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***PRETENCES OF HATRED:
 THE ACCESSION OF HENRI IV SEEN BY
 SÉBASTIEN LE PELLETIER, PRIEST, THEOLOGIAN, GRAMMARIAN
 OF THE CHOIR BOYS OF CHAPTER OF CHARTRES
 FROM HIS ORIGINAL MANUSCRIPT (1579–1592)***

The priest, theologian, grammar teacher of choir boys of chapter Sébastien Le Pelletier was an eyewitness to a Catholic world in peril. In 1589, he started writing the history of Chartres and the surrounding area during the wars of the League. He lived daily near the cathedral, in the heart of the community of canons of Notre-Dame, protected by the cloister. He took care of the choir boys of Chartres. In this environment, he attended masses where the main inhabitants of the city thronged. He was in a privileged position to glean information. The chapter of Chartres was closely involved in the municipal government of the city. His lordship included a large part of the city. The canons were represented by reigning aldermen and deputies, both at townhouse meetings and at general assemblies. Le Pelletier gives a detailed description of the siege of the town by Henri IV's army, the League's resistance, and the firm taking in hand by the royal side. He also gives his impressions of his Calvinist adversaries and of the French king's religious policy. Contained for a long time by memorable deeds of brave and prestigious defenders of the Catholic faith since the treacherously murdered hatred of the heretic was unleashed against Chartres in 1589. For fear of the destruction of his religion and of the desecration of his church, priest, theologian, grammar teacher of choir boys of chapter, Le Pelletier puts in writing what goes behind the schismatic policy of the King of Navarre, a policy similar to the earlier one of Henry VIII. Under an appearance of objectivity, the writing of Le Pelletier dissimulates a violent hate against heresy and its proponents.

Key words: King of Navarre, the League, Notre-Dame, canons, Calvinism

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**ПРИТВОРСТВО НЕНАВИСТИ:
 ВОЦАРЕНИЕ ГЕНРИХА IV, ОПИСАННОЕ
 СЕБАСТЬЯНОМ ЛЕ ПЕЛЛЕТЬЕ, СВЯЩЕННИКОМ, ТЕОЛОГОМ,
 ГРАММАТИКОМ ХОРА МАЛЬЧИКОВ ШАРТРСКОГО КАПИТУЛА:
 ОТРЫВОК ИЗ АВТОРСКОЙ РУКОПИСИ (1579–1592)**

Священник, теолог, учитель грамматики Шартрского капитула, Себастьян Ле Пеллетье был свидетелем возникновения угрозы католическому миру. В 1589 г. он начал писать историю Шартра и его окрестностей во время войн Лиги. Он жил при соборе, в самом сердце общины каноников Нотр-Дама, заботился о мальчиках из хора Шартра, посещал мессы, на которых собирались основные жители города. Его позиция позволяла легко собирать информацию. Глава Шартра был тесно вовлечен в муниципальное управление городом. Его власть распространялась на большую часть города. Члены капитула были представлены правящими олддерменами и депутатами, как на собраниях домовладельцев, так и на общих собраниях. Ле Пеллетье описывает осаду города армией Генриха IV, сопротивление Лиги и меры, принятые короной. Он также делится впечатлениями о своих противниках-кальвинистах и религиозной политике французского короля. Долгое время сдерживаемая памятными подвигами храбрых защитников католической веры, после предательского убийства, ненависть еретика вырвалась на волю в Шартре в 1589 г. Опасаясь разрушения его религии и осквернения его церкви, Ле Пеллетье излагает в письменной форме то, что стоит за раскольнической политикой короля Наварры, аналогичной политике Генриха VIII. Под видом объективности в сочинении Ле Пеллетье скрывается яростная ненависть к ереси и ее сторонникам.

Ключевые слова: король Наварры, Лига, Нотр-Дам, каноны, кальвинизм

The city of Chartres is about to fall. The royal forces batter the city on April 2nd, 1591, causing a breach in the outer walls of the city¹. The citizens, faced with torture for their resistance and knowing that military support from the Holy Catholic League is unlikely, see it in their best interest to submit their terms of surrender to the king². Henry IV, in the presence of the messengers representing the city, decides on a dramatic course of action: he tears apart the articles that have been proposed by the people of Chartres and declares his demands³. The inhabitants had ignored several times the summons from the king in the first days of the siege. Violent and hostile talks targeted at the new king had been screamed over the outer walls by the town mayor Sureau⁴. Admittedly, the resistance of the people of the capital city of the French Beauce had shown considerable courage, forcing the king to extend throughout a cold winter a siege that cost him highly in men, powder and munitions. However, there were other considerations that motivated the king's bold act. This is at least the opinion of the memorialist from Chartres, Sébastien Le Pelletier. Indeed, Chartres was more than a strategic place, or wheat loft, to control. Henry IV would violate the Marian Sanctuary, an old bastion of «the real faith of the Catholic religion» to annihilate. In sum, the actions of the king would reveal once again his relentless determination to attack the Catholic religion despite his constant efforts to conceal his true intentions behind «these practices» and other cunning policies. After his accession, that was pushed by «the hypocrisy and cruelty by the tyrant» Henry III, Sébastien Le Pelletier scrutinizes the slightest action or decision of the newly appointed king and gathers patiently the proof that will lift the veil hiding a policy full of hate against the Catholics, in which the ultimate goal is to wipe out the true religion of Christ. These are the pretences of a policy replete with hate that Sébastien Le Pelletier repeatedly denounces in his memoirs, a policy whose only goal is to «cheat the Catholics» in other words, abuse them to better sep-

¹ Histoire de Sébastien Le Pelletier, prêtre ligueur et maître de grammaire des enfants de la cathédrale de Chartres (1579–1592) / Éd. X. Le Person. Genève, 2006. P. 9.

² Histoire de Sébastien Le Pelletier... P. 225.

³ Histoire de Sébastien Le Pelletier... P. 225.

⁴ Histoire de Sébastien Le Pelletier... P. 155.

arate them from the responsibility of the Church and finally hand them over to Satan.

THE VIOLENT HATE OF A HERETIC KING AGAINST
THE CATHOLIC CITY OF CHARTRES

An engaged historian: Sébastien Le Pelletier

The author of *The Account the Most Memorable Things that Becomes of the City of Chartres and its Surroundings* is «priest, teacher, and instructor of grammar for children of the choir» at Notre-Dame of Chartres⁵. He was also a rigorous and stern theologian. His fidelity to the Holy Catholic League as well as his religious exigencies had been nurtured by the edifying model of the eminent prelate Claude de Saintes, bishop of the city of Evreux. His rigour as a priest and his knowledge lead him to be proposed by the bishop Nicolas de Thou for the position of high penitentiary priest for the diocese⁶. He refused the post not only because he despised Bishop of Thou but also because of the hardness of the task: he did not wish to follow the fate of his predecessor who had died of a cold waiting for the penitents⁷. In Le Pelletier, we therefore have a historian memoir writer, concerned for his health, demanding and radical morally and religiously. He also was a man who was deeply influenced by the cultural and ecclesiastical nature of his canonical community in his perception of the events that took place in the city of Chartres, both in the past or during his own life⁸. Throughout his loyalty, he shows his faith to the Holy Catholic League and his support for the war that the armies of the Holy Union were leading against «the enemies of the French state and the Catholic faith»⁹.

⁵ Departmental archives of Eure-et-Loir. Contracts received by the Chapter of Notre-Dame by Antoine Mussart, Chapter notary (1593–1596), Contract between Robert Vauquelin and Sébastien Le Pelletier, Chartres, August 30, 1593. G. 244. Fol. 31 r^o.

⁶ This function consisted in absolving reserved cases and which was, in general, entrusted to a priest endowed with a solid theological culture according to the prescriptions of the Council of Trent.

⁷ Histoire de Sébastien Le Pelletier... P. 290.

⁸ See: Sanfaçon A. Légendes, histoire et pouvoir à Chartres // Revue historique. 1988. Vol. 279. P. 337–357.

⁹ Histoire de Sébastien Le Pelletier... P. 82.

The news of the death of both the Duke of Guise and his brother was painfully received by the people of the Holy Catholic League. This was particularly true in the city of Chartres, where the population considered the two princes responsible of their deliverance from the «reiters» (German mercenaries) in 1587. Sébastien Le Pelletier expresses the popular pain at the beginning of his book, especially mourning the Duke of Guise, whom he viewed as a final bastion against heresy: «You would hear around you a huge silence, people from the churches drenched in tears, the small children crying seeing their fathers and mothers, and with their example, with many sighs from those who had lost their own parents and friends. There were many who spent multiple days without eating nor drinking. In short, the sadness was larger than the death of this prince that hadn't been the joy that had seen or been received in Chartres»¹⁰. Le Pelletier omits a report of events in the city of Blois, not only because he was not a witness to them, but also because his center of interest now shifted elsewhere, to a seemingly apocalyptic future: the memorialist intends to warn of the scourge from God that will befall the people of France in punishment for their heretic behaviour: «I will not amuse myself in narrating this story [the assassination of Guises], considering that others will describe its truth, as it deserves, and I will have the satisfaction of only recounting the history of what happened in Chartres and its country, because, the king, having cut his right arm with his left arm, the blood will flow for as long as it pleases God and until his wrath will have passed and it will stop chastising us»¹¹. Le Pelletier sought to decipher the evidence of an announced divine punishment, and as an erudite theologian, to show parallels between the revelations of the Scriptures and the prophetic signs of an immediate history. The time had come to distinguish true Christians and «heresy-mongers», designating thus the Catholics allied with the «Béarnais»¹². Sébastien Le Pelletier intends his manuscript to be a work of resistance against Evil with aims of revealing to the reader the pretences of the policy of Henri IV which, with the pretext of restoring civil peace, had as its ultimate intention the extirpation of the Catholic religion from

¹⁰ Histoire de Sébastien Le Pelletier... P. 91.

¹¹ Histoire de Sébastien Le Pelletier... P. 91.

¹² It is the pejorative nickname given to Henri IV by Le Pelletier.

France. He also repeatedly describes acts of physical and spiritual violence against the «good Catholics».

The military eagerness of a heretic king against Chartres the Pure

For the priest Le Pelletier, *the «King of Navarre»* (way of refusing to recognize his quality of king of France) is animated by same «bloody destiny» as his predecessor. For the memorialist, Henri IV is without a doubt a born slaughterer like the dead «tyrant»¹³. To fulfill his wishes, he must strike at the heart of Catholic France, the city of Chartres. Chartres, the preeminent church dedicated to the Virgin, is nothing less, according to the memorialist's pen, the source of the Revelation of the Christian message in the kingdom of France¹⁴. As such, it is hardly surprising that the king of Navarre fights against it with so much hate. The true meaning of the siege of the Marian city did not take long to reveal itself. From the first canon shots fired against the city, the sovereign's malice is obvious to the eyes of the most clear-sighted. As heavy cannonballs rained down on the churches of the Marian city, the considerable damage was quickly apparent¹⁵. The church of Sainte-Foy was particularly hit hard¹⁶. The theories on the motivations behind the bombardment reach the city of Chartres quickly and the memorialist hastens to report these rumours to the governor of the Holy Catholic League: «Sir de Grandmont [...] seeing that he was present that day and that they were damaging the Church of Holy Faith, he said: "Are you surprised that they are destroying our holy faith? Don't you know that they want to end our holy faith"¹⁷?» The cathedral can no longer bear the violence: «When firing against the Cathedral of Notre-Dame between both bells, they shot down one of the large images that was in the high gallery, above the rose window. This image made a loud noise as it fell without hurting anyone»¹⁸. This damage was not anecdotic: it resonates in the consciences

¹³ Histoire de Sébastien Le Pelletier... P. 130.

¹⁴ Histoire de Sébastien Le Pelletier... P. 101.

¹⁵ Histoire de Sébastien Le Pelletier... P. 165.

¹⁶ Histoire de Sébastien Le Pelletier... P. 167.

¹⁷ Histoire de Sébastien Le Pelletier... P. 166.

¹⁸ Histoire de Sébastien Le Pelletier... P. 166.

of the citizens as a Marian abandonment¹⁹ since, as the memorialist writes, at the time of the preceding siege of 1568, the cathedral had been miraculously spared from the fire of the Huguenots²⁰. Until the beginning of Lent 1591, the large mantle of Mary had always protected the city from the attacks and from fury of the barbarians and heretics. The inhabitants of Chartres attributed to these images, more than one hundred and fifty carved in the stone or illustrated on bluish stained glasses of the cathedral and its cloister²¹, protective virtues against Evil²². A few days later, it was one of the towers of Notre-Dame that was targeted as if to silence the time of the Church²³.

After the inevitable surrender of the city, the king shows his deep aversion for the catholic religion as evidenced by his entry in the Marian city, which was both blasphemous and profane. In spite of the honour that the bishop and his clergy had decided to bestow on him at the door of Notre-Dame on April 20th, 1591, Henri IV, according to the memorialist, showed himself to be contemptuous: «He never deigned to enter the said church [even if it was an “old custom to receive members of the royal family”], but he went directly to the bishop’s house»²⁴. The city was then delivered to the debauchery of the enemy soldiers who «would not fail to quench their thirst by drinking the wines of Chartres». Next, came the mocking remarks²⁵. The King, according to Le Pelletier, «using his freedom and authority over his sect [...] wanted to defy

¹⁹ About the reasons which, according to Le Pelletier, would explain this Marian abandonment, see: Le Person X. Le siège de la corruption: la résistance de Chartres la Pure aux assauts de l’hérésie. Témoignage du prêtre ligueur Sébastien Le Pelletier de Chartres d’après son manuscrit inédit // Mémoires et mémorialistes à l’époque des Guerres de Religion / Éd. J. Provence. Paris, 2015. P. 215–235.

²⁰ These images had even remained unharmed during the siege of 1568, even as the Huguenots were enraged to want to bring them down. Histoire de Sébastien Le Pelletier... P. 176.

²¹ Sanfaçon A. Society and Ideology in Early Modern France: The Sense of Community in Chartres // Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the Western Society for French History. 1984. Vol. 11. P. 14.

²² Histoire de Sébastien Le Pelletier... P. 174.

²³ Histoire de Sébastien Le Pelletier... P. 190.

²⁴ Histoire de Sébastien Le Pelletier... P. 234–235.

²⁵ Histoire de Sébastien Le Pelletier... P. 235.

the Church and its procession, by going to Paloys, the most profane district of the city»²⁶. Consequently, it seems that nothing can protect the city from the exactions of the heretics and their «heresy-mongers» anymore.

Henri de Navarre: a «ferocious beast» devouring the strong Catholics and the priests of Chartres

In the city of Chartres, the priest Le Pelletier notes that the king violates without delay the terms of the capitulation in which he agreed not to persecute the clergy. Even whilst writing his work, the author deplores the banishments, arrests or executions of members of the Church, authorized by the king and perpetrated by his representatives from the city of Chartres, later appointed to the urban government: «When they entered Chartres, gallows had been erected [...] Nevertheless, in all this chaos, they hanged only priests and Catholics»²⁷.

According to Sébastien Le Pelletier, these judges have «the desire to please the King they serve and to quench their thirst for the sacred blood of God»²⁸. Their judgments «were only intended to flatter the King»²⁹. He deplores the rehabilitation of murderers of priests and the criminal pursuit of those who had justly condemned them under the government of the League. It was specifically in the chapter of Chartres that the justice of the «Royals» attacked most vigorously: «They only consult on the means of fining the chapter and the clergy»³⁰. One decision retained the attention and interest of the memorialist. He devotes, indeed, several pages of his writings to rail against the severe penalty against a young sub-deacon, a canon at Chartres, named Senault, for a sentence testifying his membership in the League contained in a letter intercepted by the «Royals» and intended for an uncle who had taken refuge in Paris, also holder of a prebendary in Chartres³¹. He is outraged by the decision of these «righteous judges» who, based on a foolish word, [...] bathe and soak

²⁶ Histoire de Sébastien Le Pelletier... P. 235.

²⁷ Histoire de Sébastien Le Pelletier... P. 266.

²⁸ Histoire de Sébastien Le Pelletier... P. 280.

²⁹ Histoire de Sébastien Le Pelletier... P. 267.

³⁰ Histoire de Sébastien Le Pelletier... P. 281.

³¹ Histoire de Sébastien Le Pelletier... P. 277.

in the blood of an innocent poor fool»³². Sébastien Le Pelletier then continues to compare the action of the king and his justice to a new massacre of the Holy Innocents³³. The task of exposing this royal injustice is such that his discouragement is apparent under the pen of the memorialist, finding himself unable to report the «immemorable other death sentences of such justice which, instead of punishing crimes, empower criminals and embolden them to sin boldly»³⁴.

The hatred of the king was not only manifested by physical violence but especially by the corruption of souls which would lead the inhabitants of Chartres to an unquestionable damnation.

A policy of corruption of souls carried out at the heart of the Marian city

Whilst the thinly veiled policy by the king aimed to destroy the Catholics, it was implemented alongside an active propaganda. This campaign intended to convert the good catholic subjects to its own devotion Sébastien got angry when he heard the sermons of «a doctor in theology named Maignen» who «came to preach in Chartres, to serve the King» at the end of the year 1591³⁵. As a grammarian of the choir boys of chapter of Chartres, he had to accompany them in the cathedral where they harmoniously mixed their voices with the songs in praise of God. This Sunday mass was attended by a large people and the principal notables of the city. Le Pelletier was present, despite himself, with assiduity, for the speech of the one he ironically calls «venerable professor», who supervised the conversion of inhabitants of Chartres to the royal devotion. Like all the clerks belonging to the Holy Catholic league, he is condemned to silence, except for the pages in which he was writing and where he does not miss an opportunity to challenge with vehemence the arguments of his opponent. Maignen «persevered in giving his sermons, often saying what should be silent and stifling what should be said, so scholars and good Catholics clenched their teeth listening to their jargon»³⁶. Everything is organized to increase the interest

³² Histoire de Sébastien Le Pelletier... P. 279.

³³ Histoire de Sébastien Le Pelletier... P. 280.

³⁴ Histoire de Sébastien Le Pelletier... P. 266.

³⁵ Histoire de Sébastien Le Pelletier... P. 268.

³⁶ Histoire de Sébastien Le Pelletier... P. 100.

of those favouring the doctor: «So that a greater number of people came to Notre-Dame to listen to him, he [Maignen] had the Sieur de Souday forbidden to ring the chocks of the parish churches of the city and to say masses for the deceased after his sermon»³⁷. What precisely shocked Le Pelletier was that Maignen «often said there was not much difference between the Catholic religion and the King's religion and that they could easily be brought together» whereas, according to Le Pelletier, «the King's religion is that of Calvin and his disciples». Sébastien Le Pelletier, as if he was talking to the public within the context of a controversy asks for the reader's opinion: «So you see how easily, writes Le Pelletier ironically, we could accomodate our Catholic religion and his, Jesus Christ and Belial. You can measure how little honesty there was in his doctrine. This cunning doctor was impudent, satirical, wordy, dirty in the words he spoke. He was not afraid to say he'd piss off all those Leaguers in their pants»³⁸. Maignen silenced the opposing preachers of the mendicant orders on the first Sunday of Advent, complaining about the opposition of the chapter on this subject: «This first Sunday, he did not fail to wash them and preach them with satirical invectives, reproaching them with covered words that they were rebellious to the king and that they prevented preaching in favor of the king's service»³⁹. The priest Le Pelletier then grieves for the audience of this «royalist doctor» and fears his possibly harmful influence on the flocks⁴⁰.

Still, according to Le Pelletier, the efficacy of the «royalist» preaching was consolidated by a rather effective policy of ostracizing certain members of the clergy who had been the mouthpieces of the Holy catholic League propaganda under the former government of the city: «When the Jesuits, Capuchins and Minims left, the Cordeliers and Jacobins expected to suffer the same fate. Noting that several canons of Notre-Dame had already been expelled and that several clerics of the churches of Saint-Jean and Saint-Pere were also to be banished, Catholic preachers no longer dared to preach the truth in their pulpit»⁴¹. Those who dared to contravene the decisions

³⁷ Histoire de Sébastien Le Pelletier... P. 268.

³⁸ Histoire de Sébastien Le Pelletier... P. 268.

³⁹ Histoire de Sébastien Le Pelletier... P. 288.

⁴⁰ Histoire de Sébastien Le Pelletier... P. 288.

⁴¹ Histoire de Sébastien Le Pelletier... P. 242.

of the municipal authority were immediately sanctioned. Such was the case of a Jacobin named Le Breton caught red handed at the Pentecost of 1591, accused of subtly preaching disobedience, and then sent to face the Parliament of Tours where he was condemned to death⁴².

The «Royals» thus ensured the importance of preaching favorably to Henri IV in Chartres, much to the disgust of our memorialist: «They want the inhabitants of Chartres to hear only their sermons, reflecting their passions and their understanding»⁴³. Le Pelletier thus endeavours, in his historical journal book, to describe the heinous policy of Henri IV aimed against the Catholics. More specifically, against inhabitants of Chartres who were so bold as to defend their religion against the attacks of the heretics during the siege of the beginning of the year 1591. However, this royal violence on the bodies and the souls is not circumstantial but rather indicates a strategy inspired from abroad.

HARTED AGAINST THE CATHOLICS INSPIRED FROM ABROAD

The denunciation of Sébastien Le Pelletier rests on a fundamental argument: Henri IV's politics would resemble the one followed by the English monarchs against the English Catholics. This policy would have been suggested by the ministers of Geneva. These people «were such good archers that they fired the first shot at our Catholic faith. They caused him several wounds»⁴⁴.

The first arrow drawn by the «heretic King» against the Catholics took the form, according to Le Pelletier, of a «iniquity and sacrilege law recorded at the Parliament of Tours which ordered priests to violate the secrecy of confession and to denounce to judges Catholics belonging to the Holy League. The king also ordered the monks to leave their monastic habit and renounce their vows». With this decision, Henri of Navarre wanted, according to the memorialist, to deprive the Catholics of their best defenders and thus conform to «the first law of Henry VIII of England» which he calls «the first wound», which «will discover the Catholics and ransack them». The goal of the heretic king was then to precipitate the disaffection

⁴² Histoire de Sébastien Le Pelletier... P. 242.

⁴³ Histoire de Sébastien Le Pelletier... P. 242.

⁴⁴ Histoire de Sébastien Le Pelletier... P. 130.

of those still zealous to the Catholic faith to lose their souls: «This first law of his alleged reign is made to drive as many Christians as he can out of the bosom of the Church and, when those who will remain there, take away the use of the sacraments for fear that they will obtain their salvation»⁴⁵.

The memorialist recites without delay, point by point, the phases of the satanic plan already in action by which king de Navarre intends to persecute the Catholics following with the English example: «The second [law] will be to kill the same disobedient preachers. The third, which is the principal intention of Satan, will be to make the sacrament of penance odious to the Christians and to prevent them from confessing their sin to gain forgiveness. The fourth is that Henry of England to apostate as many religious people he can»⁴⁶.

If the Henri VIII's policy was a model for Henri IV, it was because it resulted in breaking with Rome and in establishing a schism. This fear adopts a greater meaning considering that when Sébastien Le Pelletier was writing, around the years 1590–1591, the king attempted to discuss and make inoperative the excommunication weighing on him⁴⁷.

A schismatic royal policy

In his diary, the memorialist often returns to this pontifical judgment denying Henri of Navarre any possibility of succession to the throne. This supreme sanction, for him, was flouted by Henry III who had designated the heretic as his legitimate successor in Tours in the spring of 1589⁴⁸. To violate «the sentence of excommunication against Henry of Bourbon» fulminated by Sixtus V in 1585 and confirmed by Gregory XIV in 1591, as did those who supported the king of Navarre, was an offence against God⁴⁹. All those whom had burned the papal bull must thus be excommunicated on the spot⁵⁰.

⁴⁵ Histoire de Sébastien Le Pelletier... P. 131.

⁴⁶ Histoire de Sébastien Le Pelletier... P. 131.

⁴⁷ Reference is made to the bubble of Sixtus V: *Declaratio contra Henricum Borbonium assertum regem Navarræ, et Henricum item Borbonium, præ-tensum principem Condensem, Hæreticos, eorumq; posteros et successores: Ac liberatio Subditorum, ab omni fidelatis et obsequii debito. Romæ, 1585.*

⁴⁸ Histoire de Sébastien Le Pelletier... P. 120.

⁴⁹ Histoire de Sébastien Le Pelletier... P. 220.

⁵⁰ Histoire de Sébastien Le Pelletier... P. 247.

The year 1591 was marked by the fear of the memorialist of Chartres of seeing the «Regalists» electing an antipope in France: «We were tired of listening in the city those who said they were Catholic speak against the Pope and especially when we learned that he had excommunicated all the adherents of the heretical king, and believed that a patriarch of France should be elected, an anti-christ or antipope»⁵¹. However, the ecclesiastical assembly of Mantes, joined on Saint Jean's day in 1591 for this purpose, failed but nonetheless achieved something quite worse in his opinion by restoring the Edict of January 1562⁵². Furthermore, the situation deteriorated.

On October 11th, 1591, Le Pelletier learns that «the Royal Council assembled in Chartres confirmed the condemnable sentence of Tours of the abrupt excommunication bull and declared the pope heretic and a disruptor of Christendom». He immediately recognizes this as a strong act of a schismatic policy worthy of damnation: «See how these poor dogs enraged with hysteria, schism and ambition amused themselves by exercising their rage and fury by biting the piece of excommunication which knocked them out and the sword which kills them, but their disbelief and obstinacy does not prevent the truth of the word of God and that they are not really excommunicated as heretics, heresy-mongers and true schismatics, without being able to be absolved otherwise than by worth satisfaction of God»⁵³.

This schismatic policy penetrated another threshold in the conclusions of an assembly of twenty-eight prelates in Chartres at the beginning of November 1591 confirming the content of the decree of Tours⁵⁴. This decision, made under the authority of the young cardinal of Bourbon, provokes a furious reaction from Sébastien Le Pelletier: after patiently having recopied in his diary the detail of what he ironically names the «beautiful decree» that came from the «secret meeting», he dismantles one by one, as such a combative polemicist, the given arguments to justify the cancellation of the bull in a passage of his work that he entitles: «The Theological Considerations of Annulling the Episcopal Canon of the Papal

⁵¹ Histoire de Sébastien Le Pelletier... P. 240.

⁵² Histoire de Sébastien Le Pelletier... P. 240.

⁵³ Histoire de Sébastien Le Pelletier... P. 255.

⁵⁴ Histoire de Sébastien Le Pelletier... P. 258.

Bull of Excommunication»⁵⁵. According to him, these prelates seek to help «establish heretics and the heresy and schism in this kingdom, as did the false Catholics of England, they only try to strive to deliver to the wolf the flocks redeemed by the precious blood of Jesus Christ»⁵⁶. Violence against the Church, which is being stripped «of the obedience of its leader, our Holy Father the Pope», is such that he considers the damage irrevocable: «I will blame them that this ecclesiastical decision has done more damage to the Catholic Church in France than all the preaching of the heretic ministers and all the wars of their princes and protectors since the death of King Henry II have done»⁵⁷. This measure is such that it will lead the Catholics to a certain damnation: «The prelates opened the gates of Hell in Mantes and closed those of Paradise in Chartres»⁵⁸.

A historical interpretation inspired by the pamphlets supporting the Holy League

This comparison between Henri IV and Henri VIII in their courses of action is not merely a personal reading or interpretation by the author. It was in the spirit of the times in from 1585–1593. As of spring 1585, the princes of the Holy Catholic League try to discredit Henri of Navarre as a pretender to the throne by asserting that his eventual aim, following the fashion of Henri VIII, is to become richer through the patrimony of the Church⁵⁹. Pamphlets or diaries that show League sensitivity prompt the fear of their readers by insisting on the likely translation in France of a state persecution against the «good Catholics». Thus the impact of the Loys Dorleans' lampoons, republished several times since 1586, probably contributing to the augmentation of this fear⁶⁰. The Parisian lawyer devotes

⁵⁵ Histoire de Sébastien Le Pelletier... P. 258–259.

⁵⁶ Histoire de Sébastien Le Pelletier... P. 260.

⁵⁷ Histoire de Sébastien Le Pelletier... P. 264.

⁵⁸ Histoire de Sébastien Le Pelletier... P. 265.

⁵⁹ See: Declaration des causes qui ont meu Monseigneur le cardinal de Bourbon et les pairs, princes, prelatz, seigneurs, villes et communautez de ce royaume de France de s'armer contre ceux qui veulent subvertir la religion et l'Etat (31 mars 1585). Péronne, 1585.

⁶⁰ Loys Dorleans. Advertissement des catholiques Anglois aux François catholiques, du danger où ils sont de perdre leur religion et d'experimenter, comme en Angleterre la cruauté des ministres s'ils reçoivent à la couronne un Roy qui soit heretique. S. l. 1586. BnF, impr. [8–Lb34–311]. His early success

several pages of the «English Catholic», as it had generally become known as at this time, to the «comparison of the King of Navarre with Henry III the King of England»⁶¹. When the grammarian of the choir boys recopied his notes in a more historical manner, from 1591, Loys Dorleans gets on the polemical and lampoonist track. Not only does he republish the 1586 lampoon, but he publishes another one, dedicated entirely to terrible descriptions⁶². The new prosecuting attorney of the Parliament of the League depicts in it the horrible persecutions ordered by Jeanne d'Albret in Béarn and describes Henri IV as an instigator of carnages and an eater of human flesh. The priest Sébastien Le Pelletier seems to be inspired on several occasions in his work by the heinous eloquence of the Parisian lawyer. According to him, the king of Navarre maintained in Béarn the ecclesiastical ordinances of his mother, who prohibited Catholic worship. He did not doubt that the new king would extend his policy of extirpation of the Catholic religion to the whole kingdom, which he judges to be much more serious than «the rampages of the Catholics which are innumerable»: there is nothing that can be more «displeasing to God» than «the banishment of the Catholic religion from Bearn and the establishment of heresy in the same country, because to kill good people is to send souls to paradise, and to deprive them of the true religion is to precipitate them to Hell»⁶³. In addition, he interprets, for example, the first military Norman campaign of Henri IV, at the end of 1589, as a trip «to form an alliance with Elisabeth of England, executing the priests of God and the Catholics»⁶⁴.

was such that he was commonly referred to in League times as «the English Catholic». In this well-known book, the lawyer league called on French Catholics to wage an all-out war against heresy in France to avoid them suffering what had happened in «the satanic kingdom of the English Jezebel in which religion, now revered, is atheism». See: Crouzet D. *Les guerriers de Dieu. La violence au temps des troubles de religion (vers 1525 vers 1610)*. Seyssel, 1990. Vol. 2. P. 196–197.

⁶¹ The passage mainly concerns the behavior of Henry VIII with his wives and the violation of kinship rights (Crouzet D. *Les guerriers de Dieu*. P. 83–84).

⁶² Loys Dorleans. *Premier et second avertissement des catholiques anglois aux François catholiques et à la noblesse qui suit à présent le roy de Navarre*. Paris, 1590. This is an update of the work published in 1586.

⁶³ *Histoire de Sébastien Le Pelletier...* P. 130.

⁶⁴ *Histoire de Sébastien Le Pelletier...* P. 120.

This apprehension of a tragic and shared destiny for the French Catholics with their English peers can also be found in the writings of the theologian and polemicist Claude de Saintes whom Le Pelletier greatly admires. Indeed, during the spring 1591, the Tridentine prelate, who was forced to flee the town of Dreux when surprised by the royal armies, also tried to protest against the royal preacher, a Dominican named Jullian Bernardi, giving the Lent sermon by excommunicating him. The new governor of the city appeals against this judgment to the royal Parliament of Caen which invalidates the episcopal decision. After having achieved an annulment of this decree by the Court of Justice in allegiance with the League at Rouen, Claude de Saintes published a onetime publication, where he strongly affirmed that «to want to prescribe, by the authority of the secular Magistrate, the common heresy of our times, and principally with England, condemned and anathematised at the Council of Trent»⁶⁵.

Following the fashion of many other memorialists, themselves members of the Holy Catholic League, Sébastien Le Pelletier was strongly influenced and inspired, in certain polemical passages of his writings, by the propagandist publications of the Holy Catholic League⁶⁶.

* * *

The writing of this history of Chartres and its surroundings is not solely a work of circumstance such as Sébastien seems to write in the first pages of his manuscript. He claims only to have recopied his diary in an historical manner to please a gentleman that he names

⁶⁵ Bref advertisement de M. l'évesque d'Évreux [Claude de Saintes] à ses diocésains, contre un prétendu arrest donné à Caen, le 28 de mars dernier, par lequel il appert de l'introduction et établissement en France du schisme, hérésie et tyrannie d'Angleterre. Avec ledit arrest, sentence du métropolitain et arrest de la Cour donnez contre iceluy. Paris, 1591. P. 18. This brochure seems to have been particularly distributed. Printed in Paris and Rouen, it «ran into the hands of curious people both from one party and from the other» according to: Rozée P. Histoire de la Ligue, auvre inedité d'un contemporain (1574–1589). Paris, 1914 // BnF. Ms. Fr. 23296. P. 422. Quoted by: Pallier D. Recherches sur l'imprimerie à Paris pendant la Ligue (1585–1594). Genève, 1975. P. 189–190.

⁶⁶ Pallier D. Recherches sur l'imprimerie... P. 188.

Sir — Claude de La Châtre — who required «commentaries»⁶⁷ for the future historians of the Holy Catholic League in a context of battle for the memory⁶⁸. However, as the work progressed, he turned himself into a historian to alert the «good catholic readers» and to put the pretences of the hatred of the king into light. In order to achieve this, he does not hesitate, in his own words, to add «a lot of himself [...] to write history methodically and to help with its remembrance of those who read it»⁶⁹. Unlike Nicolas Brûlart, canon of Chartres, of Notre-Dame of Paris and magistrate at the Parliament, whose faith to the Holy Catholic League had ended up weakening under the burden of his social fears, the own hatred of Sébastien Le Pelletier remains intact from start to finish in his writing⁷⁰. Written in fear of the peril of his religion, his work concludes on the evocation of the massacre of the priests and the plundering done by the king's armies in the surroundings of Chartres in September 1592⁷¹. This was the deliberate choice of the author, who survived at least another year⁷². News of the abjuration of Henri IV at Saint-Denis reached him⁷³. Although this event reinforced an interpretation of History that he favored, namely that all the barbarians and heretics who attacked with hatred the Marian city ended by converting themselves to the Catholic religion by the miraculous intervention of the Virgin. It is likely that he saw in this event, although so important and fundamental for the pacification

⁶⁷ «Commentary» is a French word from the end of the 15th century coming from the Latin «commentaries», which means «collection of notes» and more precisely «meditations» on a subject.

⁶⁸ See: Le Person X. L'avènement d'Henri IV vu par les historiens ligueurs / Ed. by M. Bernard, J. Goeury // Paradoxes d'historiens. Les enjeux de l'écriture de l'histoire en France (1560–1630). Albineana Cahiers d'Aubigné. 2019. N 31. P. 133–153.

⁶⁹ Histoire de Sébastien Le Pelletier... P. 59.

⁷⁰ See: Nicolas Brûlart. Journal d'un ligueur parisien, des Barricades à la levée du siège de Paris par Henri IV (1588–1590) / Ed. by X. Le Person. Genève, 1999.

⁷¹ Histoire de Sébastien Le Pelletier... P. 310.

⁷² Departmental archives of Eure-et-Loir. Contracts received by the Chapter of Notre-Dame by Antoine Mussart, Chapter notary (1593–1596), Contract between Robert Vauquelin and Sébastien Le Pelletier, Chartres, August 30, 1593. G. 244. Fol. 31 r°.

⁷³ According to the register of the Clerk of the Work of Chartres Cathedral, the news reached Chartres on Tuesday July 17, 1593. Departmental archives of Eure-et-Loir. G. 418. Fol. 257 v°–258 r°.

and the reunification of the kingdom of France, only another «practice» by the heretic king against the religion of Christ and its faithful, a «practice» intended to dissimulate his profound and mortal hatred⁷⁴.

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⁷⁴ Wolfe M. The conversion of Henry IV. Politics, Power, and Religious Belief in Early Modern France. Cambridge (Mass.), 1993.

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