

The propositions censored by the Faculty of theology of the University of Rheims in the times of the cardinal of Lorraine. The spread of Protestant ideas, doctrinal fragility of the clerics and construction of Roman Catholicism

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**PROPOSITIONS CENSORED BY THE FACULTY
OF THEOLOGY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF RHEIMS
IN THE TIMES OF THE CARDINAL OF LORRAINE.
THE SPREAD OF PROTESTANT IDEAS,
DOCTRINAL FRAGILITY OF THE CLERICS
AND CONSTRUCTION OF ROMAN CATHOLICISM**

Historiography has shown that the censures published by the Faculty of Theology of the University of Paris, called the Sorbonne, during the first half of the sixteenth century, played a major role in delineating the limits between Protestant ideas and Catholic orthodoxy, in France and beyond¹. Even if Protestant orthodoxies were mostly fixed around 1550, it was not yet the case of Catholic orthodoxy because the Council of Trent was closed only in 1563. Moreover, the Council of Trent did not deal in detail with all subjects and its reception was difficult in France for political reasons; furthermore, Gallicanism encouraged original experiments in doctrinal formulations and liturgical practices; lastly, the contours of French Protestantism remained blurred in some ways during the 1550s and 1560s. To study this progressive and complex fixation of orthodoxies and, as finely as possible, get a grip on the elements that induced some Roman Catholics to religious conversion in the third quarter of the 16th century, it is important to examine the censures adopted by the French Faculties of Theology during this period. On the one hand there is the Sorbonne case, on which

¹ See particularly: *Higman, F. M.* Censorship and the Sorbonne. A bibliographical study of books in French censored by the Faculty of Theology of the University of Paris, 1520–1551. Genève, 1979. I thank Thierry Amalou, Jean Balsamo and Cheikh Sakho for their help or the information they gave me.

Thierry Amalou (from Paris) is currently working, and on the other hand there are the other French Faculties of Theology. Almost all were very weak, due to moral predominance of the Sorbonne². But there was also the University of Rheims, founded in 1548 by the cardinal of Lorraine, a major character of the French Church in the third quarter of the 16th century. This archbishop of Rheims, who played an essential role in Gallican experiments, but also in the Tridentinization of Catholicism and the repression of Calvinism (while having a kind of sympathy for German Lutheranism³), brought theologians in Rheims and founded a Faculty of Theology, which seems to be working from 1555 on⁴. For all these reasons, the discovery of an unprecedented document, containing the censures published in the name of the Faculty of Theology of the University of Rheims from 1557 to 1572, at the time of the Cardinal of Lorraine, the archbishop of Rheims until his death in 1574, is of considerable importance⁵.

² «The authority of the Paris Faculty in the definition of doctrine, and in the censorship of books, was over-riding, and its word could be said to run throughout France» (*Higman, F. M. Censorship and the Sorbonne. A bibliographical study of books in French censored by the Faculty of Theology of the University of Paris, 1520–1551.* P. 15). Apart from Paris and Rheims, the French Faculties of Theology were small and did not give doctrinal consultations. They delivered degrees and most of the time were ruled by the Dominicans, who taught in their convents. For the mid-16th century, we can mention Angers, Bourges, Caen, Cahors, Montpellier, Nantes, Orléans, Poitiers, Toulouse and Valence. In 1553 the Parliament of Bordeaux transmitted writings to the Faculty of Theology of the University of Paris, and in 1557 the archbishop of Bordeaux referred to the Sorbonne about dissent within the clergy.

³ *Carroll, S. Les Guises et le luthéranisme, in: Le Salut par les armes. Noblesse et défense de l'orthodoxie (xiii^e–xvii^e siècle) / Ed. by A. Boltanski and F. Mercier. Rennes, 2011. P. 109–122.*

⁴ Un Prélat français de la Renaissance. Le cardinal de Lorraine entre Reims et l'Europe / Ed. by J. Balsamo, T. Nicklas and B. Restif. Genève, 2015; *Balsamo, J. Le cardinal de Lorraine et l'Academia Remensis, in: République des lettres, République des arts. Mélanges en l'honneur de Marc Fumaroli.* Genève, 2008. P. 13–36; *Balsamo, J. Le cénacle rémois du cardinal de Lorraine. Littérature, théologie et politique (1548–1574), in: Il principe e il potere. Il discorso politico e letterario nella Francia del Cinquecento. Atti del Convegno Internazionale di Studio, Verona, 18–20 maggio 2000.* Fasano, 2002. P. 99–113.

⁵ This manuscript is held in the Municipal Library of Rheims. It is a copy probably made in the 17th century, or perhaps in the first half of the 18th century. It seems that pages were numbered in 1757 when the archives of the University were inventoried. It is important to note that nearly all the archives of the University of Rheims were

1 – The censorship of heretical spoken words

The first censures were adopted in March 1557⁶ and July 1558. They concerned words said in the streets of the city or in the Rheims area. These statements were formulated in French, so they were reported in this language as accurately as possible, and called ‘propositions’. Then censures were formulated in the Latin language. These were short-formulations, always in a single sentence, but the doctors of the Faculty were attentive to adopt one censure for each proposition. In 1557 the doctors met in the Dean’s home, maybe because the buildings were not yet ready for use⁷, whereas in 1558 they gathered in the premises of the Faculty, near the Chapel of St. Patrick, located in University street.

The propositions examined in 1557 were sent by the Rheims Presidial, a court of law which is competent to prosecute heretics since its creation in 1552. The Cardinal of Lorraine played the key role in the creation of both the Presidial and the Faculty of Theology⁸, but there is no evidence that he intervened to build this collaboration between these institutions, on the model of cooperation between the Parliament of Paris and the Sorbonne. However, was this collaboration conceivable without a kind of moral patronage played by the Cardinal, knowing that the Presidial of Rheims was in the area of jurisdiction of the Parliament of Paris? Eight propositions were presented by two Dominicans, who were doctors of theology⁹, and we know that the Cardinal of Lorraine was known to be a protector of the Mendicant Orders¹⁰. These propositions were words said by lay people and in seven cases out of eight it called into question

destroyed during the French Revolution – it is the case of the original documents relating to the censures of the Faculty of Theology – and we can say the same thing about the deliberation records of the Cathedral Chapter.

⁶ March 1556 in the old style of dating, the year beginning at Easter in France until 1564.

⁷ The decision to start the building works was taken in 1548. The Cardinal of Lorraine requested the city council, who agreed (Municipal Archives of Rheims, Fa R 39). The building account register was not kept; the construction may not have been completed before 1557–1558.

⁸ Restif, B. Reims, un pôle de la Réforme catholique, pré-tridentine et tridentine, au temps du cardinal de Lorraine, *in*: Un Prélat français de la Renaissance. Le cardinal de Lorraine entre Reims et l’Europe. P. 43–58.

⁹ Pierre Divalet, who was provincial, and Jacques du May.

¹⁰ Molin, M. Le cardinal de Lorraine, protecteur des ordres mendiants, *in*: Un Prélat français de la Renaissance. Le cardinal de Lorraine entre Reims et l’Europe. P. 193–211.

the Catholic prayer: the use of images, appeal to Saints as intercessors, prayer for the dead, pilgrimages, adoration of the Eucharist, veneration of relics and of the cross. Four of these propositions were found to be heretical (concerning images, the Saints, the dead and the Eucharist) and the other three were deemed scandalous and erroneous. The eighth proposition which consisted in threatening clerics was viewed as injurious to ecclesiastical dignity. These sentences were probably transmitted to the Presidial, but its archives disappeared later for this period¹¹. It is known that the Presidial sentenced to death and killed a few Protestants, but we do not know all the details nor even the dates¹².

In 1558 twenty-eight propositions were presented and discussed. There is no reference to the Presidial here. It seems that the list of propositions had been established through an inquiry conducted by the ecclesiastical court called «officialité». Indeed, these propositions correspond to statements made by one or maybe several clerics during their sermons. One of them — or the only one if all of these propositions came from the same person — was a vicar, accused of disseminating Protestant ideas during Mass. Six propositions claimed that «la vérité est mieux connue» (the truth was better known) for the thirty years before — so since the end of the 1520's — and that a council was necessary to put an end to Church abuses: these six propositions were considered suspicious and necessitating further explanations. Seven propositions were against images and were found scandalous and insulting to the Second Council of Nicaea. Four claimed that there were abuses in the use of rosaries, *Ave Maria* and pilgrimages: they were deemed suspicious or erroneous. Only one proposition, declaring that Mary is Queen only by participation, was not censured. Most of the other propositions attacked the intercession of the saints and the prayers for the dead: according to the cases, they were considered suspicious, scandalous or heretical. It is known that three weeks later there was a grand procession in Rheims during which a man who had blasphemed against God and the Saints repented¹³:

¹¹ Marne Departmental Archives (Rheims), 17 B.

¹² Henry, E. *La Réforme et la Ligue en Champagne et à Reims*. Saint-Nicolas: Prosper Ternel, 1867. P. 37.

¹³ *Histoire de la ville, cité et Université de Reims, métropolitaine de la Gaule Belgique, divisée en douze livres, contenant l'estat ecclésiastique et civil du pais*, par le R.P. Dom Guillaume Marlot, docteur en théologie, grand prieur de l'abbaye

perhaps he may have been the vicar being investigated. We also know that the Presidial sentenced a priest to death¹⁴: was this the same man?

2 – The censorship of books

The interventions of the Faculty of Theology, along with public processions and the Presidial's action, was definitely effective, as around 1560 it was no longer necessary to censor oral statements. But the Faculty now censored several books, probably printed and distributed in Rheims. In 1559 two publications were condemned. The first was a psalter in the French language, saying that all deeds are sins¹⁵, an assertion deemed heretical and Lutheran. The second was the *Alphabet ou instruction chretienne pour les petits enfans* printed first in Lyons, which contained verses by Marot and was banned because of its presentation on sins and confession¹⁶. These books were arguably printed in secrecy in Rheims by Geoffroy, a typographer from Lyons who worked for the printer Nicolas Bacquenois, a native of Rheims who was first installed in Lyons and moved to Rheims in 1552 at the request of the Cardinal of Lorraine¹⁷. It is known that sentences were pronounced against Geoffroy¹⁸ by the Presidial in 1559 or 1560, but he was released after the death of King Francis II in December 1560¹⁹.

This type of problem recurred in February 1564. Alphabet primers and catechisms for children asserting that there are only two sacraments, Baptism and Holy Communion, were censored. It was also the case

de Saint-Nicaise de Reims, t. 4. Reims: L. Jacquet, 1846. The manuscript is of the 1660s, and Marlot got that information from the chapter's archives, destroyed later, during the French Revolution.

¹⁴ Henry, E. *La Réforme et la Ligue en Champagne et à Reims*. P. 37.

¹⁵ Les 150 psalmes de David reduits a forme d'oraison.

¹⁶ The book is printed in Lyons in 1558 by Pierre Estiard.

¹⁷ Fontaine, J.-P. Les imprimeurs rémois du xvi^e siècle, in: *Travaux de l'Académie nationale de Reims*. 1986. Vol. 165. P. 41–112; Henry, E. *La Réforme et la Ligue en Champagne et à Reims*. P. 15–16; Répertoire bibliographique des livres imprimés en France au seizième siècle, t. V: *Poitiers-Romans*. Baden-Baden and Bouxwiller, 1996. P. 193–264 (by J.-M. Arnoult); Répertoire bibliographique des livres imprimés en France au dix-septième siècle, t. XXVII. Baden-Baden and Bouxwiller: Valentin Koerner, 2005 (supplements for the 16th century by J.-P. Fontaine. P. 165–170). None of these illegally printed books are reported in these inventories.

¹⁸ But we know nothing about the type of penalties.

¹⁹ Henry, E. *La Réforme et la Ligue en Champagne et à Reims*. P. 37.

for two publications of the Protestant Pierre Viret, *Sommaire des principaux points* and *Bref sommaire de la doctrine chrétienne*, printed in 1558, the first because it denied Transubstantiation and Corporal Presence, the second mainly because it affirmed the existence of only two Sacraments²⁰. Perhaps these books were reprinted in Rheims by Nicolas Trumeau, a printer who moved to the city in 1549 to take advantage of the creation of the University: as a matter of fact, he was sentenced to death by the Presidial in 1564²¹. Unfortunately, the trial documents were destroyed²². Thereafter, the Faculty did not have to examine Protestant books: it can be concluded that its action was effective.

But a new problem arose two years later, in 1566. Gentian Hervet, a famous anti-Protestant polemist who moved to Rheims at the request of the Cardinal of Lorraine and became canon of the cathedral chapter in 1562, submitted the text of his forthcoming book *L'Antihugues* to the Faculty²³. At the same time the Faculty examined the text of Hervet's work *Briefve response*, which could not have been printed by then, and his book *Briefve resolution des points* which was printed in Rheims in 1565²⁴.

²⁰ Viret, P. *Sommaire des principaux points de la foi et religion chrestienne et des erreurs contraires à iceux* (1558) and *Bref sommaire de la doctrine chrétienne* (1558).

²¹ Fontaine, J.-P. *Les imprimeurs rémois du XVI^e siècle*. P. 42. Book historians say that he was executed in 1563, but it seems to be in the old style of dating (Easter dating), so 1564 in our style. In the *Répertoire bibliographique des livres imprimés en France au seizième siècle*, t. V: *Poitiers-Romans*, only five book printings are attributed to him for a dozen years (p. 195), which is strange and makes his involvement more likely in illegal printing of books.

²² Fontaine, J.-P. *Les imprimeurs rémois du XVI^e siècle*. P. 42. Marne Departmental Archives (Rheims), 17 B.

²³ As Tatiana Debaggi-Baranova rightly points out, Hervet was well trained in rhetoric but was not a doctor of theology (*Debaggi-Baranova, T. À coups de libelles. Une culture politique au temps des guerres de Religion (1562–1598)*. Genève, 2012. P. 95). This book seems to be not yet published at this date, apart from a few copies which were not sold (it is probably the explanation of the indication of the year 1566 in *Les Bibliothèques françaises de La Croix du Maine et de Du Verdier*, new edition, t. 1. Paris, 1772. P. 262). I do not have any explanation of the indication of the year 1564 in the work of *Pettegree, A., Walsby, M., Wilkinson, A. French Vernacular Books. Books published in the French language before 1601*, vol. 2. Leiden/Boston, 2001 (n^o 28851): perhaps it is a mistake.

²⁴ Hervet, G. *Briefve resolution d'aucuns points principaux de la religion chrestienne et catholique, en forme d'epistre responsive aux calomnies publiées en un libelle difamatoire, par M. Jean Micqueau maistre d'eschole à Orleans, contre Gentian Hervet*

The doctors of the Faculty identified fourteen propositions which posed doctrinal challenges: seven were in the book submitted *L'Antihugues*, four in the manuscript of the *Briefve response* and three in the already printed *Briefve resolution des points*. As stated by Christopher Elwood in his book *The Body Broken* published in Oxford in 1999²⁵, Herve, who was not a doctor of theology, was completely taken up by his polemics with the Calvinists Micqueau and Sureau and obsessed with the idea of bringing back some Protestants to Catholicism, and probably for these two reasons he developed a discourse which differed from Catholic orthodoxy. He distinguished between the natural body of Christ and his supernatural body, going so far as to say that his natural body is only present in heaven, so is not in the host, which is only the Christ's supernatural body. A sentence of *L'Antihugues* condemned as erroneous by the Faculty stated: «la chair, dis-je, mistique et spirituelle qui est au sacrement et non pas la naturelle qui est aux cieux». The other censored propositions, which were in the two books not yet published, displaced the Sacrifice of Christ from the Cross to the Last Supper, asserted as a consequence, maybe under the influence of a Lutheran literature he used against Calvinists, that the Sacrifice of Christ was unbloody and so the Holy Communion is unbloody²⁶. The three censured sentences which were in the book already printed *Briefve resolution* are of the same type. All these propositions were declared false; one of them, which was in *L'Antihugues*, is even declared heretical: « en la croix Jesus Christ n'a ete hostie» (on the Cross Jesus Christ was not a host). Herve partly took into account the censures. The *Briefve response* was printed only in 1580 in Douai, in the Spanish Netherlands²⁷. *L'Antihugues* was published the following year (1567) in Rheims without the censored sentences, except from one proposition about the absence of Christ's natural body in the Eucharist that he did not want to withdraw²⁸. Furthermore, we can find other

chanoine de Rheims, et ensemble tous les catholiques. Rheims, 1565. This book was also published in Paris, the same year.

²⁵ Elwood, C. *The Body Broken. The Calvinist Doctrine of the Eucharist and the Symbolization of Power in Sixteenth-Century France*. Oxford, 1999.

²⁶ This may also be explained by the discussions taking place during the Council of Trent, to which Herve took part

²⁷ Is it possible that this had been done without his agreement?

²⁸ Herve, G. *L'Antihugues, c'est-à-dire, responce aux escrits et blasphemes de Hugues Sureau, soy disant ministre calviniste à Orleans, contre les principaux points de la foy*

ambiguous or problematic passages in *L'Antihugues* published in Rheims in 1567: did he add those after the Faculty's examination? And for the book already published, it was, of course, too late.

The Faculty had to hold a new meeting about the Hervet case in 1569. Indeed, the sentences censored in 1566 but already published or not deleted fuelled his controversy with the Calvinist Micqueau, who claimed that these statements were heretical²⁹. As a response, in Rheims in 1569, Hervet published a book entitled *Response sur aucuns poincts principaux de la religion chrestienne, aux impudentes calomnies de Jean Loys Micqueau*, in which he defended his controversial propositions³⁰. The Faculty therefore required the assistance of the Cardinal of Lorraine and ordered Hervet to stop writing on the Eucharist. Hervet finally submitted and renounced the controversy. From then on, his only production in Rheims will be limited to a mathematics book, in 1573³¹.

3 — The censorship as a means of Tridentinization

Lastly, in the early 1570s, the Faculty made an effort to standardize the discourses and practices of the vicars and canons of Rheims. Indeed, the Cardinal of Lorraine protected and nurtured several trends of thought inside the Catholic Church, and it seems that all these ways of thinking, be they inflexibles or reformers or maybe experimentals, were allowed to develop in Rheims during the 1550s and 1560s. From 1570 onwards, the Faculty, perhaps encouraged by the Cardinal himself, undertook a Tridentine normalisation.

In 1570 the Faculty examined seven propositions that were vicars' words. For the doctors, it was a means of normalizing preaching and administration of baptism and exorcism. None of these propositions was found heretical; they were just false. But one of them, claiming that Mass must be

et religion catholique. Rheims, 1567.

²⁹ According to the response of Gentian Hervet, the Micqueau's book was entitled *Confutation des erreurs et prodigieuses heresies de Gentian Hervet*.

³⁰ *Hervet, G. Response sur aucuns poincts principaux de la religion chrestienne, aux impudentes calomnies de Jean Loys Micqueau, maistre d'escholle de l'Eglise reformée d'Orleans, en un livre qu'il intitule : Confutation des erreurs et prodigieuses heresies de Gentian Hervet*. Rheims, 1569.

³¹ He also published writings of the Fathers of the Church, in Paris (*La France des humanistes. Hellénistes I.* / Ed. J.-F. Maillard, J. Kecskeméti, C. Magnien, M. Portalier. Turnhout, 1999. P. 185–276).

celebrated in French, to ensure that all have a common understanding, was deemed not only false but also scandalous and schismatic.

In 1572, the Faculty censored 31 propositions presented by the great archdeacon. Obviously, all were words spoken by clerics, either canons or vicars and curates of the archdeacon (so not only the city itself). These clergymen wanted to clearly subordinate the cult of Mary to the worship rendered to God the Father or to Christ, they refused some of the gestures and postures that were in common use, they contested kneeling before images, they used too much French language for the celebrations and they focused too much on justification through faith in their sermons.

Conclusion

The censures of the Faculty of theology founded by the Cardinal of Lorraine thus provide valuable information on the themes and means of dissemination of Protestant ideas, on the effectiveness and conscientiousness of Catholic censorship, on the control of books and spoken words, on the diversity of Catholicism and the need to normalize it after the Council of Trent. As is revealed by this document which has remained unheard of until today, the city of the Cardinal of Lorraine was bound to play an important role in all these domains.

Information on the article

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The discovery of an unprecedented document, which contains the censures published in the name of the Faculty of Theology of the University of Rheims at the time of the Cardinal of Lorraine, from 1557 to 1572, is of considerable importance for the study of the spreading of Protestant ideas, of the permeability of the Catholic clergy to some of these ideas, and of the doctrinal construction

of Roman Catholicism. In the 1550s, there was a censorship of heretical words spoken in the streets of Rheims by laypeople and even in a church by a parish priest. The censorship of these propositions was effective, as we can see there was no longer need to censor speeches by 1560. However, at that time, several Protestant books circulated in Reims were censored by the Faculty. In the mid-1560's, there was a new trouble: Gentian Hervet, a famous anti-Protestant polemicist, who was in Rheims at the request of the Cardinal of Lorraine, made problematic statements in his books. Around 1570, the confessional construction conducted against the Protestant doctrinal seduction prompted the Faculty to give clear instructions to parish priests on the administration of sacraments and preaching. In 1572, it seems that the targeted persons are now canons of the cathedral chapter and parish priests. Thus, the need to fight Protestant ideas and practices compelled Catholicism to a strict confessional construction.

Key words: censures, faculty of theology, Cardinal of Lorraine, Protestantism, books, clerics, liturgy, Tridentinization, controversy

Информация о статье

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Находка уникального документа, который содержит цензорские постановления, опубликованные от имени богословского факультета университета Реймса в период правления кардинала Лотарингии в 1557–1572-х гг., имеет огромное научное значение для изучения распространения протестантских идей, интереса католического клира к этим идеям и доктринальными построениями католической церкви. В 1550-е гг. существовала цензура еретических идей, произносимых на улицах Реймса мирским населением, и даже цензура проповедей, произносимых в церкви приходским священником. Такая система была эффективной, поскольку к 1560-му году необходимость в цензорском институте отпала. Однако к этому времени несколько протестантских книг, имевших хождение в Реймсе, подверглись факультетской цензуре. К середине 1560-х гг. возникла новая проблема: Жансьен Эрве, известный проповедник, полемизировавший с протестан-

тами и приглашенный в Реймс кардиналом Лотарингским, в своих книгах сделал ряд неоднозначных утверждений. Около 1570 г. конфессиональные доктринальные конструкции, направленные против богословских искушений Реформации, позволили факультету дать точные инструкции приходским священникам относительно преподавания таинств и проповеди. В 1572 г., похоже, целевой аудиторией стали каноники кафедральный собор и приходские священники. Следовательно, необходимость борьбы с протестантскими идеями и практиками вынудила католиков сформулировать точные конфессиональные положения.

Ключевые слова: цензура, факультет теологии, кардинал Лотарингии, протестантизм, книги, клир, литургия, Тридентский собор, богословские споры

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