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**'On the streets and in the book': text, subtext and context in Lyon's *Chevauchée de l'asne*, 1566**

**by**

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*Pour Eve Marie*

## ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the relationship between text and context in a booklet describing a *charivari* held in Lyon, in 1566, published in a period of heightened civic social tensions between the first two episodes of armed conflict of the French Wars of Religion. By looking at the printed account of a festive procession, this thesis will explore how the *Suppots de la Coquille*, a group of small printers who were also prominent members of Lyon's network of abbeys of misrule, used this publication to assert their social prestige. They were representative of a nascent, urban, pragmatic *petite bourgeoisie* which positioned itself to avoid persecution from polarized religious factions in Lyon. This examination will yield a unique insight into the ways power struggles between urban groups are embedded in a text, and illustrate how this cultural artifact reflects the historical context of its production.

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## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

Introduction	1
Chapter One	16
Chapter Two	26
Chapter Three	48
Chapter Four	69
Conclusion	78
Bibliography	84

## INTRODUCTION

This thesis examines the relationship between text and context in a booklet describing a *charivari*<sup>1</sup> held at Lyon in 1566, and published the same year, during a period of heightened civic social tensions between the first two episodes of armed conflict of the French Wars of Religion. By looking at the printed version of this carnivalesque event, entitled *Recueil fait au vray the la chevauchée de l'asne* (hereafter *chevauchée*)<sup>2</sup> this thesis explores how the *Suppôts de la Coquille*<sup>3</sup>, a group of independent printers who were also prominent members of Lyon's network of abbeys of misrule, used this 'occasional'<sup>4</sup> to assert the prestige of their social peers as

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<sup>1</sup> A *charivari* is a "noisy, masked demonstration to humiliate some wrongdoer in a community." Natalie Zemon Davis, "The Reasons of Misrule," in *Society and Culture in Early Modern France*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1975) 98. The *charivari*, as an occasional, collective ritual, contrasts with the carnival - with which it shares many traits - by not being linked to the cyclical rhythm of the calendar. In England, *charivari* was often called Rough Music, Rough riding, or Skimmington ride. Martin Ingram, "Rough Music and the 'Reform of Popular Culture' in Early Modern England", *Past & Present*, No. 105 (Nov. 1984), 79-113. For more on *charivaris*, see Henri Rey-Flaud, *Le charivari. Les rituels fondamentaux de la sexualité*, (Paris: Payot, 1985); Jacques Le Goff and Jean-Claude Schmitt (eds.), *Le charivari: actes de la table ronde organisée 2 Paris (25-27 avril 1977) par l'Ecole des hautes études en sciences sociales et le Centre national de la recherche scientifique* (Paris, 1981)

<sup>2</sup> *Recueil fait au vray de la chevauchée de l'asne, faite en la ville de Lyon : et commencée le premier iour du mois de septembre, mil cinq cens soixante six, avec tout l'ordre tenu en icelle*, (Lyon : Guillaume Testefort, 1566).

<sup>3</sup> The Lord of Misprint's henchmen.

<sup>4</sup> An occasional was a printed artifact, smaller than a book, which took various forms: broadsheets, single printed engravings, booklets and pamphlets. They were generally much more affordable than the book and, consequently, often benefited from wider circulation through various socio-economic strata.

well as their own, and simultaneously to position themselves strategically to avoid religious persecution, while implicitly remaining faithful to the Reformed church. It will also examine their parodic appropriation of contemporary symbols of power, in inversion mode. This examination shows how “the inextricably inter-related nature of social and discursive practices, [and] of the material and linguistic realities that are interwoven into the fabric of the text.”<sup>5</sup> It will illustrate how this cultural artifact both mirrors and generates the social and historical reality of its production in a period when, as Bakhtin argued, the liberating culture of laughter and carnival was marginalized by an increasingly controlling - and centralizing - royal power. <sup>6</sup> In the *chevauchée*, we find the trace of a number of historical transformations that profoundly changed culture and society in sixteenth-century France: the growth of a wider-circulating printed news culture, the increased use of vernacular language in print, the aggravation of religious fragmentation, and the subjugation of civic powers to a royal program of state-building which, in France, took the form of a new political order: absolutism.

This study does not aim to discover a normative model of interpretation that could be applied to the study of similar printed artifacts in other early modern settings; on the contrary, it argues that localized experiences constitute a unique, complex social landscape where historical

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<sup>5</sup> Gabrielle M. Spiegel, History, Historicism and the Social Logic of the Text in the Middle Ages, *Speculum*, Vol. 65, No.1 (Jan. 1990), 59-89, 85.

<sup>6</sup> Mikhail Bakhtine, *L'oeuvre de François Rabelais et la culture populaire au Moyen Âge et sous la Renaissance*, (Paris : Gallimard, 1970) .

contingencies and social practices resist the formal inflexibility of schematic model creation. Borrowing from Dominick LaCapra's vivid encapsulation, texts represent *situated* uses of language.<sup>7</sup> Such sites of linguistic usage, "as lived events, are essentially local in origin and therefore possess a determinate social logic of much greater density and particularity than can be extracted from totalizing constructs like 'language' and 'society.'"<sup>8</sup>

Another totalizing construct this thesis will avoid is the dichotomy between elite and popular cultures. As a conceptual model, it might be useful to illustrate the reality of social stratification in pre-modern Europe and the corollary cultural differences, but it lacks flexibility to take into account the interchange, the two-way traffic between 'elite' and 'popular' cultures. Turner has argued persuasively that:

*"The crucial cultural difference in early modern Europe...was that between the majority, for whom popular culture was the only culture, and the minority, who had access to the great tradition but participated in the little tradition as a second culture. They were amphibious, bi-cultural, and also bilingual. Where the majority of people spoke their regional dialect and nothing else,*

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<sup>7</sup> Dominick LaCapra, "Rethinking Intellectual History and Reading Texts", in LaCapra and Kaplan, eds., *Modern European Intellectual History: Reappraisals and New Perspectives*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1982), 49.

<sup>8</sup> Spiegel, *History, Historicism ...* 77.



*the elite spoke or wrote Latin or a literary form of the vernacular, while remaining able to speak in dialect as a second or third language. For the elite, but for them only, the two traditions had different psychological functions: the great tradition was serious, the little tradition was play.”<sup>9</sup>*

Another shortcoming of the popular/elite model is the implicit homogeneity of each term. Although ‘elite’ culture tended to be more unified with its Latin heritage, popular culture varied greatly depending on region, language, dialect, rural/urban divides, etc.: “*il n’y a pas une culture ecclésiastique, ni une culture paysanne, ni une culture urbaine, mais des théâtres locaux d’ambitions et de conflits qui mettent en jeu tel ou tel segment de la société.*”<sup>10</sup> One needs to avoid the sterile determinism of structural history’s ‘long-term prisons’ in order to account for people’s agency.

In considering the formation and dissemination of a print culture and the synchronic Reformation in the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries in Europe, the already blurred line between popular and elite culture becomes further indiscernible: “The enormous rupture resulting from the end of the monopoly on written culture by the educated and on religion by the clergy had created a new and potentially explosive

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<sup>9</sup> Peter Burke, *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe*, (New York: Harper and Row, 1978), 55.

<sup>10</sup> Jean-Claude Schmitt, *Le corps, les rites, les rêves, le temps. Essais d’anthropologie médiévale*, (Paris, Gallimard, 2001), 19.

situation.”<sup>11</sup> Ultimately, the opposition between elite and popular culture needs to be questioned. Roger Chartier has stated that “*Là ou on avait cru découvrir des correspondances strictes entre clivages culturels et oppositions sociales existent plutôt des circulations fluides, des pratiques partagées, des différences brouillées.*”<sup>12</sup> The macroscopic opposition between popular and elite does not allow for a more complex analysis of other forms of polarization – men/women, rural/urban, generations, Huguenots /Catholics, guilds/municipal authorities, etc. – and the plurality of cultural practices which, upon closer examination, display an aggregate, *bricolage* nature which is not congruent with a single, all-encompassing binary division.

In chapter one, this thesis will examine the historical context of the *chevauchée*'s production. The second half of the sixteenth century was marked by the spectacular growth of print in Lyon. Until 1550, owing to the presence of a prominent elite of Italian and German merchants-bankers - who benefited from close links with Venice and Frankfurt, two of the most important printing centers of Europe at the time - and its geographical location on two important commercial axes, one North-South and the other one East-West, Lyon could rightfully claim the title of print capital of France. The presence of a critical mass of printers' journeymen

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<sup>11</sup> Carlo Ginzburg, *The Cheese and the Worm. The Cosmos of a Sixteenth-Century Miller*, (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1980), 9.

<sup>12</sup> Roger Chartier, *Lectures et lecteurs dans la France d'Ancien Régime*, (Paris : Seuil, 1982) , 8.

created the conditions of possibility for a new type of printer, not rich enough to be included into the patrician elite of the city, but financially comfortable enough to rent and buy equipment and specialize in the production of a new type of publication, cheaper to produce, concerned with more popular themes, and benefiting from a wider area of penetration in the lower layers of the social hierarchy: the *occasional*. The *suppôts* are emblematic of this new breed of entrepreneurs, which were members of a nascent social class which can be called the *petite bourgeoisie*.

Reformed Church membership in France, particularly in large cities south and west of Paris, like Lyon, was at its peak four years before the *chevauchée* was held. 1566 was a year characterized by social unrest, between the first two episodes of armed conflict between the two religious factions, the Catholics and the Huguenots (1563-1568). A large number of printers in Lyon either sympathized with, or joined the Reformed Church and published works of religious propaganda; the *suppôts* were in the orbit of the *Griffarins*, a loose association of printers' journeymen who were identified as early members of the Protestant faction.<sup>13</sup> They were also in danger of being singled out as targets of an increasingly successful Catholic propaganda designed to stamp out Huguenot power in the city. This period of 'phony peace' created opportunities for civic and royal

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<sup>13</sup> Natalie Zemon Davis, "Strikes and Salvation at Lyon", in *Society and Culture in Early Modern France*, (Stanford University Press, 1975).

authorities, fearful of social unrest, to increase their control over public life by the implementation of a series of promulgations on public processions, print, arms control, and, from 1566 to 1568, systematic religious persecution. These measures offer useful insights on the instability of civic social cohesion at the moment the *charivari* and entry were held, and foreshadow the renewed period of persecution for France's Huguenots in 1568.

Chapter two will explore the text of the *chevauchée* to identify six explicit functions of the text: commemoration, explanation, persuasion, self-promotion, justification and vindication. The aim is to consider the booklet not only as a textual object, but also as an instrument, a mode of social action, produced by actors with agency, into which a host of desires, beliefs and interests are impressed, consciously or not, and which arise from social pressures, not only from textuality or intertextuality; "in seeing how a book is made, we also see what it is made from."<sup>14</sup>

In chapter three, this thesis will uncover two implicit functions present in the subtext of the *chevauchée*: one of parodic appropriation of social, heraldic, military, sartorial, and judicial symbols of power; the second, a function of resistance to the dominant religious discourse. Subtext here "focuses on whatever understanding or themes form the background or tacit dimensions of a text, inferable but not explicitly

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<sup>14</sup> Spiegel, *History, Historicism...*, 85.

stated.”<sup>15</sup> The identification of these derivative meanings will contribute to uncovering the “pragmatic elements from the local interactional context that permit the construction of meaning to occur.”<sup>16</sup> These tacit dimensions are crucial elements to consider in order to grasp more fully the specificity of the cultural milieu in which the booklet was produced. As cultural historians of the late 1970s, like Davis and Darnton, have demonstrated, “charivaris, carnival and [other] ceremonies of social inversion... [are] symbolic expressions of a social order that was both enacted and tested through ritual life.”<sup>17</sup>

In chapter four, this thesis will explore how the participants chose to represent the Other, a choice that mirrors their complex emotions of attraction and repulsion toward the external threat they constituted.

## Source

### Chevauchée: the booklet

The advent of a new technology for text reproduction, print, had a profound impact on all aspects of public and private life in sixteenth-

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<sup>15</sup> W.F. Hanks, Text and Textuality, *Annual Review of Anthropology*, Vol. 18, (1989), 95-127, 96.

<sup>16</sup> Aaron V. Cicourel, Text and Discourse, *Annual Review of Anthropology*, Vol. 14, (1985), 159-185, 167.

<sup>17</sup> Spiegel, *Historicism*, 66.

century Europe, by reducing the price and time of production, increasing circulation, and creating new, mobile objects that gave texts and images a greater familiarity across all social strata. Print became a flourishing industry, and Lyon was one of its most important centers.<sup>18</sup> One of the first new objects to emerge from these transformations was the *occasional*, which took various forms: broadsheets, single printed engravings, booklets and pamphlets. These new cultural artifacts spread through various social strata, particularly in the cities, and increased the circulation of information traditionally carried by oral proclamation. Inexpensive, the new forms of print could reach a wider audience composed of burghers, merchants, guild-members and – to a limited extent – humble folk, segments of the population that had previously been excluded from intimate relationship with the written text. As literacy grew within these groups, occasionals became products worthy of commercial exchange or, at the least, affordable objects of cultural capital. Consequently, some printers included these types of publication in their production. The *chevauchée* is an example of this type of occasional.

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<sup>18</sup> In 1495, Lyon's printing industry was the third largest in Europe: one thousand books were printed in the city between 1473 and 1500. Between 1500 and 1536, Paris and Lyon represented 90 per cent of book production in France (respectively 2500 and 6000 editions). Lyon, Venice, Antwerp and Paris dominate the industry in Europe. André Pelletier et al., *Histoire de Lyon des origines à nos jours*, (Lyon: Éditions lyonnaises d'art et d'histoire, 2007), 269. By 1520, about 600 people worked in the industry in Lyon. Natalie Zemon Davis, "Le monde de l'imprimerie humaniste: Lyon" in Henri-Jean Martin and Roger Chartier, ed., *Histoire de l'édition française, tome I. Le livre conquérant ; du Moyen Âge au milieu du XVIIe siècle*, (Paris : Promodis, 1983), 255.

As Laurie Nussdorfer summarized, “printed descriptions of ceremonies, festivities, and pageants were a growth sector of publishing in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries...Political, devotional, and commercial motives were driving this type of publication, which participated in the general increase of cheap printed occasionals.”<sup>19</sup> Large folio editions of festival books, describing royal marriages and entries, were popular throughout the sixteenth century and, given their lavish production values and wealthy commissioners, they have survived in greater number than the more modest booklets that give accounts of lesser ceremonial events, like the *chevauchée*. “Yet these works,” argues Nussdorfer, “far outnumber the ‘festival books’, and they reached many more readers.” As Palmer argues, “no dramatic genre presents the critic with more subtle – and less studied – complications of mediation.”<sup>20</sup>

Following Roger Chartier, this thesis will explore a single document, away from sweeping generalizations, which can mask or miss the complexities of objects and practices:

“...L’élection du singulier permet de ‘relocaliser’ des objets trop vite considérés comme constituant le patrimoine commun d’une culture supposée populaire, générale et immobile. En fait, nombre des imprimés... sont utilisés... au service d’un parti ou d’un pouvoir, d’un ordre religieux ou d’un sanctuaire particulier, d’une

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<sup>19</sup> Laurie Nussdorfer, ‘Print and Pageantry in Baroque Rome’, *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, Vol. 29, No. 2 (Summer 1998); 439-464, 439.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 440.

communauté ou d'une institution. D'où, sous la lettre du récit...une intention polémique, plus ou moins cachée et explicite, qui vise à justifier, convaincre, rallier. ”<sup>21</sup>

*Le recueil fait au vray de la chevauchée de l'asne* was published in 1566. It was printed by Guillaume Testefort and the *suppôts de la coquille*. There are only three original printed editions still in existence. Two can be found in Lyon<sup>22</sup> and one in the British Library.<sup>23</sup> All copies share the same format, a small, 40 pages *in quarto*. The British library copy is found in a small book, bound with 22 other texts, a number of which were written by *les Suppôts de la Coquille*.<sup>24</sup> Nine booklets, written and printed by the *suppôts*, constitute the corpus of works from them that has survived; they can all be categorized as types of occasionals, and they all contain *sotties*, texts of proto-theatrical performances. These are : two *chevauchées* (1566, 1578) ; one *discours du temps passé* (1568); one *dictons satyriques* (1574) and 5 *Plaisans devis* (1580, 1584, 1589, 1593 and 1601).

The full title, *Recueil fait au vray de la chevauchée de l'asne, faite en la ville de Lyon: et commencée le premier iour du moys de Septembre, Mil cinq cens soixante six*, situates the text in time and space. There is an emphasis on the veracity of the text: *fait au vray*. The expressions *vray*,

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<sup>21</sup> Roger Chartier, dir., *Les usages de l'imprimé*, (Paris: Fayard, 1987) 12.

<sup>22</sup> BML Rés 356055.

<sup>23</sup> BL General Reference Collection C.132.h.10.(8.)

<sup>24</sup> *Les dictons satyriques* (1574), and *Les plaisants devis* (1580, 1584, 1589, 1593, 1601). The book is classified under *L'enfer* by Clément Marot, printed by Étienne Dolet in 1542 ; also bound in the book are pamphlets by Ronsard and Estienne Pasquier, all printed in the last half of the 16th century.



*veritable*, were usual terms for printed descriptions of events in sixteenth-century France; a necessity at a time when public proclamations were still the major source of official news.<sup>25</sup>

The narrative begins with an account of small processions held three consecutive Sundays of September, which served as advertisement for the coming *chevauchée*. On each of these Sundays, a short *sottie* (called *dicton*) was performed to incite all abbeyes of misrule to prepare for the event. The meticulous – and repetitive – description of the processions gives a profusion of details on costumes, fabrics, colors, props, and composition of each participating group. The description mimics the actual processions by repeating the phrase “*après suivaient...après suivaient...*” throughout. Clearly, the authors wished to recreate for the reader the linear succession of groups that took part in the processions. The text reflects the events “mingled nature of tableaux and processional.”<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> *Discours au vray des troubles naguère advenus au royaume d'Arragon...* (1592); *Discours au vray de la réduction du Havre* (1563); *discours au vray de la prise et reddition de la ville de Raucroy...*(1570) etc. In a study of 500 occasionals published in France between 1529 and 1631, Jean-Pierre Séguin notes that a great number of them begin with similar testimonials of truth. Jean-Pierre Séguin, « L'information en France avant le périodique: 500 canards imprimés entre 1529 et 1631 », *Arts et traditions populaires*, T. 11, No 1 (Janvier-Mars 1963), 20-32.

<sup>26</sup> Tracy Hill, *Pageantry and Power. A Cultural History of the Early Modern Lord Mayor's Show, 1585-1639*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010), 132.

## Les suppôts de la coquille

Who were *the suppôts de la coquille*? The *chevauchée* of 1566 mentions Guillaume Testefort<sup>27</sup>; he is also co-printer with Pierre Ferdelat and Claude Bouilland of the 1578 *chevauchée*. A *discours* of 1568 was printed by Pierre Brotot. Different people, but all the booklets identify them as members of the *suppôts*. This group was emblematic of a social stratum of Lyon's society composed of mediators between popular and elite culture; without being rich like the great merchants, they were relatively well-off. They were printers' journeymen who became small *compagnons-imprimeurs*. Their position as master printers was not solid enough to warrant membership amongst the great printers of the city like the La Porte and Senneton brothers, the Gabianos and de Tournes' fathers and sons. These *compagnons-imprimeurs* were literate, considered themselves socially superior to traditional artisans because of their literacy and special knowledge. They found a niche which filled a need for a more "popular" and affordable print production. As Davis explains, these *imprimeurs-compagnons* "often acquired, usually by rental, a press and type and printed almanacs and occasional pieces."<sup>28</sup> Furthermore, the *suppôts* were heavily involved in Lyon's *confréries joyeuses*, or abbeys of

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<sup>27</sup> Guillaume was the son of Hugues Testefort, a notary. He had properties in Saint-Georges, one of Lyon's central neighborhoods on the west side of the Saône. (AML, CC0046-03 and CC048-03). He was also a member of a group of *imprimeurs-compagnons* assembled in 1580 to give power of attorney to each other in the creation of a company (Davis, *Society*, 5.)

<sup>28</sup> Natalie Zemon Davis, "A Trade Union in Sixteenth-century France", *The Economic History Review*, vol. 19 No.1 (1966); 48-69, 58.

misrule, recreational associations grouped by urban neighborhoods. The *suppôts* were actors and writers, and their corpus reflects these activities.

### Abbeys of misrule

Abbeys of misrule were lay associations present in great numbers in rural France, and they were generally composed of young members. Using the notion of carnivalesque as defined by Bakhtin, Davis described the para-legal functions of moral regulation entrusted to these youth associations in rural communities : control of the village's young women's courting by strangers ; control over instances of second and third marriages; organization of the public shaming inflicted on men beaten by their wives. These regulatory responsibilities were often accomplished in humorous mode, characteristic of an inverted, regenerative world view: charivaris, insults, public and grotesque humiliations, comical processions, impositions of fines (money or goods), etc. These groups experienced mutations when situated in more complex urban environments. From associations defined by categories of age and matrimonial status, they became increasingly organized by neighborhood, with watch responsibilities, and then transformed into trade groups, mimicking guild organizations, particularly clerical and craft guilds. By the middle of the sixteenth century, with growing literacy in urban environments and a movement towards increasing trade specialization, the charivaris organized by the abbeys of misrule morphed into a more

substantial and complex public ritual, including proto-theatrical performances, carnival costumes and a greater number of participants. To their moral regulatory role was added a more political dimension expressed by the satirical nature of the *sotties* performed and the other, highly choreographed events that punctuate the associative life of these urban groups, which were not exclusively composed of youth anymore but in which were found clerks, merchants and specialized craftsmen, who could keep their membership to the abbeys of misrule all their lives. The adaptive capacities of these transformed urban groups were striking; as Davis noted: "I am struck here, as I was earlier studying the formation of *compagnonnages*, by the social creativity of the so-called inarticulate, by the way in which they seize upon older social forms and change them to fit their needs." <sup>29</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Natalie Zemon Davis, *Society*, 50.

## CHAPTER ONE

### Text/context relationship

In the last forty years, developments in critical thinking have radically transformed the study of literary texts and have challenged the relationship between text and context, which had been considered as generally unproblematic by traditional historiography. The linguistic turn and its related deconstructive impetus have popularized the notion that language is severed from any external referent, thus creating new problems for the historical understanding of texts. In an effort to escape the final indeterminacy of meaning, and the endless mediation of a free-floating language – “*il n’y a pas de hors-texte*”, said Derrida<sup>1</sup> - historians and anthropologists have attempted to restore historicism in the study of literary texts by “focusing on the social construction of meaning in historically determinate cultural discourses.”<sup>2</sup> The anthropologist Clifford Geertz was a pioneer in the use of semiotic models for cultural studies, and

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<sup>1</sup> Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976) 157.

<sup>2</sup> Spiegel, *History, Historicism...*, 64.

was followed in that path by a new school of cultural historians in the late 1970s and early 1980s.<sup>3</sup> But they have not been successful, according to Gabrielle Spiegel, in “restoring history as an active agent in the social construction of meaning,” and have not succeeded either in tackling satisfactorily the inherently historical questions of social determination, causality and, most critically, human agency in the relationship between text and context. If language constitutes the social world of meaning, “language itself acquires meaning and authority only within specific social and historical settings. While linguistic differences structure society, social differences structure language.”<sup>4</sup> Spiegel has argued persuasively that the most rewarding way of exploring this material and discursive relationship is to “focus analysis on the moment of inscription...on the ways in which the historical world is internalized in the text and its meaning fixed. We should...seek to locate texts within specific social sites that themselves disclose the political, economic, and social pressures that condition a culture’s discourse at any given moment. Involved in this positioning of the text is an examination of the play of power, human agency, and social experience as historians traditionally understand them.”<sup>5</sup> This is the theoretical stance this thesis adopts.

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<sup>3</sup> Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Culture*, (New York: Harper Collins, 1973). Amongst those cultural historians heavily influenced by anthropology we find Davis, Darnton, Schmitt, Chartier, etc.

<sup>4</sup> Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, “The Body Politic”, in *Feminism, Theory, Politics*, ed. Elizabeth Weed, (New York: Routledge, 1989), 101-121.

<sup>5</sup> Spiegel, *History, Historicism...*, 84.

Lyon, 1566

It was November 4, 1566. People gathered along the main streets of downtown Lyon, festively decorated with tapestries for the occasion. They were there for the parade. The Duchess of Nemours, wife of the Governor, had solemnly entered the city on October 31, but festivities in her honour had continued throughout the week-end. The last event was the *Chevauchée de l'asne*, a type of *charivari*<sup>6</sup> organized by the *Abbeyes de Mal-Gouvert*<sup>7</sup>, or abbeys of Misrule, a network of carnivalesque associations mainly composed of guild members and grouped according to Lyon's *quartiers* (neighbourhoods). The procession usually paraded men - or their effigies - who were beaten by their wives in the previous year, mounted backwards on donkeys. Each neighbourhood abbey paraded its own victim(s), thus showing a kind of 'division of labour' in the moral control and policing of the town.

This joyous parade, in which more than a thousand people participated, investing time and creativity in the confection of costumes, props and the production of theatrical performances – apart from the numerous people composing the crowd - evokes the image of a homogeneous social body, welcoming the wife of a benevolent ruler, in a well-organized celebration of communal harmony. This evocation is

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<sup>6</sup> Natalie Zemon Davis, *The reasons of Misrule*, 98.

<sup>7</sup> *Gouvert*: conduct. *Mal-gouvert* can thus be translated as misrule.

belied by the reality of Lyon in 1566: a city rife with religious conflicts, recently stricken by a ferocious plague epidemic, where the complex power struggles between Catholic and Huguenot factions, communal and royal authorities threatened to degenerate – again – into civil war, as it had three years before.

### Religious context

Lyon's geographic situation, at the crossroads of commercial routes of the realm, made it a strategic city for the dissemination of Protestantism in the first half of the sixteenth century. Proximity to Geneva – less than two days' travel - enhanced the attraction of the city as a base for proselytizing; so did the absence of a university or parliament to exercise close control on heterodox ideas, as was the case in Paris. The sources do not allow accurate estimates of the exact size of Lyon's Protestant community. At the height of its popularity, in 1562, there were about 5 thousand people attending the temples (Reformed churches); and those were only the ones courageous enough to publicly affirm their heterodox religious affiliation.<sup>8</sup> In April 1562, alarmed by rumours of a Catholic army marching towards Lyon, twelve hundred armed Huguenots took control of the city. The new leaders held new municipal elections and increased the

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<sup>8</sup> Richard Gascon, *Grand commerce et vie urbaine au XVIe siècle. Lyon et ses marchands*, (Paris, Mouton, 1971), 474-77.



number of *échevins* from 12 to 24,<sup>9</sup> to consolidate their power and secure the presence of a majority of Huguenots at the *consulat*.<sup>10</sup> Three of the most important printers of Lyon, Jean de la Porte, Claude Senneton and Henri de Gabiano were members of the new cohort of municipal leaders, which already included a number of openly declared Protestants. The Reformed Religion was particularly popular in the print industry's population; printers' journeymen were among the first to convert to the Reformed Religion, loudly and publicly.<sup>11</sup> In early 1563, more than 25 000 people attended the Reformed Church, a testimony to the new team of Huguenot councillors' success.<sup>12</sup> The Huguenot faction held the city for a year, until June 1563 when the defeat of Condé's army, the Promulgation of the Amboise Edict - giving a measure of religious tolerance to Huguenots -, and the military success of Catholic leader Jacques de Savoie, Duke of Nemours, in the *Lyonnais* marked the end of the city's Huguenot leadership and the beginning of an uneasy truce between the Catholics, who returned to share power, and the defeated Huguenots. For the next five years, a systematic – and increasingly successful - campaign of religious propaganda by the Catholics to regain control of public spaces and ritual leadership increased social tensions in the city.

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<sup>9</sup> Until then, 12 *eschevins* composed the civic legislative body, 6 elected each year for two-year terms.

<sup>10</sup> In the cities of southern France, the municipal government was called *consulat*, in commemoration of the region's Roman past; the magistrates of the *consulat* were called *eschevins*, *consuls* or *conseillers*.

<sup>11</sup> Printers' journeymen organized religious processions in 1551 during which a few hundred of them, along with other armed artisans, paraded in the streets, singing Psalms and insulting the noble canons of the Saint-Jean Cathedral. Davis, *Society*, 4.

<sup>12</sup> Yves Krumenacker, *Lyon 1562, Capitale protestante. Une histoire religieuse de Lyon à la Renaissance*, (Lyon: Éditions Olivetan, 2009), 185.

### The plague of 1564

After the Great Death of 1348-51, plague pandemics became part of the fabric of everyday life in Europe, so much so that in the second half of the sixteenth century, even severe episodes that killed tens of thousands of people in large areas left few archival traces. Lyon's plague of 1564-65 is one of these, and we find echoes of this tragedy in the *chevauchée*.

The first signs of the plague appeared in June 1564, while Charles IX and his court were in Lyon, as part of a massive *Tour de France* that lasted 20 months and which was designed to reach out to the people of the realm and to reaffirm royal power.<sup>13</sup> The King stayed in Lyon twenty-five days, and would have stayed longer had it not been for the increasing virulence of the plague. From July to December, the city was deserted by all who had the means to flee the disease, while the more humble died in droves.

How many people died from the plague in Lyon in 1564? It is difficult to ascertain, because there are no official records left. According to Claude de Rubys, two-thirds of the common people died,<sup>14</sup> and the city was deserted by all the people that had the means to leave it. In 1598, in a letter sent by the *consulat* to Henry IV, it is stated that 60 thousand people had

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<sup>13</sup> Victor E. Graham and McAllister Johnson, *The Royal Tour de France by Charles IX and Catherine de Medici, Festival and Entries, 1564-65*, (Toronto : University of Toronto Press, 1979).

<sup>14</sup> Claude de Rubys, *Histoire véritable de la ville de Lyon*, (Lyon : Bonaventure Nugo, 1604), 404.

died, for not having anyone left in the city to control it and to apply the usual protocols of quarantine and closure of the city to outsiders.<sup>15</sup>

Emmanuel Le Roy-Ladurie, in his seminal book on the bloody 1580's Carnival at Romans, a city 80 kilometers south of Lyon, has estimated four thousand deaths from the plague of 1564-66, in a city of just over ten thousand people.<sup>16</sup> In the absence of precise data, Gascon looks at the annual birth rate in Lyon following the plague, and finds that in 1565, it represents only 38% of what it was before the epidemic.<sup>17</sup>

The plague of 1564 would haunt Lyon's population for years to come<sup>18</sup>; every rumour of epidemics in nearby towns provoked severe prohibitions to sell or buy any product coming from those potentially dangerous places.<sup>19</sup> Numerous metaphors of the plague are found in the *chevauchée*, when women's aggressive behaviour toward their husbands is compared dramatically to a disease that spreads like wildfire and makes man suffer greatly before killing them:

*De moi ie ne suis pas ioyeux*

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<sup>15</sup> Antoine Péricaud, *Notes et documents pour servir à l'histoire de Lyon*, vol. 5, p.44. This number should not be taken at face value ; the *consulat* was trying to paint a picture of Lyon as a poor city in need of fiscal relief. Nevertheless, even half that number represents about half the population of Lyon around 1564.

<sup>16</sup> Emmanuel Leroy-Ladurie, *Le carnaval de Romans*, (Paris: Gallimard, 1979), 11.

<sup>17</sup> Richard Gascon, *Grand commerce et vie urbaine au XVIe siècle. Lyon et ses marchands*, (Paris, Mouton, 1971), 496.

<sup>18</sup> The description of Lyon's plague by Ambroise Paré, the king's personal physician, conveys the apocalyptic effects of social disintegration caused by the disease in the city: "*les gens 'tombent morts' en cheminant par les rues et les temples. (...) la ville déserte ou l'herbe envahit les rues, les cadavres sans sépultures, les agonisants abandonnés par leurs proches, les enfants tétant le venin mortel aux mamelles de leur mère morte, les médecins, chirurgiens et barbiers pourchassés à coup de pierres...par la populace en folie, les larrons maîtres de la cité, pillant les maisons, étranglant les malades.*" A. Chaussade, "Ambroise Paré et Charles IX (1561-1574) ", *Revue Historique*, Vol. 156 No. 2 (1927), 304.

<sup>19</sup> AML, BB 86, municipal deliberations of April 25: no person or merchandise from Avignon, Sathonay and Saint-Fortunat will be allowed within the city, for fear of contagion.

*Car ie crains trop la malle tache.<sup>20</sup>*

...

*(les femmes) frappent à tors & à travers  
Assez pour troubler l'univers  
Si soudain l'on ni met de l'eau<sup>21</sup>*

...

*Autrement nous voila deffaict  
Si soudain l'on n'y met remede:  
Car la maladie ne procede  
Que par faute de chastiment.  
Elle pulupe<sup>22</sup> grandement  
Et se prend comme feu Gregeoys<sup>23</sup>.*

...

*La contagion est à craindre :  
Et qui la lairra<sup>24</sup> demeurer,  
Serons en danger d'endurer  
Avant que mourir grand martyre.<sup>25</sup>*

The ghost presence of the plague may also be felt in the disorganization of some of the abbeys of misrule, as described in the *chevauchée*. Three consecutive Sundays, the *suppôts* call on the abbeys to get their house in order, elect a leader and prepare for their participation in the coming ride.<sup>26</sup> Only 18 months after the plague ended, it was certainly a struggle to recapture a sense of normalcy in Lyon's festive life; people had more pressing concerns than rebuilding membership in recreational organizations. The fact that three public proclamations were

<sup>20</sup> *Malle Tache* is a disease, often associated with the plague. *Chevauchée*, 4.

<sup>21</sup> Water was considered a powerful remedy against the plague. *Chevauchée*, 6.

<sup>22</sup> *Pulluper*: proliferate.

<sup>23</sup> Greek fire.

<sup>24</sup> *Laissera*, future of *laisser*.

<sup>25</sup> *La chevauchée*... 6-7.

<sup>26</sup> *La Lanterne s'endormira/car elle a perdu sa Princesse...De la Fontaine le conte dort sans cesse/ie ne sçay qui l'éveillera ; Du Puy Pellu n'est plus nouvelle/Le Conte s'en est dépouillé. Recueil de la chevauchée...*, 5.

made, three Sundays in a row, two months before the scheduled date given for the beginning of the official festivities – the *chevauchée* is one of the only example of a *sottie* including three *criées* preceding the principal show - can be explained by a desire on the organizers' part to allow enough time for all abbeys of misrule to regularize their situation and start preparations for the public parade.

### Urban context

The urban space where the processions were held was highly malleable, and could be easily transformed into a vast stage: “By festooning windows and balconies with flags and tapestries, by filling streets with processions, city-dwellers were able to turn ordinary and profane commercial streets into *viae sacrae*. (...) This malleability gave urban space special moral force and power.”<sup>27</sup> In the *Chevauchée*, street decoration is described on two distinct occasions: *Les rues des environs toutes tapissées* (page 7) ; *Près de La Platière, là ou les deux costez de la Rue estoyent tous tapissez* (page 12). Both the processions preceding the *Chevauchée* and the ride itself criss-cross the city and transform the familiar urban space into a great stage. Municipal authorities contributed to the cleaning of the streets, the payment of musicians and guards,

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<sup>27</sup> Dennis Romano, “Gender and the Urban Geography of Renaissance Venice”, *Journal of Social History*, Vol. 3 No.2 (Winter 1989) 339.

decorations for the Duchess' entry, as well as for the lavish clothes worn by the *échevins* for the occasion.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> *Comptabilité communale, 1566-67: Pièces justificatives des dépenses de François Coulaud, AML, CC 1142.*

## CHAPTER TWO

### Explicit functions of the text

There are at least six explicit functions in the text of the *chevauchée*: commemoration, explanation, justification, persuasion, self-promotion and vindication. The commemorative aspect is the most obvious: the booklet is a printed souvenir of a festive event, destined to inform readers who had not been able to participate in person of the details of the ride, to commemorate the event for those who were there and to offer to the participants a written account of their own accomplishments. The text is explanatory because it exploits the print medium to provide the meaning of some of the symbols used in the *chevauchée* that might not be familiar to the reader. The writers also used the text to justify, to their peers and to the general public, the absence of an important element, traditionally always present in a *charivari*: the public naming and parading of men who were beaten by their wives. The writers used the booklet to justify and explain this absence. Furthermore,

as Burke argued, “the possibility of propaganda has always to be borne in mind when one is studying [occasionals].”<sup>1</sup>

The print industry in Lyon was a hotbed of religious heterodoxy in the second half of the sixteenth century, printed material being one of the most important vectors of new religious ideas, and its workers were often identified as or associated to Huguenots. However, in 1566, they were on the losing side of the social/religious conflict in the city, and were therefore eager to persuade the Catholic authorities of their membership in the Mother Church. The *chevauchée* – the event and the booklet - gave them an opportunity to publicly confess their orthodoxy.

As writers, the *suppôts de la coquille* could also enhance their profile in a way that was not possible during the ride. They devoted more space in the text to themselves, describing their group with a wealth of details that far exceeded the description of other groups, especially when describing Minerva, their patron goddess. They also took the opportunity the booklet gave them to boast of their literacy, their specialized print skills and their knowledge of Latin.

Finally, the event was held without incidents, and the texts frequently highlight this fact in response to the authorities' fearfulness of social unrest. The writers' belief that they could hold the *charivari* without troubles was vindicated.

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<sup>1</sup> Peter Burke, *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe*, (New York: Harper & Row, 1978), 71.



## Commemoration

As is the case with most commercial objects, the *chevauchée's* booklet needed to be sold - or commissioned - to cover the costs of production. The speed of production – the *charivari* was held on November 4<sup>th</sup>, and the *privilège*<sup>2</sup> was signed on November 24<sup>th</sup> – is a clear indication that time was of the essence, and the publishers wanted to bank on the availability of the booklet shortly after the event was held, while the event was still recent, to profit from a greater demand. The *privilège* at the beginning of the booklet states that exclusive selling rights are given to Guillaume Testefort and the *suppôts* for six weeks only.

Who was the targeted audience for the book? The *chevauchée's* description strives to include all the abbeys that participated in the *charivari* - sixteen out of twenty.<sup>3</sup> The authors take great pains in describing each group with a profusion of superlatives. All riders were

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<sup>2</sup> By 1566, there had already been 19 laws relative to print control adopted in France. By the *lettres patentes* of December 1547, Henry II ordered that the author and the printer's names be included in all published books, and forbade printing before inspection and approval. In 1563, printing without authorization was punishable by death. In 1566, new *lettres patentes* forbade the printing of books without the name and residence of the printer, and made the inclusion of the *privilège* mandatory. Paul Dupont, "Analyse des principaux actes législatifs et réglementaires qui ont régi la presse depuis l'introduction de l'imprimerie en France jusqu'à l'époque actuelle (1853) », in Paul Dupont, *Histoire de l'imprimerie*, (Paris : Edouard Rouveyre, 1853). The latter measure targeted a practice widely used by printers, who distributed heterodox literature from Geneva with false addresses. Yves Krumenacker, *Lyon 1562*, 131.

<sup>3</sup> Twenty abbeys are mentioned in the *sotties* held in September prior to the *chevauchée*. Only four are absent the day of the *charivari*: Bazoche, Bourgneuf, Confort and Forz. It was clear from the *sotties*, that the abbey of Forz and the Bazoche had been inactive for a long time. A conflict with the Bavards of Confort was hinted at in the second *sottie*: *Et vous les Bavardz de Confort/Qui vouliez tenir ranc en place/Voulez vous que lon vous effacce/Maintenant de ceste assemblée?* *Chevauchée*, 9. But the absence of Bourgneuf is unexpected.

*richement accoutrés* and *fort bien montés*; most props were *fort bien contrefaits*; all of which *il faisait fort bon veoir*. This is not a critical work; the abbeys are presented in a very favourable light, which is to be expected since the authors were themselves organizers and performers in the ride.

The self-promotional aspect of the book is a strong indication that, although accessible to the general public, which could appreciate its memorabilia nature, the publication was destined primarily to the abbeys' members. What makes this almost certain is the last section of the booklet, which describes the baptism of the knight of Saint Romain's son the following day, November fifth. Seven abbeys of misrule and their members, including the Lord of Misprint, participated in the procession, which ended with a banquet. There is no apparent reason to include this event in the description of the *chevauchée* if it is destined for a wider audience. The anecdotal character of the event, which had very little to do with the *chevauchée*, would be of interest mainly to the abbeys' members.

### Explanation

The text is a “complex hybrid of description and interpretation”; it is “self-consciously textual, bearing elements such as...*privilège*, printer's

details and so on, all of which...(is)...extra-theatrical, giving the reader more and new information than would have been allowed the spectator.”<sup>4</sup> Recreating the event in textual form allowed the writers the luxury of using print to enhance the experience by adding details and explanations, which were not available to the event’s witnesses, or that may not have been understood properly by them. Throughout the sixteenth century, civic events incorporated mythological symbols and references to more traditional, religious ones; the new Renaissance sensibilities also walked the streets. Some major city events, like a royal entry, demanded elaborate preparations and the manipulation of classical references to exalt royal power to such a degree that organizers relied on emblem books and mythology books to find inspiration.<sup>5</sup> The *chevauchée* was a much smaller affair, but there were a few symbols in the procession, mythological or otherwise, which the authors felt the crowd might have seen without understanding what they represented and thus required explanation.

The ride being a *charivari* organized by abbey of misrule, the overarching theme of the event was the moral deviance that women beating their husbands – and the latter’s submissiveness – represented. With the help of the notion of carnivalesque as defined by Bakhtin, Davis described in a seminal essay the para-legal functions of moral regulation

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<sup>4</sup> Tracy Hill, *Pageantry and Power. A Cultural History of the Early Modern Lord Mayor’s Show, 1585-1639*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010) 237.

<sup>5</sup> Amongst the most used emblem books were Alciato’s *Emblematum liber* (1531); Corozet’s *hecatomgraphie* (1540); Tory’s *Chamfleury*, (1526) and Conti’s *Mythologiae* (1551).

entrusted to these organizations.<sup>6</sup> One of their responsibilities – and privileges – was to be the initiators of public opprobrium inflicted on men beaten by their wives and, in some cases, by men who beat their wives. These moral, regulatory responsibilities were often accomplished in humorous mode, characteristic of an inverted, regenerative world view: *charivaris*, insults, public and grotesque humiliations, comical processions, impositions of fines (money or goods), etc. In the *charivari*, “two social contexts merged, the penal and the festive.”<sup>7</sup> Although *charivari* was a form of moral policing outside of the official legal frame, it borrowed heavily from legal discourse. Public humiliation and parades were forms of punishment given for certain crimes, like perjury, in early modern England.<sup>8</sup> In France, some customary laws – like the customs of Senlis and Saintonge around 1400 - did cover the case of men beaten by their wives; they were punished by “being paraded on an ass, head to tail.”<sup>9</sup> But the customary laws of the Lyonnais did not legislate this offence. The *charivaris* can therefore be considered, in this case as in other numerous regions of France where they were organized, as a popular supplement to the legal system. Therefore, there were many explicit and symbolic references to this morally unacceptable behavioural inversion in the processions, and in the *sotties*. For example, following the Lord of Misprint and his group in the ride were four giant puppets: “*quatre drolles*

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<sup>6</sup> Natalie Zemon Davies, *The reasons of Misrule*, op.cit.

<sup>7</sup> Martin Ingram, “Rough Music and the ‘Reform of Popular Culture’ in Early Modern England”, *Past & Present*, No. 105 (Nov. 1984), 79-113, 92.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid*, 92.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid*, 93.

*magnifiques & hautes comme geans, habillez desdictes couleurs, iaune, rouge, & verd: sans aucune aparoissance de bras, chose fort monstrueuse. Et apres un autre Drolle à cheval d'autre façon, toutesfois habillé de mesme couleur, ayant le visage & affus de teste le plus difforme que possible est de veoir."* <sup>10</sup> Towards the end of the booklet, the authors explain that these *drolles* represent men who, against the will of God and their own nature, let themselves be beaten, mutilated and subjugated by their wives. Because, as they add, there is nothing so monstrous, and funny, as seeing Man so debased and under the hand and rule of Woman. And it is impossible to see *Drolles* or animals more monstrous than the men who endure such mischief; lastly, in a final indictment, they are considered "unworthy of the name of Man." <sup>11</sup>

The last group to parade in the *chevauchée* was composed of the members of the Abbeyes' *Justice* under the banner of the *Juge du Bourghanin*. These were all the officials of all the parading abbeys of misrule. All of these officials (dressed as lawyers and counsellors) were paraded in a chariot, wearing the traditional lawyers' cloaks of red with collars of white fur, perusing mounds of books and *sacz de procès*, trial bags. They all had bridles attached to their left shoulders, with painted bits at the end. As the booklet explains, as is the case with deviant women, the people (*populas*) need to be controlled by justice to punish the wicked and protect the good:

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<sup>10</sup> *Chevauchée*, 33. "After followed four magnificent dummies, tall as giants, dressed in said colors of yellow, red and green, with no apparent arms, which was a quite monstrous thing to see. And after came another, different dummy, but dressed in same colors, with the face and head ornament as deformed as can be."

<sup>11</sup> *Chevauchée*, 36.

*“quant aux Advocatz, Conseillers, & Iujes desdictes Abbayes de Malgouvert, la bride & mord par eux portée sur l’Espaule, signifie que tout ainsi que la bride accompagnée du mords est pour dompter & tenir le cheval en raison: aussi est entendu que par la Iustice tout le populas doit estre tenu en raison, & comme par devoir, par icelle estre dompté: pour conserver et tenir en bride & raison les malins, à lencontre des bons, rendant à chacun le devoir. Et sans ladicte bride tout iroit à rebours : tout ainsi que le cheval sans bride ny mords va ou bon luy semble.”<sup>12</sup>*

In this visual metaphor, social anxieties about deviant gender boundary-crossing are extended to society in general and the fear of social unrest. It may also represent a strategy to flatter the civic and royal authorities by reinforcing their role as ultimate powers of social control.

### Justification

One of the most striking features of the booklet is the long explanation given by the writers on the reasons why the men who had been beaten by their wives in the past year, in each neighbourhood, were not named by name during the ride, as was the tradition.

Public humiliation of the overly submissive men was a big part of the *charivari*'s attraction. We can read – in a booklet bearing the same name,

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<sup>12</sup> *Chevauchée*, p. 37. “As for the lawyers , counsellors and judges of said abbey of misrule, the bridle and bit worn by them on the shoulder means that as they hold the horse to reason, it is understood thtat Justice has to hold the people to reason, and by duty, by Justice be tamed; to hold the evildoers under leash, protect the good people, each to his own. Without said bridle everything would go backwards, just like the horse without a bridle goes wherever it pleases.”

written by the *suppôts* twelve years later, and describing Lyon's ride of 1578 – the residence and profession of the martyrs who, during this ulterior event, were indeed paraded backwards on donkeys.<sup>13</sup>

The description of the 1566 *Chevauchée* begins with an explanation of the circumstances of its delay. It was scheduled to be presented on the day of the Duchess's arrival, October 27. However, it had to be postponed until November 4 because the targeted men, who had been beaten by their wives, mounted a defence to stop their public identification. This public naming was traditional for all charivaris organized by the *suppôts*: "*Et depuis ladite Chevauchée fut prolongée...pour obvier à ce que les puvres Martyrs...ne fussent nommés par noms & surnoms, comme de coutume est de faire ausdictes Chevauchées.*"<sup>14</sup>

The targeted men lobbied all levels of authority: The Governor Jacques de Nemours, his wife the Duchess, the *Président Birago*<sup>15</sup>, and the *consulat*. After a meeting of the parties, it was decided

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<sup>13</sup> *Recueil de la chevauchée, faite en la ville de Lyon: le dixseptième de Novembre. 1578.* (Lyon, par les trois Suppôts, 1578). For example : *Parlons de ce plieur de soie...du cartier de Bourgneuf...près de la samaritaine. Or En place des Cordeliers, encore qu'il soit bien familier, ce bel & bon homme Rousset.* (14-15).

<sup>14</sup> *Chevauchée*, 18.

<sup>15</sup> René de Birague, gallicizing of *Renato da Birago*, (1507 Milan-1583 Paris). Birague came from an illustrious Milan family – his father was ambassador of the Duke of Milan in France - and was an important political figure in France during the Wars of Religion. Favored by Francis I – who gave him a seat at the Council of Trent - and Henri II, he was a military man who acted as governor of the Lyonnais when de Nemours was absent. He became the first President of Turin (which explains his title in the *Chevauchée*). He was naturalized in 1565 and, in 1568, became superintendant of finances for Charles IX. He was nominated as *Garde des Sceaux* in 1570 and therefore obtained a seat at the secret council. He is considered one of the architects of the St. Bartholomew Massacre of 1572, and was rewarded with the position of Chancellor of France the following year, as well as the bishopric of Lodève. He became a close confidant of Catherine de Medici until his death in 1583. Jean-Baptiste Glaire, *Encyclopédie catholique*, vol. 3, (Paris: Parent-Desbarres, 1841), 616-617. According to Albi, during his stay in Lyon between 1565-1568,

that the ride would be authorized, but without the public identification of the ‘martyrs’. Given the short delay between the scheduled date and the actual ride (eight days), the negotiations must have been intense. The lobbying by the so-called martyrs had been a last-minute effort, because the *suppots* had obtained permission to parade through the streets for the first three call-to-arms processions of September, as is attested in the text of the third *sottie*:

*Sus, tabourins, que lon s’avance,  
De peur de tomber à la nuict.  
Nous avons bien bon saufconduit,  
Mais il se faut retirer d’heure.<sup>16</sup>*

Having already agreed to postpone the ride so it would coincide with the Duchess’ entry, the abbey of misrule and their members - which represented more than a thousand persons, not counting the usual crowd present for this traditional event – were reluctant to let a few targeted men cancel an event for which they had been preparing for months. For the authorities, the real danger was massive popular unrest if they did not agree to let the event take place, at a very delicate moment when religious tensions in the city were increasing. As a matter of fact, a few months earlier, in January of 1566, the feast of the mistletoe had been cancelled by civic authorities who feared that it would ignite a bloody conflict between the factions, like the riot of June 1565 had, and which had resulted in one

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Birague persecuted Huguenots to such an extent that he was nicknamed *Le marteau des hérétiques*. Henri Albi, *Éloge historique des cardinaux illustres*, (Paris, 1744); 354.

<sup>16</sup> *Chevauchée*, 17.



death, many casualties, the expulsion of a high-profile Protestant preacher, and increased social tensions.<sup>17</sup>

After 1563, as Timothy Watson explains, “the leaders of Lyon’s Catholic revival – like the Protestants – realized the crucial importance of mobilizing lay enthusiasm by encouraging public communal manifestations of lay piety. The Huguenots were well aware of the significance of this question, which was one of the crucial sticking points in the negotiations for the return of the Catholic exiles in June 1563.” Their unsuccessful attempt to prohibit processions in the city was motivated not only by a militant iconoclasm, but also by an awareness of the popularity of such processions. “The public observance of Saint’s days and other church festivals henceforth became a centre-piece of the Catholic revival, along with a concerted effort to revive pre-existing networks of religious sociability such as *quartier*-based and parish confraternities.”<sup>18</sup> The abbeys of misrule, although secular, followed precisely this template of *quartier*-based organizations and had a long tradition of involvement in processions and celebrations, religious or otherwise.

From the early days of the growing Protestant presence in Lyon, in the late 1550s, the *consulat* adopted a systematic policy of *laisser-faire* towards the Reformed. The aldermen’s first concern was that conflict between the Huguenots and the Catholics would bring down a royal army

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<sup>17</sup> Péricaud, *Notes...*, 46, 50.

<sup>18</sup> Timothy Watson, “Preaching, Printing, Psalm-singing: the Making and Unmaking of the Reformed Church in Lyon, 1550-1572”, in Raymond A. Mentzer and Andrew Spicer, ed., *Society and Culture in the Huguenot World, 1559-1685*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002)

on the city, thus reducing the *consulat's* political power. Furthermore, the city's patrician elite had been involved in a trial of strength with the ecclesiastical power of the archbishop for over a century, and had been lobbying the crown for the past decade to obtain for the municipality the *justice ordinaire* which was still in the archbishop's hands. The delicate balance of power between Catholics, Huguenots, the Church, the *consulat*, the royal representatives, the guilds and the general population in Lyon was exceedingly fragile and required a political culture of negotiated compromises; the presentation of the *chevauchée* without the usual martyrs is emblematic of those diplomatic skills at work, which often resulted in negotiated compromises to avoid violence.

We do not know who the beaten husbands were, but it is easy to imagine that the fusion of the entry and the ride gave their public humiliation a much wider – and nobler – audience than the familiar, annual *charivari*. Furthermore, the steady stream of Huguenots leaving the city for Geneva, which would reach its apex a year later, created a climate in which public punishment for heterodox moral behaviour could be easily conflated with sanction for religious heterodoxy.<sup>19</sup> The compromise proposed by the authorities – a ride without public identification of the morally deviant husbands – managed to avoid both dangers, although the organizers of the ride had to abandon some of the

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<sup>19</sup> Jean Tricou, *Les confréries joyeuses de Lyon au XVIe siècle et leur numismatique*, (Paris : Belles-lettres, 1937) ; Natalie Zemon Davis, *Society and Culture in Early Modern France*, (Stanford, California : Stanford University Press, 1975).

features they had prepared: *Qui fut cause toustefoys que lon ne veid à ladicte Chevauchée, choses de grande importance desia préparées, que lon y eusse veu.*<sup>20</sup>

### Persuasion

Both Tricou<sup>21</sup> and Zemon Davis have established that there was a high proportion of Huguenots in Lyon's print industry. Davis uses the term *secularistic* to qualify the world-view adopted by printers, one which made them good candidates for membership in the Reformed Churches of France: "by secularistic I mean to suggest a wide but interrelated group of phenomena: the explaining, planning, and justifying of events in this-worldly terms; the use of nonreligious sanctions and techniques to influence social action; and the assumption by laymen of increasing responsibility in directing social activities formerly directed by the clerical estate."<sup>22</sup> Davis explains how a guild of artisan printers called *Griffarins*<sup>23</sup>, an organization grouping the print industry's journeyman

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<sup>20</sup> *Chevauchée*, 19.

<sup>21</sup> Jean Tricou, *Les confréries joyeuses de Lyon au XVIe siècle et leur numismatique* (Paris : Les Belles-lettres, 1937).

<sup>22</sup> Davies, *Society...*, 7, footnote.

<sup>23</sup> Davis offers a plausible etymology for *Griffarin*, related to the food increase requested by the print journeymen in the first decades of the 16th century. But it is more likely a reference to the most famous printer in Lyon, Sebastien Gryphe. Gryphe (or Greyff), born in Reutlingen Germany in 1492, settled in Lyon in 1530. His popularity grew rapidly and, in 1536, he created a partnership with one of Lyon's most notable merchant, Hugues de la Porte, to open a big printshop called *l'atelier du Griffon*. He was referred to as the 'Prince of booksellers' by his peers. Between 1530 and 1550, his production is evaluated as three times that of his competitors. It can be argued that the name *Griffarins* refers to journeymen working in this printshop. Raphaëlle Bats et al., *Étude de la production éditoriale de Sébastien Gryphe sur deux années caractéristiques : 1538 et 1550*. Mémoire de recherche pour le diplôme de conservateur de

and *compagnons* – including the *suppôts* – had been active in the Huguenots' rise in the late 1540's and 1550's. When Reformers – and the consistory – took control of the city in 1562, the printers discovered that they did not obtain the active role they had expected in the church hierarchy. Furthermore, their strong attachment to their professional association, with its profane rituals and hedonistic entertainment, was at odds with Lyon's morally austere *consistory*. So was their violent treatment of *Forfants*, other printers' journeymen who did not belong to their association and worked for cheaper wages; nowadays, these workers would be called *scabs*. As punishment, Lyon's consistory threatened to deprive them of the Lord's Supper, and told them their salvation was in jeopardy. Disillusioned, and eager to keep their professional bond – which often doubled as a surrogate family and a strong support network – they gradually migrated back to the Mother Church, which might not approve of their lifestyle and their proto-union behaviour, but had never threatened them with spiritual punishment. The climate of persecution in 1566 surely did not help the Huguenots' cause, and the *suppôts* used the very public opportunity offered by the *chevauchée* to confess, on the street and in the book, their membership in the Catholic faction. Whether this public confession was mainly motivated by self-preservation or true repentance remains to be explored.

In the *chevauchée*, the printers were dressed in yellow, red and green, the Lord of Misprint among them, richly adorned, followed by a woman who distributed rolls of papers on which an octet was printed; a chariot followed, on which Minerva was seated, flanked on both sides by replicas of a lion and a dragon. All the printers held an anchor in their hands. The booklet explains: “As for the Print Journeymen that each held an anchor in his hands: it means that the anchor holds the ship to reason, stable, firm and invariable in the middle of the sea, even when it is tempestuous, whipped by the fury of the North Wind. Which has been done **by the few Printers’ Journeymen still in said city: without having changed anything in their Art, or Religion, and hope to do better**, with the Grace of God.”<sup>24</sup>

This passage is quite informative. Just as the anchor provides stability in tumultuous seas, the printers offer stability in troubled times. The reader is also told that there are few printers’ journeymen left in the city; this has been confirmed by Davis, who uncovered archival evidence in Geneva that a important group of *Griffarins* moved to Geneva and tried to maintain their association there, but were unsuccessful, that city’s consistory being opposed to the secular oath, the parodic rituals of

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<sup>24</sup> *Et quant aux Compagnons Imprimeurs qui portoyent chacuns d’eux une Ancre en main: Est signifié que tout ainsi que l’Ancre tient le Navire en raison au milieu de la Mer: Encores qu’elle soit impetueusement agitée des ondes, par les furies des ventz d’Aquilon. Nonobstant ce ladicte Navire demeure ferme, stable & sans varier. Ce, qui a esté faict par ce peu de bons Compagnons Imprimeurs, qui font encore à present en ladicte ville: sans avoir rien changé ny en leur Art, ny en leur Religion, & esperent faire de mieux en mieux, moyennant la grace de Dieu. Chevauchée, 37.*

initiation, and the violent attitude towards *Forfants* which were characteristic of this professional association.<sup>25</sup>

The booklet's writers also explain that the printers had not changed their religion during those troubled times; they only acknowledged that they could do better, which was, in fact, their professional motto. Indeed, their banner in the procession consisted of a great green V, inside which was written *ESPOIR DE MIEUX*. This was a clever play on the concept of *coquille*, misprint, the V being a typographic sign which was used both for the letter U and the letter V, and thus a great source of misprints. In the context of religious affiliation, the meaning of the motto is extended from its original meaning to encompass a type of confession, a desire for spiritual improvement. Saying they hope to do better meant they might have faltered, but they would strive to improve. The *suppôts* obviously wished to avoid being associated with heterodoxy, and were explaining in the booklet their (apparent) steadfastness in religious matters. This polysemic use of symbols is also characteristic of a carnivalesque mode of expression where meaning is unstable and subject to play, which is congruent with the parodic nature of the event, and constitutes an example of the *suppôts*' skills at wordplay.

A year and a half later, in the spring of 1568, the *suppôts* published another small, 12-page booklet, called *Discours du temps passé et du*

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<sup>25</sup> Davis, *Society*, 14.

*présent*.<sup>26</sup> No processions, no description, only a *sottie*. Not a funny one; it was closer to a lament than to a comedy. In this booklet, the *suppôts* longed for an idyllic, idealized past, *temps passé*, when wine flowed and food was cheap, when all was good and people were happy. *Temps présent* is terrible, in rebellion, and double faced: " *Le temps présent ce n'est qu'hypocrisie/accompagné de folle opinion/qui a pour foy Rebellion choisie/dont la noblesse est en division*."<sup>27</sup> In 1567 and early 1568, between the *chevauchée* and the *discours*' publication, the noose was tightening for Lyon's Huguenots. In September 1567, in fear of a possible takeover of the city by *ceux de l'église réformée*, the Catholics destroyed two of their temples, and posted militias in a number of strategic places in Lyon. In October, an edict published by de Birague, who was in command in the absence of the duke of Nemours, gave Huguenots twenty-four hours to leave the city. The *ordonnance* also stipulated that it was forbidden to transport goods from one house to another, between an accused Huguenot house and a friendly Catholic's one, for example, in order to escape confiscation of the former's goods. In November, there was a procession in the streets to celebrate the victory of the Duke of Nevers against a Huguenot army: "from which at once we went to give thanks to God and sing a *Te Deum* in the cathedral of Saint-Jean, where the people were summoned by the sound of the great bell, which certainly made the

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<sup>26</sup> *Discours du temps passé & du présent, publié en la ville de Lyon, par les trois suppôtz de l'imprimerie: accompagnez du Seigneur de la Coquille, & de plusieurs compagnons Imprimeurs en bon equipage, avec tabourins, fifres, timbales, & autres instrumens, le ious des Brandons 1568*, (Lyon : Pierre Brotot, 1568)

<sup>27</sup> Present time is but hypocrisy/accompanied by foolish opinion/who has chosen faith in rebellion/by which nobility is divided. *Discours du temps passé*, 12.

Protestants lower their heads, and from then on they spoke only of leaving town.”<sup>28</sup> In December, Huguenots’ goods were confiscated and, again, they were ordered to leave the city within twenty-four hours; many of them were arrested, and could only avoid jail by converting back to Catholicism, or paying a hefty fine before having to leave the city, forced to leave all their possessions behind. Finally, in late January 1568, another edict declared that the authorities would prosecute those who had falsely converted to Catholicism; the published document contained the name of 240 Huguenots who were still in the city and who were ordered to leave within twenty-four hours.<sup>29</sup>

In *Discours du temps passé*, the *suppôts* took a clearer – and more elaborate – position than in the *chevauchée*, clearly in response to a period characterized by heightened persecution. Talking about the *temps passé*, the *suppôts* now supported a resolutely intolerant attitude towards the Huguenots: "*Sçavez-vous un jour que l'on fit?/L'on bannit Folle opinion/lors l'on vivoit en union/C'estoit plaisir que d'estre en France (...) heresie l'on fit brusler/Avec son compaignon Rebelle./Mon Dieu que la France étoit belle.*"<sup>30</sup> They thus reinterpreted the past to suit their immediate needs, their renewed confession more strident and categorical than the one they had made in the *chevauchée* of 1566.

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<sup>28</sup> De Rubys, *Histoire*, 412, cited (and translated) in Watson, *Preaching*, 26.

<sup>29</sup> Péricaud, *Notes...*, 51-55.

<sup>30</sup> Do you know what was done one day?/Foolish opinion was banished/then we lived in harmony/it was a pleasure to be in France (...) Heresy we burned/along with its companion Rebellion. God, how beautiful was France. *Discours*, 5.



### Self-promotional

As writers, the *suppôts* had a perfect opportunity with the *chevauchée*'s publication to promote themselves and their peers, something that might have been quite a bit more challenging to accomplish during the event itself. The first indication of this use can be found by looking at the length of text dedicated to the *suppôts* in the booklet: two and a half pages, whereas the description of other groups averages a third to a half page each. Another indication is suggested by the insistent presence of Minerva, the Roman goddess regarded as the patron of arts and handicrafts, and later of wisdom and knowledge. The printers' journeymen claimed her as their own and considered her the goddess of print, "*Mère d'Imprimerie et déesse de savoir*," the Mother of science.<sup>31</sup> As Davis wrote, "their pride would be expressed... through Minerva, the Mother of Printing, who presided over their secular festivals."<sup>32</sup> Furthermore, the *suppôts* reveled in their skills, a majority of them being able to read and write. There was no lack of opportunity in the procession – and in the text - to showcase their expertise. Their knowledge of Latin, for example, was displayed in their accessories: "*ledict Seigneur de la Coquille...portant une espée de boys, contrefaict, à ondes, escrit en icelle*

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<sup>31</sup> *Chevauchée*, 37.

<sup>32</sup> Davis, *Society...*, 16.

*en lettres d'argent: Dissipabit impios Rex.*"<sup>33</sup> Following the Lord of Misprint were the printers, all holding anchors in their hands, on which Latin again was prominent: "*à chacune desdites Ancres y avoit certaines devises imprimées, en Latin & en François: chose de fort bonne grace, & bon sens.*"<sup>34</sup> A *suppôt*, dressed as a footman, also distributed little rolls of paper with an octet printed on them, a gift given in the name of the Lord of Misprint, which he took from a little coffer he held in his hands.

In addition to these expressions of pride in their literacy, the frontispiece of the booklet features a motto in Latin: *Mulieris bonae, beatus vir.*<sup>35</sup> The presence of this Latin quote reinforces the link between the printers' journeymen and an 'elite' culture to which they aspired, and of which they considered themselves mediators.

### Vindication

*Avec tout l'ordre tenu en icelle.*

The subtitle of the booklet prefigured the linear structure of the description that follows. It also introduced the notion of order, as opposed

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<sup>33</sup> *Chevauchée*, 36. 'The said lord of Misprint...wearing a fake, weaving wooden sword, in which was written in silver letters Dissipabit impios Rex.' The quote is taken from *Prov. 20:26*: A wise king will winnow the wicked. (my translation).

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid*, 29: 'And on each of said anchors, there were words printed, in Latin and in French, a graceful and clever thing.'

<sup>35</sup> *Eccles. 26:1: Happy is the husband of a really good wife.* It is to be noted that the inclusion of this quote shelters the book under the umbrella of scriptural approval. It is taken from *Ecclesiasticus*, or *Sirach*, one of the seven books of the Bible rejected by Luther and the Huguenots on soteriological grounds. Another subtle indication that the *suppôts* wished to be considered good Catholics.

to disorder, a very apparent characteristic of the *chevauchée*'s text. In the space of forty short pages, the term was used 42 times. When compared with the *chevauchée* of 1578, which shows a remarkable structural similarity with the *chevauchée* of 1566 in the description of the procession, we find only seven occurrences of the word 'order'. Stylistic awkwardness alone cannot account for such a systematic use of the word. In the *chevauchée* of 1566, towards the end of the procession's description, on page 36, the writers reaffirmed the good order of the whole event: "*Entre telle & si grande compagnie & assemblée de peuple, n'y eut oncques querelle ny parole fascheuse ny en faictz, ni en dictz aucuns scandalles.*" At the end of the booklet, on the last page, there is another passage which reinforced the message: "*Qui a este la fin de toute la chevauchée, apres en icelle par la grace de Dieu avoir passé le temps sans scandalle, n'y trouble aucun: ainsi tout passetemps & recreation d'Esprit.*"<sup>36</sup> There is a clear intent from the writers of the booklet to highlight their success in bringing to fruition the event without causing social unrest, disorder, or unsavory scenes, which might have jeopardized the greater event of the entry and caused the Duchess to adopt an unfavorable opinion of the city and its leaders.

It appears that the motives for publishing an account of the *chevauchée* had as much to do with the reputation of the authors and organizers as with that of the city. In this regard, writers strayed from a

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<sup>36</sup> *Chevauchée*, 39.

simple description of the event and added their own blend of interpretations, consciously moulding the narrative to fit their needs and interests, while simultaneously responding to the social, economic and religious pressures that characterized their world at the moment of the procession and the *chevauchée's* redaction. However, this world is also present in the text in tacit, implicit fashion, in a form of "latent unconscious" which requires further investigation.

## CHAPTER THREE

### Implicit functions of the text

When considering the text-context quandary, Macherey describes history as the text's 'absent cause', the "forces and texts against which it constructs itself, incorporating not a single meaning but layers of contested and conflictual meanings and silences that bind the work to reality."<sup>1</sup> Although one must be particularly cautious when applying psychoanalytical concepts to the study of history, one must recognize that this way of looking at the text as the site of "multiple, often contradictory historical realities" that are absent and present in the literary artifact provides an efficient approach to the "inextricably inter-related nature of social and discursive practices, of the material and linguistic realities that are interwoven into the fabric of the text." And it is by concentrating on the "social logic of the text, its location within a broader network of social and inter textual relations," that we can familiarize ourselves with the particular historical conditions whose presence in the text informs us about its specific social attributes and function. <sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Spiegel, 84.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 85.

### Parodic appropriation of symbols of power

Talking about royal entries, Darnton argued that they were “a statement unfurled in the street, through which the city represented itself to itself.”<sup>3</sup> The *chevauchée*, where elements of *charivari*, carnival, pageantry and entry are mixed together and contribute to give the event a singular and hybrid nature, was a location “of the dense presence and the high production of symbols.”<sup>4</sup> Royal entries, official entries organized to honour important public figures, and other related civic ceremonials grew in importance in France at the end of the fifteenth century, and reached the apex of their political and cultural importance in the sixteenth century.<sup>5</sup>

Muchembled has offered a classification for popular urban festivities, dividing them into eight categories: (1) spontaneous and occasional celebrations; (2) weddings and banquets; (3) confraternity or guild festival; (4) festivities limited to one street or one neighbourhood; (5) church fair *ducasses*<sup>6</sup>; (6) popular aspects in certain official festivities, like games and theatricals included in princely entries into cities; (7) the

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<sup>3</sup> Robert Darnton, *The Great Cat Massacre and Other Episodes in French Cultural History*, (New York: Vintage Book, 1985), 124.

<sup>4</sup> Don Handelman, *Models and Mirrors: Towards an Anthropology of Public Events*, (Cambridge University Press, 1990), 12.

<sup>5</sup> Nicolas Russel and Hélène Visentin, *French Ceremonial Entries in the Sixteenth Century. Event, Image, Text*, (Toronto: Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, 2007)

<sup>6</sup> Celebrations of the anniversary of a church dedication.

burlesque festivals: *Fête des Fous, des Asnes, des Sots*<sup>7</sup>; (8) the great feasts of Carnival and Lent and of the month of May.<sup>8</sup> *La chevauchée* does not fall neatly into one of those groups, but shares aspects with many of them. This is often the case when using a conceptual grid designed to construct wide generalizations. As a charivari, a type of grotesque carnival, it should fall squarely in group number 7. However, because it was organized and performed by *Abbeyes de Mau-gouvert*, the *chevauchée* is also part of group number 3, festivities organized by guilds. Charivaris were generally held during the carnival festivities of Lent and the gender-oriented feasts of May, the month when women are praised, and morally reprehensible behavior toward them is publicly chastised.<sup>9</sup> Therefore, it has a place in category number 8. However, the *chevauchée* was postponed to coincide with another, more ambitious urban event, the entry of the Duchess of Nemours; therefore, it is also characteristic of group number 6. Evidently, Muchembled's taxonomy is unhelpful when applied to the *Chevauchée* of 1566, and reveals the limits, and frequent inadequacies, of reified categorizations as conceptual tools to analyse discrete historical events.

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<sup>7</sup> Feasts of the Fools, of the Asses, of the Dunces.

<sup>8</sup> Robert Muchembled, *Popular Culture and Elite Culture in France. 1400-1750*, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 1985), 129.

<sup>9</sup> In 1576, *L'Infanterie de Dijon*, a confrérie joyeuse of that city, performed a sottie during a charivari organized to chastize a magistrate who had beaten his wife in May: *Au mois de May, en ceste ville - les maris les plus rigoureux - laissent leur femme bien gentille - maistresse dedans leur maison - Que des douzes mois de l'année - la pauvre femme fortunée - se puisse aider du droict commung !* (In the month of May in this city - the most severe husbands - leave their nice wives - mistresses within their house; - in the twelve months of the year - may the poor fortunate woman - be helped by common law!). *Asneries, ou les quatre Jeux joués contre le grand maistre des eaux et forestz: avec la chanson des satyres. 1576.* (Dijon : Chez Darantière, imprimeur, 1887) 39.

As *charivari*, the *Chevauchée* – being included in the duchess of Nemours' entry celebrations – shared with the larger event a semiotic code of symbols, but used in parodic fashion, applying to the public display of civic structures, “designed to strengthen the perception of hierarchies of government and the right ordering of society,” if not a subversive, at the least a relativizing twist. This mode of appropriation, ludic in character, based on laughter and parody, frees human beings from a deep-seated fear of chaos, lack of control, and dissolution of the order of the world, all the while empowering the ones who laugh by conjuring the possibility of an alternate order. As Bakhtin argued, “*le carnaval était le triomphe d'une sorte d'affranchissement provisoire de la vérité dominante et du régime existant, d'abolition provisoire de tous les rapports hiérarchiques, privilèges, règles et tabous.*”<sup>10</sup> This carnivalesque laughter, born of the experience of contradiction, can only happen if there is something to contradict. It walks a thin line between negation and affirmation, and lives in the ambivalence between the two, in the experience of discrepancy. Rituals of parodic inversion like the *chevauchée* offer counter-propositions about the established social order. But parodic inversion of an order, a hierarchy, is still a discourse about that order: “inversion maintains the relevance of its foundation, and is a discourse about its validity....the inversion of a stratified order is still a discourse about that very order that

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<sup>10</sup> Bakhtine, 18.



is inverted.”<sup>11</sup> If there is a consensus on the validity of the original order which is inverted by the carnivalesque event, then the inversion may become irrelevant. Beyond the fact that the transgression of a norm, or hierarchy, by inversion might be a challenge to the said norm, it can be argued that what is challenged is not always the norm *per se*, but *who* the norm applies to, and who benefits from it. In the context of the *chevauchée* and the numerous instances of inversion it displayed – social, military, sartorial, heraldic, etc. – this thesis contends that what is disputed is not so much the dominant order, the existing norm, but rather the exclusive nature of its application. Using parodic inversion, the *suppôts* - and their fellow guilds and abbey members - can appropriate the benefits of the dominant order which eludes them outside the confined parameters of festive occasions, while giving them an opportunity to create “configurations of potential dynamism that both exercise and limit possibilities of empowerment within social orders.”<sup>12</sup> In other words, inversion works as a means of empowerment. Furthermore, this appropriation is a way for the participants and the crowds to exorcise, *via* cathartic performance and parodic re-enactment, sources of fear like wars, gender anxieties and threatening Others. Consequently, an exploration of these instances of parodic appropriation of symbols of power by the *suppôts* and their peers will provide a better understanding of the dominant social order in which the *suppôts* inscribed themselves,

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<sup>11</sup> Handelman, Don, *Models and Mirrors: Towards an Anthropology of Public Events*, (New York: Berghahn Books, 1998), 52.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

the nature of the elements of the order(s) they challenged, and to identify some of the fears exorcised by their carnivalesque performances.

### Military symbols of power

The whole *chevauchée* is a call to arms against the scourge of deviant moral behaviour: strict gender norms are transgressed by overly masculine women, and by men who, by their submissiveness, do not conform to the accepted norms of manhood. From the three *sotties*, performed three Sundays in a row in September, to the big carnival/charivari/procession of November 4, the overarching theme is martial in nature:

*Sus, sus, tabourins, sonner l'ordre!*<sup>13</sup>

...

*Arneschez vous, Marchand, Bourgeois*<sup>14</sup>

...

*Lon le faict aussi asçavoir  
Comme de chose bien certaine,  
À vous de Plastre Capitaine,  
pour y marcher & vos soldats.*<sup>15</sup>

The second and third Sunday, two abbeyes of misrule and their members, on horseback, were reviewed, like military regiments. When the day of the *chevauchée* arrived, most groups paraded in the same general order as military companies would do:

<sup>13</sup> Come, come! Tambourines, sound the order! *Chevauchée*, 7.

<sup>14</sup> Get your equipment, merchants, burghers. *Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>15</sup> We will make it known to you for certain, Captain of Le Plastre, so you can march with your soldiers. *Ibid.*, 10.

*Premièrement marchoit la compagnie de l'Abbé  
Saint Vincent, en bon ordre...Et au devant de ladicte  
compagnie le Porte-Guydon...Et suyvoient en bon  
ordre quantité de gens à cheval, bien montez, habillez  
de grandz sayes à modede gens-d'armes...portans  
lances à main, avec la Banderollede mesme, les  
coutelatz de boys bien contrefaictz...<sup>16</sup>*

The following abbeys marched in the same military way, their groups arranged in mock martial fashion, with members playing traditional military roles like banner-holder, soldiers and rammers. Some companies even featured falconers, venerers, cooks and other such specialized personnel who were responsible for food supplies in a marching army. There is a great emphasis, in the description, on the presence of fake weapons, worn by the participants:

*...portant espées de boys bien contrefaictes<sup>17</sup>*

...

*Portant les susdits en main lances, & petit  
guydons au bout d'icelles, coutellatz de boys de  
mesme...<sup>18</sup>*

...

*La plupart d'iceux portans hallebardes de boys bien  
contrefaictes, les autres dardz...et coutellatz...<sup>19</sup>*

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<sup>16</sup> Firstly marched the company of the Abbot St. Vincent, in good order... And in front of said company the Standard-Bearer... And followed in good order a great many people on horses, well mounted, dressed with large cloaks in soldier fashion, ... spear in hand, with the same banderoles, their wooden cutlass well imitated (...). *Ibid.*, 19

<sup>17</sup> ...holding wooden swords well imitated. *Ibid.*, 20.

<sup>18</sup> ...holding spears with little standards at the end, cutlasses also made of wood. *Ibid.*, 22.

<sup>19</sup> Most of them held well imitated wooden Halberds, others (held) wooden cutlasses... *Ibid.*, 27.

Some abbeys even adopted a military structure in their own hierarchical organization, beginning with their leaders: *Capitaine du Plastre, Capitaine des Teincturiers, Chevalier Saint-Romain, Admiral du Griffon*. It is important to note that, in the late Middle Ages, French abbeys of misrule almost exclusively parodied either the ecclesiastical or noble hierarchies in the way they structured their association; while it is still true for the *confréries joyeuses* of Lyon in 1566, the presence of these mock military hierarchies constitutes a new organizational trend, which may reflect the increased presence of the military in everyday life.

The *Admiral du Griffon's* abbey is the most spectacular one of the whole procession. The group constructed a mock galley, built on a wheeled cart, which featured sails, tops, oars, and imitations of artillery pieces, from which a great many fireworks were lit throughout the procession's course:

*Et au devant de monseigneur de Nemours & sa  
Compagnie & autres lieux & places de ladicte  
Ville, se faisoit gros bruit sortant de ladicte gallere,  
Par le moyen desdictz feuz d'artifice. Tellement  
Que quelque foys sembloit le tout estre en feu...<sup>20</sup>*

The possibility of wearing and displaying weapons – even mocked ones - during the ride constitutes a telling fact when considering the

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<sup>20</sup> And in front of his Lordship de Nemours and his company, and in other places of said city there were great noises coming out of the galley by means of said fireworks. So much so that sometimes it seemed it was all on fire... *Ibid.*, 27.

numerous bans against the carrying of weapons published in 1565-66, some promulgated by the king, others by Lyon's governor or his representative. The king, either by *lettres patentes* or *ordonnances*, promulgated no less than four of these bans in 1565, and six in 1566.<sup>21</sup> The queen, Mary of Medicis, sent a letter to Lyon's *consulat* in 1566 prohibiting that municipal body from legislation of any kind related to the bearing of arms, which was to be kept a royal prerogative.<sup>22</sup> That was a radical attack on the traditional privilege held by the *consulat* to guard the city. Lyon was divided into 36 *pennonages*, a type of urban militia, one per *quartier*. In each *pennon* a notable burgher, named by the *consulat*, kept note of all the men in his neighborhood able to stand guard and maintain a lookout. He led his subordinates - a lieutenant, an ensign, sergeants, *dizainiers* and *quarteniers*<sup>23</sup> - into service when needed. These *pennonages* were ultimately under the orders of the *commandant général de la ville*, chosen by the *consulat*, and confirmed by the king. Since many guild members - some of them the very same who organized the *chevauchée* - were *dizainiers* and *quarteniers*, and counted many Huguenots in their midst<sup>24</sup>, the governor's second-in-command, de

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<sup>21</sup> *Catalogue des livres précieux*, (Paris: Adolphe Labitte, 1889), 52-53.

<sup>22</sup> AML, BB 86.

<sup>23</sup> Leaders of a neighborhood or an administrative structure. A *dizainier*, as the name says, led a group composed of ten men.

<sup>24</sup> About printers' journeymen religious affiliation and participation in the urban militia, Davis has found that 'Before that date [1573], Protestantism had won the support of a large majority of men in Lyon's publishing industry; whereas the journeymen began around 1566 to return to the Mother Church.' (p.49) 'The urban militia was built around neighbourhood units of ten men...A gang of printers' journeymen could show up from one street or shop and volunteer. Known as good fighters, they were not turned down. Often officers of the *Griffarins* led their own *dizaines*. Thus a certain percentage of the journeymen had the occasion to bear arms legally.' Natalie

Birague, modified their composition in 1566-67 to exclude all declared or alleged Huguenots from their ranks.

Another category of military symbols used extensively for the *chevauchée* was the heraldic banners. All abbeys had their own banners, with mottos and designs:

*Et au devant de ladicte compagnie le Porte-guydon  
...& audict Guydon était écrit l'Abbe de Saint-Vincent  
et sa suytte.<sup>25</sup>*

...

*Toute ladicte gallere garnie de guydons & penonceaux  
de plusieurs armoyries de diverses couleurs...<sup>26</sup>*

Coats of arms had been popular in Europe since the eleventh century, and were closely associated with military tradition and nobility. The use of standards and coats of arms on the firing galley and for the identification of each parading group mimicked those hierarchies and reinforced their empowering effect on each abbey, through the crowd's gaze.

The presence of various armies in the *Lyonnais* was a staple of everyday life in Lyon throughout the 1560s. Although the town was spared from any large military presence from 1563 to 1566 – just before the *chevauchée*, a few hundred Swiss guards, promised more than a year before by the king, finally arrived – Catholic and Huguenot armies were

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Zemon Davis, A trade Union in Sixteenth-Century France, *The Economic History Review*, Vol. 19, No. 1 (1966), 48-69, 57.

<sup>25</sup> And in front of said company the Standard-Bearer, (...) on which standard was written: *The Abbot of St. Vincent and his suite. Chevauchée*, 19.

<sup>26</sup> All of said galley well fitted out with standards and banners, with coats of arms of various colors... *Chevauchée*, 27.

nonetheless roaming the countryside, battling it out in numerous, but ultimately inconclusive skirmishes. Thus military symbols were highly contested – and threatening - in 1566.

### Ecclesiastical symbols of power

Relationships between abbeys of misrule and the Church had always been ambivalent. The first archival mentions of *confréries joyeuses* and *Feast of Fools* appear at the same time, in the early decades of the thirteenth century.<sup>27</sup> The Feast of Fools was a parodic event, characterized by the parodic inversion of the mass. Religious clerics officiated in these spectacles of mockery, presided over by a king of fools. The abbeys of misrule, although secular, mimicked the ecclesiastical hierarchy in their inversionary activities; carnival, *charivari* and Feast of Fools share a common parodic world-view and carnivalesque world-view. The official position of the Church towards these events and organizations was sometimes benevolent – they were then considered as safety-valves against social unrest – and sometimes intolerant, and consequently, denounced as impious and sacrilegious. While the Feast of Fools, which was generally held in churches - and thus under the direct control of ecclesiastical authorities - was eventually forbidden by the late fourteenth century, the *confréries joyeuses* avoided that fate and blossomed in the

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<sup>27</sup> Martine Grinberg, *Carnaval et société urbaine XI<sup>e</sup> – XVI<sup>e</sup> siècles : le royaume dans la ville, Ethnologie française*, [0046-2616] Vol. 4 No. 3 (1974), 216.

urban context of sixteenth-century France, and kept their mock ecclesiastical hierarchy, a fact splendidly illustrated in the *chevauchée*. The ecclesiastical presence is found in the generic name itself: *abbeyes* of *mirsole*. Secondly, many names chosen for the leader of each abbey in Lyon were related to the Church and more specifically to parishes in each neighborhood: *abbé* Saint-Vincent, *abbé* du Temple, *abbé* Saint-Georges, *abbé* Saint-Just, *abbé* Saint-Michel, etc. The members of these particular abbeys were called *moynes*, monks, and dressed in mock ecclesiastical garb when participating in the procession. They also wore a mitre and carried a crozier, two potent ecclesiastical symbols. There is no doubt that in the context of the religious tensions at play in Lyon at the time of the *chevauchée*, mocking the Church and the monks – orders which were subjected to the animosity of the Huguenots – was a perilous and ambivalent undertaking.

#### Sartorial symbols of power

One of the most striking ways in which the historical world is internalized in the textual version of the *charivari* is located in the costumes of the procession, which are described in great details in the *chevauchée*. Those descriptions can be divided into two categories: embodiment of the Other - in which the writers described the various types of costumes chosen by the organizers to represent the foreign Other - and the sartorial, which parodied the social order and the distinct ways in



which the various members of the first and second estates – kings, princes, nobles, lawyers, etc. - were identified by their clothes.

The Renaissance transformed the clothed body into a ‘visual rhetoric of social discourse.’<sup>28</sup>In sixteenth-century France, two trends appear in fashion, one horizontal and the other vertical: “...les différences liées au corps social que l’on pourrait qualifier de verticales tendent à s’estomper, au grand dam des ...législateurs tandis que, d’autre part, apparaissent des différences que l’on pourrait qualifier d’horizontales car liées au pays, à la nation. ”<sup>29</sup> Let us explore the former first.

Fashion in the fifteen and early sixteenth centuries in France – and more generally in Europe - was an expression of the ordering of society; it was an effective index to the social wearer’s class. It “embodied a whole series of status signals – the quality of the cloth, the richness of the accessories, the colours – clearly identifying the social rank of the wearer.”<sup>30</sup> This hierarchy of appearances came under attack in the second half of the sixteenth century due to an increase in social mobility and the rise of the middle class: “those who succeeded in trade, through public office... were concerned with consolidating the advantages achieved by

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<sup>28</sup> Madeleine Lazard, « Le corps vêtu. Signification du costume à la Renaissance », *Le corps à la Renaissance. Actes du XXXe colloque de Tours 1987*, Jean Céard, Marie-Madeleine Fontaine and Jean-Claude Margolin, eds., (Paris : Aux Amateurs de Livres, 1990), 77-94.

<sup>29</sup> Isabelle Paresys, *Paraître et se vêtir au XVIe siècle : morales vestimentaires*, in *Paraître et se vêtir au XVIe siècle*, (Presses de l’Université de Saint-Étienne, 2006), 34.

<sup>30</sup> Carlo Marco Belfanti and Fabio Giusberti, “Clothing and Social Inequality in Early Modern Europe: Introductory Remarks”, *Continuity and Change*, Vol. 15, No. 3 (2000), 359-365, 359.

class as regards both social status and political influence. It is important to observe that these ‘emerging classes’ did not want to destroy the hierarchy of appearances, but merely to be included in it.”<sup>31</sup> The crown reacted to this sartorial attack on the visual hierarchy of power by adopting eleven sumptuary laws between 1543 and 1606, where there had been none between 1485 and 1543.<sup>32</sup> The sumptuary edict of 1549, promulgated by Henry II, strove to re-establish the visibility of social hierarchy in the social body. These laws, among the most important segregational instrument of social space at the time, were ineffectual at thwarting those who had the means to dress as the nobles did. At the General Estates of 1561, the third estate itself wanted to restrain artisans’ ostentatious luxury, and the nobility wanted to control “the bourgeois” luxury. Why? Because the great financial crisis of 1557-59, caused mainly by the enormous expenses related to the Italian wars, and the sudden influx of gold from Peru, affected peasants and nobles, but burghers, merchants and well-to-do artisans kept getting – relatively – richer, having profited from their capital.<sup>33</sup> The participants in the *Chevauchée* could, under the guise of a carnivalesque event, partake in this muddying of the hierarchy of appearance. First, on the day of the ride, the count of *La Fontaine* and his suite marched in the streets dressed as members of the nobility:

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<sup>31</sup> Carlo Marco Belfanti, “The Civilization of Fashion: at the Origins of a Western Social Institution”, *Journal of Social History*, Vol. 43 No. 2, (Winter 2009), 261-283, 271-72.

<sup>32</sup> Pascal Bastien, « Aux trésors dissipez l’on cognoist le malfaict » : Hiérarchie sociale et transgression des ordonnances somptuaires en France, 1543-1606, *Renaissance and Reformation/Renaissance et Réforme*, Vol. 23, No. 4 (1999), 23-43.

<sup>33</sup> Bastien, 27-28.

*...portans cappes de taffetaz bleu, passementées d'or, d'argent, & soye de diverses couleurs : pourpointz & chasses de mesmes. Portans tous bonetz rouges garnis de plumes avec force pendans d'or, perles & autres pierreries (..)<sup>34</sup>*

They were followed by the the *gentil-hommes*, the noble gentlemen:

*Suyvoit apres la compagnie du Gentil-homme de la rue des Boys...ladicte compagnie portans tous Capes de taffetas bleu passerées d'or & d'argent, les bonnetz de mesme (...)<sup>35</sup>*

And behind them followed the count of Puys Pellu and his company:

*En apres marchoit la compagnie du Conte de Puys Pellu en bon équipage (...) habillez de noir & verd : Assavoir grandz casacques noires couvertes d'escailles verdes, les Bonnetz...de mesme.<sup>36</sup>*

Black was the color traditionally worn by the nobility; as for the cloth braided with silk of gold and silver, it was a relatively new kind of mixed fabric produced by Lyon's prosperous silk industry.<sup>37</sup>

Princes and nobles were not the only one whose clothing was adopted by the participants. The last group to parade, which included all the officers of the various abbeys of misrule, mocked the *noblesse de robe* and were dressed as lawyers and judges:

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<sup>34</sup> ...wearing capes of blue taffeta, braided with gold, silver and silk of various colors; doblots and gaiters the same. All wearing red hats, lined with feathers, with many pendant earrings of gold, pearls and other gems... *Chevauchée*, p. 20.

<sup>35</sup> After followed the Gentleman of Rue du Boys' company... the said company wearing capes of blue taffeta braided with gold and silver, the hats [made] the same... *Ibid.*, 20.

<sup>36</sup> And after marched the Count of Puys Pellu's company, well equiped...dressed in black and green: namely great black tabards covered with green scales, the hats...the same. *Ibid.*, 22.

<sup>37</sup> Belfanti, 273.

*Et pour les derniers & la fin de ladicte Chevauchée marchoit la Justice desdictes Abbayes de Mal-Gouvert. (...) Apres marchoyent les Advocatz, habillez de couleur rouge, bordées de blanc : les hauts bonnetz...de mesme, fourrez de penne blanche : portans chacuns la cornette verte sur le col. (...) Et apres suivoyent le Iuge, & ses conseillers habillez de robbes longues de couleur violet, bordées de blanc, les hautz bonnetz fourrez de mesme, portant sur l'espaule chacun d'iceux un chapperon à bourrelet, à mode d'une Court du Parlement.<sup>38</sup>*

Not only does this parody mimic the hierarchy of appearances; it also mimics the mimic, a form of *mise en abîme* of the sartorial symbolism's social instability. As Bastien argued, Charles IX's sumptuary edict of 1565 (the third one in less than four years) clearly illustrated his powerlessness to eradicate this transgressive trend: "*la désobéissance et le désordre des hiérarchies sociales constituaient ici la raison fondamentale pour laquelle l'édit de 1565 était enregistré, l'ordonnance déclarant paradoxalement, par mesure royale, l'indiscutable incapacité du pouvoir à se faire obéir.*"<sup>39</sup> Lyon being one of the most opulent cities in France, there were a great number of merchants and guild members who displayed their wealth by adopting fashions popular at court and among the nobility. This phenomenon was reinforced by the status of the city's textile industry, on which an important part of its wealth was built. Nowhere else in the realm could better and more various fabrics could be found. Even if cities

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<sup>38</sup> And at last, for the end of the said ride, marched the Justice of said Abbays of Misrule. (...) After marched the Lawyers, dressed in long red robes, trimmed of white, the high hats... trimmed with white feathers; each wearing a green *cornette* on their collar. (...) After followed the Judge and his Counsellors dressed in long, white-trimmed violet robes, fur-lined high hats of the same, each wearing on the shoulder a hood with rolls in *Parlement* fashion. *Chevauchée*, 35-36.

<sup>39</sup> Bastien, 29.

like Tours and Paris saw their textile industry prosper throughout the sixteenth century, Lyon remained the principal hub of textile commerce in France.<sup>40</sup> Sumptuary dress was, therefore, not only a question of ostentatiousness, but also a sign of civic pride. Since the abbey's membership was mainly composed of guild members who belonged to the city's textile industries they, too, felt the urge to use elaborate clothing to display this pride in their work:

*Et apres suyvoit la compagnie du Chevalier saint Romain... habillez de couleurs incarnat et blanc. Au devant de laquelle compagnie marchoyent les trompettes habillez de grandz sayes...incarnatz, passementez la pluspart de passemens d'Argent : chose fort riche à veoir. Les chapeaux de soye incarnat, & au tour la cornette de taffetas blanc.<sup>41</sup>*

This transgression of the hierarchy of appearance prompted a flow of strident commentaries from offended moralists. Antoine du Pinet is one of them. Describing Lyon in 1564, and talking about the “golden age” of the good kings of France, he declared that: “*En ce temps-là, le marchand estoit aysé à remarquer d'avec le gentilhomme, et le gentilhomme d'avec l'homme de longue robe: et tous néanmoins vestuz de draps de laine. Lors n'estoit question qu'un simple bouchier, ou artizan Lyonnois portast un ascoutement de trente escuz de façon, sans l'estouffe, toutes les festes.*

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<sup>40</sup> Gascon, 55-81.

<sup>41</sup> And after followed the knight of St. Romain's company...dressed in crimson and white. In front of said company walked the trumpets dressed of crimson short-piled woolen cloth...most of them braided with silver thread; a rich and pleasant sight. The hats of crimson silk, and around it a cornette of white taffeta. *Chevauchée*, 26.

(...) *Et d'où venoit tel désordre, sinon de la bombance et superfluité des draps de soye practiquée et moyennée à Lyon... ?*"<sup>42</sup>

### Resistance

The *suppôts*' chariot does not offer beating wives and martyrs' suffering to the cheering crowds. It offers Minerva, dressed in fool's colours, holding a sphere covered by a crepe veil. At the end of the booklet, the author explains that truth is everywhere in the world, thinly veiled, and will only be known when God permits it. This symbol can be interpreted as a prescription to keep one's religious belief hidden in times of oppression. Understood as such, it would contradict the overt symbolism of the anchor as a 'public confession' of the *suppôts*.<sup>43</sup> In his analysis of the symbolic politics of resistance, James Scott has made a distinction between public transcripts, "the open interaction between subordinates and those who dominate," and hidden transcripts, "discourse that takes place 'offstage'"<sup>44</sup>. The public transcript is a stylized performance through which the weaker party in a relationship of domination adopts the forms of deference and respect for the authorities that are necessary to avoid punishment. The public performance of the *compagnons de l'Imprimerie*, during the ride, constitutes a clear act of deference, if not repentance, destined to persuade

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<sup>42</sup> Antoine de Pinet, *Plantz, pourtraitz et descriptions de plusieurs villes et forteresses, tant de l'Europe, Asie, Afrique, que des Indes, & terres neuves...*, (Lyon : Ian D'Ogerolles, 1564), 35-36.

<sup>43</sup> Scheler, Lucien, La confession publique des imprimeurs lyonnais, *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et de Renaissance*, Vol. 21 No. 2 (1959), 350-363, 1.

<sup>44</sup> James C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990) pp. 4-6.

the (now) dominant church authorities that they had not strayed from the Catholic Church during the Protestant interlude, and even hints that if they are perceived as having been on the path of heterodoxy, they will double their efforts to do better (*et espèrent faire de mieux en mieux*). The hidden transcript of the *suppôts*' relationship with the ecclesiastical powers can be found in their subtle, but numerous, references to a truth that needs to remain hidden until such time as God permits it to be shared by all. The parodic nature of the *suppôts*' discourse in the *chevauchée* is in itself a hidden transcript or, at the least, an efficient method for voicing dissent without direct and immediate adverse consequences.

#### Baptism of the knight of Saint Romain's son

The last section of the booklet describes the baptism of the knight of Saint Romain's son the following day, Tuesday November fifth. Seven abbey members and their members, including the lord of misprint, participated in the procession, which ended with a banquet. There is no apparent reason to include this anecdotal event in the description of the *chevauchée*. Placed in the context of the great religious tension between factions at play in Lyon between 1564 and 1568, and the marked efforts by the *suppôts* to associate themselves publicly with the Catholic party in the *chevauchée*, it becomes apparent that a baptism in a Catholic church (Saint Romain), beyond its anecdotal nature, which might be of interest

only to members of the abbeys, can be used as another proof of their religious orthodoxy, worthy of inclusion in the text.

### Lyon's dialect

The form of the ride's main *sottie* is similar to those offered during the preceding weeks: 121 lines, same structure, with rhyming couplets. However, it is written in *patois lyonnais*, a dialect specific to the city. The target audience is clearly not the Duchess and her suite, who were not familiar with this dialect.<sup>45</sup> It is aimed at a popular, local audience, and the subsequent printing of the text is a double appropriation of the printing medium, not only in the vernacular, but also in *patois*. There is only a handful of sixteenth-century texts written in Lyon's dialect that have survived, and all of them can be classified as 'popular' literature, such as songs, fables and plays.<sup>46</sup>

The Lyonnais dialect (also called *Arpitan*) is a member of what is called today the Franco-Provençal family of dialects. Its speakers can be found, as was the case in the sixteenth century, in a wide area including the western part of France (all of the actual Rhône-Alpes region, excluding the *Ardèche* and *Drôme* departments), the eastern region of Switzerland (most of *Romandie*), and the northeastern part of Italy (Val d'Aosta, Vales

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<sup>45</sup> Anne – or Anna - d'Este was the daughter of the duke of Ferrara and Renée de France. She was raised in Ferrara until her marriage, at 17, to François de Guise. She lived in Paris and the Duchy of Bar, northwest of Lorraine.

<sup>46</sup> See E. Leroudier, *Noël et chansons en patois Lyonnais du 18e siècle*, (Lyon : Cumin et Masson, 1918) ; G. B., *La Bernarda Buyandir, tragi-comedia*, coll. Anciens patois de la France, (Paris : Techener, 1840).



and the alpine heights of Piemont). Although they are members of the same linguistic family, speakers of different dialects today have difficulty understanding each other. That probably was not the case in the late sixteenth century.

Using *Lyonnais* dialect instead of French for the *sottie* constitutes a statement of identity and an affirmation of regional particularism. It points to a resolutely local target audience, and can be considered an act of resistance against the new rulers of the Lyonnais.

Instead of a call to arms, like the preceding *sotties* were, this *Franco-Provençal* performance is tailored to show physical comedy. It describes different ways in which one can be beaten by his wife (with a frying pan, a knife, an iron spit, blows to the face, etc....), and it is easy to imagine the performers beating each other in *guignol* fashion, a theatre *genre* which originated in Lyon in the eighteenth century and is still practised to this day. Like the short *sotties* presented in the previous weeks, the performance ends by a traditional call to wine drinking and merriment.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### Embodying the Other

Michel de Certeau argued that “ to travel is to see, but seeing is already traveling.” Viewed from that angle, the carnivalesque *chevauchée*, with its participants disguised in exotic costumes of foreigners, was in fact a way for the audience to visually travel and confront otherness. By a surprising twist of mediation, the text of the *chevauchée* – and the *chevauchée* itself - were thus transformed into a travel narrative. The performance of the abbey of Misrule and its textual description constructed social representations in which the parodic mode offered the crowd a safe way to come to grips with contemporary anxieties about threatening Others. Six abbey groups elected to disguise themselves as foreigners. The second group to march, the count of La Fontaine and his company, were dressed as Egyptians. Others chose to dress as Turks, Moors, Bressois and Swiss.<sup>1</sup> Bresse was a small region north east of Lyon, west of Geneva, in the foothills of the Jura mountains. In 1566, it was part

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<sup>1</sup> The presence of Moors and Turks became increasingly popular in entries, a fact attested by the entry of Madame de La Rochefoucauld in Tournon, in 1583: “Les Maures et les Turcs étaient à la mode dans les entrées solennelles...ainsi que dans les spectacles de Cour. Tantôt ils étaient les symboles des ennemis de la paix chrétienne, tantôt leur présence rappelait la soumission des hérétiques.” Maxime Gaume, *La Triomphante entrée de tresillustre Dame Magdeleine de La Rochefoucauld, Espouse de hault & puissant Seigneur Messire Iust-Los de Tournon, Seigneur & Baron dudict lieu, Comte de Roussillon, &c. Faicte en la Ville, & Universtité de Tournon, le dimanche vingtquatriesme du mois d’Avril 1583*, (Publications de l’Université de Saint-Étienne, 1976), 165.

of the Duchy of Savoy, although the northern region had been under Burgundian influence in the late middle ages. Bresse would later be integrated into the French realm, in 1601. The region had lived in *quasi* autarchy for 500 years, a singular circumstance which gave it a distinct cultural, linguistic and political specificity. Although geographically close, Bressians' foreign culture and distinctive traditional dress set its citizens apart from Lyon's inhabitants, and thus represented an exotic other worthy of parody.

Swiss costumes and apparel were quite familiar to Lyon's population. Catholic France had been employing Swiss mercenaries (*Reisläufer*) to supplement its army since the late Middle Ages. Although the adoption of the harquebus would gradually diminish the Swiss mercenaries' efficiency in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century, their tactical contribution was still valued during the French Wars of Religion. In the 1562 battle of Dreux, for example, a battery of Swiss pikemen was successful in holding the Huguenot army while the Catholic cavalry attacked the flanks, leading to the victory and the capture of the Prince of Condé. In 1567, a year after the *Chevauchée*, the march of a Spanish army, which included an important number of Swiss mercenaries, traveling north alongside the eastern border of France to reach the Low Countries with the objective of subduing the Dutch Protestant Revolt, fueled the French Huguenots' paranoia about military persecution and was

instrumental in triggering the second armed conflict of the French Wars of Religion in 1568.

The Turks were also a relatively familiar group to French audiences of the time. Francis I negotiated a Franco-Ottoman alliance with Süleyman the Magnificent (or the Lawmaker) against the Habsburgs in 1535-36. He received the Ottoman delegation in Le Puy in 1533, just over a hundred kilometres from Lyon. A year later, an Ottoman fleet, led by Hayreddin Barbarossa, met with French representatives in southern France. During the joint siege of Nice, in 1543, an Ottoman fleet of more than 110 galleys was stationed for many months in Marseilles and Toulon. More importantly, the *capitulations* of 1536 gave French merchants a virtual monopoly on trade in the Mediterranean (until the Ottoman naval defeat of Lepanto in 1571); foreign merchants who wanted to trade with Süleyman's empire had to sail under a French banner, and had to pay a percentage of their transactions to France.<sup>2</sup> The Franco-Ottoman military alliance endured under Henry II, with the conquest of Corsica by the Ottomans in the interest of France in 1553. Furthermore, Süleyman launched his last great campaign against eastern Europe in August 1566, a

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<sup>2</sup> Christine Isom-Verhaaren, "'Barbarossa and His Army Who Came to Succor All of Us': Ottoman and French Views of Their Joint Campaign of 1543-1544", *French Historical Studies*, 30 (3), (Summer 2007), 395-425.

few months before the *Chevauchée*, an event which received much attention in Lyon.<sup>3</sup>

The conquest of Egypt by the Ottoman Empire in 1517 brought the country under the umbrella of the Franco-Ottoman alliance, an event that was pivotal to the growth of French trade in Alexandria. Egypt had been under Mameluk rule until the conquest, and the Egyptians continued to play an important role in the sixteenth century; having been only recently conquered, the Egyptian's traditional clothing was still quite distinct from the Ottoman's dresses.

The name *Mores*, or *Maures*, is associated with Muslim presence in the Spanish peninsula, and by extension refers to people from North Africa. In 1566, the name also encompassed *Moriscos* from Spain. While Muslims were officially expelled from the country in 1502, the Moriscos - Muslims who converted to Catholicism to avoid this fate - were numerous in Spain, especially in the regions of Granada and Valencia. They benefited from relative 'tolerance' until the reign of Philip II, when they were prohibited from 1567 on to use their traditional dress and speak Arabic, a

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<sup>3</sup> *Memoyres des entreprinses du Turc sur la Chestienté, tant du côté d'Allemagne, que d'Italie pour la présente année 1566*, (Lyon : B. Rigaud, 1566) ; *Advis de Vienne en Austriche, et de Hongrie. La conqueste de quelques citez et terres sur le grand Turc*, (Lyon, B. Rigaud, 1566) ; *Discours de la guerre entre l'Empereur et le grand Turc, par advertissement de quelques lettres envoyées de Vienne en Austriche, Messine et Naples à Rome*, (Lyon : B. Rigaud, 1566) ; *Continuation du discours de la guerre entre l'Empereur & le grand Turc, par advertissement de plusieurs lettres envoyées de Constantinople (21 juin), Vienne en Austriche (11 et 19 juillet), et Rome (5 août)*, (Lyon : B. Rigaud, 1566).

repression that led to the Alpujarras Revolt of 1567-71.<sup>4</sup> Thus in 1566, *Mores* would have still been represented with their traditional clothing. However, in the case of the *Chevauchée*, the name refers to Africans, with darker skin, typical curly hair and traditional clothing, which were distinct from the Moors of Spain. As was the case in early modern England, where the “representations of the Moor were vague, varied, inconsistent and contradictory,”<sup>5</sup> the use of *Maure* in France was an umbrella word covering a variety of unstable meanings.

How would the participants in the *Chevauchée* have crafted their costumes to make them identifiable as Turks, Moors and Egyptians? And how would the audience also have recognized them as such? In 1562, a book was published in Paris called *Recueil de la diversité des habits qui sont de present en usaige tant es pays d'Europe, Asie, Affrique et Illes sauvage*, attributed to François Desprez, or Deserpz.<sup>6</sup> It consists of 140 engravings of people’s costumes from Europe, Asia, Africa and the Americas. Each engraving has a title and a quatrain at the bottom of the

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<sup>4</sup> Leonard Patrick Harvey, *Muslims in Spain, 1500-1614*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 337.

<sup>5</sup> Emily C. Bartels, "Making more of the Moor : Aaron, Othello, and Renaissance Refashionings of Race", *Shakespeare Quarterly*, Vol. 41 No. 4 (Winter 1990), 433-454, 434.

<sup>6</sup> François Deserpz, *Recueil de la diversité des habits, qui sont de present usaige, tant es pays d'Europe, Asie, Affrique & Illes sauvages, le tout fait apres le naturel*, (Paris : Richard Breton, 1562). Deserpz is probably an anagram of Desprez, the author of *Les songes drolatiques de Pantagruel*. Indeed, a copy of the second edition of *Le recueil de la diversité* (1564) is bound with *Les songes* in an edition housed in the municipal library of Tours: <http://www.bvh.univ-tours.fr/Consult/index.asp?numfiche=65>

page, under the image. It is considered to be the first printed book<sup>7</sup> which gave birth to a new literary genre: the costume book, notes Vincent Masse: "*(le recueil) signe néanmoins l'acte de naissance d'un genre littéraire qui va jouir d'une grande fortune: le recueil de costumes....Aux réimpressions de 1564 et 1567, et aux traductions flamandes (1570) et latine (1572), se joignent bientôt...près de deux cents recueils similaires, en France seule, publiés avant 1610.*"<sup>8</sup> The engravings not only offered images of the above-mentioned groups, but also included representations of members of different estates (*chevalier, gentilhomme, président, courtisan, bourgeois, artisan, docteur, paysan*) as well as monstrous creatures (*cyclope, singe debout, évêque de mer*) and costumes of a variety of French regions (*la Picarde, la Lyonnaise*).

Literacy was widespread in the printing journeymen's world, but this did not apply to the same extent to other categories of craft workers, which constituted the vast majority of membership in the abbeys of misrule. Although we do not have precise data to ascertain book possession among Lyon's artisans, the few indications we have point to a very limited number of books, mostly Bibles and technical booklets related

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<sup>7</sup> The *Trachtenbuch* by Christoph Weiditz was produced a few decades before, but in manuscript form, and did not benefit from the same wide circulation as the *Recueil*.

<sup>8</sup> Vincent Masse, 'Stéréotypie des peuples de l'Europe dans le *Recueil de la diversité des habits* de François Deserpz (1562) et autres 'livres d'habits' du XVIe siècle", *Stéréotypes et prototypes nationaux en Europe, Colloque organisé à Paris le 4 et 5 novembre 2005 par le Forum des langues européennes*, <http://www.forumdeslangues.net/forum/masse.htm>.

to their crafts.<sup>9</sup> We cannot therefore posit a wide readership of *Le recueil de la diversité*, even if by 1566 there already were two editions in circulation.

There is, however, a phenomenon which could account for the widespread representation of foreigners via iconography: the practice of binding broadsheets into book form. “Existing broadsheets sources provided much material for book production,” argues F.J. Stopp: “after 1550, when book-publishing became more lucrative for those with resources and plant, this process was accelerated.”<sup>10</sup> This practice would explain not only how the *chevauchée’s* organizer could design their costumes, but also the accurate reception of their representations by the crowd if the images had been circulating as inexpensive broadsheets prior to their publication in book form. In the *recueil de la diversité*, for example, we find engravings of creatures called *l’evesque de mer* (der Bischofsfisch) and *le moyne de mer* (der Mönchsfisch), two images taken from broadsheets of c. 1545, and the image of the *Ciclope* is inspired by another widely circulated broadsheet.<sup>11</sup>

There is clear evidence that the *recueil de la diversité* was used as a model for the *Chevauchée’s* costumes in the representation of the

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<sup>9</sup> Natalie Zemon Davis, “Printing and the People”, in *Society and Culture in Sixteenth Century France*, (Stanford University Press, 1975), 189-226.

<sup>10</sup> F.J. Stopp, “The Early German Broadsheet and Related Ephemera: A Bibliographical Survey”, *Transactions of the Cambridge Bibliographical Society*, Vol 5 No. 2 (1970), 81-89, 86.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid*, 86.



*Egyptiennes* by la Fontaine's abbey. The text describes them in detail: *Et au devant dudict Conte...marchoit environ une douzaine de femmes habillées en Egyptiennes, montées sur chevaux, **portans de petit enfans bien contrefaits en main*** (bold is mine). Twelve women all holding fake babies to represent Egyptian women is a bizarre choice, and part of an iconographic code difficult to decipher. However, when we examine the pictorial representation of the *Egyptienne* in the *recueil*, we find that she is, in fact, holding a baby in her hand (fig. 2).

Of the 62 images of females in the book, there are only two carrying a child: the Egyptian and the Brazilian. People in the crowds would easily recognize the meaning of the babies, having been familiar with this type of iconographical association from an extensive circulation of the broadsheet or book form of the typical Egyptian woman's image. We also find in the book an engraving of a woman from Bresse, with the traditional straw hat and the dress cut under the arms, worn by a dozen women of the *Teincturiers'* group and described in the *Chevauchée*. As for other, more familiar costumes – monks, knights, lawyers, etc.... – no template would have been needed for confection, although they also figure in the engravings.

If the organizers of the *Chevauchée* used the widespread images of the engravings present in the *recueil de la diversité* as templates for their representations of the foreign Others, we can also conclude that their idea

of Moors was of the black-skinned variety, because that is the way they are represented in the *recueil de la diversité*. The choice of costumes by the *chevauchée*'s organizers reflected a desire to express, through disguises and in parodic fashion, their understanding of the exotic – and often threatening - Others, by using visual representations that were available to them.

## CONCLUSION

Lyon's role as the print capital of France in the first half of the sixteenth century offered the conditions of possibility for the emergence of a new breed of entrepreneurs, the *imprimeurs-compagnons*, a group which included the *suppôts du Seigneur de la Coquille*. By virtue of their literacy (a skill required by their profession) and their social and economic status – half-way between the patrician elite and the humble folks and craftsmen – they became mediators *par excellence* between the 'elite' and 'popular' cultures of their *milieu*. Banking on this role as cultural bilinguals, they were able to find a niche in the production of *occasionals* which could be more widely circulated than the traditional book. Furthermore, their familiarity with the written word gave them a special status as important figures in the world of local recreation: their corpus of *sotties* is one of the only examples of written, 'popular' entertainment still in existence for Lyon in the second half of the sixteenth century.

When exploring the contents of the *chevauchée*, we have followed Gabrielle Spiegel, I have "focused on the social logic of the text, its location within a broader network of social and intertextual relations" in order to

“best become attuned to the specific historical conditions whose presence and/or absence in the work alerts us to its own social character and function, its own combination of material and discursive realities.”<sup>1</sup> In their booklet, the *suppôts* extended the theatrical reach of their *sotties* to include a description of the charivari and its accompanying procession (one could almost say parade), a text in which are also present details of the social and historical circumstances of its production. Echoes of the recent plague are embedded in the *sotties*’ verses; furthermore, the conflict between Lyon’s Catholics and Huguenots created a situation which both illuminates the text and is reflected in it.

Although the whole event of the entry and the charivari were festivities designed to generate merriment, the sombre background of violent opposition and tight control within the social fabric of the city is never completely absent, and we are reminded of its presence by the fact that the first processions mention they have to abide by their safe-conduct, or by the allusion to the troubled times included in the description of the *suppôts*’ group during the *chevauchée*. There is also the pervasive notion of order which permeates the whole description.

The *chevauchée* functioned as a vehicle to defend the *suppôts*’ interests; first and foremost their economic interest. Indeed, the commemorative nature of the booklet and the speed of its production testify to its commercial appeal. The writers also used the printed booklet

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<sup>1</sup> Spiegel, 85.

as a medium to promote themselves, to clarify some of the symbols they used in the procession, and to explain to the readers the reasons which prevented them from offering to the crowds the central element of a charivari: the naming of the *martyrs* and their public shaming within the procession. This absence was an attack on the organizers' traditional prerogative, and they needed to set the record straight. Furthermore, the writers also used the text as an instrument to avoid the real danger of imminent persecution because of their past – and very public – religious affiliation. They used the text – and the event – to confess their allegiance to the Mother Church, stating that they had never wavered from their orthodoxy. This was an important statement when considering the flight of a number of Protestant printers to Geneva in that period, a number which swelled when the active persecutions resumed a year later, in 1567. But it did not prevent the *suppôts* from including in the *chevauchée* veiled hints about the importance of keeping the truth about their religious inclinations hidden until danger had receded.

The specific combination of 'material and discursive realities' in the *chevauchée* is also found in the parodic images of power created for the occasion. Military, heraldic, sartorial and judicial costumes and accessories used by the *suppôts* and their peers to entertain the crowds gave an inverted picture of the social stratification of the society in which they lived. As we have already argued, the parodic use of those symbols does not necessarily conceal an opposition to this stratification, but more

likely reflects a dissatisfaction at the exclusion from these powers experienced by the organizers. Despite a certain growth in social mobility in the second half of the sixteenth century in France (correlated to a growing appetite for fashion in the burgeoning *bourgeoisie*), real power rested resolutely in the hands of the first two Estates.

Comfortably nested in the cultural practices of the humble folk, the *suppôts* chose to write their *sottie* in *patois lyonnais*, an affirmation of its validity against the pervasive presence of Ile-de-France French and a statement of local identity in the face of new leaders from elsewhere in France – or even from Italy, like René de Birague, master of Lyon when the duke of Nemours was away, as was often the case.

The description of participants in the *chevauchée* disguised as people from exotic, or at least foreign, parts of the world is another informative way to apprehend the *mentalité* of the participants and to discern how they acknowledged the Other. While we investigated the process by which the participants could create ethnic costumes which would be recognizable by the crowds as such, we argued that they were inspired by a widely circulated book, *Le recueil de la diversité des habits* – or at the very least by single broadsheets included in the book but which had been circulating for a long time before. This is another testimony to

the complex inter-connectedness of social, discursive, material and discursive practices “interwoven in the text.”<sup>2</sup>

By the distinctive features of their social and cultural practices, their ability to create new products to profit from the increasing literacy of the urban population, and their willingness to voice their own particular concerns in their texts, the *imprimeurs-compagnons* were iconic representatives of an emerging *petite bourgeoisie* in Lyon. In order to consolidate their position in the civic arena, and thus create for themselves new possibilities for social mobility, they joined the ranks of the Reformed Church and strove to make themselves major players in the entertainment world of the city. This is not to say that their religious beliefs were calculated and insincere; only that, as Davis as argued, their secularistic world-view made the Protestant movement more attractive to them as a form of resistance to the exclusive powers of the Church. <sup>3</sup>These secularistic attitudes also played a determining role in their migration back to the Mother Church when their safety and livelihood were at stake.

As Tulchin has so skillfully suggested regarding the social composition of Protestant groups in French towns in the late sixteenth century, we can assert that the *imprimeurs-compagnons* were “high

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<sup>2</sup> Spiegel, 85.

<sup>3</sup> Zemon Davis, *Society and Culture*, pp.15-16.

enough up the social ladder to feel they were entitled to...the perks of the social elite, but low enough that they did not get them.”<sup>4</sup> By applying their literary skills to parody and theatrical performances, they navigated the troubled waters of their times while keeping a healthy sense of humour.

*Amy lecteur, les trois suppôts te prie  
 Les excuser en la rime présente :  
 Car ce n'est pas un faict de poësie,  
 Telle qu'elle est, prions que t'en contente :  
 Pour faire fin, je te prie contemple  
 Le grand plaisir que le peuple a eu,  
 Car leur désir, & toute leur attente  
 Etoit de voir tout ce qu'ils en ont veu.*<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Allan A. Tulchin, *That Men Would Praise the Lord : The Triumph of Protestantism in Nîmes, 1530-1570*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 186.

<sup>5</sup> Friendly reader, the three henchmen ask your forgiveness for these rhymes; they are not a feat of poetry. As they are, we pray they will satisfy you. In the end, please consider the pleasure it gave the folks, because all their desires and their expectations were to see all that they saw. *Recueil de la chevauchée, faicte en la ville de Lyon, le dixseptieme de novembre 1578*. Lyon, par les trois suppôts, 1578.



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