

ARTICLE

Rabelaisian Satire and the Conciliation of the *Satyre Ménippée*

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SUMMARY

From the time Rabelais's works were condemned by the Sorbonne in the 1540s and Calvin's denunciation of his writings in *Des Scandales* (1550), it is generally accepted that Rabelais became one of France's first cancelled authors, with religious zealots on either side attacking his vulgar language and heterodox ideas. A notable exception to this is the *Satyre Ménippée* (1594), an anonymous work by *Politiques* aimed at undermining the Catholic League and affirming Henri de Navarre as the rightful king of France. Rabelais's presence in this work, both explicitly and implicitly, is far more important than has been previously recognized. While satire during the French Wars of Religion tends to be much harsher and nakedly partisan, the *Satyre Ménippée* demonstrates that the spirit of Rabelais lives on. With its amusing mockery of various League members which recalls Rabelais's caricatures of the Sorbonne, along with its more serious pleadings for temperance and peace, echoing the ethos of *Pantagruélisme*, this important, understudied pamphlet serves as a useful counterpoint to the intense earnestness and anger of polemical works from this period.

KEYWORDS: *Satyre Ménippée*, humor, religion, satire, pamphlets, polemics, performance, Sorbonne, Catholic League, Henri IV, Rabelais

For this article, I wanted to find a way to connect my current research interests to Jean-Claude Carron, the recipient of this *festschrift*. First, let me offer some observations about one of the best collections of essays ever assembled on Rabelais, *François Rabelais: Critical Assessments*, edited by Jean-Claude and the result of a conference he organized at UCLA in 1991. I was a mere undergraduate at the time, but although I know little about the conference, it was clearly important, and a big part of that importance was its focus on conciliation, which is the theme of this article. Scholars of Rabelais are familiar with the most significant dispute in our field in the 1980s, when deconstructionism seemingly reigned supreme. Nowadays, it is a rite of passage for students embarking on graduate-level study of Rabelais to read the very public dispute between Terence Cave, Michel Jeanneret, and François Rigolot on one side, and Gérard Defaux and Edwin Duval on the other. This feels like so long ago, and also a bit sad, as all these giants in the field are now retired or gone, but I can imagine that in 1991, it was still very *actuel*.¹ Amusingly, the editors preface this polemical article by asserting, "Après cet échange, nous considérons la discussion comme close" (709).

There are many who know Jean-Claude better than me, but he has always struck me as the perfect person to bring together these intellectual combatants in a spirit of conciliation. He did not shy away from controversy; the first two sections of the essay collection are cleverly titled "Bones

of Contention” and “Marrows of Discontent.” In terms of conciliation, Terrence Cave summed up what is today the prevailing view regarding this dispute: “The notion that Rabelais’s text can mean anything one wants is untenable. But I believe the opposite view – namely, that all the strands (or, failing that, those deemed worthy of serious attention) serve a unitary intended meaning – is equally untenable” (55). The questions that were the focus of the conference and the volume, as Carron explained in his introduction, were the following: “Who were Rabelais’s readers and what did Rabelais’s contemporaries read in his text?” In this article I want to look at a small group of readers of Rabelais who stood out compared to their contemporaries in their appreciation of this author who was much maligned in the second half of the 16th century (and beyond).

Seiziémistes are generally familiar with early condemnations of Rabelais’s work, first by the Sorbonne in the 1540s and then by Calvin in 1549 and 1550 in his *Des scandales*, and by the arch-Catholic Gabriel de Puy-Herbault in his Latin dialogue, *Theotimus*, published in 1549, both of whom are referenced in the *Quart Livre* of 1552 (615).² It is generally accepted that Rabelais became one of France’s first cancelled authors, with religious zealots on either side attacking his vulgar language and heterodox ideas. Much less well known is how Rabelais fared in the polemical pamphlets of the era, where he was regularly mentioned. The first reference anywhere to Rabelais’s first book, *Pantagruel*, is found in a pamphlet by the Protestant polemicist Antoine Marcourt, the person likely responsible for the text of placard in the *Affaire des placards*, but who first published his *Livre des marchans* in 1533. In the first edition of this pamphlet or *libelle*, there are multiple references to *Pantagruel*, starting with the title page. In the next edition of this work the following year, all references to Rabelais’s work were removed. Some have speculated that this was because Marcourt wanted to avoid controversy, an argument I do not find particularly convincing. (It would be hard to think of someone who courted controversy more than him during this time.) Instead, as I wrote in *Hostile Humor in Renaissance France*, “A more plausible explanation is that as Marcourt’s militant ideological position hardened...Rabelais’s work became too liberal minded and too heterodox for him” (Hayes 18). This trend would be followed throughout the second half of the century with both Calvinist and Catholic polemicists associating Rabelais with irreligion, his reputation as the French Lucian meant to highlight among other things his supposed atheism.

A notable exception to this negative trend is the *Satyre Ménippée* (1594), an anonymous work by *Politiques* aimed at undermining the Catholic League and affirming Henri de Navarre as the rightful king of France. Rabelais’s presence in this work, both implicitly and explicitly, is far more important than has been previously recognized. While satire during the French Wars of Religion tends to be much harsher and more nakedly partisan, the *Satyre Ménippée* embodies Rabelais’s playful, satirical verve. With its amusing mockery of various Catholic League leaders that recalls Rabelais’s caricatures of the Sorbonne, along with its more serious pleadings for temperance and peace, echoing the ethos of *Pantagruélisme*, this important, understudied pamphlet serves as a useful counterpoint to the intense partisan vitriol of polemical works from this period.

In highlighting this pamphlet, one of my goals is to convince more people to read what Martial Martin, the editor of the exhaustive, definitive critical edition of the work, has called the “roi des pamphlets” (xv).³ Scholarship on the *Satyre Ménippée* is quite sparse. The most useful piece of scholarship, beyond Martin’s critical edition, is the *Études sur la Satyre Ménippée*, edited by Frank Lestringant and Daniel Ménager and published by Droz in 1987. There is, however, more work to be done on this pamphlet that figures so centrally in a key moment of change in France’s

history, as Henri IV would become the legitimate king of France and almost 40 years of civil war would come to a close. Like most *libelles* from this period, the *Satyre Ménippée* lists no author, but researchers have discovered that the work was a collective affair. Pierre le Roy, canon of Rouen and chaplain to the cardinal of Bourbon, came up with the plan with Jacques Gillot, canon of the Sainte-Chapelle. The work was written by Nicolas Rabin, Jean Passerat, and Florent Chrestien, and edited by Pierre Pithou (*Satyre Ménippée* xlvi–liv). Among the hundreds, if not thousands of polemical *libelles* that circulated in France during the sixteenth century, this one stands out as being one of the most, if not the most sophisticated, urbane, literary, and frankly entertaining examples of the genre.

The *Satyre Ménippée* has been described as “un ouvrage de propagande où le rire est une nécessité politique” (Poirson 39). This is a key difference from many other such “ouvrages de propagande” which all too often are so zealously aggressive that they were not likely to attract any new converts to their cause.⁴ Among other reasons for its success, its humor stands out. The pamphlet begins with a “Discours de l’imprimeur,” which explains how the work is connected to the classical satirical tradition, including the work of Menippus, the “philosophe Cynique,” as well as Lucian, Varro, and “le bon Rabelais” (160–61). However, the printer asserts that, in comparison to Rabelais’s writings, they self-censored and removed “les quolibets de tavernes, et les saletez des cabarets” (161). Nevertheless, the *Satyre Ménippée* is not without a few “saletesz,” beginning with the subtitle, “de la Vertu du Catholicon d’Espagne.” While “Catholicon” has been connected to *Pantagruélion* in the *Tiers Livre*, perhaps we could consider other potentially dirty associations with the name of this drug.⁵ The pamphlet also contains an ill-timed fart and the occasional bare behind, but more on that later.

The pamphlet is perhaps best understood as a tragic farce, or a farce with a dramatic twist, a hybrid genre first explored by Rabelais.⁶ It begins with an unintentionally comic procession that recalls the procession of the *Haute dame de Paris* in *Pantagruel* (Hayes, *Rabelais’s Radical Farce* 129–38). Charles Lenient compared it to the processions that preceded medieval farces, specifically mentioning the 1510 procession of Mère Sotte in Pierre Gringore’s *Le Jeu du Prince des Sots et de Mère Sotte* (I: 128–29).⁷ The first group of this procession is comprised of foreigners, both dignitaries and troops from Spain, Flanders, and Italy. While their presence is meant to shock readers, the comical aspect of the procession is found in the second group, comprised of monks and religious leaders of the League. Their outfits certainly stand out; they are all heavily armed with their religious vestments buried beneath an arsenal of daggers, swords, and guns. Meant to look imposing or even menacing, they are instead portrayed as ridiculous and laughable.

The procession brings the reader to the Louvre, where both outside and inside “eschaffauts” or stages have been constructed for specific performances. Outside the Louvre, as preparations are underway for the farcical *états généraux* inside, two hucksters take the stage, one from Spain and the other from Lorraine. This is an obvious xenophobic dig at the League and the “foreign” Guise family. The two charlatans are hawking their miracle drug in a manner that recalls the *bonimenteurs* of medieval farces and the prologue of *Pantagruel*; they enumerate the qualities of their magical elixir—with it you can lie, cheat, deceive the King, steal his money, mock the sacraments of the Church, etc. (9–12).

After this opening act, the reader is taken inside the Louvre for the main performance, a farcical set of speeches that takes place on another hastily constructed stage, as the League tried in

vain to find a suitable Catholic candidate for the French Crown. First, we are treated to what Frank Lestringant has called a “*décor parlant*,” tapestries surrounding the stage that depict events from French history, Antiquity, and the Bible (55). Many of these make unflattering connections between the League and previous historical events, such as Spartacus rallying his troops against Rome and the ducs de Bourgogne rebelling against the French Crown. Others celebrate Jacques Clément, the friar who assassinated Henri III, and the St. Bartholomew’s Day Massacre. In one biblical scene, the Israelites are worshipping the golden calf portrayed as the duc de Mayenne, the leader of the League, with Henri III as Moses. In the most obscene tableau, which depicts the Battle of Ivry (where a vastly superior number of League troops were routed by Henri de Navarre’s army), we see “les Espagnols, Lorrains, et autres Catholiques Romains par moquerie ou autrement, monstrent leur cul aux Maheustres” (23). “Maheustres” refers to clothing worn by Henri de Navarre’s troops and is also a reference to a League pamphlet, *Le Dialogue d’entre le Maheustre et le Manant* (1593). A particular word change in this passage highlights how the authors played on readers’ xenophobia to attack the League. In the original, it referred to “autres Catholiques zelez”; by changing “zelez” to “Romains,” the text further emphasizes the foreignness, the otherness of the Catholic League.

The main body of the pamphlet is composed of seven speeches performed on the *eschaffaut*. The first six, representing the leadership of the League, along with papal envoys, are comparable to the comic characters of medieval farce.⁸ The farcical, Rabelaisian tone of the proceedings is set before their leader, the duc de Mayenne, begins his speech. As he is about to start his harangue, an argument erupts between the Dame de Rosne and the Dame de Busy over who was responsible for a rather malodorous fart. This interruption represents an immediate double debasement of these ostensibly august proceedings. First, there is the scatological humor that moves the reader’s attention from lofty considerations to what Bakhtin called the “bodily lower stratum” (20). Second, the mere presence of women at the *états généraux* is meant to be derisive, used as further proof of the lowliness of the gathering. Both the scatology and the misogyny are meant to be funny, a comic strategy that undermines any serious consideration of the *états*.

The Master of Ceremonies pleads with the women to stop their bickering, telling them, “mes dames ne venez point conchier noz Estats” (28). This, of course, is precisely the goal of the *Satyre Ménippée*, to thoroughly debase what was intended as an august and solemn meeting. All six speakers are unintentionally comical and are portrayed as caricatures, keeping with the spirit of Menippean satire. As Bénédicte Boudou, Michel Driol and Pierre Lambersy have described it:

La caricature à l’œuvre utilise le procédé bien connu du rabaissement : rabaissement physique comme tout ce qui a trait à l’embonpoint du Lieutenant [...] ou à la transpiration de M. de Lyon. Rabaissement intellectuel : le Recteur de la Sorbonne s’avère incapable de tenir un discours cohérent. Rabaissement moral : chaque Ligueur ne voit que son intérêt privé, l’un se révèle lâche (Mayenne), l’autre vindicatif (Pelvé), un troisième cupide (Rieux [...]). Devenu caricature, le personnage peut s’assimiler à un masque dont la double fonction est de cacher la réalité [...] et de la révéler (simplifiant une réalité embrouillée, la caricature la rend intelligible). (107)

There is a lot of humor to be found in these first six speeches, much of it recalling Rabelais (at times the connections to his work are explicit). As one scholar noted about the participants in the

états, “Henry [de Navarre]’s accusers are no more than further exploiters of religion, performers in the farce” (Zsuppán 357).

Once things settle down, the duc de Mayenne (Charles de Lorraine), the leader of the League since the assassination of his brother, Henri de Lorraine, in December 1588, provides the opening remarks for these facetious *états*. The role he plays in his speech is that of the cowardly soldier or *soldat fanfaron*, a caricature type found in medieval farce and other similar comic genres. He brags about how, after battles, defrocked priests who had become soldiers raped women in towns the League had conquered. He also boasts about everything the *Ligueurs* were able to steal. He constantly undermines his credibility, such as when he offers the contradictory description of his soldiers as both battle-tested (i.e., old) and young (30). The justification he offers for his cowardice in not leading his troops to attack Henri de Navarre is that he did not want to get too close to the heretic for fear of being excommunicated (31). He uses a vestimentary metaphor to describe his change in allegiance from France to Spain, explaining that he gave up his “couverture Françoisse en cape à l’Espagnolle, et donnay mon ame aux demons meridionnaux” (32). He brags about the League’s successes in France in convincing people to follow them: “nous avons mesnagé des processions nonpareilles, qui ont obscurcy le lustre des plus belles mommeries qui furent oncques veuës, nous avons faict semer souz main par toute la France du Catholicon d’Espagne, voire quelques doublons qui ont eu des effets merueilleux” (33). This assertion recalls both the original procession at the beginning of the pamphlet, as well as its two resident charlatans. The League has seduced the people with performative processions that are portrayed as pious but are in fact “mommeries,” mere farces. This cynical strategy is supported by “Catholicon d’Espagne,” which here and elsewhere takes the form of Spanish gold, “doublons” handed out as bribes to officials throughout the kingdom.

Unable to best Henri de Navarre on the battlefield, the spineless duc de Mayenne tries to hide behind the Pope and the Sorbonne, in a hilarious explanation about how they could punish the King of Navarre: “si le Pape s’en vouloit mesler, nous le [Henri de Navarre] ferions excommunier luy mesme par nostre mère la Sorbonne, qui sçait plus de Latin, et boit plus catholiquement que le consistoire de Rome” (36). This ending of his speech reveals him, as well as his allies in both Rome and the Sorbonne, to be utterly inept and risible.

The second speaker is the Papal legate Philippe Sega, who was very involved with the League. To emphasize his foreignness, his harangue is given in a combination of Italian and Latin. He is the most bellicose of the speakers and he uses as his biblical text Matthew 10:34–36, when Christ says, “Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a person’s enemies will be those of his own household” (English Standard Edition). This is certainly an appropriate passage in the context of a massive, decades-long civil war in France that was motivated in no small part by religious strife. Sega offers the following reassurance from Rome: “The Pope will grant full indulgences to all good Catholics from Lorraine [Catholici Loreni], or the Spanish French [Hispani francesi], who will kill fathers, brothers, cousins, neighbors, magistrates, princes of the blood, *Politiques*, heretics, in this most Christian war” (41, translation mine). His speech is that of an agitator who is calling for increased violence and bloodshed, a stunningly ironic position for someone who purportedly represents the Vicar of Christ. His comments are chilling; if there is any humor to be found here, it is simply in his use of macaronic Latin, with its blending of Latin and

Italian. Besides that, the main purpose here is to portray the Pope's envoy as a warmonger.

More humorous is the next speaker, the Cardinal de Pellevé, who had been in Rome from 1572 to 1592. Based on testimonials about his actual speech, which was not well received and seemed to be the ramblings of an old man, this harangue is a clear parody of the original. Both in the real *états* and in this fictional recreation, he gives part of his speech in Latin, which would have been seen as anti-French. As he explains at the end of his speech, “Sed alio me uocant principes isti...quorum interest ut intelligent me disserentem lingua Gallica, quam pene dedidici loqui, adeo meam patriam sum oblitus” [But let us return to these princes...who are interested in hearing me speak French; unfortunately, I have almost forgotten this language, just as I have forgotten my country] (45, translation mine). This damning admission underscores his essential foreignness; he has spent 20 years in Rome and is more connected to the Papacy than he is to his own country. Even when he turns to French in his speech, it is peppered with Latin and Italian expressions. To underscore further his foreignness, he chooses sides on the hotly debated name for syphilis; for the French, it was “le mal napolitain,” but for the Italians, it was, as the Cardinal calls it using the Italian, “del male francioso” (46, incl. n. 318).

The last part of his speech is an elaborate, obsequious encomium of Philip II of Spain. His claims about the Spanish king are absurd; the Spanish king apparently has so much power and controls all of Europe, to the point that France does not interest him much, he just wishes the country would behave like good Catholics. After Pellevé finishes, “tous les docteurs de Sorbonne et maistres és arts là presents fraperent en paulme et crierent VIVAT par plusieurs fois” (48). This is followed by a prior and one of the Master's students sharing quatrains meant to praise the Cardinal, but in fact mocking him “pour ignorantissime” (49). The ridiculous speech, followed by the enthusiastic endorsement of it by the Sorbonne, places the reader solidly in the world of Rabelais, and it is impossible to read this without thinking of Maître Janotus de Bragmardo, “le plus vieux et suffisant [habile] de la faculté [de la Sorbonne]” (*Gargantua*, ch. 17–20, (49)). Further adding to the comic effect of his speech, as the next person stands to speak, “tout le monde eut sonorement et theologalement toussy, craché et recraché, pour l'ouir plus authentiquement” (49). Any author who describes people as coughing theologically owes an obvious debt to Rabelais.

That next speaker, known for his eloquence, is Pierre d'Épinac, archbishop of Lyon and a client of the Guises. He had been involved in a propaganda campaign against Henri III and his “archimignon” Épernon. Here he is portrayed as a total hypocrite. He praises Catholicon and again suggests that this “miracle” substance is in fact Spanish gold used to bribe the French:

Ô saint Catholicon d'Espagne, qui es cause que le prix des messes est redoublé, les chandelles benistes rencheris, les offrandes augmentees, et les saluts multipliez, qui es cause qu'il n'y a plus de perfides, de voleurs, d'incendiaires, de faulsaies, de couppegorges et brigans : puis que par ceste sainte conversion, ils ont changé de nom, et ont pris cest honorable tiltre de catholiques zelez, et de gendarmes de l'Eglise militante ; O deifiques doublons d'Espagne, qui avez eu cest efficace de nous faire tous rajeunir, et renouveler en une meilleure vie. (51)

His praise of Catholicon is twofold: first, it has made him and other French prelates rich – offerings are up and costs for performing masses and blessing candles have increased. On a semantic level,

Catholicon has created a linguistic “conversion”: crimes are no longer crimes, because now such criminals are called “catholiques zelez” and “gendarmes de l’Eglise militante.” This is some seriously damning satire.

He goes on to praise “ce saint martir” Jacques Clément, the monk who assassinated Henri III, while also acknowledging that Brother Clément was “le plus desbauché de son convent” (53). As for himself, he admits the following: “Si vous confesseray je librement que peu auparavant ceste sainte entreprise d’union je n’estoy pas grand mangeur de crucifix: et quelques uns de mes plus proches [...] ont eu opinion que je sentoy’ un peu le fagot” (53). He goes on to explain that in his youth, he enjoyed reading the works of Calvin and Théodore de Bèze, and that he is still fine with eating meat during Lent and sleeping with his sister, “suyvant les exemples des saints Patriarches de la Bible” (53). Finally, he confesses that after receiving some “doublons,” he became a zealot for the League. The caricature of the archbishop of Lyon as a religious hypocrite is utterly unsparing.

Next up is Rector Guillaume Rose, previous bishop of Senlis, who owed his rise to Henri III before betraying him and siding with the League. He is a total pedant, using a form of kitchen Latin that recalls Rabelais’s *écolier limousin* episode (*Pantagruel* ch. 6). He begins by acknowledging both his indebtedness to and betrayal of Henri III. From the start, he uses Latinism such as “cunabules” and “primordes” (57), parroting the *écolier limousin*. In his opening remarks, he also refers to “fripons...quereller les rotisseurs de petit pont” (57), a clear reference to Seigny Joan in the *Tiers livre* (ch. 37). He also refers to satirical theater, giving thanks that “on ne jouë plus de ces jeux scandaleux, et satyres mordantes aux eschafaux des Colleges” (57). Perhaps not, but of course he is unintentionally starring in a theatrical satire on the *eschafaux* of the Louvre. His speech is sprinkled with language that directly or indirectly echoes Rabelais; at times the references are quite explicit, such as when he compares the duc de Nemours to Picrochole (*Gargantua*, ch. 26). His argument that Spain’s Infanta should be the next French monarch gets the audience riled and people start arguing. Rose becomes furious that he is not allowed to conclude his speech and then, with a classic Rabelaisian touch, when he finally sits down, “s’essuiant le front, il luy eschappa à ce qu’on dit quelques rots odoriferents de l’estomac, qui sentoient le parfum de sa colere, avec des paroles en basse note, se plaignant qu’avoit fraudé l’assignation envoyee d’Espagne” (68). Like Thaumaste before him (*Pantagruel*, ch. 18–20), his loss of control of bodily functions provides the reader with a final laugh at his expense, his lack of control a sign of his weakness, both physical and mental.

The final facetious speech is by the Sieur de Rieux, who fought for the League and was hanged by royal forces in 1594. According to records of the real *états généraux*, he did not participate, so instead of a parody, this harangue serves to cast the Leaguers once again as blood-thirsty warmongers. He begins by attempting to prove the holiness of the League, using his own surprising upward trajectory as proof: “commissaire d’artillerie assez malotru, je suis devenu gentil-homme, et Gouverneur d’une belle forteresse” (69). As for religious conflicts, as long as war continues to enrich him, “il ne me chaut que deviendra le Pape, ny sa femme” (69), a mocking comment intended to make the reader laugh at papal corruption. He portrays himself as a simple mercenary with little interest in anything besides battle. He reminds the audience that all of his depredations are authorized by the League:

Monsieur le Lieutenant, ne nous avez vous pas donné liberté de tout faire: et monsieur le

Legat nous a il pas mis la bride sur le col, pour prendre tout le bien des politiques, tuer, assassiner, parents, amis, voisins, pere et mere pourveu qu'y facions noz affaires, et que soyons bons catholiques?" (71)

This is very harsh satire, to be sure, as he makes it clear that he can do whatever he wants, murder whomever he wishes, as long as he operates with the bridle (i.e., control, but also authorization) of the Holy Catholic League.

Then it is time for the final speech before this audience, a speech that represents the heart (or marrow) of the pamphlet, and here a comparison to Rabelais's "substantifique moelle" is appropriate, since all the farcical performances until this point have served to entertain, the Horatian (or, more obviously, Lucianic) *dulci* to the moral *utile* that will now follow. The seventh and final speech is longer than the previous six speeches combined. Representing the Third Estate, Claude d'Aubray, who had been the *prévost des marchands* in Paris, offers the final harangue, a spirited speech that radically changes the tenor of the pamphlet, from the farcical to the somber and tragic. At one point, he uses the theatrical metaphor to underscore this change:

(C)ar toutes les sanglantes tragedies qui ont depuis esté jouëes sur ce pitoyable eschaufaut François, sont toutes nees et procedees de ces *premieres querelles*: et non de la diversité de religion, comme sans raison on a fait jusques icy croire aux simples et idiots. (79).

In addition to referring to the stage metaphorically, here it is transformed from the performance of a farce to that of a tragedy. His reference to the "premieres querelles" highlights a critical position of the *Politiques*, and one that connects their ideology to Rabelais. The *Politiques* were despised by both Catholic and Protestant partisans, for whom there was no room for compromise. Had Rabelais lived during this time, there is little doubt that he would have been a *Politique*. D'Aubray's lament recalls the Rabelais of the *Quart Livre*, skewering ideological opponents and expressing profound frustration about the fanaticism that blinds people to the spirit of *Pantagruélisme*.

As Jean Vignes noted, "tout fragment de la *Satyre Ménippée* renvo[ie] à un discours antérieur que le lecteur idéal est censé connaître" (151). Just like Rabelais before them, the anonymous authors of the *Satyre Ménippée* sought the ideal reader, a reader who was well read, who had a liberal understanding of history, and who did not fall into the trap of ideological purity. Just as Rabelais mocked his ideological adversaries, so the writers of this pamphlet ridicule the leaders of the League, a group of extremists who did tremendous harm while they were ascendant, prefiguring in Paris the atrocities that would be greatly magnified in the wake of the French Revolution. But just as Rabelais railed against religious bigots on both sides of the growing religious divide who attacked him, proposing instead a humanist-inflected generosity of spirit that would work towards conciliation, so the ultimate goal of the writers of this "roi des pamphlets" was conciliation in war-torn France, conciliation that is only possible by embracing an attitude of compromise and respect. I see Jean-Claude Carron as just such a person, *vrai disciple du bon Pantagruel*.

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Notes

¹ Cave, Jeanneret, and Rigolot's co-authored 1986 article "Sur la prétendue transparence de Rabelais" was published in response to articles published the previous year by Gérard Defaux and Edwin Duval.

² In the Quaresmeprenant episode, where again both sides are rendered equally ridiculous, Rabelais takes aim at Calvin and other detractors of the author, whom he identifies as "les Maniacles Pistolez, les Demoniacles Calvins, imposteurs de Geneve; les enraigez Putherbes" – references to Guillaume Postel, Calvin, and Gabriel Du Puy-Herbault, all of whom had condemned the author. All references to Rabelais are taken from Mireille Huchon's Bibliothèque de la Pléiade edition of his *Œuvres*; here it is the *Quart Livre*, ch. 32.

³ All references to the pamphlet are taken from Martin's modern edition of the *Satyre Ménippée*.

⁴ This is also a central contention made by George Hoffmann in his magisterial 2017 *Reforming French Culture*.

⁵ In the notes of his edition, Martin refers to the "l'esthétique 'farcesque' du texte" and asserts that it echoes the *Pantagruélion* in the *Tiers Livre* (180–81).

⁶ See Chapter 4, "Unresolved Farce and 'tragicque farce': *Tiers* and *Quart Livre*" in my book, *Rabelais's Radical Farce: Late Medieval Comic Theater and Its Function in Rabelais*. Ashgate, 2010.

⁷ See also the modern edition of Pierre Gringore. *Le Jeu du Prince des Sots et de Mère Sotte*, edited by Alan Hindley, Honoré Champion, 2000.

⁸ I respectfully disagree with Armand and Driol, who compare these types to characters from Shakespeare. While they are certainly theatrical, there is little of the complexity found in Shakespeare's comical characters such as Falstaff and Polonius.