçait bien de qui je parle, & le nom de ceux qui ont porté l’esprit & la plume de Monsieur Ogier, & qui ont abusé de sa jeunesse. (p. 166)

The cumulative result of his arguments, Garasse hopes, will be the successful turning of Ogier’s strategy against him, persuading readers that Ogier is not to be read as a serious writer, and, therefore, someone whose criticisms of Garasse can easily be ignored.

2. Garasse and the Jesuits

A point which emerges from the Apologie is that Garasse not s’ensuit pas qu’il soit mesdisant. Il n’y a rien de plus libre que les avis, & s’il frequentoit aussi souvent la Sorbonne que la taverne, il apprendroit que les Theologiens se refutent tous les jours sans s’esparigner l’un l’autre, & sans encourir le blasme de mesdisance. (pp. 203-04)
only wishes to re-establish his own reputation, but that he is keen to associate his self-defence with the defence of the reputation of the Jesuits as a whole. Any accusation made against Garasse, he assumes, is aimed at the whole Society. For example, the suggestion that Garasse was writing about debauchery from personal experience is taken as a slur on the Jesuit reputation for chastity, and the worst accusation the Society has received:

Ils nous accusent d’avarice, d’orgueil, de cruauté, mais jamais personne ne nous accusa d’impureté, excepté l’Anticoton & nostre honneste Ecclesiastique, qui m’accuse d’estranges & horribles impudicitez. (p.86)

Garasse is filled with rage at the suggestion that he is at odds with his masters, and he criticises Ogier for venerating the Society while calling him a buffoon (p.21). Garasse reasons that Ogier’s veneration of the Jesuits makes no sense if it were true - as Ogier seemed to believe - that they were prepared to tolerate the presence of a buffoon in their midst (p.36). Here, too, Garasse has perhaps allowed his annoyance to blind him to the content of Ogier’s argument. It was precisely Ogier’s point that there was a paradox involved, which was why he called upon the Society to condemn Garasse and preserve their reputation.

This point gains greater weight when it becomes clear that Garasse’s first version of the Apologie was indeed blocked by the Jesuits, so that they had, directly or indirectly, taken Ogier’s advice. Perhaps on account of his superiors’ opposition to his first edition, aspects of Garasse’s second edition reflect a desire to repair his standing in the Society. He is keen to present a picture of himself as part of a united Society of Jesus in the second
version (pp.317-18). In addition, he uses his new book as an opportunity to criticise further the work of Pasquier, a well-known enemy of the Jesuits, the defence of whom, he insists, made nonsense of Ogier’s veneration for the Jesuits. By portraying Ogier’s veneration as hypocritical, and nothing more than a manoeuvre to prevent the wrath of the Society descending on him, Garasse feels he has exposed new depths of hostility and malice in Ogier’s work, which he now presents as the work of a new enemy of the Jesuits.

Garasse’s identity as a Jesuit is of great significance, given the nature of some of Ogier’s criticisms (criticisms of a kind that Pascal was to make against the Jesuits, some thirty years later, in his Provinciales). Pascal was to allege that the Jesuits were guilty of systematically using sophistic or casuistic arguments. ‘Ogier had no doubt that Garasse intentionally used lies to justify his opinions. For example, his conclusion on the case of Gabriel Fabricius was that Garasse’s position was untenable:

Si Garasse entreprend de laver [les mains] du crime d’avoir écrit faux, il donne la mort tout à fait à sa

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4 The dictionary definition of a sophist is a captious or intentionally fallacious reasoner, and a casuist is one who uses sophistry to resolve cases of conscience. The systematic use of sophistry was also an accusation made against scholastics by the humanist Philipp Melanchthon. His Erotematum dialectices (1520) describes how sophistry, once only a pedagogical game, has come to be used to spread all manner of untruths: sophistries have invaded life, horribly sowing and implanting false opinions in the Church, in the curia, in politics, giving rise to great discord, war, and the ruin of mankind. Mind and soul must be well fortified against this dire plague.

(Melanchthon, Corpus reformatorum (Halle, 1834-60), vol 13, p.715, translated by Rummel, p.187)

Melanchthon also complains that scholastic dialectic has become characterised by ‘inane and ridiculously captious themes’ (p.615), ‘ridiculous examples’ (p.615), and ‘tricks and contentious argumentation’ (p.616).
Aspects of Ogier’s criticisms of Garasse were to be echoed by Pascal. For example, Pascal was to argue - with supporting evidence - that slandering enemies was a part of Jesuit policy:

‘Ce n’est qu’un péché véniel de calomnier et d’imposer de faux crimes pour ruiner de créance ceux qui parlent mal de nous’ [...] Et cette doctrine est si constante parmi vous, que quiconque ose l’attaquer, vous le traitez d’ignorant et de téméraire. 5

Garasse uses sophistry to present Ogier as an enemy of the Jesuits, then assumes these ‘proofs’ of his enmity gave him carte blanche to slander him further. Pascal was to allege that the use of calumny was the cornerstone of Jesuit polemical technique:

Qu’on ne s’étonne donc plus de voir les Jésuites calomniateurs: ils le sont en sûreté de conscience, et rien ne les peut empêcher; puisque, par le crédit qu’ils ont dans le monde, ils peuvent calomnier sans craindre la justice des hommes, et que, par celuy qu’ils se sont donné sur les cas de conscience, ils ont établi des maximes pour le pouvoir faire sans craindre la justice de Dieu. (Pascal, Letter 15, p.280)

Study of Pascal reveals further parallels between Jesuit behaviour satirised in Les Provinciales and Garasse’s treatment of Ogier. Pascal was accused of mocking religion in his anti-Jesuit writings, for which he had a defence that Ogier might have made to Garasse:

il y a bien de la différence entre rire de la religion, et rire de ceux qui la profanent par leurs opinions extravagantes. (Pascal, Letter 11, p.195)

Meanwhile, Garasse's blanket condemnation of all writings hostile to his own point of view finds an echo in Pascal's protestation that the Jesuit definition of heresy was anything which was written against the Jesuits:

C'est donc une même chose dans votre langage d'attaquer votre société et d'être hérétique? Voilà une plaisante hérésie, mes Pères. Et ainsi, quand on voit dans vos écrits que tant de personnes catholiques y sont appelées hérétiques, cela ne veut dire autre chose, sinon que vous croyez qu'ils vous attaquent. Il est bon, mes Pères, qu'on entende cet étrange langage, selon lequel il est sans doute que je suis un grand hérétique. (Letter 15, p.285)

In the Apologie, Garasse's slander does not only take the form of direct allegations. He also continually uses sophistry to 'prove' that Ogier is an unprincipled, dissolute libertine. For example, Garasse claims that the logical conclusion of Ogier's book is that it is a worse crime to write about debauchery than to take part in it (p.89). This conclusion was based on two premises: the first was that Ogier was himself a libertine who attended seedy taverns:

Voicy une nouvelle façon de conscience; Monsieur Ogier n'est point bouffon ny cabaretier, quoys que souvent il frequente les tavernes & l'Hostel de Bourgogne, mais c'est moy qui suis bouffon & tavernier, pource que je reprens les exces des tavernes, & nomme les plus celebres cabarets de Paris. ('Jugement et Descouverte', p.xviii)

The second was that Ogier was writing to defend the work and behaviour of Théophile de Viau (p.141). There was in fact no

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evidence either that he was dissolute or a defender of Théophile. Garasse's case rests on apparently invented evidence combined with casuistic logic.

The false assumption that Théophile and Ogier were connected leads Garasse to present what he considers to be his crowning argument. He defends his publication of the libertine maxims, by stating that they could be inferred from widely available texts of Théophile, Charron and Vanini. Garasse concludes:

car je luy demande, ou il croid que mon livre sera plus leu de tout le monde que celuy de Théophile Viaud, ou qu'il sera delaisse de tout le monde. S'il croid qu'il sera plus leu que celuy de Viaud, il s'engage en un mauvais pas, car il luy fascheroit fort de m'advoyer & reconnoistre plus habile homme que luy: s'il croid que mon Livre sera delaissé, il croid par consequent que les Maximes de Viaud & de Charron ne seront pas fort avantageusement mises au jour & sur le buffet par la publication de mon livre, s'il me respond à ce dilemme je l'estimeray honnest homme. (p.146)

This ingenious argument ignores the fact that Ogier was probably unconcerned as to which of Théophile and Garasse was the 'plus habile homme'. However, it was useful to Garasse's project, as it re-established Théophile, and the Parnasse satyrique that he was accused of having written, as the focus of the argument. It was in Garasse's interest to imply that his opponent was a defender of a collection which the courts had judged to be obscene.

Garasse backs up his condemnation of Charron with another odd piece of logic. Garasse himself had convicted Charron of writing atheistic material in his books. He then used his own conclusion as the basis for stating that Charron must have been hypocritical, because, he argues, if Charron's sermons were sound, they were contradicted in his works, which were atheistic; alternatively, if his sermons
were consistent with his books, they, too, must have been atheistic themselves (p.273). Demonstrably, then, Charron, according to Garasse, performed the duties of a priest while not believing in God, and, therefore, Ogier’s defence of Charron on the basis of his ecclesiastical career was worthless.

The common factor in these examples of questionable reasoning is their usefulness to Garasse’s project. His conclusions are that Charron was a hypocrite, an accusation which was to be given greater attention in La Somme théologique, that Ogier was a man who would not only defend Charron, but also the obscene poet Théophile de Viau, that Ogier was an enemy of the Jesuits, and that he wilfully criticised Catholics while defending heretics. The pattern emerges of Garasse making accusations, confirming them using his own unsubstantiated allegations as evidence, and then making use of these confirmations to make further accusations and draw further unsafe conclusions.

3. Conclusion: The unchanging positions of Garasse and Ogier
A reading of Garasse’s Apologie leaves the reader in no doubt that Ogier’s response to La Doctrine curieuse in no way changed Garasse’s original position. He still believed that Charron was a dangerous atheist, and refused to consider that Ogier might have anything significant to say. Instead, Garasse decided that all that was necessary to restore his reputation was to depict his opponent as a foolish young writer, who would surely repent when he read Garasse’s reply (‘Jugement et Descouverte’, p.xxi). Faced with Ogier’s alternative view that Charron was righteous,
Garasse redoubled his attack, albeit in a more structured and comprehensible manner. He was to repeat this process once more in his Somme théologique, where again he would approach the subject of discrediting Charron.

The books by Garasse and Ogier reveal that they were locked in a quarrel of a circular nature, and that neither was likely to accept the views of the other. Garasse accused Charron of atheism. The sceptical Ogier offered Charron's reputation, his position in the Church and his life's works as evidence of his standing as a great and honourable man. Garasse responded by giving examples of alleged atheism in his work and indeed, in his own way, proved that a selective reading of Charron could lead to conclusions which might support the questionings of unbelievers. However, a study of the context of Garasse's objections reveals that it is possible to draw conclusions from the very statements that Garasse found objectionable which suggest that Charron was not in the least hostile to the Church and its teachings.

It is clear that no satisfactory conclusion was reached in the minds of the two protagonists. Ogier was aware enough that the matter was not closed to plan a further response, as he stated when writing to be reconciled with Garasse:

Je ne l'eusse jamais cru que le mesme papier que j'avois preparé pour escrire une Replique à vostre Apologie, deust estre employé maintenant pour faire responce à une lettre que j'ay receuë de vostre part. 

The same was true of Garasse, who returned to the question

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7 Ogier, Responce du Sieur Ogier a la lettre du R.P. François Garassus de la Compagnie de Jesus in Lettre du Père François Garassus de la Compagnie de Jesus à Monsieur Ogier, touchant leur reconciliation, et Responce du Sieur Ogier sur le mesme sujet (Paris: Chappelet, 1624), p.49. These letters are to be studied in the next chapter.
of Charron the following year in his *Somme théologique*. As will be seen, he was prepared to concede certain points to Ogier, but he remained convinced of Charron’s atheism. The public quarrel between Garasse and Ogier may have come to an end, but it is clear that the issues which had caused each to object to the other remained unresolved.
CHAPTER 15
THE LETTERS OF RECONCILIATION

1. Garasse's letter

Garasse said in the second, toned-down version of the Apologie that his aim in writing was to be reconciled with Ogier. The letters exchanged between the two are testimony that this had been achieved.¹

Garasse's letter is most interesting on account of its startling difference in tone, when compared to the invective which characterised the previous books. Far from treating Ogier as an enemy, he is now anxious to say what a fine writer he is:

je vous diray franchement, que lisant vostre Censure je n'ay jamais esté si aveugle, ny transporté de passion, que je n'aye bien recogneu, & l'esprit que Dieu vous a donné & la lecture que vous avez acquise par sa grace, & par la contribution de vos travaux. (p.20)

He adds the suggestion that, given Ogier's considerable talents, it would be better if he followed Garasse's lead and attacked the true enemies of the Church:

Croyez-moy, Monsieur, que Dieu vous oblige par les talens qu'il vous donne à rehausser vostre courage & à faire quelque chose digne de vous, trouvez un fons plus capable que moy, qui puisse en vous fournissant une matiere riche & feconde, rapporter & à son autheur de la gloire, & au public de l'utilité. (p.23)

Garasse affirms that this is the duty of honourable men, and states that his change of heart has occurred because he has recognised Ogier's erudition (p.20), and he wishes that all his enemies were as honourable as Ogier (p.26). Garasse

¹ Garasse's letter is dated 4 February, and Ogier's reply 7 February 1624. The letters were the proof of the reconciliation, rather than the reconciliation itself. Ogier states that he received Garasse's letter 'en suite de notre entreveuë' (pp.49-50). Adam states, without giving his source, that the meeting took place on 27 January.
still claims the right to reply to any further attack on him by any other enemies. However, it is absolutely right that he and Ogier should be friends. Their continued quarrel would only produce the unedifying spectacle of two good Christians fighting each other, which would be scandalous in the eyes of the wise (p.35), and a pleasing spectacle in the eyes of libertines (p.36).

While such statements no doubt offer an example of the correct way for a Roman Catholic priest and a Jesuit Father to behave, the manner in which Garasse glosses over the reasons for their quarrel is revealing. One of the weaknesses of the Apologie had been Garasse's insistence that Ogier and Théophile were friends. Garasse concedes, in his letter, that the two had never met (pp.40-41), but he overstates the importance of this concession. Garasse believes that, by making it, he has removed Ogier's main objection to his text, and that Ogier's censure of La Doctrine curieuse has been withdrawn as a result:

> Je dis que [...] vous m'avez tesmoigné une joye & satisfaction particulièer pour avoir recogu en moy l'innocence de tous les blasmes que la passion & le faux rapport, qui sont deux faux tesmoins, vous avoient faiçt croire de moy. (p.40)

Garasse's conciliatory remarks reveal his state of mind. He states that his misjudgment of Ogier was caused by blindness, an admission, perhaps, that self-love caused him to attack a writer who challenged his views. Despite this concession, however, Garasse's words reveal that he is still writing from a perspective of ignorance and preconception, in that he still insists on believing that Ogier had defended Théophile de Viau along with Charron. Crucially, the issue of Charron remains unresolved. In the Apologie,
Garasse associated Ogier's ideas with those of Charron, yet in his letter Garasse does not suggest either that he was wrong to have done so, or that he was wrong about Charron's atheism. His claim to have settled his differences with Ogier was the merest glossing over of their differences. Garasse could not continue to attack Charron and be reconciled with Ogier.

Garasse's blindness was not so much to Ogier's qualities as a writer, as to the fact that someone who challenged scholastic views could still write in defence of the Church. Garasse's letter shows that his anger and resentment were still alive. He still refers to Ogier's youth, but this time accepts it as a reason for Ogier's misjudgment in misdirecting his talent. Garasse still does not concede that any element of Ogier's attack on him may have been justified, but instead hopes that his letter will show Ogier that the people to be attacked are not good Catholics but Huguenots. In Garasse's mind, the belief, expressed in the Apologie, that it was always wrong to attack Catholics and defend Reformers remains firm. Moreover, he still believes that scholasticism and Catholicism are interdependent, and that it is impossible to attack one and not the other.

Garasse undermines his own magnanimity in the manner in which he chooses to forgive Ogier. He presents himself as a crusader inviting Ogier to join him in his crusades against the enemies of the Church, hoping indeed that Ogier might be inspired by his example of Christian charity. The image Garasse presents is still one of an experienced master instructing a young novice.

Garasse's letter, therefore, serves only to demonstrate
his aptitude for self-deceiving sophistry. His stated concessions - that Ogier was not a libertine, and was not an enemy of the Church - are irrelevant. The major issue is whether Ogier's sceptical position could be compatible with a Christian perspective. Garasse steered clear of this subject, and indeed was to show in La Somme théologique that, when he insisted that he still intended to attack the Church's enemies, the principal figure he had in mind was Charron.

2. Ogier's letter

Ogier's letter reveals that he was in fact far from happy with the reconciliation. On his immediate reaction to the Apologie, which had been to plan a further reply, he insists that he had every right to do so:

si est-ce que le scandale que l'on avoit eslevé sur moy, en me descrivant comme un homme abandonné à tout vice, un but de malediction, un rebut de l'ordre Ecclesiastique, & pour comble d'ignominie, un Achates de Théophile m'eust rendu eloquent par force, & desnoûé les ressorts de ma langue encore qu'elle eust esté muette, pour m'escrier au secours de ma reputation mourante. (pp.50-51)

He was also suspicious of Garasse's motives for seeking reconciliation:

Je ne veux point parler des motifs qui vous ont poussé à une si saincte recherche, & veux croire qu'il procede d'une ame non moins prudente que religieuse. (p.54)

Ogier makes it clear that a large part of his motive for writing was his desire to defend himself in the wake of the insults that had rained down on him. He describes his pious life spent in study, and insists that, although he kept company with his fellow humans, all sinners in the eyes of God, it was a great scandal to be described as 'l'Achates
d'un homme que je ne vis jamais' (p.63).

Ogier states that his readiness to be reconciled with Garasse was based on the need for Christians to show Christian charity, and also to provide others with an example of a better method of correcting people than he had shown with his use of invective. Ogier's words are a model of political expediency. He agreed to the reconciliation because, as a churchman, he was forced to agree with Garasse that their quarrel was an unedifying spectacle 'aux yeux des Athées et des Heretiques, les deux plus sanglants et cruels ennemis de l'Eglise' (p.55).

More interestingly, Ogier also has his own observations to make about their quarrel. His own concessions are that his method of attacking Garasse was misguided. He makes the contrast between blindness and illumination. It is better to:

se contenter de mettre les rayons de la vérité dans les yeux de son adversaire, sans tascher à jeter de la poudre aux yeux du Lecteur, par une infinité de discours frivolles d'accusations et de calomnies hors de raison et de saison. (p.58)

He is prepared to admit that he was motivated by anger and the desire for revenge. Charron had preached that these passions should be controlled when dealing with the stupidities of others:

le sage doit aussi bien supporter les vices des meschans sans choler, que leur prosperité sans envie. Il faut qu'il endure les indiscrétions des temeraires avec la mesma patience, que le medecin fait les injures du phrenetique: il n'y a pas plus grande sagesse ny plus utile au monde, que d'endurer la folie d'autruy. (De la Sagesse, pp.138-39)

Most importantly, Ogier says the affair has been a rewarding experience because it has helped him towards greater self-knowledge:
Vous me l'avez présentée au milieu de nostre combat, & par ceste genereuse action je confesse que vous m'avez vaincu: aussi-tost que despouillant ce nuage de passion qui vous couvrait, vous vous estes fait conoistre, aussi-tost m'avez-vous donné sujet de me recoignoistre, & de me repentir de m'estre pris à un homme plein de tant d'ingenuité & de franchise. (p.71)

Ogier ends by saying that he hopes the letters will help to save his reputation as a generous and honourable man. It is clear that this was of importance to him, as was the need to safeguard the integrity of the Catholic Church, which was the main purpose of the reconciliation. The probability is that it was engineered for this reason by a third party. It would be difficult to see why the pair should have acted of their own accord. It is clear that Ogier was not persuaded that he was wrong by the Apologie, since he intended to answer it in uncompromising terms. Clearly, he still considered the main argument of the Jugement & censure to be valid, and the reconciliation did nothing to resolve the arguments that lay behind Garasse's and Ogier's quarrel.

Ogier wished to promote the unity and integrity of the Church. As a Christian sceptic who had always insisted that the authority of the Church was sacrosanct, Ogier's readiness to bow to the greater good of the Church was unsurprising.

3. The meaning of the reconciliation

Opinion is divided as to how the letters of reconciliation should be judged. Three widely differing conclusions are to be found, for example, in the work of Nisard, Lachèvre and Adam.

It was Nisard's belief, in Les Gladiateurs de la république des lettres, that the letters represent the best
commentary on the affair:

Elles sont la meilleure critique de la Censure d'Ogier et de l'Apologie de Garasse. On ne peut pas se dire avec plus de politesse et de courtoisie qu'on a menti et qu'on s'est calomniés l'un l'autre, ni en faire son mea culpa d'un air plus dégagé. (II, p.329)

Nisard endorses Garasse's views that neither of the two was a great writer, and that Garasse, in the Apologie, had successfully answered Ogier's criticism. He sees the reconciliation as the double climbdown of two mediocre polemicists.

Lachèvre's approach to the subject, in Le Procès de Théophile de Viau, was markedly different. He believes that the Apologie represents a triumph for Garasse. Lachèvre accepts Garasse's account of Ogier's motives. He believes that Garasse had proved that he was justified in publishing the maxims of the libertines. He believes, too, that Garasse was correct in saying that Ogier had written to defend Théophile, and Lachèvre seeks to demonstrate this by reproducing in its entirety Garasse's redoubled attack on Théophile in the Apologie. This interpretation, I suspect, results from Lachèvre's determination to find evidence of the development of libertinism in France; he approached the controversy with the conviction that Garasse was in essence a pioneering and clear-sighted crusader against libertinism. Lachèvre made use of the Apologie as a source of venomous attacks on Théophile which he could quote and present as evidence of the poet's libertinism; he appears not to have studied Ogier's work, preferring to take Garasse's word for it that Ogier was a young fool. He believes the reconciliation to be an act of remarkable charity on Garasse's part. Lachèvre cites Garasse's letter as evidence
of Garasse's true sense of honour, while he assumes that Ogier must have been only too glad to emerge from the affair with his honour intact.

Adam's treatment, in Théophile de Viau et la libre pensée française en 1620, was different again. He believed that Ogier was forced, by the procureur général Molé, firstly to suppress a second edition of his Jugement et censure, and secondly to abandon his planned response to the Apologie and to be reconciled with Garasse instead. ^ Moreover, Adam detected evidence that the two had entered upon the reconciliation with very different attitudes, and contrasts Garasse's blindness with Ogier's self-awareness:

Garasse, dans sa lettre, témoigne d'une véritable inconscience. Il renie ses écrits antérieurs contre le prieur, se jette dans ses bras, le proclame son meilleur ami, son allié, son frère. Ogier reste bien plus froid et l'on devine qu'il obéit à un ordre supérieur, sans que son sentiment en soit modifié. (p.382)

These three differing conclusions emerge from differing approaches. Nisard was studying the history of polemics, and regarded the reconciliation as the only civilised moment in a quarrel between a pair of irascible and ungifted controversialists. His approach to Ogier was based on the strange premise that Ogier’s attack had been unprovoked, as

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2 There is certainly evidence that Ogier suppressed a second edition of his work. In the preface to his Apologie, Garasse placed a 'Copie de l'extrait des Registres de la Chambre Civile du Chastellet de Paris, du Mercredi 29 novembre, 1623'. This states that Ogier had ordered copies of his text to be seized at the printers because they had not 'charge ny permission dudit Maistre François Ogier auteur de les imprimer, d'autant que ledit Ogier les avoit baillées à un autre'. However, the extract also states that, 'Deffenses sont faites [...] audit Oiger de les exposer ny faire exposer en vente sans nostre permission.'
Garasse had said nothing against him personally. This view in turn was based on the mistaken assumption that La Doctrine curieuse had been written only against Théophile de Viau. Nisard was unaware of the angle from which Ogier approached the controversy, as a defender of Charron, and of Charron's Christian use of sceptical ideas. This is surprising given that Nisard had justified Garasse's extreme polemics on the grounds of the rise of scepticism:

Sa haine contre [les athées] se manifeste avec une violence extrême: mais la cause n'en était pas absolument chimérique. Aux moeurs galantes d'Henri IV et de sa cour, avaient succédé les moeurs corrompues de la cour de Louis XIII; les guerres religieuses apaisées par les victoires et la conversion d'Henri IV, par la publication de l'édit de Nantes, tendaient à renaître sous la forme de controverses qui favorisaient le scepticisme. (p.295)

Nisard's confusion arises from a failure to distinguish between philosophical scepticism - which, in itself, is neither Christian nor anti-Christian - and atheism.

Lachèvre's project was the history of libertinism, and in this particular instance his subject was Théophile de Viau. Garasse was naturally an important source of material for him, and a major feature of Lachèvre's work was his willingness to accept everything which Garasse wrote at face value. He concludes from his reading of Garasse's Apologie and the letters of reconciliation that Ogier had attempted

3 Note that this view is in concordance with Garasse's view. He complains in his Apologie:
Moy je dis en triomphant religieusement de mes accusateurs; Mais que vous ay-je faict? Si vous estiez de ceux que j'attaque dans la Doctrine Curieuse, à la bonne heure, j'estimerois que vous avez droit de recriminer. (p.28)
Fouqueray backs up Garasse's view, saying of Ogier that, 'On ne sait trop quelle mouche le piqua' (IV, p.86).
to defend Théophile and had failed.  

Adam's aim, in contrast to those of Nisard and Lachèvre, is to defend Théophile; by making Ogier the victor in the quarrel, he can strengthen his argument that Garasse's attack on Théophile was unjustified in the first place. Adam does recognise that the defence of Théophile was not in Ogier's mind, and argues that his attack on Garasse was motivated by his distaste for Garasse's fanaticism. Adam, unlike Nisard and Lachèvre, does mention Ogier's defence of Charron, and of other humanists such as Justus Lipsius.

The question as to whether Garasse or Ogier "won" the quarrel, is, in my opinion, without meaning; neither writer could claim victory. Garasse's *Somme théologique* is proof that his mind was not changed by Ogier, while the expediency apparent in Ogier's letter shows that he placed little trust in Garasse's good intentions. The question of Théophile de Viau, which the three critics took to be the central issue, was to be resolved not by Garasse and Ogier, but by a criminal court.

A more important point to emerge from these commentaries on the reconciliation is that none of the critics considered

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4 As was the case with Nisard, Lachèvre's misinterpretation of Ogier's work, and his ignoring of the issue of scepticism, is surprising. Lachèvre cited both Montaigne and Charron as unwitting influences on libertinism and deism in the 1620s: "les Essais" (1595) de Montaigne étaient le livre de chevet des gentilhommes de la ville et de la campagne; les éditions de "la Sagesse" (1601) de Charron, entachée d'épicurisme, se multipliaient; ces deux ouvrages inclinaient les esprits au doute méthodique sur lequel Descartes fondera sa philosophie. Avouons-le, le scepticisme répond et répondra toujours aux besoins de ceux qui, considérant la morale comme une gêne, versent dans l'incrédulité afin de s'éviter de juger leurs actes. (I, pp.xxxix-xxx)
Charron to have been an important figure in the argument between Garasse and Ogier. Ogier appears in their texts as the defender, not of an important humanistic sceptic, but of an allegedly libertine poet. In consequence, they do not draw attention to the fact that the continuing opposition shown by Garasse to Charron in *La Somme théologique* sits oddly with his expressed friendship with Ogier.

The initiative in the move to reconciliation appears to have come first from Garasse. Given that it was his Jesuit superiors who intervened to suppress the first, immoderately worded, version of the *Apologie*, and that they were to intervene more firmly still after the publication of Garasse’s *Somme théologique*, sending him away to serve in obscurity in Poitiers, the most likely explanation for Garasse’s sudden and untypical emollience is that the Society of Jesus had instructed him to patch up his quarrel with Ogier.

The action of Ogier’s friend Balzac provides an interesting parallel with that of Ogier himself. He also criticised Garasse in strong terms, and received an equally vehement reply.\(^5\) Balzac’s campaign had a similar outcome to

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5 Balzac’s letter is addressed ‘A Hydaspe’ in *Les Premières lettres de Guez de Balzac (1618 - 1627)*, 2 vols (Paris: Droz, 1933-34), Vol 1, Letter XIV, pp.58-64. The letter is not dated, the editor stating in a footnote that it can only be placed in 1623 or 1624 (p.58). In it, Balzac criticises Garasse and *La Doctrine curieuse*, saying that his arguments lack logic, his language is poor, he does not keep to his subject, and his humour is misplaced (p.60). This was answered by a ‘Response du sieur Hydaspe au sieur de Balzac, sous le nom de Sacrator, touchant l’Anti-Théophile et ses escrits’. This can be found in *Oeuvres complètes de Théophile*, pp.cxxvj-cxxxvj, and is accredited to Garasse himself by Backer (in his *Bibliothèque des Écrivains de la Compagnie de Jésus*), and Sommervogel (in his *Dictionnaire des ouvrages anonymes et pseudonymes*)
that of Ogier, in that he was later to send Garasse an equally unconvincing letter of reconciliation. The desire not to damage the integrity of the Church appears to be the only common factor between Garasse and humanistic writers. In spite of individual reconciliations, they remained opposed on all matters of philosophy and approaches to theology.

Garasse informs Balzac:
Vos périodes sont des périodes lunatiques; vos locutions sont des ampoules; vos virgules sont des rodomontades; vos interponctuations sont des menaces: le tout cimenté, lié, composé avec des grimaces de muhamedis, qui sont comme la quintessence de vos oeuvres. (p.cxxvij)

6 See Balzac, 'Au Reverend Pere Garasse' (Book 4, Letter III, pp.27-31). The letter was dated March 1625. It was included by Garasse as part of the introduction to La Somme théologique.
CHAPTER 16
THE ANTI-GARASSE

1. The text
This second attack on Garasse appeared in 1624, written by Antoine Rémy, but commissioned by the two sons of Étienne Pasquier. It is a defence of their father, primarily in response to Garasse’s *Recherches des recherches*, but it incorporates a response to all the attacks made on Pasquier in *La Doctrine curieuse* and the two *Apologies*, and includes many criticisms of Garasse in general.

It is not possible to be sure to what extent, if any, there was any connection between Rémy and Ogier. Antoine Adam had no doubt that they worked in conjunction with each other:

> Le synchronisme des deux publications, l’allusion d’Ogier aux fils du chancelier, l’apologie qu’il fait des grands érudits, Juste Lipse, Pasquier, les Scaliger, prouvent assez que son livre travaille dans le même sens et s’inspire des sentiments du même groupe littéraire. (Adam, p.381)

Adam’s argument, though plausible, remains speculative, but there is circumstantial evidence to support his case. If Ogier and Rémy did collaborate, this might explain why Ogier did not find it necessary to make a more detailed defence of Pasquier in his own work. It might also explain Garasse’s assertion in his *Apologie* that attacks on him were the work of a group and not of individual writers. Also, although the approach of Rémy is different from that of Ogier, and the two writers avoid covering the same ground, there are enough similarities of argument to suggest that the two attacks were designed to be complementary. Most interestingly, both writers use sceptical arguments to criticise Garasse, and
both identify him as a pedant.

The most striking difference in style is that Rémy’s book is a more directly textual criticism of Garasse’s book. Ogier structured his text so that Garasse’s weaknesses were revealed in an ascending scale of gravity. He started by describing Garasse’s childish buffoonery, and ended with his attacks on great scholars and with the accusation that his work displayed a lack of self-knowledge. Rémy, on the other hand, deliberately imitates Garasse’s structure as well as his style. This is evident from the title of the preface, which is addressed to ‘François Garasse, en quelque lieu qu’il puisse estre’ (p.i). This is a direct response to the preface of the Recherches des recherches, which was addressed to ‘Estienne Pasquier, la part où il sera’ (p.i). Rémy continues this device in the main body of his text. The five sections of the Anti-Garasse are direct responses to the five sections of Garasse’s book.

2. Rémy’s polemical strategy

Like Ogier, Rémy seems to have decided that the reputation of the figure under attack from Garasse could best be protected by a policy of discrediting his attacker. The result is that he spends more time condemning Garasse than defending Pasquier, just as Ogier had restricted himself to only brief defences of Charron.

Many of Rémy’s arguments against Garasse are the same as

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1 The five sections of Garasse’s Recherches des recherches are entitled le Mesdisant, l’Impertinent, l’Ignorant, le Libertin, and le Glorieux. Rémy responds by referring to Garasse as le Bouffon, l’Imposteur, le Pedant, l’Injurieux and l’Impie.
those of Ogier. These include the suggestion that Garasse wrote under false pretences, in that his books were not what they claimed to be: the Recherches des recherches was not a defence of kings, and La Doctrine curieuse was not against atheism (pp.97-98). Indeed, Rémy agrees with Ogier’s argument that it was more likely to encourage atheism than prevent it. He also alludes to Garasse’s indiscriminate use of censure, and his tendency to classify all his opponents as atheists:

Combien d’âmes foibles se sont-elles laissées glisser insensiblement dans le penchant de l’athéisme, depuis l’édition de sa Doctrine Curieuse? Où il estelle une infinité de questions, qui demeurent irresolues: & cependant le venin gagne dans les esprits de plusieurs, & au bout du conte, si on murmure tant soit peu contre ce libelle, on ne manquera pas d’estre atheiste dans le second volume. (Rémy, pp.496-97)

Rémy criticises Garasse on several other counts which echo the accusations of Ogier. Garasse spoke badly of the dead, as illustrated by his suggestion that Pasquier, who died a Christian death, could be anywhere after his death other than heaven. Garasse’s vindictiveness was presented as a sign of his fury and malice, passions which prevented him from giving reasoned arguments:

De voir un Jesuite si barbare & si assassin que d’aller assouvir sa rage sur un corps mort, & d’aller fouiller dans sa fosse, sept ans apres qu’il est enterré, vomissant contre luy ce qu’il a de plus aigre, & de plus furieux: C’est ce que je ne puis souffrir, & en quoy je trouve que Garasse est plus malicieux que Rabelais, car ce gausseur ne fut jamais descendu jusques à ceste extrémité. (Rémy, pp.42-43)

Rémy compares Garasse to a donkey, to show that he is ignorant and a buffoon (pp.411-12), and sees in the Jesuit’s insistence on censuring everything and everybody the mark of
a pedant. Pasquier is defended on the grounds that he was an historian, and that he should not be attacked for repeating known historical facts (pp.151-208). Finally, Rémy's conclusion is that Garasse's work was unrepresentative of the Jesuits as a whole, and that they should disown him:

Et vous, sainte Compagnie, comment permettez-vous que cette peste contagieuse infecte d'avantage votre Ordre, qui jusques icy a produit de si divines plantes, & de si beaux rejettons de vertu! O combien auriez-vous plus d'honneur à le bannir pour jamais de vostre Société, que de laisser glisser son venin plus longtemps parmy nous! (Rémy, pp.121-22)

3. Rémy's new criticisms of Garasse

Rémy also offers criticisms of Garasse which Ogier did not make, and attacks the Jesuit from another angle. His main line of attack is to accuse Garasse of hypocrisy. He cites Garasse's insistence that 'jamais, il ne luy est sorty une parole salle, ny deshonneste de la bouche' (Apologie, p.102; Rémy, p.100). Rémy disproves this by stating that 'il vous fera des chapitres entiers touchant les bons cabarets de Paris' (Rémy, p.101, citing La Doctrine curieuse, p.30), and il passera plus outre, & suivant Regnier pas à pas, mesure jusque dans des lieux infames que j'ay honte de nommer, il en fera une description, section 6 du Livre 1, de la Doctrine Curieuse, page 36. (Rémy, p.103)

A more serious criticism advanced by Rémy concerns the

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2 Rémy, p.459. In this context, Rémy, like Ogier, comments on Garasse's condemnation of Jules Scaliger and Justus Lipsius. Rémy illustrates Garasse's attempt to discredit Scaliger, by quoting his view that 'son père s'appelloit Messer Benedetto de la Scala, & que c'estoit un Broyeur d'Ocre, & un faiseur d'Armoiries, qui gagnait sa vie sous l'Escalier de Saint Marc à Venise' (Rémy, p.462, quoting La Doctrine Curieuse, p.671). Lipsius, meanwhile, 'ne scçait trouver un bouclier assez grand pour se torquer contre ses calomnies' (Rémy, p.462).
authority of kings. While Ogier criticised Garasse's exposure of Joan of Navarre's heresy, Rémy takes this a stage further by saying that Garasse was willing to defend the Jesuits' condoning of regicide. To do so, he quotes from the suppressed Poitiers Apologie:

Garasse dans son Apol. de Poictiers, c.13 p.168, non content des paroles qu'il avoit avancées contre M. Jeanne de Nav. voulant excuser Guignard Jesuiste, qui a esté pendu & bruslé par Arrest de la Cour, pour avoir dit, qu'il estoit permis de tuer Henry IV, dresse une maxime injurieuse, impie & detestable, contre Henry le Grand d'heureuse memoire, disant, Que ce sont paroles qui tombent au jour au lendemain, & qu'il y a plus de crime, de les transcrire, que de les prononcer au bouche. Et sur ce fondement il dit que si ces paroles ont esté prononcées, ce n'estoit point tant contre la personne, du feu Roy, que contre sa Religion. (Rémy, p.645)

Rémy admits readily that the Jesuits had a perfect right to challenge Pasquier, but says they responded to Pasquier in a manner which was ill-judged and inadequate:

Si les Jesuistes avoient envie d'examiner les oeuvres de Pasquier, il faloit prendre son Catéchisme, & en marquer les faussetez (si aucunes y en a): car ils ne sont là dedans battus que de leurs armes, leurs propres constitutions, leurs regles, & leurs statuts contraires à l'ancienne oeconomie de l'Eglise, & aux privileges que nous avons en France, leur servent de piege: il faloit répondre à ce Livre, chapitre par chapitre, sans

3 Père Jean Guignard, and the Jesuits as a whole, were implicated in the assassination attempt by Jean Chastel in 1594. Chastel was a law student who had graduated from a Jesuit school. Roland Mousnier tells how the parliament seized papers belonging to Guignard, in which he stated that:

le Béarnais (Henri IV), ores que converti à la foi catholique, serait traité plus doucement qu'il ne méritait, si on lui donnait la couronne monachale en quelque couvent bien réformé [...] que si on ne le peut déposer sans guerre, qu'on guerroie; si on ne peut faire la guerre [...], qu'on le faisse mourir. (L'Assassinat d'Henri IV, p.205, quoting Mémoires de la Ligue (Amsterdam, 1758), VI, pp.237-40 ms fr.15798 fos 202 et suivant)

Mousnier explains that, although Guignard was guilty because these papers should have been destroyed, there was no evidence linking his views to Chastel's crime (p.205).
It was also unacceptable to launch this attack after Pasquier’s death. Anticipating such an accusation, Garasse had stated in his defence that a new edition of Pasquier’s work was about to appear containing further anti-Jesuit propaganda (Apologie, p.215), but this was denied by Rémy (p.226).

Rémy repeats the familiar accusation that the Jesuits, with their special vow of loyalty to the Pope, disliked Pasquier because of his loyalty to France above Rome. Rémy was reviving the question of Garasse’s definition of Gallicanism as a libertine trait. In particular, Rémy objects to the notion that Pasquier’s loyalty to the King amounted to disloyalty to the Church:

Estes-vous faschez que Pasquier estoit bon françois, & vray serviteur de son Prince? Estes-vous fasché de ce

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4 Mousnier states how enemies of the Jesuits used their loyalty to the Pope to propagate a negative image of the Society:

Liés au pape par un serment d’obéissance spéciale, partout ardents défenseurs des doctrines romaines, remportant un grand succès comme confesseurs et éducateurs, et se présentant comme une milice combattant sous les ordres de Jésus-Christ et de son vicaire, ils sont facilement devenus un symbole. Tous ceux qui présentaient des caractères semblables, ou tout au moins qui se fixaient les mêmes buts, c’étaient aussitôt des "jésuites", des "jésuites déguisés". Le terme désignait une façon d’être chrétien. Et ce symbole, commode, les adversaires des jésuites l’entourèrent d’un mythe, un mythe de duplicité, d’intrigues tortueuses, de fourberies, de cruautés. (p.212)

The allegations of condoning regicide should be balanced, says Mousnier, by the fact that ‘les jésuites n’en disaient pas plus que les autres prédicateurs, et il n’y avait pas lieu de les incriminer spécialement’ (p.211). In the case of Henry IV, Mousnier points out that it was the King himself who was responsible for their return to Paris in 1603, and that all Jesuit support for his assassination ceased when he received absolution from the Pope (p.212).
qu'il quitta sa maison, & ses biens, à la journée des Barricades, pour suivre le Roy Henry troisième son maistre? aymant mieux abandonner tout ce qu'il avoit de meilleur dans Paris, que de tremper dans la faction des seize? Vous dites qu'en terme de Boufon, un bon françois signifie un Charlatan, & qu'à la Rochelle un bon françois passe pour un huguenot. (p.112)

4. Rémy's focus on Garasse as a pedant

Rémy, like Ogier, describes Garasse as a pedant. Ogier focused on Garasse's wordy style, and specifically contrasted it to that of Charron, whom he cited as the enemy of pedants. Rémy, while classifying Garasse's desire to censure as a pedantic trait, felt that the clearest evidence of Garasse's pedantry was his inability to make good use of the knowledge he possessed. Rémy is writing in the tradition of Charron and Montaigne in evoking the mind of the pedant cluttered with information of which it can make no sensible use. Charron wrote:

> Ce sont gens qui ont la memoire pleine du scavoir d'autruy, & n'ont rien de propre. Leur jugement, volonte, conscience n'en valent rien mieux, mais habiles, peu sages, & prudens, tellement qu'il semble que la science ne leur serve que de les rendre plus sots, mais encore plus arrogans, caqueteurs: ravallent leur esprit & abbastardissent leur entendement, mais enfient leur memoire. (De la Sagesse, p.220)

Rémy represents the mind of Garasse as an ill-run apothecary's shop:

> Vous y trouverez le passé, le present, & le futur. Il y a de toutes sortes de drogues, aussi bien que dans la boutique des Apoticaires: mais les regimes y sont si incertains, & les ordonnances si meslangées, que bien souvent pour un recipé, on y trouve un decipé. 5

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5 Rémy, p.444-45. The Dictionnaire de l'ancienne langue française et de tous ses dialectes du IXe au XVe siècle, 10 vols (Paris: Vieweg, 1883) by Frédéric Godefroy defined 'decipé' as meaning 'pillé'. The dictionary cites its use as a noun in the same analogy that Rémy made:

Sans qu'ils ayent besoin avoir refuge aux medecins,
Garasse believed that he was a genius, but his expounding of his knowledge led only to greater confusion:

Il voit tout, il sçait tout, il cognoist tout: Bref, si on le veut croire, c'est un troisièmes Caton descendu du Ciel, & cependant il n'y a rien de plus sot que ses grimauderies, de plus niais que ses raisons pueriles & rampantes, ny de plus impertinent, & de plus bas, que ses conceptions villageoises. (Rémy, pp.393-94)

Like Ogier, Rémy insists that the mark of the pedant is to produce works of no worth:

En conscience, quel renom s'est acquis Garasse, de tous les libelles diffamatoires qu'il a fait imprimer? sinon un reproche universel d'avoir entrepris des querelles de costé & d'autre, & d'avoir esmeu des playes qui commenceoient à se consolider, & ausquelles il ne peut plus apporter de remede. Il a escrit contre Monsieur Servin, & a regratté tout ce qu'il a peu de ses Oeuvres, en son Banquet des Sages: quel fruit en a-il remporté? (Rémy, p.445)

Rémy's final criticism picks up and reflects Ogier's— that Garasse's greatest problem was his lack of self-knowledge:

c'est une des plus grandes ignorances que je trouve en Garasse, que d'ignorer ce qu'il est, & de ne se cognoistre. (p.445)

The gaining of self-knowledge had been the cornerstone of Charron's doctrine for the wise person. Rémy appears to share this philosophy and, like Ogier, he measures Garasse against the idea of true self-knowledge and finds him hopelessly wanting.

5. Rémy's use of classical allusions

Rémy, like Ogier, establishes himself as a humanist, drawing upon the commonplace classical illustrations of the workings of blind self-love. Some derive from Æsop's fables, and some

lesquels soubs ombre d'un recipé muent r, en d, et font un decipé (Boaystau, Theat. du monde, I, Lyon, 1567; Godefroy, II, p.444).
had been used by Erasmus, Rabelais and Montaigne.

Firstly, Garasse and Pasquier are compared to the wolf and the lamb:

Garasse ressemble proprement au loup de Phedrus, lequel estant à la source d’une belle fontaine, & voyant un agneau qui beuvoit au dessous de luy, luy demandoit pourquoi il luy troubloit son eauë: à quoy l’agneau ayant reparty que cela ne se pouvoit faire, à cause qu’il estoit à la source, & luy il n’avoit que ses restes: L’autre se plaignoit qu’il y avoit six mois qu’il l’avoyt injurié: Maienfin le pauvre agneau voulant s’excuser sur ce qu’il n’estoit encor nay en ce temps là: Le loup luy dit que toutes ses excuses ne luy serviroient de rien, & qu’aussi bien avoyt il envie de le manger, & à l’heure mesme il luy planta les dents sur le dos, & s‘en réchauffa les entrailles. (Rémy, p.153)

In Æsop’s fable, the important point was that reason was useless in the face of force. In Rémy’s comparison, the emphasis is on the fact that Garasse the wolf can have the last word only because of the death of Pasquier.

Garasse is also compared to the donkey dressed in a lion’s skin, who was able to impress for a while before suffering greater shame as a result of being found out (pp.411-12). In this instance, the emphasis is on self-knowledge, and the disastrous consequences of attempting to be something one is not. This issue was at the heart of Rémy’s criticisms of Garasse, whose belief that he was a lion could not carry conviction with others who could see that he was a donkey. 6

6 ‘You are dressing me up in the lionskin’ is Adage I, iii, 66 of Erasmus’s Adagia. Erasmus connects the adage to the theme of self-love, commenting that the adage is ‘said of those who undertake a work beyond their means, and who bear themselves with more pride than their rank warrants’ (Collected Works 31, p.290). Erasmus remarks further that in the fable
The unmasking of the donkey roused a general laugh at the expense of the population of Cumæ, who had been terrified out of their wits for so long by an imaginary lion. (31, p.290)
His lack of self-knowledge led him to misjudge others.

Rémy uses two more commonplace illustrations, from a fable and from Scripture:

il arrive le plus souvent, qu'és affaires d'autruy, & en des choses qui nous sont indifférentes, nous avons des yeux de Lynx, & en ce qui regarde nostre particulier, nous sommes plus aveugles que des taupes [...] le mesme en arrive à Garasse en cet endroit.  

The second, which is his closing comment on Garasse, is the same example from Matthew 7:3 with which Ogier concluded his polemical attack:

en pensant remarquer un petit festu dans l'oeil de vostre voisin, il y a un poutre dans le vostre, qui vous aveugle entierement la visiere.°

Another common humanist image used by Rémy is that of

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7 Rémy, pp.219-20. See also Montaigne, ‘De l'art de conférer’, III, 8, p.144, and Rabelais, who puts the image in the mouth of his self-loving fool Panurge, as an attack on Her Trippa, himself a foolish philosopher: C'est une aultre Lamie, laquelle, en maisons estranges, en public, entre le commun peuple, voyant plus penetrament qu'un oince, en sa maison propre estoit plus aveugle qu'une taupe. (Rabelais, Le Tiers Livre, I, p.508)

In Panurge's hands, the allusion is an example of an adage he has learnt, but applied to others instead of himself (see M.A.Screech, Rabelais, p.237). In Erasmus, 'As blind as a mole' is Adage I, iii, 55. Erasmus states that it should refer to those 'who have no judgment, for the metaphor will be more pleasing if it is transferred to the mind'. He also implies, citing Pliny, that the lack of judgment is wilful: Pliny, book 11, writes that among quadrupeds, 'the mole is without sight, and yet the shape of the eyes is there, if the covering membrane is drawn back'. From this arose the adage. (31, pp.281-82)

8 Rémy, p.917. See also Ogier, p.172. This biblical image is also directed at Her Trippa by Panurge: Il ne sçait le premier trait de philosophie, qui est: Cognois toy; et, se glorifiant veoir un festu en l'oeil d'autruy, ne void une grosse souche laquelle luy poche les deux oeilz. C'est un tel Polypragmon que descript Plutarche. (Rabelais, Le Tiers Livre, I, p.508; See M.A.Screech, pp.236-37)

See also Erasmus, Adagia, I, vi, 91. The adage is 'To cast a mote out of another man's eye', and refers to those who 'take offence at the smallest faults in others and flatter their own however great' (32, p.59).
the beggar's wallet, which also derives from a fable of Æsop. In the fable, the besace is described as containing the faults of others in the front pocket, where they are in full view, whereas one's own faults are out of sight in the back pocket. However, Rémy uses the image of the besace in his own way. In the case of Garasse, Rémy reasons, he is so ignorant that he places his own faults in the front pocket, mixes them with those of others, and then fails to recognise them as his own when he comes to criticise everybody else:

Mais Garasse nous fait paroistre icy le contraire, car il fourre les fautes d'autruy, & les siennes propres dans un mesme sac, lequel le plus souvent est si plein, & si melange, que les siennes sortent les premieres. Et de fait, puis qu'il se degorge en medisance contre soy-mesme, & qu'il ne pardonne pas a ses inclinations propres: comment se pourroit-il empescher de medire d'autruy. (Rémy, pp.666-67)

Rémy's most telling comparison is the one he makes between Garasse and Rabelais's Panurge. This is on account of his apparently vast library and his total inability to make good use of it:

Je ne pense point que le Panurge de Rabelais en sceut jamais d'avantage que luy. (Rémy, p.502)

Panurge is the character from Rabelais's Chronicles who is the very embodiment of a man dominated by philautia. Rabelais invented this character in order to satirise the condition of self-love, by presenting its symptoms as laughable. These were the very symptoms which Charron

9 The image is used by Rabelais in Le Tiers Livre. Epistemon, Rabelais's 'mouthpiece of classical wisdom' (Screech, p.235), comments that the image is the perfect illustration of philautia in humans, and that those who are not filled with self-love are 'ceulx qui des cieulx ont le benevole aspect' (Rabelais, I, p.467). See also Erasmus, Adagia, I, vi, 90 (32, p.59).

10 For an analysis of Panurge and philautia, see Screech, pp.235-38.
identified as the marks of a scholastic pedant. They were also identified in Garasse by Ogier.

Panurge can be compared to Garasse in a number of ways. Panurge was characterised by his unerring ability to see the faults of others while ignoring his own, an accusation levelled at Garasse by both Ogier and Rémy. Secondly, Panurge possessed an inability to make any use of the philosophical ideas which he had learnt by heart. This is mirrored in Ogier's accusation that Garasse misused rhetorical devices, and constantly referred to ancient philosophers, whom he did not understand, as when he concluded that on the question of destiny, philosophers such as Seneca contradicted themselves and one another (Ogier, p.65; Garasse, pp.344-45). Panurge is prone to superstition in his dealings with God, and Garasse attacked Charron

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11 Screech says of Panurge:

He is the very pinnacle of self-loving blindness. A better example of the 'beggar's wallet' in action would be hard to find. (p.237)

Ogier refers to Garasse's 'humeur de censure' in the second of his chapter 5s, referring to him as 'le pedant [...] le plus censeur' (p.64). See also Rémy, p.459.

12 Screech states, referring to Panurge's use of the images of the mote in the eye of another, compared to the beam in one's own, and that of the beggar's wallet: Panurge is a learned fool: he knows the adages off by heart: what he cannot do is learn wisdom from them. (p.237)

13 In the storm episode of the Quart Livre (Rabelais, II, pp.92-108), Panurge is reduced to praying for a miracle: Vray Dieu, envoye moy quelque dauphin pour me saulver en terre comme un beau petit Arion. (Rabelais, II, p.104)

Screech gives an analysis of the storm episode (pp.304-16). He states firstly that Panurge's superstition is caused by ignorance of God (p.308). It is also a symptom of his servile fear, which has become his dominant characteristic. This servile fear was directly related to his self-love:

Rabelais was not arbitrarily changing Panurge's character by making him a prey to fear. Mediæval and
because he interpreted Charron's censure of superstition as an attack on religion itself. Panurge displays the three facets which Ogier had taken from Charron's Petit traité de sagesse as the three characteristics of the pedant (Ogier, p.56), and which he applied to Garasse. Panurge's vanité, inexactitude and humeur de censure are all evident in his argument with Her Trippa (Rabelais, I, pp.505-12). Panurge believes that he is intellectually superior to Her Trippa, but in trying to demonstrate this, misuses adages, applying them to Her Trippa in censorious fashion, when they should be applied to himself.

Ogier and Rémy are offering us a picture of a Garasse who has all the faults of the typical humanist's portrait of the self-loving fool. He believed, like Panurge, that he had learnt all he needed to know, and either could not or would not assimilate new ideas, or accept that he might be mistaken. The mark of self-loving individuals was the way their opinions never changed; Rémy makes much of how all Garasse's books say the same thing:

Bref, si vous pensez qu'un Pedant vous veuille faire voir quelque chose de nouveau dans sa Doctrine Curieuse,

Renaissance morality saw the kind of fear which dominates Panurge as the natural companion to self-love. (p.316)

Panurge's superstition is also contrasted by Screech with the permitted fear of wise people:

Panurge does not suffer from the kind of fear that Epistemon can rightly experience: a fear which does not stop him from striving to save the ship. Nor is it the heroic fear of Æneas, a fear which allowed for groans but not for funk and panic. (Screech, p.316)

14 For an analysis of Garasse's attacks on Charron, see above, Chapter 13.

15 See Montaigne, 'De l'art de conférer', III, 8, p.152, and Screech on Panurge, p.280.
vous serez estonnez que ce n’est qu’une repetition de ce qu’il a dit dans le Rabelais, & dans la Recherche des Recherches. (Rémy, p.409)

Rémy’s polemical strategy is aimed primarily at allowing Garasse’s work to be self-condemning, leaving his readers to draw their own conclusions. A pattern emerges in which he quotes a passage from *La Doctrine curieuse* to show what Garasse considered to be wrong, and then points to another passage in the *Apologie* in which Garasse breaks his own rules. His focus, therefore, is on the fact that Garasse contradicts himself, and was not self-knowing. The argument is that if he did not know himself, then he could not know other people, and his criticisms of others could not be valid.

It is clear, therefore, that many of the arguments used by Rémy were common arguments of humanistic sceptics. Like Ogier, Rémy compares Garasse unfavourably to his opponent. The important factor in this comparison is self-knowledge. Both Ogier and Rémy felt that Garasse’s opponents were self-knowing individuals, and both made much of Garasse’s self-blinding philautia. This angle of attack marked Garasse down as a scholastic pedant, against whom the most suitable and most effective weapons were the humanistic arguments of Erasmus, Rabelais, Montaigne and Charron, thinkers who had formulated many of their ideas in opposition to the thinking of scholastics of an earlier generation.
CHAPTER 17
THE 'NOUVEAU JUGEMENT'

1. The text

A curious post-script to the quarrel between Garasse and Ogier was the Nouveau jugement, a text published by Garasse under a pseudonym. It takes the form of a dialogue between two characters in whom can be recognised mouthpieces of the ideas of Garasse and Ogier, as they appear in the letters of reconciliation. These are Nicanor, Garasse's mouthpiece, who believes that Ogier has withdrawn his censure, and Eleuther, the voice of Ogier, who believes that Ogier has remained silent out of generosity.

Their discussion centres on four arguments which arose from Ogier's Jugement & censure. These are that atheistic maxims should not be divulged (pp.22-47), that if they are to be published, they should not be written in the vernacular (pp.47-68), that they should not be discussed in a humorous manner (pp.68-90), and that the refutations of the maxims must be more convincing than the justifications (pp.91-102). Eleuther's argument is summed up by the belief that the easiest approach to Garasse's book is to read the maxims and their justifications, without bothering to read the bulk of the text, which contain the refutations (p.12).

Nicanor defends Garasse on each point. Firstly, it is

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1 Nouveau jugement de ce qui a esté dict et escrit pour & contre le livre de la DOCTRINE CURIEUSE des beaux esprits de ce temps, &c (Paris: Quesnel, 1625). The book was published under the name of Guay, but is attributed to Garasse himself by, amongst others, Sommervogel and Fouqueray. There is no reason to doubt that Garasse was the writer. The book is a logical epilogue to his reconciliation with Ogier, and a prologue to La Somme théologique.
necessary for inquisitors to have a clear idea of what they are fighting (p.33), and only a reading of both sides of the arguments can lead to the right conclusion (pp.35-36). Secondly, it is pointless to avoid writing in the vernacular as a translation would very soon be produced (p.42). Thirdly, he reiterates Garasse's belief that he was using eutrapelie, and that he was following early Christian fathers in doing so (p.69). If he had failed to produce the same effect, argues Nicanor, Garasse could be excused because the work was written in a rush (p.89). Finally, he insists that the book was clearly against atheism, and that a soul simple enough to think otherwise would not read the book in the first place (p.96).

The conclusion of Nicanor is that it is wrong to criticise modern authors, and that attention should be switched to those ancient authors from whom they take their cue. He names Homer and Virgil (p.104), whose grandiose talk of Gods, idolatry and temples is really to blame for the rise of impious verse in modern Paris (p.129).

The Nouveau jugement is a pivotal book in Garasse's career. Garasse was attempting to close the chapter of his argument with Ogier, while looking forward to his Somme théologique. Garasse was convinced that this book was to be his masterpiece, and he was anxious to put the criticism he had received for his earlier works behind him. Eleuther's arguments are essentially those that Garasse had inferred from Ogier and had accepted as partially justifiable at the time he wrote the Apologie. The only real change from this earlier text is the absence of a mocking tone and a readiness to accept Ogier as a serious writer. These were
precisely the concessions he made in his letter of reconciliation.

The book can be considered as a preface to *La Somme théologique*. In this later work, Garasse sets out to combat atheists, but this time he hopes to do so by utilising theology and reasoned arguments, rather than mockery and insults. The discussion in the *Nouveau jugement* is intended to demonstrate that Garasse has recognised the flaws in his previous works and that he is prepared to listen to criticism and enter into reasoned arguments with opponents such as Ogier. Most importantly, Nicanor concludes that Garasse could ultimately be excused his mistakes because of his honourable motives in writing (pp. 88-89), and that these, combined with the recognition of his previous errors, would lead him to write a better book next time. The inference is, therefore, that *La Somme théologique* would be the perfect weapon against atheism.

The book also serves as a preface to the later work because it continues to exhibit Garasse’s opposition to humanistic scepticism. The *Nouveau jugement* makes no mention of the important question of Garasse’s views on Charron. As Garasse identified the defence of Charron as a major part of Ogier’s work, and therefore devoted considerable time to condemning him in the *Apologie*, it is surprising that Eleuther does not mention him. Garasse uses the figure of Eleuther to suggest, reasonably enough, that Ogier still has objections to *La Doctrine curieuse*:

*L’auteur de cette Doctrine Curieuse a escrit à celuy, qui a jugé & censuré son livre pour luy jurer amitié & l’autre a fait une response favorable, sans toute fois qu’il apparoisse publiquement que la Doctrine Curieuse soit prouvée ou non de celuy qui l’auroit des-ja*
reprouvée si fort. (pp.3-4)

Through Nicanor, however, Garasse answers this point, suggesting that Ogier’s silence might be read as an indication that he has no further objections to Garasse’s work. The implication from Garasse’s text is that Ogier has been appeased by Garasse’s *Apologie*, and his letter of reconciliation:

Son silence nous doit estre un assez ample desaveu de ce qu’il avoit escrit, car ayant demeuré sans replique à ce qu’on luy avoit respondu, il a tesmoigné suffisamment qu’il ayme la suppression & l’entiere oubliance de ce qu’il a escrit. (p.44)

Given that Ogier is hardly likely to have been convinced of Charron’s atheism by the arguments in Garasse’s *Apologie*, and that Charron was not mentioned in their letters of reconciliation, it seems unlikely, to say the least, that Garasse is right to continue to assume that Ogier’s only objection to him is to the poor quality of his writing. Garasse’s failure to address the issue of Charron weakens the effect of the *Nouveau jugement*, and gives the clear impression that he is attempting to draw attention away from the most important aspect of Ogier’s text.

2. Garasse’s attack on humanism

Garasse’s anti-humanist stance is further demonstrated by his attack on classical literature, in which he perceives encouragements to idolatry:

Que sert-il donc d’avoir abbatu à la naissance du Messie les idoles, & les temples vouez aux Demons, si les livres de ces anciens Poetes sont encore les temples de l’Idolatrie où tant d’esprits s’engagent? (p.129)

A response to this statement was made by one of the
leading Christian sceptics, Gabriel Naudé. Naudé argues that Garasse’s view was part of a long line of allegations, that had continually sought to discredit writers such as Homer and Virgil, on the grounds that their works referred to idolatrous practices:

il l’accuse [Virgile] d’avoir esté un insigne Enchanteur & Necromantien, & de ce qu’il a trové fait d’une infinité de choses esmerveillables par le moyen de sa Magie [...]. D’où venant à faire reflexion sur ce que j’avoir leu, & à me resouvenir que non seulement Virgile, mais presque tous les grands personnages estoient pareillement soupçonnez de Magie. (Naudé, pp.iii-iv)

Naudé’s preface is a defence of both classical authors and the use of their ideas by syncretists of the modern era. Naudé states that the greatest talent is to ‘contenter une si grande diversité de lecteurs sans rien emprunter d’autruy’ (p.vii). He goes on to state that those writers who possess this talent feel that the best course of action is, in any case, to quote previous writers:

S’il y eut jamais Autheurs qui puissent veritablement s’estimer tels, ont esté sans controverse Plutarque, Seneque & Montagne, qui n’ont toutesfois rien laissé chez les autres de ce qui pourrait servir à l’embellissement de leurs discours: testmoin les vers Grecs & Latins qui se rencontrent presque à chaque ligne de leurs oeuvres. 3

Naudé, Apologie pour tous les grands personnages qui ont esté faussement soupçonnez de Magie (Paris: Targa, 1625), p.iii. Naudé states that Garasse’s attack on Virgil was ‘transcrit mot pour mot du dernier livre que M. de Lancre a fait imprimer contre la mescreance du Sortilege’ (p.iii). Naudé is referring to L’Incrédulité et mescreance du sortilege pleinement convaincue [...] par P.de l’Ancre Conseiller du Roy en son Conseil d’Estat (Paris: Buon, 1622). The author attacks Homer and Virgil on pp.280-82, concluding that ‘le meilleur est à mon avis de quitter tous les sorts d’Homere et de Virgile puis qu’ils sont prohibez par les Saintcs Peres’ (p.282).

Naudé, pp.vii-viii. The preface concludes with a verse by Ogier’s friend Guillaume Colletet, which similarly attacks the denigration of classical writers:

Monstrez que nostre siecle, en cela miserable,
In *La Doctrine curieuse* and his *Apologie*, Garasse blamed Charron directly for the spread of libertinism. In the *Nouveau jugement*, he attacks the literature from which Charron and his humanistic sources had derived much of their material. The projects of Erasmus, Rabelais and Montaigne had been to syncretise the wisdom of classical writers with the wisdom of Christ, and to use these authors to build up a picture of human wisdom, which could lead to the mind's being ready to be filled with divine grace. Garasse's assertion that their wisdom was based on idolatry, and should therefore be discarded, was a familiar argument used by scholastics against humanists. His ideas on Virgil are the same as those attributed to the scholastics by Erasmus in his *Antibarbarians* (1520). The scholastics, it is reported, dismiss Virgil as a pagan:

> Am I to carry books by damned men in my hand and in my bosom, and read them over again and reverence them? Virgil is burning in hell, and is a Christian to sing his poems? (*Collected Works* 23, p.57)  

In *La Somme théologique*, Garasse was to make it clear that he believed that Charron’s works were based on pagan atheism:

> On peut dire en vérité, que la Sagesse & les Veritez ne sont autre chose qu'un pressis des plus notables & plus douces impietez de Pline le Grand, & des plus farouches propositions de Seneque, lesquelles il a modifié par la Diffame sans sujet leurs plus rares Escrits  

For some vain poison dont il se feint surpris Quoy qu’ils ne soient remplis que d’un miel désirable.

4 The disagreement of scholastics and humanists is further illustrated by Montaigne’s high opinion of ‘pagan’ poets like Virgil:  

> il m’a tousjours semblé qu’en la poésie Vergile, Lucrece, Catulle et Horace tiennent de bien loing le premier rang: et signamnant Vergile en ses *Georgiques*, que j’estime le plus accomplly ouvrague de la Poësie. (*Des livres*, II, 10, p.81)
In Garasse’s mind, Seneca and Pliny the Elder belonged to a non-Christian age, which could not possibly have been more enlightened than seventeenth-century France.

The **Nouveau jugement**, therefore, is a redoubled attack on humanism. The conciliatory tone aimed not only at improving Garasse’s reputation, but also at presenting this attack as being carried out by a man capable of reasoned argument. However, it is clear that few of Garasse’s opinions had changed. **La Somme théologique** was to present the same ideas as **La Doctrine curieuse**, and these ideas were to be attacked in turn by Saint-Cyran, just as his only new idea in the **Nouveau jugement** was attacked by Naudé.
CHAPTER 18

'LA SOMME THÉOLOGIQUE' (1):

THE TEXT

1. Garasse’s project

Garasse’s *Somme théologique des veritez capitales de la religion chrestienne* was a monumental work of theology. Its final edition, which was just under a thousand pages long, represented only a third of Garasse’s original project. It consisted of three sections, respectively ‘De l’Atheisme & de ses appartenances’ (pp.1-78), ‘De Dieu et de ce qui le touche’ (pp.79-506), and ‘De Jesus-Christ, & de ce qui luy est propre’ (pp.507-983). The plan in the preface announces nine sections, but the final six did not appear. These missing sections would have been ‘De l’Homme’, ‘De l’Ame raisonnable’, ‘De l’Ame separée’, ‘De l’Eglise’, ‘Des Vertus & des vices’, and ‘Du Monde’.

Garasse’s project, therefore, aimed at producing a complete picture of the world to his readers. This structure was not unlike that of Charron’s two-stage project of presenting his theological views in *Les Trois veritez*, and his philosophical views in *De la Sagesse*. It is also clear that Garasse’s intention was to refute Charron’s arguments. He had attempted to do this in *La Doctrine curieuse*, but had found himself under attack, in part at least, because of the failings in the style and structure of this work. In *La Somme théologique*, it was his intention to correct the faults which he accepted were present in his previous work, and to present a definitive answer to the works of Charron.

It is an immediate sign of an improved approach by Garasse that this new book has an easily-recognisable
structure. His preface states his intentions in writing; his first section is an account of the presence of atheism in Paris in the 1620s, and serves as a justification for the work as a whole; his second book aims to prove the existence of God, by detailing the great works of the divine in the world; the third book outlines the great works carried out by Christ.

Garasse’s viewpoint in writing is recognisably that of a scholastic theologian. The main source of his theology is the Bible, backed up by interpretations based on the work of Thomas Aquinas. In addition, the work was written to attack the position of the Christian sceptic and humanist. Garasse intended, by detailing the works of God, to counter Charron’s statement that God was unknowable. He aims, too, to prove that God can be known by studying the Bible. He follows a pattern of using Thomist arguments to prove his points, presenting Charron as a voice of dissension, then pointing out why Charron was wrong and what he should have said. These statements, which are the first in which Garasse states his own beliefs, rather than merely contradicting the words of others, reveal with a new sharpness the extent of Garasse’s opposition to Charron.

2. The preface
Garasse’s preface is designed largely to answer various criticisms of his past work. As in the Nouveau jugement, he attempts to show that he has recognised his own faults, and hopes that people will realise that this new work is a mature piece of scholarship, and far superior to his previous work:
Comme le premier né n'est pas toujours le meilleur fils de famille, & que souvent ce sont les Cadets qui font la maison, & qui donnent de l'honneur à leur père, j'ose espérer que mes travaux suivants, qui ne sont purement que de choses Saintes, selon ma profession, seront & profitables au public, & peut estre par une conséquence que je ne desire point, honorables à leur Auteur. Il est vray, que celuy-là avoit ses defauts, celuy-cy aura les siens. (Preface, p.14)

Garasse's first statement is that whereas before he sought to strike fear into the hearts of atheists, he now seeks to outline the only true doctrine:

Pour le Livre, que cy-devant, j'ay mis au jour touchant la mal-heureuse Doctrine des Libertins, il a fait son coup, l'événement & la terreur des Atheistes couverts, jointe avec quelque amandement, ont fait connoistre aux plus sages, que ce Livre estoit ou necessaire, ou tres utile pour le temps: Celuy-cy vise à l'Eternité, & ne regarde les personnes; mais seulement la pure & solide Doctrine. ¹

Garasse insists that his aim is to help to bring covert atheists back to a righteous path by clarifying theological doctrine, and by attacking the false doctrine to which they adhere. The latter is the doctrine of Charron, as it is his work which contains the most dangerous material:

ceux d'entre les personnes neutres, qui ont plus d'interest à la lecture de ma Somme, sont les admirateurs DE PIERRE CHARRON; car c'est de ses oeuvres, que je rapporte les principales, & les plus dangeruses objections. (Preface, p.35)

His plan is to stick closely to, but not repeat verbatim, the doctrines of Thomas Aquinas:

mon dessein est de faire une nouvelle SOMME, non pas de traduire S.Thomas, ny de marcher dans les mesmes orneries, quoy qu'en mes opinions je ne m'esloigneray point de sa Doctrine, pour ce qu'en effect elle me semble la plus solide & la plus raisonnable de toutes. (Preface, p.22)

¹ La Somme théologique, preface, p.14. Sabrié felt that Garasse succeeded in this aim:  
[La Somme théologique] a sur [La Doctrine curieuse] cet avantage qu'il donne plus de place à la doctrine, et moins aux injures. (p.414)
Garasse also insists that he is going to avoid using metaphors (Preface, p.38), and mixing Latin with French (Preface, p.39). However, he makes it clear that this does not mean that he accepts all of Ogier’s criticisms of his work. Ogier is not mentioned at all, and Garasse states that he has retracted none of his original views, and had only done so before for reasons of expediency. He offers the colourful explanation that any earlier retractions had been made only in order to make life easier for future critics of his work:

Si j’avois fait des Retractations, ce ne seroit que pour soulager la peine de ceux qui voudront cy-après prendre cet exercice des-agreable de censurer mes Livres. (Preface, p.16)

Indeed, it is clear that Garasse was still angry with Ogier, because he had suggested that Garasse had criticised great scholars:

tels que sont Joseph de l’Escale, Lipse & Casaubon, desquels on avoit tassché de me rendre ennemy, pour accueillir sur moy la hayne publique des hommes sçavans. (Preface, p.37)

The purpose of the preface, therefore, is to attempt to present a picture of a situation in which Garasse had written a book against atheists, which was flawed, but which had served its purpose. Garasse had listened to the justifiable criticism of this book - that its style was imperfect - but could ignore further criticism as it was born of a censorious and polemical spirit and was without substance. The presence of Balzac’s letter of reconciliation at the front of the book, together with Ogier’s public reconciliation, was intended to display to readers that Garasse was no longer at odds with these contemporary
thinkers. He felt free therefore to renew his attacks on Charron untroubled by their outbursts of irritating petulance.

3. Book 1: De l’Atheisme

The first section of the main body of Garasse’s text is an account of the people and the views which Garasse opposed. Garasse had stated in the Nouveau jugement that he was justified in outlining the beliefs of atheists because inquisitors needed to know exactly what they were fighting (p.33), and he insists that his new book was the correct approach to achieving this knowledge. His defence of La Doctrine curieuse was that he had sought to meet the atheists on their own ground, and he states that now the approach was going to be different:

Si on a eu quelque sujet d’estimer que j’enseignois une partie du mal en la Doctrine Curieuse des Atheistes, pour ce que je descouvrois leurs Maximes, & donnais quelque prise aux esprits foibles, on n’aura pas dequoy me faire ces reproches en ceste seconde partie, d’autant que sans m’amuser à leurs propositions detestables, je fais estat de les battre par force de raisons.

Garasse is also careful to present his task as a difficult one. It is not easy to divine the beliefs of atheists because of their refusal to admit their atheism. In

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3 La Somme théologique, p.13. Later, Garasse reiterates his determination not to give unnecessary publicity to atheistic ideas:

Je ne porte point leurs paroles, tant pour n’enfler mon volume de leurs despouilles, que pour n’esventer les haillons pestiferez de leur impiété. Je ferai comme Saint Augustin, qui a refuté les erreurs de Fauste, sans rapporter ses termes, que le moins qu’il luy a esté possible. (p.267)
fact there were only five people who had admitted their atheism, three Italians and two Frenchmen. As in La Doctrine curieuse, Garasse's description of these mysterious individuals is designed to show that atheists are miserable specimens:

l'un estoit pis que garçon d'estable, quand il commença de s'addonner à l'estude des lettres, le second fut fils d'un barbier de Milan, le troisiesme banni de son pays, sans advey, sans parens, potiron d'une nuit, veritablement P.D.C. [parentibus dubiis creatus] suyvant les anciennes formules des Monumens, le quatriesme fils d'un Libraire de Paris, lequel ayant roulé plusieurs années, & comme les oysillons des Pyrenées, poussé doucement avec le pied la boule de sa fortune, acquit quelque peu de moyens, servant quelques Evesques, laissant par sa derniere volonté quelques uns de ses proches en incommodité, & n'ayant jamais eu ny affection ny sentiment naturel pour les siens: En somme le cinquiesme fut fils d'un cabaretier, lequel après avoir suyvi & servy les basteleurs, grignotant à leur table, & vivant de leurs rests, se mit en quelque recommendation par l'effronterie de son esprit & les blasphemes execrables qu'il avoit ordinairement en bouche. (p.23)'

Garasse's next task was to define precisely what he meant by atheism. He believes that it manifested itself in five forms. Each corresponds to an element of Garasse's interpretation of Charron's work.

The first type is 'Athéisme furieux & enragé' (pp.45-51), which was the flat denial of the existence of God, and which, Garasse believes, as he had stated in the Apologie, was inspired by Charron's statement that atheism was the mark of the strong, and with which Garasse completely disagreed:

Ma conjecture est bien fondée, d'autant que l'Auteur de la Sagesse & des Trois Veritez, l'un des principaux

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4 Garasse technically stood by his insistence that he would not name individual atheists, although four of the five - Cardano, Vanini, Charron and Théophile - could clearly be identified. Later, he avoided naming Charron by referring to him as 'l'auteur de la Sagesse' (e.g. p.47).
The second type of atheism is 'Atheisme de libertinage et corruption des moeurs' (pp.51-54) and Garasse specifically states that the main exemplars of this kind of dissolute atheism were Théophile, Charron and Vanini (p.53).

It was inspired by their alleged conviction that the soul was mortal. Meanwhile, it was the nature of these people that made their beliefs so dangerous:

de voir un Ecclesiastique, un Prestre, un Religionnaire converty, parler avec plus d'infamie, que les Epicuriens mesmes, & faire les characteres, truchemens de leurs impiete, Sainte posterité que diras tu de nous? (p.53)

The third form is 'Atheisme de profanation' (pp.55-60) which mocked everything to do with God and Scripture. This was the same sort of criticism as that levelled in the fifth book of La Doctrine curieuse against those who quibble about the total veracity of the Bible.

The fourth form of atheism is recognisable as being Garasse's interpretation of Charronian scepticism. This fourth form is 'Atheisme flottant ou mescreant' (pp.60-66), described as:

 CET ESPIRIT VAGABOND DES PYYRHIENIENS, QUI TIENNENT TOUTES CHOSES POUR INDIFFERENTES, & NE SE PASSIONNENT NY POUR,

5 In the chapter to which Garasse refers, Charron had remarked that atheism required a large degree of effort because the existence of God was obvious:

CETTE ESPEC E D'ATHIEISE PREMIERE, INSIGNE, FORMEE & UNIVERSELLE NE PEUT LOGER QU'EN UNE AME EXTREMEMENT FORTE & HARDIE [...] FORCENE & MANIACLE. CERTES IL SEMBLE BIEN, QU'IL FAUT AUTANT, & PEUT ESTRE PLUS DE FORCE & DE ROIDEUR D'AME A REBUTER & RESOULMENT SE DESPOUILLER DE L'APPREHENSION & CREANCE DE DIEU, COMME A BIEN & CONSTAMMENT SE TENIR FERME A LUY. (LES TROIS VERITEZ, P.7)
ny contre Dieu, ains font estat par une froideur
Politique de laisser les choses indécises. (p.45)

The fifth form is 'Atheisme brutale, assoupy,
melancholique' (pp.66-69), and is specifically accredited to Charron:

Ceux qui ont leu la Sagesse, & les Trois Veritez entendront bien ce que je veux dire par ces paroles, car voyla l'humeur de cet Escrivain naïvement dépeinte. (p.66)

These five illustrations of the effects of 'atheism' demonstrate that Garasse’s target was, once again, Charronian scepticism. For Garasse, Charron’s doctrine was a negative one, which made its followers yearn for a Golden Age of pagan bliss:

Or je ne scay comment il arrive qu'en la lecture de ces Veritez & de cette Sagesse langoureuse, nous concevons une tres basse pensee de la Religion Chrestienne, nous sommes quasi marris & affligez de n'avoir esté du temps de ces anciens Philosophes Payens, qui vivoit à la naturelle, sans servitude & captivité d'esprit, nous portons envie aux bestes voyant ces discours populaires des avantages qu'elles pretendent avoir par dessus l'homme, la honte s'estouffe dans nostre coeur voyant quelques pointes agréables, & des paroles impudentes qui flattent le vice sous pretexte de quelque honneste naïveté de langage. (p.68)

Garasse’s *Somme théologique* was intended to be a triumphalist celebration of the Christian faith, and was written from the point of view that there was not a shred of doubt surrounding scholastic teaching of theology. It was no accident that Garasse linked Charron’s doubt to his melancholy, as his thesis was that the certainty expounded by the scholastics was the surest route to happiness and a guarantee against the melancholy madness brought on by perpetual uncertainty. Consequently, it was scholastic certainty which inspired the rest of Garasse’s book, which was an expression of the wonders of the divine, designed to
sweep away Charron’s doubts, and lead his readers wholeheartedly to accept the Bible. Like the early Christians, Garasse saw himself as bringing people the ‘good news’ of the gospel. Equally, he was determined to see that the message that his readers would receive was the correct one, which was why he devoted so much space to refuting the faulty interpretations of Pierre Charron.

4. Book 2: De Dieu

Garasse’s second section was written in direct response to Charron’s view that God was unknowable, and that the acceptance of this fact was the best way to approach the divine. According to Garasse,

il y a une dangereuse ignorance de la Divinité, qui par un desespoir melancholique, laisse Dieu pour tel qu’il est, rebute l’esprit humain, effarouche les pensées, & reduit toutes choses à une certaine indifference Stoicienne, laquelle soubs pretexte d’humilité se porte jusques à l’irreligion. (p.82)

Once again, Garasse’s emphasis is on Charron’s uncertainty and consequent melancholy. Charron, he believed, by comparing humans to animals, aimed to belittle the human race, to reduce it to animal status. Garasse objects because he believes that the human mind and reason can grasp the nature of God (pp.89-92). Charron’s view, he felt, was that true wisdom was to be gained through an almost bovine simplicity, something observed in animals, but only rarely in humans:

Certes je ne luy puis preferer aucune chose que la seule preud’homme, qui est la santé de l’ame. Or elle nous est commune avec les bestes, voire le plus souvent plus avantageuse, forte, & vigoureuse en elles, qu’en nous. (De la Sagesse, p.45)

Charron’s belief that it was wrong to talk too often and too
familiarly of God is refuted on the grounds that such a view was based on fear that one would say the wrong thing. Garasse’s belief is that this is an outdated idea, as educated Frenchmen were equipped with the correct means for communicating with God:

Ceste Maxime pourroit estre soufferte dans le Pais des Cannibales, où l’ignorance les pourroit porter à des impietez dangereuses & cachées: mais en France, parmy un peuple si bien instruit, qui depuis le berceau jusques à la tombe entend parler de Dieu, & qui apprend à begayer, s’il faut que j’use des pensées de saint Hieosme, parmy les Questions de Theologie, dire que nous devons nous abstenir de parler de Dieu, de peur d’en parler mal, c’est une especie de scrupule non recevable, & grandement prejudiciable à la Pieté. (p.101)

Again, it is clear that Garasse was anxious to promote a positive belief that God could be reached by human minds. Garasse’s method of proving the existence of God was to present his readers with the evidence of the world around them:

il n’y a personne, non pas mesmes les païsans, qui ne sachent connoistre ces beaux characteres dorez, qui ne remarque le Soleil en ses signes, la Lune en ses defaillances, l’Aurore en sa naissance, l’Estoile du matin & du soir, en leurs desmarches pour leur servir d’un horologe naturel. Ainsi, dis-je, qu’en ce grand livre des Creatures, il n’y a personne, si ignorant puisse t-il estre, qui ne saché lire, & reconnoistre par l’assemblage des lettres qu’il y a un Dieu, Authour de ce bel Ordre. (p.142) 6

Garasse sets out to prove there was a divine force

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6 This is a key area where sceptical thought diverged from others. Mersenne agreed with Garasse that God could be proved by nature, stating in L’Impiété des Deistes, p.93:

Ne doutez point jamais voyant telle concorde Qui secrette entretient le monde en sa beauté Qu’il n’y ait un Patron, qui manie, & qui torde L’anchre & le gouvernail selon sa volonté.

Charron, however, believed that nature proved nothing: Le Chrestien croid ce que sa propre raison & tout l’ordre des choses luy desconsellent de croire, & que la nature ne peut supporter. (Les Trois veritez, p.165)
behind these wonders of nature by citing stories of how the order of nature was occasionally overturned. He was aware of the argument that such stories may have been invented to promote religion, and so chose examples which could be found in more than one source. These included the Flood, to be found in Pliny or Ovid as well as the Bible (pp.202-203), the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, told by Tacitus (p.203), and the ten plagues of Egypt, to be found in Josephus (p.204). Garasse's logic was that atheists could believe these stories by reading them in atheistic sources. Also, the denial of these examples of divine power would necessarily involve the condemnation of a large number of writers and historians as liars.

Garasse outlines the attributes of God: omnipotence, wisdom, knowledge, justice and goodness. Here, he feels, is the answer to Charron's assertion that God was unknowable. Garasse's view was that everything which is described in Scripture, everything we see in the created world, however difficult to understand, is evidence of the omnipotence and goodness of a loving God:

\[
\textit{il ne faut pas croire trop aisement tous les narrez qui se font sur ce sujet, neantmoins j'estime que c'est une imprudence bien temeraire de mescroire indifferentemment tout ce qui nous semble difficile, \\& se prendre à la sagesse du Creator, quand par foiblesse d'esprit, nous ne comprenons pas la merveille de ses oeuvres. (p.271)}
\]

5. Book 3: De Jesus Christ

Garasse's third section continues the same process as his second, with the difference that, whereas before he cited the works of God from the Old Testament, here he cites the works of Christ in the New Testament. Again, proof of
Christ's existence, and more importantly of his divinity, is taken from Scripture, and also from pagan writers whose works backed up the Gospel.

Garasse's proof that Christ's doctrine is the only true one centred on evidence of history since his death. His influence, through the Catholic Church, has become global, while the Jewish race, which put him to death, has descended into ignominy (pp.580-88). Similarly, while the doctrines of Plato and Aristotle have become dominant only in schools, Christianity has reached everybody from the most educated to the common people (p.568). These proofs are given in response to the hypothetical notion that Charron, and others, denied the truth of Christianity. He bases the hypothesis rather loosely on the reasoning that Charron's views that the forms of worship were a concession to human weakness was tantamount to an attack on Christianity itself, and, more specifically, on the sacraments which had been ordained by Christ himself.

Garasse concludes by stating rather grandly and all-embracingly that he has proved the divinity of Christ:

J'ay monstré par raisons evidentes vostre Divinité, & celle de vostre Pere: J'ay fait voir vos perfections, & l'oeconomie de vostre Providence: J'ay parcouru les Mystères de vostre vie, les vertus de vostre ame, & les excellences de vostre corps. (p.973)

This confident conclusion that he has produced an excellent, powerfully argued and unanswerable piece of reasoned theology was not shared by his opponents, and La Somme théologique was not a success. It was banned by the Sorbonne, and was heavily criticised by Saint-Cyran, who suggested that:

La Somme de Garasse est un égoût d'erreurs et une
monstrueuse confection [...] de conceptions si égarées et extravagantes qu'elles passent jusqu'à la ruine et qui est en vérité incomparable par ses inepties à tout autre écrivain qui ait écrit de notre temps de la théologie.  

7 Saint-Cyran, I, pp.fij, giiij. For a brief study of the main issues of Saint-Cyran’s text, see Jean Orcibal, Les Origines du Jansénisme: II: Jean Duvergier de Hauranne: Abbé de Saint-Cyran et son temps (1581 - 1638), (Paris: Vrin, 1947), pp.260-82. The quotation is from Orcibal, p.273. Orcibal also reports the number of errors which Saint-Cyran found in Garasse, relating to his misuse or misinterpretation of Church Fathers, theologians and philosophers, including: 58 sur Saint Augustin, 5 sur Saint Basile, 6 sur Origène, [...] 1 sur Socrate, [...], 5 sur Sénèque, 1 sur Tacite, 29 sur Aristote, 2 sur Philon, 13 sur Charron. (Orcibal, pp.269-70)
CHAPTER 19

‘LA SOMME THÉOLOGIQUE’ (2):

GARASSE’S TREATMENT OF CHARRON

1. Garasse’s approach to Charron: a counter-attack

Garasse’s book was structured in such a way as to present Charron as a figure whose books tempted unwitting readers into taking the unhappy course of atheism. He suggests again, in stressing that he will concentrate on Charron as the most dangerous of writers (p.35), that Charron had caused the impiety of other leading atheists such as Théophile and Vanini.

Garasse’s general remarks about Charron are something of a counter-attack, as he makes similar criticisms of him to those that Ogier and Rémy had made of Garasse. Firstly, Garasse insists that nothing useful was to be gained from reading his works, as they were merely poor interpretations of the works of others:

je n’y voy rien de merveilleux, & la plus part de ses travaux ne sont que traductions de l’Analysie de Gregoire de Valence, & de Vasques, ou des compilations de Michel de Montagnes, lequel il a sçeu desguiser assez ingeniusement; mais ce n’est pas louer un meschant homme de luy donner bon esprit, d’autant que plus il en a, & plus est-il pernitieux aux bonnes moeurs. (Preface, pp.35-36) 2

Sabrié stressed that there was a different emphasis in Garasse’s later work:

son zèle ne s’est pas borné à relever une longue liste d’erreurs; il est allé jusqu’à approfondir les intentions. Dans la Doctrine curieuse, Charron était accusé d’ignorance; dans la Somme théologique, il est presque toujours question de mauvaise foi. Notre auteur y est présenté comme un "athéiste couvert" dont le dessein secret était de préparer la ruine de la religion. (Sabrié, p.469)

Ogier maintained that La Doctrine curieuse was ‘un avorton de sa teste [de Garasse], plus pleine de soulfre & de feu que de cervelle’ (p.viii). Similarly, Rémy asked: ‘En conscience, quel renom s’est acquis Garasse,
Secondly, Garasse convicts Charron of ignorance with the claim that he had a poor knowledge of Latin:

sçay-je de bonne part, que l'auteur, estant Theologal de Cahors, & conferant un jour avec un habile Conseiller du siege Presidial, luy dit en souspirant, ô! si j'entendois si bien le Latin, que vous! D'un Escrivain qui a de tels souhaits, que peut-on esperer de grand & relevé? (p.34)

2. Garasse's objections to Charron's texts

Garasse summarised his objections to Charron in his preface, designed to prove to his readers that Charron's philosophy was 'Traitureuse, Brutale, Cynique, Atheiste, Libertine'
(Preface, p.36):

1. Que Jesus-Christ est une piece FAICTE A DEUX FOIS. 2. Que Jesus-Christ est venu du ciel en terre pour DESNIAISER le monde. 3. Que son Incarnation purge tout jusques à la CHIASSE de ce monde. 4. Que pour luy il iroit volontiers TOUT NUD en public. 5. Qu'il ne faut point avoir de honte de prendre nos plaisirs deshonnestes EN PUBLIC, comme les bestes. 6. Qu'il n'y a point d'action DESHONNESTE au monde. 7. Que les principales marques de la Religion sont des PURES FOIBLESSES. 8. Que les principales parties de la Religion, comme sont les Sacremens, sont des choses MAUVAISES, FOIBLES & HONTEUSES, & une vingtaine de pareilles Maximes, qui ne peuvent sortir que d'une cervelle desmontée, & d'une bouche entierement profane. (Preface, p.36)

The evident relish with which Garasse retails the scurrilous maxims which, he alleges, can be found in Charron's work shows a degree of anger and hatred for the long dead Charron which reaches a new pitch. The obscenity which he reads into Charron's account of Christian doctrine is manifestly malicious, and perhaps the more distasteful for the fact that the thin veneer of humour which ran de tous les libelles diffamatoires qu'il a fait imprimer?' (p.455).

3 Ogier's Chapter 13 showed Garasse's ignorance by the list of factual errors in La Doctrine curieuse.
through *La Doctrine curieuse* is now missing.

Garasse’s evident determination to find evil in Charron’s works informs the detail of his arguments. More specifically, Garasse is determined to dismiss Charron’s maxims by portraying them as being contrary to Scripture. On one level, Garasse objects to Charron’s terminology: Charron’s use of the word ‘faict’ is an inadequate and incorrect description of the wonder of Christ’s creation (p.871). On another, Garasse answers the crucial point that God is a hidden God, who cannot be fully comprehended, by stating that the worst crimes in history had been perpetrated because of an ignorance of God, namely the Crucifixion, and Pharoah’s enslaving of the Israelites (p.83). He dismisses Charron’s objection to the humanising of God, by citing biblical words which bestowed human emotions such as anger and jealousy on God (p.88), alluding in particular to Christ’s words in which he spoke directly to God, committing his spirit into God’s hands (p.88). Charron’s questioning of the value of asceticism for ordinary Christians was construed as a condemnation of Christ’s request to the disciples that they stay awake for one hour to pray (p.88).

Garasse also challenges Charron’s view that the mechanical repetition of prescribed words was worthless unless accompanied by understanding of those words. It is interesting to note, however, that Garasse admits that there is some logic in Charron’s words, but considers them to be too sweeping. He argues that the effect of Charron’s words is to condemn prayers which are prescribed by Scripture, and that in criticising them, he is criticising Scripture:
Je sçay bien que nostre Seigneur a blasmé ces prières bruyantes & importunes, qui n'ont que le bruit des levres, les Latins appellent cette façon de prier Bilbite, ou bien Bilbitus, qui est le son d'une phiole pleine, quand elle se vuide, Tertullian appelloit cet abus darder les levres: mais sous pretexte d'un inconvenient guérissable, blasmer indifferemment toutes les prières vocales & spirituelles avec des paroles odieuses & sordides, ce sont des phrases qui me semblent tirées du Calepin d'Epicure & de Diagoras. (p.87)

It is symptomatic of Garasse’s blanket condemnation of Charron that he dismisses with bitter recriminations even those Charronian views on which Charron, Scripture and Garasse himself are essentially in agreement. Charron, of course, never denies - as Garasse alleges - the value of prayer itself.

3.'Qui descouvre mieux la foiblesse humaine que la Religion'

Garasse’s triumphalist attitude to the Church is reflected in his strong objection to Charron’s suggestion that religion draws attention to human weakness. Charron suggests:

Mais après tout, qui descouvre mieux la foiblesse humaine que la religion? Aussi est-ce son intention de faire bien sentir à l'homme son mal, sa foiblesse, son rien, & par là le faire recourir à Dieu, son bien, sa force, son tout.'

Garasse objects to this remark, and goes on to list eight illustrations of the way in which, according to Charron,

4 De la Sagesse, p.191. This remark, with others on similar lines to which Garasse also objects, appears in a subsection of Book 1, Chapter 37, pp.191-94. This subsection is entitled 'Religion', and is in sub-chapter 2, entitled 'Foiblesse', of Book 1, Section 4, which is entitled 'Quastriesme consideration morale de l'homme par ses moeurs, humeurs, conditions, bien vive & notable'. While Garasse suggests that Charron makes separate remarks, and objects to each in turn, the remarks are collective illustrations of the single point that religion demonstrates that human beings are weak. Garasse counters these ideas in La Somme théologique, Book 3, Treatise 3, Section 6, pp.730-40.
religion reveals human weakness. Firstly, he rejects Charron’s idea that the Christian religion demonstrates human weakness ‘INTRODUISANT un Dieu humilié, affoiblement, &c’ (pp.732-33). Charron’s point was that God had to be made humble and weak in order to make him accessible to humans:

bref traissant & agissant avec l’homme d’une maniéré beste, foible, humaine, ainsi qu’un pere qui begaye & fait le petit avec ses petits: Estant telle, si grande, & invincible la foiblesse humaine, que pour luy donner quelque acces & commerce avec la Divinité, & l’approcher de Dieu, il a fallu que Dieu se soit abbaissé au plus bas. (De la Sagesse, p.191)

Garasse next objects to Charron’s view that:

tous les principaux, & les saincts exercices de la Religion ne sont que vrays Symptômes, & argumens de la foiblesse & maladie des hommes. (p.733)

Garasse sees in this proofs of Charron’s hypocrisy. He reasons that, as a priest, Charron must have practised ‘les plus saincts exercices de la Religion’, which he believed were manifestations only of his weakness:

Que ses Idolastres me respondent à ce dilemme, sans descouvrir l’ineptie de leur maistre; car il faut, ou qu’il fust le plus grand Atheiste de l’Univers, & le plus famelique necessiteux du monde, de se porter à ces fonctions, lesquelles il reconnoissoit pour SYMPTOMES de sa foiblesse, ou qu’il s’advoüe pour un prevaricateur infame, escrivant des Atheismes, lesquels il pratiquoit journallement, par l’obligation de sa charge, ou par la necessite de gagner sa miserable vie. (p.733)

In the third passage to which Garasse objects, Charron says that ‘les Sacrifices sont des marques HONTEUSES de la misere humaine’ (p.734). Garasse argues that, as the sacrament of Mass is considered a sacrifice, then Charron is condemning Mass (p.734). Charron’s text, however, makes it clear that he is referring to blood sacrifices:

Les sacrifices qui ont esté anciennement en usage par tout le monde, & encore sont en quelques endroits non seulement des bestes, mais aussi des hommes vivans, voire des innocences, n’estoit-ce pas des honteuses marques de l’infirmité & misere humaine. (p.192)
Charron's view was that sacrifice was a demonstration that those who made sacrificial offerings were acknowledging that they themselves deserved to die and were trying to appease God by offering other creatures as scapegoats:

premierement pource que c'estoyent des enseignes & tesmoignages de sa condemnation & malediction (car c'estoyent des protestations publiques d'avoir merité la mort & d'estre sacrifié comme ces bestes) sans laquelle n'y eust jamais eu d'offrandes sanglantes, sacrifices propitiatoires, expiatoires. Secondement à cause de la bassesse du dessein & de l'intention qui estoit de penser appaiser, flatter, & gratifier Dieu par le massacre & le sang des bestes & des hommes. (De la Sagesse, p.192)

Garasse's fourth objection is to this precise point, that l'intention des Sacrificiateurs est MAUVAISE, d'autant qu'ils pretendent FLATTER Dieu par la massacre des bestes. (pp.735-36)

Garasse reasons that it was God who gave instructions for sacrifice in Leviticus, and that Charron was therefore saying that God had bad intentions, and that God instituted sacrifice only in order to be flattered (p.735).

The issue of sacrifice plays an important part, too, in Garasse's fifth objection, which is that Charron said that 'JESUS-CHRIST, qui est venu du Ciel en terre, pour DESNIAISER les hommes, a aboly les Sacrifices' (p.736).

Garasse reasons that Christ ended sacrifice, but only in instituting the greater, more noble sacrifice of Mass (p.734). Charron's point was that Christ led the world from a pre-Christian state, where animal sacrifice was practised, to a world where inner faith, rather than external displays of devotion, was emphasised. His analogy equated the pre-Christian world with childhood and the Christian world with adulthood; it is in this context that he used the word 'desniasier', in the sense of taking away our childish
misconceptions. The term, as used by Charron, is hardly, as Garasse suggests, 'excessivement profane' (p.736). What Charron actually wrote was:

Certes Dieu aux premiers siècles, encore la foible enfance du monde & la simple nature, les a bien accepté des gens de bien à cause d'eux & de leur devotion [...] prenant par sa bonté en bonne part ce qu'il se fait en intention de l'honorer & servir: & encore depuis estant le monde encore apprentif & grossier sub pædagogo, tout confit en cette opinion si universelle, que quasi naturelle [...]. Mais ce n'estoit que Dieu y print plaisir, ny que ce fust chose par aucune raison bonne de soy, tesmoïn les Prophetes & plus clair-voyans qui [...] ont rappellé & convié le monde à un autre sacrifice plus haut, spirituel, & plus digne de la Divinité [...]. Et en fin le fils de Dieu Docteur de vérité estant venu pour seuerer & desnlaiser le monde, les a du tout abolis, ce qu'il n'eust fait si c'eust esté chose de soy, & essentiellement bonne, & eust pleu à Dieu son pere. (De la Sagesse, pp.192-93)

Garasse believed he detected criticism of the Eucharistic sacrifice in Charron's remark that 'Les Sacremens qui sont instituez en matiere vile & basse, sont marques de nostre pauvreté' (p.737). Charron is saying only that God, to present himself in a form humble enough to be received by humans, is known through the humble, common, even banal and trivial medium of bread and wine.

Garasse objects, too, to Charron's notion that 'la penitence est chose de soy du tout honteuse, foible, voyre MAUVAISE' (pp.737-39). He ignores, however, Charron's explanation that repentance is necessarily a proof of human weakness because it follows on from shameful deeds. For Garasse, penitence was introduced by Christ himself 'comme un remede necessaire dans son Eglise', and therefore, he argues, resorting to sophistry,

si la Penitence des pechez est meschante, il faut de toute nécessité que les pechez soient une chose bonne & desirable. (p.739)

The role and function of religion is the issue in
Garasse's eighth objection, which is that Charron stated that 'les moyens desquels se sert la Religion, sont de nulle valeur, sont comme les GIBETS, et les esternuements, bons effets de mauvaises causes' (p.739). Charron's text argues that the main function of religion is to provide a way, comprehensible to humans, of overcoming their human weaknesses and helping them to move closer to the ways of God:

Le jurement qu’est-ce qu’un symptome & marque honteuse de la méfiance, infidélité, ignorance, impuissance humaine, & en celuy qui l’exige, & en celuy qui rend, & en celuy qui ordonne, Quod amplius est, à malo est. Voilà comment la religion guarit & remedie à nos maux par moyens non seulement petits & foibles, ainsi le requerant nostre foiblesse, stulta & infirma mundi elegit Deus: mais qui ne sont aucunement de valeur, ny sont bons en soy, mais bons en ce qu’ils servent & sont employés contre le mal, comme les Medecines: Ils destruisent leur autheur, sont causés par le mal, & chassent le mal: ce sont biens comme les gibbets & les roûes en une republiq; comme l’esternuëment & autres descharges venans de mauvaises causes & remedes à icelles. Bref, ce sont biens tel qu’il seroit beaucoup meilleur qu’il n’y en eust jamais eu comme aussi n’y en eust-il jamais eu, si l’homme eust esté sage, & se fust preservé en l’estat auquel Dieu l’avoit mis, & n’y en aura plus si tost qu’il sera delivré de cette captivité pour arriver à sa perfection. (De la Sagesse, p.194)  

Charron’s argument, therefore, is that religion, in the form of the institution, teaching and sacraments of the Church, is made necessary by human blindness to God. It is human weakness that demands external forms. These should not be confused with the true nature of the divine. Charron’s words do not express a new idea. Erasmus, too, had suggested that God had had to become foolish in order to make himself

5 The differing approaches to religion of Garasse and Charron are neatly illustrated by Garasse’s remark that ‘pour ce qui touche Dieu, l’intention de la Religion est de luy faire rendre l’honneur qui luy appartient’, while ‘ce qui touche l’homme, ce n’est que de le rendre bienheureux’ (p.732).
knowable to people. Screech outlines the argument of Erasmus in *Ecstasy and the Praise of Folly*:

Even the wisdom of Paul, who only saw through a glass darkly (1 Corinthians 13:12) is to be reputed folly when compared to celestial wisdom as it is, to that perfect knowledge (gnosis) which is God’s. Eventual access to this perfect knowledge is vouchsafed to man through God’s baby-talk, so to speak, through that ‘foolishness’ which is all of God’s wisdom that man can take. Such foolishness is the wisdom revealed, in ways that man can grasp, in the Bible. The highest manifestation of that foolishness - that divine Wisdom made intelligible to man - is Christ: God made man. (p.22)

Charron, like Erasmus, was not prepared to accept that scholastic theologians had made any progress in closing the infinite gap between human and divine wisdom. Neither was Saint-Cyran to accept that Garasse had uncovered flaws in Charron’s arguments: he shared the perspective of Erasmus and Charron:

Saint-Cyran conclut donc avec l’auteur de la Sagesse que "c’est l’intention de la religion de faire [...] sentir à l’homme son mal, sa foiblesse, son rien et par là le faire courir à Dieu, son bien, sa force, son tout". (Orcibal, p.277, quoting Saint-Cyran, II, pp.400-403).

Garasse’s sustained hostility to Charron was clearly a major barrier to understanding him. Behind the hostility - and indeed explaining it to some extent - lay a much more solid and inpenetrable barrier. Charron thought it ridiculous and dangerous to view learning, the self, nature and religion through the eyes of a scholastic; for him, scholasticism destroyed the understanding, filled people with vanity and spurious certainty, destroyed true Christian humility and robbed people of the freedom to think and live for themselves. In the scholastic world, the individual cannot move or act without first finding support and justification from some scholastic source:

Il semble appartenir à foiblesse, & estre une grande
Garasse, on the contrary, believed that the scholastic movement had married Christian doctrine and reason to provide a comprehensive and wholly self-sufficient interlocking system of principles and procedures which could give a safe answer to any question which might be raised. Charron's texts suggested that this marriage was an illusion, that Christian doctrine could not be understood or demonstrated from a base of human reason; his aim was to break down the edifice of certainty built up by generations of scholastic thinkers and theologians.

6 Boase, in *The Fortunes of Montaigne*, p.168, sees Charron's sceptical pursuit of ignorance as the element in his work which most inspired Garasse's hostility: It is the principle of 'conscientious ignorance' which seems to him [Garasse] the source of all that is most poisonous in *La Sagesse*. Garasse derives from this both Charron's dislike of anthropomorphism, whether of thought or plastic representation and symbolism, and also his other criticisms of superstition. He objects to Charron's abasement of man, which is attributed to personal vanity and a wish to make human beings into beasts and withdraw them from religion.
CHAPTER 20

'LA SOMME THÉOLOGIQUE' (3):

GARASSE AND CHARRONIAN SCEPTICISM

1. Garasse and Montaigne

The attitude of Garasse to Montaigne is puzzling because it suggests that both Garasse and Charron had the utmost veneration for him. Charron, as we have seen, borrowed numerous ideas from Montaigne, and indeed many of the arguments for which Garasse criticised Charron could be traced to Montaigne. But Garasse was unequivocal in his view that Montaigne was to be praised and Charron to be condemned.

Garasse had shown similar veneration for Montaigne in his *Recherches des recherches*. In this book, Garasse referred to Montaigne as 'ce Seneque françois' (p.950), and mocked Pasquier for comparing himself to him:

Car j'en diray le mesme à Maistre Pasquier, que nonobstant la grosseur de ses volumes, le nombre de ses lettres, & les fatras de ses Poësies, je l'estimeray digne de comparoistre en presence de Michel de Montagnes, & capable d'en porter jugement lors que ses Recherches auront esté venduës, recherchées, debitées, imprimées, autant de fois que les Essais de Montagnes, lors que ces belles observations de Tintamarre, de Bissac, de Coquin, de Caignard, de la queu leu leu leu, luy auront acquis le titre de Bourgeoisie en la ville de Rome, l'honneur de Chevalier, de Maire perpetuel, de Conseiller du Roy, & autres excellentes qualitez qui sont tesmoins irreprochables de l'esprit, de la vertu, des merites de Michel de Montagnes. (pp.951-52)

In the case of Charron, Garasse again insists that there was no comparison between the two writers:

il n'y a Lecteur sensé, qui ne voye fort bien, lisant ces discours, & qui ne die que Charron n'est ny Aristote, ny S.Thomas, ny Seneque, mais bien que c'est un Michel de Montagnes desvalisé, & mis en mauvaise posture, faisant dire à son Maistre ce qu'il ne pensa
Here again, the ground of Garasse's arguments shifts according to the point he is making. He first suggests that Charron had been clever in disguising his borrowings from Montaigne, his works being

\[\text{des compilations de Michel de Montagnes, lequel il a sçeu desguiser assez ingénieusement. (Preface, p.35)}\]

Later, he describes Charron as having been unable to disguise his plagiarism:

\[\text{La Sagesse & Les veritez, dont les jeunes ignorans font si grand estat, ne sont que des pensées sombres & plates, ou des traductions mal entendues, ou des larrecins mal desguisez de Michel de Montagnes, qui fut plus homme de bien que son plagiaire. (p.34)}\]

In the context of _La Somme théologique_, it is difficult to explain how Garasse could have believed that Charron's faults arose from a misreading of Montaigne. Montaigne, before Charron, had expressed similar misgivings about the superstitious nature of much Christian prayer (Essais, I, 56, pp.378-79), had insisted that God should be treated as unknowable (II, 12, pp.178-79), and had compared humans to animals in order to deflate human presumption and arrogance (II, 12, pp.118-52). Garasse appeared never to consider the possibility that both Montaigne and Charron might on occasion be saying the same thing.

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1 _La Somme théologique_, p.664. Note that it was at this stage that Garasse abandoned his plan not to mention Charron specifically by name.

2 The paradox of Garasse's acceptance of Montaigne and condemnation of Charron may be explained by considering the expediency of Garasse's action. Alan M. Boase suggests that Montaigne's reputation was too high for Garasse to criticise him:

[Garasse's] forbearance with regard to the Essays is not the reflection of his own private opinion, but merely a tribute to Montaigne's reputation, solider than that of Charron. (Boase, p.164)
2. Garasse and melancholy

Garasse's veneration of Montaigne is not made any less complicated by his description of Charron as a melancholic. Montaigne admitted himself that melancholy had led him to write his works:

C'est une humeur mélancolique, et une humeur par consequent très ennemie de ma complexion naturelle, produit par le chagrin de la solitude en laquelle il y a quelques années que je m'estoy jetté, qui m'a mis premierement en teste cette resverie de me mesler d'escrire.  

M.A. Screech describes the principal characteristics of the melancholy temperament, of which the best known is its association with genius:

Melancholics, like men inflamed with wine, may become variously 'maniacs, clever, amorous or talkative'. The melancholy humour may become heated. When this heating occurs near the seat of the mind, men become 'madmen or enthusiasts'; when their condition is not caused by illness or disease, they are the seers, prophets and entheoi - men like Socrates, inspired by a 'god within' (Aristotle, 954a).  

Henri Busson suggests that the element of expediency was never absent from Garasse's attacks: Garasse n'écrit pas pour son compte. On sait assez qu'il n'a point l'esprit critique. Il est, par zèle, à la solde de la réaction religieuse si violente en ces premières années. Or Charron est condamné par la Sorbonne le 31 décembre 1603. De plus sa Sagesse est toute récente. Garasse court après les auteurs désignés par la Sorbonne (Charron), par les Jésuites (Théophile), par l'Index (Pomponazzi), ou par l'opinion (Vanini, brûlé en 1619). (La Pensée religieuse française, pp.178-79)

3 Montaigne, Essais, 'De l'affection des peres aux enfans', II, 8, p.56.

4 M.A. Screech, Montaigne and Melancholy, p.32. It is interesting to note in this context that Saint-Cyran suggested that Garasse could not see clearly because of his lack of melancholia:

Votre esprit [...] n'a pas assez de fermeté et n'est pas accompagné de cette heureuse mélancolie qui rend les hommes clairvoyants et judicieux et qui est entièrement nécessaire pour affermir les pensées et arrêter un peu la vitesse de l'esprit dans la lecture des auteurs, afin d'en peser mieux les
This had to be weighed against the fact that 'even great melancholics may topple over from good ecstasies into genuine insanity' (Screech, p.33). It is possible to accept that Garasse believed that Montaigne had achieved genius while Charron had descended into madness. This does not explain, however, why Garasse found ideas objectionable when written by Charron, while the same ideas were acceptable when found in Montaigne. Garasse appears to have allowed his judgment to be guided by his unshakable conviction that Charron was an atheist.

3. Garasse's prejudice in dealing with Charron

In La Somme théologique, Garasse set himself the task of exploring Charron's words in detail. On the question of the nature of God, Garasse admits that this was a legitimate area of study for secular philosophy:

Disputer de la Divinité, si la chose se fait avec modestie, j'estime que ce n'est pas une chose indigne d'un Philosophe. (p.85)

When Charron discussed the nature of God, he took his view from Montaigne. Garasse admits that he disagrees with Charron only because it was Charron who was writing, for he

paroles et pénétrer plus profondément dans les sens de leurs discours. (Saint-Cyran I, p.398, quoted in Orcibal, p.269)

Garasse does not say this explicitly about Charron, but he had described Pomponazzi, Cardano and Vanini in this way. In La Doctrine curieuse, he described Epicureanism as 'un effet de l'humeur hypocondriaque, & de la rage de quelques meschans esprits, Pline, Lucain, Pomponace, Cardan, Vanino' (p.784). Garasse's definition of a hypochondriac was 'une personne saisie & occupée de fumées noires & melancholiques' (p.47). Moreover, the libertines 'ont coutume de l'usurper lors qu'en leur venerable distinction des esprits, ils en mettent de Melancholiques, de Nobles & de Transcendans, comme nous avons veu cy-devant' (p.47).
admits that Charron’s argument was attractive:

Quand cet Escrivain a dit, qu’il y a une conscientieuse ignorance de la Divinité, il eust dit vray, si cette proposition fut sortie d’une autre plume que la sienne, les vérités sont belles, mais il les gaste en les prononceant. (p.82)

Here, from Garasse’s own pen, we have the key to his polemical purpose and method. It is Charron who is tainted with atheism, rather than Charron’s ideas. One is reminded of Pascal on the subject of the Jesuit condemnation of Arnauld:

Ce ne sont pas les sentiments de M.Arnauld qui sont hérétiqes; ce n’est que sa personne. C’est une hérésie personnelle. Il n’est pas hérétique pour ce qu’il a dit ou écrit; mais seulement pour ce qu’il est M.Arnauld. (Pascal, Les Provinciales, Letter 3, p.51)

Garasse finds Charron a particularly dangerous writer because his writing appears so honest and attractive:

De toutes ces huit consequences j’en tire une neufiesme plus droite & plus veritable que toutes les autres, sçavoir que cet homme est d’une tres-dangereuse lecture, d’autant qu’il estouffe le sentiment de la Religion par des parolles honorables & des propositions cajoleuses qui se glissent dans l’esprit à la faveur d’une traistreuse probabilité & complaisance attrayante. (p.89)

Garasse was never to offer a satisfactory reason for believing that Charron’s ‘traistreuse probabilité & complaisance attrayante’ should be seen as treacherous rather than as signs that what he said was sincere and honest. Moreover, it is clear that, had Garasse accepted Charron’s sincerity, there was a whole range of subjects in which Garasse would have seen that he was in agreement with Charron.

4. Garasse’s own Charronian views

The revelation that many of Garasse’s ideas were in fact
close to those of Charron occurs because of Garasse’s desire to make *La Somme théologique* a positive statement of Christianity. Whereas before he had restricted himself to stating that Charron was wrong, he now sought to state the true Christian view as well.

Garasse believes that atheism derived from cowardice, from an unwillingness to face up to such difficult concepts as the Trinity and the mortal death of God (p.50). Garasse is conceding for the first time that parts of Scripture might be difficult to believe.

Garasse’s solution to this problem is to recognise that certain Christian beliefs must be accepted as articles of faith, because they could not be proved by rational argument:

J’en dis le même quant à ce qui touche cette nécessité, que nous avons de croire la Divinité sans avoir de preuves évidentes par ses causes: Cette nécessité vaut mieux que toutes les sciences des Philosophes, & pour ce défaut qui est en Dieu, si défaut il se doit appeller de preuves évidentes, c’est un défaut qui vaut mieux que tous les trésors de la terre. Car si Dieu se pouvait prouver par ses causes, il ne seroit plus Dieu, & si nous étions libres à croire, ou ne croire pas, nous ne serions plus Chrestiens.

Charron had made this point himself, stating that God was unknowable precisely because of his infinity:

Or Dieu est incognitoissable, la Deité est ce que nous ne

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6 *La Somme théologique*, p.111. This issue has been highlighted by other critics. See Popkin: In fact, Garasse himself was somewhat sceptical of rational theology, denying that there were any *a priori* proofs of God’s existence, and insisting that the best way to know God was by faith. (*The History of Scepticism*, p.112)

Also Boase: So, too, at the conclusion of all his argumentation on this matter he admits that there is no clear rational demonstration of God’s existence, only a strong presumption *a posteriori*. (*The Fortunes of Montaigne*, p.169)
sçavons ny ne pouvons sçavoir, & ne peut estre entenduë que d'elle-même; la raison est son infinité, l'infinité est du tout incognoissable; si elle pouvait estre cogneuë, ce ne seroit plus infinie. ('De la cognoissance de Dieu', p.4)

The best path, according to Garasse, is to accept that the divine is incomprehensible:

En Paradis mesmes, nous ne comprendrons pas la Divinité, d'autant qu'alors elle sera aussi infinie & incomprehensible que maintenant. (p.91)

The result was that humans had to rely on faith, rather than reason:

Je maintiens doncques que la foy & la docilité Chrestienne est le souverain moyen pour connoistre Dieu en ce monde. (p.93)

This clearly reiterates Charron's view that:

tous les sages ont dit que Dieu se cognoissoit mieux par ignorance que par science. Que bien le cognoistre, c'est savoir que l'on ne peut, ni l'on ne le doit cognoistre. ('De la cognoissance de Dieu', p.26)

In addition, Garasse agrees with Charron that on many matters, including most obviously these articles of faith, there was a limit to the power of philosophy, and that eventually the human mind required divine revelation:

Ce que nous allons traicter désormais jusques à la fin de ce volume, sont purement des Articles de Foy, qui demandent plus de docilité de nous, que de discours humain. Car je feray voir icy bas contre Remond Sebon & quelques autres bons esprits, mais un peu trop temeraires, que le Mystere de la Trinite, & de l'Incarnation, ne se peut prouver evidemment sans l'assistance de la Revelation, qui sert de raison à Priori, en matiere de Creance. Il n'est pas à dire que le discours humain, & la Philosophie ne puisse contribuer quelque ornement, ou quelque force à la revelation: mais comme toutes les Estoiles ensemble sans le Soleil ne feront jamais le jour, ainsi toutes les demonstrations de Philosophie jointes par ensemble ne feront jamais une preuve de la Foy. (p.455) 

7 The allusion to Raymond Sebond is a clear indication that Garasse is consciously sharing a Montaignian perspective on divine revelation. M.A.Screech explains that Montaigne believed that grace was required for faith:
This view is clearly in concordance with the views of the Christian sceptics he had previously attacked. Charron stated that the opinions of theologians should be accepted when rational means were insufficient:

Aucuns ont dit que les Ames des plus meschants estoient au bout de quelque long temps reduites en rien: Mais il faut apprendre la verité de tout cecy, de la Religion & des Theologiens qui en parlent tout clairement. (De la Sagesse, p.67)

He always recognised the necessity for revelation, and his whole project was designed to prepare the human mind for this:

La Theologie, mesmement la mystique nous enseigne, que pour bien preparer nostre ame à Dieu & à son operation, & la rendre propre à recevoir l'impression du Saint Esprit, il la faut vuider, nettoyer, despouiller & mettre à nud de toute opinion, creance, affection, la rendre comme une carte blanche, morte à soy & au monde, pour y laisser vivre & agir Dieu. (Petit traicté de sagesse, p.53)

It is this factor, that Charron’s project had been to prepare the human mind for divine knowledge, which Garasse could not accept; this refusal lies at the heart of Montaigne never wavers: natural reason can stumble on to Christian verities and hold ideas or imagery identical with Christian ones. Yet without grace man would have no reason to put all his trust in Christianity. And he would certainly be no closer to God. (Montaigne and Melancholy, p.49)

He adds in a note that Sebond and Montaigne disagreed on this issue:

Raymond Sebond on the other hand believed that essential and specifically Christian truths can be obtained from Nature by natural means. Montaigne (quite orthodoxy) does not accept this, even in his 'Apology for Sebond'. (p.49)

8 The need for revelation was also recognised by Saint-Cyran. In his Épitre dédicatoire à Richelieu, he states that it is necessary to donner moins en ces matières [...] à l'appréhension des sens et à l'humaine philosophie qu'à l'intelligence intérieure qui nous vient de la seule révélation, qui renverse le plus souvent tout ce que nous concevons de Dieu par notre simple raison. (Saint-Cyran, II, p.eij, quoted by Orcibal, p.276)
Garasse’s misinterpretation of him. Charron’s goal had been to inspire tranquillity in the soul of his readers, one of the

effets & fruits de sagesse, qui sont deux, se tenir prêt à la mort, & se maintenir en vraye tranquillité d'esprit, la couronne de sagesse & le souverain bien. (De la Sagesse, p.311)

Garasse, convinced that Charron was an atheist, believes that Charron was preaching denial of God, but Charron had stated that this tranquillity was not a nonchalant withdrawal from the world. It was a positive response to the difficulty of attaining knowledge:

afin que l'on ne se mesconte, il est à savoir que cette tranquillité n'est pas une retraitte, une oisiveté ou vacation de tous affaires, une solitude délicieuse & corporellement plaisante, ou bien une profonde nonchalance de toutes choses. (De la Sagesse, pp.476-77)

For Charron, this tranquillity of mind was to be achieved in true knowledge. The routes to this knowledge were the very matter of De la Sagesse, as all of the book’s subjects - self-knowledge, regulation of the passions and following of nature - had the aim of achieving spiritual calm:

Tous ces traits & parties, qui sont plusieurs se peuvent pour facilité racourcir & rapporter à quatre chefs principaux, Cognoissance de soy, Liberté d'esprit nette & genreuse, suyvre nature, (cettuy-ci a tresgrande estendue, & presque seul suffiroit) Vray contentement. (De la Sagesse, p.8)

9 Kogel and Boase both made the point that it was the question of suspension of judgment of which Garasse was most suspicious:

Garasse takes exception to Charron’s call for suspension of judgment. He believes that this form of intellectual disinterest is undesirable for it cannot bring the peace of mind which Charron claims it can, and it is dangerous to the cause of religion. (Renée Kogel, Pierre Charron, p.152)
The demand for suspension of judgment is made in the name of a peace of mind which is as psychologically unattainable as it is undesirable. (Boase, pp.168-69)
Both Garasse and Charron believed that knowledge of God could be found through introspection. Garasse states that:

Tous mes os, seigneur, crieront & diront, qu'il n'y a rien de semblable à vous & à vos ouvrages: Qui ne connoist Dieu dans soy-mesme & par soy-mesme, est nécessairement hors de soy mesme, pource par exprès il se donne à coignoiestre à nos sens, & s'ingere tant qu'il peut, se mettant dans nos yeux, quelques aveugles qu'ils puissent estre, & nos esprits ne peuvent si fort se rebeller contre luy qu'il ne force leur opiniastreté, & qu'il ne darde ses rayons dans leurs tenebres. (p.172)

Charron similarly believed that self-knowledge was the first step towards knowledge of God:

Par la coignoiissance de soy l'homme monte & arrive plustost & mieux à la coignoiissance de Dieu. (De la Sagesse, p.25)

Charron also felt that self-knowledge could be gained by comparing humans to animals; in some cases, people could learn from their example. Animals followed instincts and nature, whereas humans tended to fight against them. Charron had discovered that this following of nature allowed them to lead better lives:

Certes je ne luy puis preferer aucune chose que la seule preud'homme, qui est la sante de l'ame. Or elle nous est commune avec les bestes, voire le plus souvent plus avantageuse, forte, & vigoureuse en elles, qu'en nous. Or combien ce soit un don de nature, gaudeant bene nati, octroyé en la premiere conformation, si est-ce que ce qui vient apres, le lait, le bon reglement de vivre, qui consiste en sobrieté, mediocre exercice, se garder de tristesse, & toute sorte d'emoction, la conserve fort. La maladie & la douleur sont ses contraires, qui sont les plus grandes, & peut estre les seuls maux de l'homme, desquels sera parle cy apres: Mais en cette conservation les bestes aussi, suivans simplement nature qui a donne la sante, ont l'avantage, l'homme s'y oublie souvent, & puis le paye en son temps. (De la Sagesse, p.45)

Garasse continually mocked Charron's veneration of animals. However, Garasse states in La Somme théologique

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10 Garasse mocked Ogier’s description of Garasse as an elephant (Apologie, ‘Jugement & descouverte’, p.vii), on the grounds that Charron venerated elephants. More importantly, Charron’s praise of animals is constantly -
that animal qualities do compare favourably to those of humans:

quasi toutes les especes d'animaux ont des industries & adresses merveilleises, qui semblent quelquefois surmonter le raisonnement de l'homme. (p.185)

This is another example of Garasse borrowing an argument from Montaigne, while appearing unaware that the same argument is present in Charron. Montaigne remarks that:

Nous reconnoissons assez, en la pluspart de leurs ouvrages, combien les animaux ont d'excellence au dessus de nous et combien nostre ar est foible à les imiter. ('Apologie de Raimond Sebond', II, 12, pp.121-22)

Charron, like Montaigne, used aspects of animal behaviour only to demonstrate the worth of following nature, in the hope that humans would learn from their example to be more at ease with themselves. Moreover, it is clear from De la Sagesse that Charron never intended following nature to lead to excess. Indeed, he believed that vicious or dissolute behaviour was contrary to nature:

Mespriser le monde [...] si en fin tu dis que ce n'est ni l'un ni l'autre, mais c'est l'abus d'icelles, les vanitez, folies, exces & desbauches qui sont au monde; bien dit, mais cela n'est pas du monde, ce sont choses contre le monde & sa police. (De la Sagesse, pp.405-06)

although implicitly - compared with the alleged animal-like behaviour of libertines. For example, Garasse suggests in La Somme théologique that Charron stated that humans should have no shame in their public or private behaviour 'comme les bestes' (preface, p.36).

11 Charron was, however, careful not to present animals as perfect beings. In fact, they do possess a modicum of reasoning, and this is a weakness, as it leads them astray from the absolute path of nature ordained by God: Ce sont des mots qu'ils usurpent mal à propos, pour ne demeurer sourds & muets. Encore ce dire se retorque contre eux; car il est sans comparaison plus noble, honorable, & ressemblant à la divinité, d'agir par nature, que par art & apprentissage; estre conduit & mené par la main de Dieu, que par la sienne; reglement agir par naturelle & inevitable condition, que reglement par liberté fortuite & temeraire. (De la Sagesse, pp.161-62)
Both Charron and Garasse shared the view that human beings have a natural love of virtue: Charron remarks that

[les sages] entendent par nature l'équité & la raison universelle qui luit en nous, qui contient & couve en soy les semences de toute vertu, probité, justice, & est la matrice de laquelle sortent & naissent toutes les bonnes & belles loix, les justes & equitables jugements, que prononcera mesmes un idiot. (De la Sagesse, p.359)

Garasse strikes a very similar note:

[L'opinion des plus sages de ce vieux temps est] que le bon naturel, c'est à dire la docilité, l'humeur douce, l'inclination de l'esprit à suivre la vertu, est une petite Divinité & pour exprimer leur dire, ce qu'ils faisoient ordinairement par le recit de quelque Fable, ils inventerent que Peleus se mariant, tous les Dieux furent invitez aux nopces [...] & que tous les Dieux firent present au nouveau marié [...] celuy d'entre les Dieux qui rencontra le mieux, fut Nereus, qui luy donna une certaine chose Divine, [...] une inclination & une facilité merveilleuse à suivre & embrasser la vertu, & que depuis on appella le bon naturel, le Sel divin, comme si dans le bon naturel il y avoit quelque Divinité, ou quelque benediction particuliere, qui s'approche de la nature Divine. (pp.321-22)

Garasse shares, too, the view of Montaigne and Charron that people have differing natures which it is their duty and pleasure to cultivate:

En somme, le mot de Nature parmy les Chrestiens se prend pour l'inclination particulière, soit bonne, soit mauvaise, qui conduit & porte les hommes à faire plustost telles actions que non pas d'autres, ainsi disons nous que tel est porté à l'estude, tel a son naturel à la guerre, tel a une nature violente, un autre aura une nature douce. Et quant nous disons qu'il faut qu'un chacun suive sa Nature, cela ne s'entend pas es actions morales, si ce n'est qu'on ait receu une nature de soy-mesme, portée & comme engagée au bien: mais cette Maxime s'entend du chois de vie, de ses exercices indifferens, de sa vocation, en laquelle on doit toujours avoir esgard au naturel, & cultiver le fonds, sans se roidir à combattre la Nature. (p.331)

This, for both Montaigne and Charron, was the main purpose of self-knowledge: to know one's own nature and inclinations, and so be able to act according to one's nature.
5. Conclusion

The differences in opinion between Garasse and Charron, over a wide spectrum, appear to be small. Indeed, Garasse admits, on the question of the ability to know God, that it was only Charron’s terminology which was at fault:

Ce qui a trompé l’Autheur de la Sagesse, c’est que par une franche ignorance il a confondu la cognoissance avec la comprehension. (p.91)

However, it was only on a secular, human level that he stated that God was unknowable. On a theological level, Charron’s view was different:

Nature nous donne l’envie de cognoistre Dieu, la religion nous enseigne à le cognoistre, voyla comme la religion ayde, secour, & parfaict la nature. (‘De la cognoissance de Dieu’, p.12)

Charron’s view was that the knowledge that God was unknowable was the best vantage point for viewing divine affairs. Such a knowledge is an essential part of human preparation for attaining divine wisdom. For Charron, the whole project of attaining human wisdom was no more than a step on the path to divine wisdom, and the sum of human wisdom was to follow nature. As we have seen, Garasse did not disagree with Charron that people should follow nature. Moreover, Garasse was being disingenuous when he ignored Charron’s call for moderation in behaviour, as he did acknowledge that Charron had stressed that bodily pleasure should not be indulged to excess (p.399).

This admission undermines Garasse’s arguments, but does not diminish his hostility. His starting-point for writing against Charron had nominally been the libertine behaviour of satirical poets. Had he admitted that their excesses were contrary to Charron’s doctrine, then his case that the
Charronian doctrine was essentially libertine would have evaporated.

The revelation that Garasse did not in fact disagree with Charron as much as he himself thought has important consequences for our understanding of the period. Garasse's blindness to the true nature of Charron's doctrine underpins his insistence that this doctrine was hostile to the Church. However, the presence of Charronian arguments in Garasse's own work shows how readily Charronian scepticism could be used to defend the Church. This in turn confirms the picture of scepticism in the early seventeenth century put forward by Richard Popkin, who suggested that, far from encouraging atheism, scepticism was a vital tool for fighting Reformers:

Since the type of sceptical method used by the Counter-Reformers could be applied to any theory of religious knowledge, safety and salvation lay in having no theory. They could advocate their Catholicism on faith alone, while demolishing their enemies by engulfing them in sceptical difficulties. By allying themselves with the 'nouveaux Pyrrhoniens', the Counter-Reformers could get their ammunition from the sceptics, as well as a fideistic 'justification' of their cause. (The History of Scepticism, p.81)
CHAPTER 21

CONCLUSION

The interest and importance of the quarrel between Garasse and Ogier can be felt in two areas. Firstly, the quarrel itself captures the differing positions of humanists and scholastics in the 1620s, and secondly the book of Saint-Cyran, which was the next episode in the long-running confrontation between the two groups, had important consequences for the subsequent debate between Jansenists and Jesuits. The quarrel is a bridge between earlier humanist-scholastic debates and the Jansenist-Jesuit debate that was to dominate religious polemics for the next century.

In the context of the humanist-scholastic debate, Garasse and Ogier appear as standard figures. Garasse upholds the Thomist, scholastic point of view against its attackers. Ogier portrays him as a typical scholastic pedant. *La Somme théologique* confirms that the accusations levelled against humanists in *La Doctrine curieuse* were stock scholastic accusations: when Garasse came to offer his own alternatives to Charron’s doctrine, his arguments foundered because it became clear he had no clear understanding of Charron’s works.

The poverty of Garasse’s arguments, and the lack of originality of his methods of attacks, can be considered as typical of his age, and indicative of the way in which scholasticism had become a stale and ossified philosophy. Historians are agreed that it was at its height around four
hundred years earlier. ¹ Maurice de Wulf states that by the
seventeenth century, scholasticism was characterised by
stagnancy, and the inability of its practitioners to adapt
to new ideas:

The deplorable attitude of the seventeenth century
peripatetics towards the science of their day was just
the opposite of what it ought to have been. Far from
courting or welcoming a possible alliance between their
cherished philosophy and the new scientific discoveries
they turned away in terror from the current theories
lest they should be compelled to abandon their own out-
of-date science. [...] Galileo speaks of those
Aristotelians who "rather than alter Aristotle's heavens
in any particular, obstinately deny the reality of what
is visible in the actual heavens". The Aristotelian
teaching they regarded as a sort of monument from which
not a single stone could be extracted without upturning
the whole [...] . Those philosophers [...] were
apparently unable to distinguish the essential from the
accessory; they failed to realise the possibility of
abandoning certain arbitrary applications of metaphysics
in the domain of the sciences without abandoning the
metaphysic itself. ²

We have seen that Garasse's objections were not only to

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¹ See William L. Reese, Dictionary of Philosophy and
Religion: Eastern and Western Thought (New Jersey:
Humanities Press, 1980):
Some would begin the scholastic period in the 7th
century and extend it to the 15th. All agree in
finding the movement at its height in the 12th and
13th centuries. (p.514)
In the Dictionnaire de théologie catholique (1939),
G. Fritz and A. Michel describe the 13th century as
'l'apogée de la scolastique' (p.1702).

² Maurice de Wulf, An Introduction to Scholastic
Philosophy: Mediæval and Modern (Scholasticism old and
new) Translated by P. Coffey (New York: Dover
History of Mediæval Philosophy (Translated by P. Coffey,
that Garasse, in taking the trouble to read Charron's
text, was in fact more diligent than many scholastics of
his age:
As for the new theories, the scholastics of this
period, with very few exceptions, not only abstained
from refuting them, but deliberately avoided
studying them. Contemptuous towards all rivals and
full of self sufficiency, they ostentatiously
imprisoned themselves within the circumscribed and
shrinking sphere of their own barren speculations.
Charron ad hominem, but were aimed at the tradition of humanistic scepticism. Garasse attacks Charron's melancholy, and the vanité and folie, which, he believed, led people to challenge scholastic certainty. He also attacks the use of non-Christian writers by humanists. The problem for Garasse is that these challenges are (almost) lost beneath his invective, in particular beneath the hyperbolic accusation that these facets of questioning and self-abasement before God amounted to atheism, and that respect for ancient writers amounted to idolatry. In contrast, when Ogier uses invective, it has a narrow focus - to discredit Garasse as a polemicist. Ogier does not have lofty ideas about exposing atheism. His aim is to show that Garasse is a pedant, and, therefore, according to the views of Erasmus, Montaigne and Charron on scholastic pedants, worthy only of the utmost contempt.

The entry of Saint-Cyran into the debate underlined the fact that the quarrel was based on theological, as well as secular, principles. Garasse challenged the theological points Charron had made, but Saint-Cyran reiterated that there was nothing irreligious in Charron's ideas:

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3 See Godard de Donville, Le Libertin des origines à 1665, p.146. She remarks that Garasse has constant recourse to his analogy between atheism and orgueil:

Dans toute la Doctrine, où Garasse la rappellera à la moindre occasion, cette vanité se mêlera au thème de la démesure, de la déraison. Car l'athéisme est folie: Théophile le montre bien par son humeur "hypocondriaque".

We have seen how Garasse disagreed with the humanists on the definition of pride or self-love (see Chapter 13, Section 5). In equating folie with atheism, Garasse is writing against Erasmus, whose Éloge de la folie suggested that only humans in a state of folly lived in their true human state. Montaigne, and Saint-Cyran, saw melancholy as a beneficial emotion.
The sceptic's insistence on the incomprehensibility of God, the feebleness of human reason, and the danger of trying to measure God by human standards, Saint-Cyran endorsed as sound Augustinian Christianity. Without attempting to, or desiring to, defend all of Charron's views, Saint-Cyran tried to show that the message of Catholic Pyrrhonism was really the same as what the Jansenists set forth as orthodox Christianity - the misery and weakness of man without God. Augustine is constantly cited to justify Charron's picture of the hopeless limitations on the quest for human knowledge, and the need for Revelation in order to know. The very views that Garasse had taken for atheism, Saint-Cyran insisted were sound, traditional Christian views.


Saint-Cyran's insistence on the importance of the ideas of St Augustine is indicative of how the scholasticism represented by Garasse was a warped version of the original: at its height, scholasticism, too, had recognised the impossibility of certainty in matters of faith. Reese explains the view of Thomas Aquinas:

Knowledge of the existence of God, for example, might be the product of reason for one person, and an article of faith for someone else, but the articles of faith, properly speaking, i.e. the Incarnation, the Trinity, etc., are beyond the reach of reason for everyone, and yet as revealed and sacred doctrine, they represent the highest wisdom. They must necessarily be approached by means of faith. Miracles are in the same case. They are beyond the reach of our reason, contradicting the order known to us, yet expressing a higher order known to God. (pp.22-23)

Garasse's ideas are perhaps not surprising. Four hundred years of secondary glosses on the work of Aquinas had led seventeenth-century scholastics to regard certain facts as provable by human reason, which Aquinas himself regarded only as articles of faith. Yet, when challenged, Garasse

4 Saint-Cyran suggested that Garasse had strayed still further from true Catholicism, accusing him of Pelagianism and Arianism, as well as Calvinism and Paganism (Popkin, p.114). Pelagius denied the doctrine of original sin, insisting that people could deserve heaven without the gift of grace. Arius denied that Christ was consubstantial with God.
returned to Aquinas's - and Augustine's - fideistic ideas.
Theological doctrines of both Garasse and Charron had
t heir origins in Augustine: it was Garasse's prejudice which
led him to believe that the two were diametrically opposed.
It was on a secular level that Charron challenged
scholastics, and that Ogier challenged Garasse. Saint-Cyran
drew attention to the fact that Garasse's philosophy was
out-dated and no longer true to its origins. It is
significant that the more measured criticism of humanistic
scepticism by Boucher shared the Augustinian view that the
existence of God could not be proved by human reason:

Je vous prie de considerer que c'est un erreur & folie
condamnée par les Philosophes mesmes, de chercher des
raisons evidentes en matiere de Religion, d'autant que
les demonstrations scientifiques se font par les causes
des choses demontrées & prouvéees: Mais Dieu ne peut
avoir de cause, d'autant qu'il est la cause de toutes
choses, & ses oeuvres Divines qui nous sont representées
dans la religion, n'ont d'autre chose que la seule
volonté, qu'il nous est impossible de cognoistre, sinon
quand il luy plaist nous la reveler par les Oracles
Prophetiques qui nous sont manifestés dans l'Escriture
Sainte. (Les Triomphes de la religion chrestienne, 'A
Typhon, et a ses compagnons', p.1)

Saint-Cyran's focus on the issue of Augustinianism is
significant in the development of ideas by the next
generation of thinkers, and in the polemic between Jesuits
and Jansenists. Antony McKenna sees the publication of
Saint-Cyran's book as a key point in the history of ideas:

C'est le moment où est déclarée l'alliance capitale
entre le pyrrhonisme chrétien et l'augustinisme dans la
constitution d'une philosophie chrétienne opposée au
rationalisme scolastique.

McKenna goes on to demonstrate how the quarrel between
sceptics and scholastics shaped the work of Pascal:

5 Antony McKenna, Entre Descartes et Gassendi: La première
édition des Pensées de Pascal (Paris: Universitas,
It is clear, however, that scholastics and sceptics were agreed that atheists existed, an assertion which seems to me to be reasonable in any age, and with which I have no reason to quarrel: the two groups disagreed on the correct way to express the Catholic faith, and so oppose non-conformers. Garasse’s project was an attempt to present atheism as a doctrine like any other, complete with its teachers, handbooks and disciples. Modern historians of ideas, in particular Pintard, have taken up his argument, and sought to continue his project, by naming more atheists, using the clues left by Garasse. Therefore, the naming of Charron as an influence on any particular thinker is taken as evidence of atheistic leanings; public professions of one’s faith come to be viewed as inadmissible evidence because Garasse had warned that atheists, following the example of Charron, hid their beliefs behind clever and attractive argumentation and protestations of fidelity to the Catholic Church.

The weakness of Garasse’s – and Pintard’s – argument, as Popkin has shown, is that it is possible to argue precisely the opposite case from the same evidence. Popkin argues persuasively that the humanistic sceptics, far from promoting atheism, were seeking to use sound Augustinian theology to protect the Catholic Church. Popkin states that
fideistic arguments, which were 'to dominate the French Counter-Reformation' (p.5), had been used to this end by Erasmus in his De libero arbitrio. They were opposed by Luther, in part at least for the same reason that Garasse opposed them in Charron:

This attempt, early in the Reformation, at sceptical 'justification' of the Catholic rule of faith brought forth a furious answer from Luther, the De servo arbitrio of 1525. Erasmus's book, Luther declared, was shameful and shocking, the more so since it was written so well and with so much eloquence. (p.6)

The approach of both Ogier and Saint-Cyran, it seems to me, is consistent with Popkin's assertion that humanists, like Erasmus, Charron and Pascal, used fideism as a tool for Counter-Reform. Their targets were not shadowy, indefinable armies of atheists, but the organised and successful reformed churches. Ogier insisted that Garasse should be silenced, citing the inaccuracies in his Doctrine curieuse, particularly concerning Beza. Saint-Cyran devoted considerable time to detailing the errors in Garasse's later text. Both sought to distance Garasse's ideas from those of true believers, and to present Charron as a promoter of sound Catholicism. If Garasse were allowed to represent the Catholic Church, he would only have the effect of convincing heretics of its bankruptcy. Instead, they advocated Charron's doctrine of conscientious ignorance, complete with its respect for, if not acceptance of, the sincere scholarship of Reformers such as Duplessis-Mornay.

This argument does not deny that some of Charron's ideas criticised sections of society which were loyal to the Catholic Church. In particular, he was critical of those whose addiction to Church ritual and to mindless repetition
of set prayers he rejected as superstition, and of those who
felt that any acts committed in the name of the Church could
be justified. I suggest that such criticism was consistent
with a Counter-Reform stance. Charron showed that
distasteful elements of the Church could be criticised from
a position within the Church itself, and that it could, and
should, be improved without recourse to schism. Charron’s
ideas are part of the tradition of Christian humanism, held
by Erasmus and to be reiterated and developed by Pascal.

It is clear, therefore, that the question of Charron’s
faith is vitally important for many aspects of seventeenth-
century thought. Many of the conclusions drawn from the
attack on Charron by Garasse have relied on the latter’s
testimony that his work was irreligious. However, critics
who have accepted Charron’s faith have drawn up a picture of
France in the seventeenth century which is different from
those who have accepted the main tenets of Garasse’s ideas.
I suggest that it is these critics, principally Popkin, but
also, more recently, McKenna, whose conclusions are
consistent with the ideas to be found in the texts of the
1620s, not only those texts which attacked Garasse, but also
the polemical writings of Mersenne and Boucher, suggesting
that Charron’s influence on atheism was caused by his being
misunderstood. I also suggest that Garasse’s accusations
were made on the secular basis of a dislike for Charron’s
anti-scholastic views, and that the texts of those who were
influenced by Charron, principally Gassendi and La Mothe le
Vayer, were similarly designed as anti-scholastic works.
Accusations that they were atheists, too, should be re-
assessed: their condemnation, as followers of Charron,
requires a level of trust in Garasse's testimony, which is unwarranted, both from the evidence of contemporaneous texts by other writers, and from Garasse's own inconsistencies.
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