French
French orthography in the 16th century

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0. Introduction

In France, as in many other European countries, the 16th century was a crucial period in the development of the written language. It was during this period that a number of features that still characterize modern French orthography were set in place: the distinction between <u> and <v>, <i> and <j> according to their pronunciation (rather than according to their position in the word), as well as most of the accents and diacritic signs that are still with us today. Moreover, this century witnessed, for the first time, a full-scale debate among intellectuals as to the role of the written language in society, together with the first known attempts at establishing a truly phonetic orthography.

Before we go any further, it should be pointed out that, strictly speaking, there is no such thing as "16th century French orthography", if we are to take the term "orthography" in the sense of the word that is generally the most widely accepted today, at least in France: "Way of spelling a word that is considered to be the only correct form". As we shall see, orthography, during the whole period, was extremely variable (this variability depending on factors that will be described further on) and changeable: the types of spellings that we see towards the end of the period are quite different from those that we find right at the beginning. If we are, however, to consider the spellings of different words (the term "spelling" being much more neutral, and not implying any idea of a norm), we will see that various systems coexisted, and that variability and changeability were not necessarily synonymous with a complete lack of coherence or of rules, as has sometimes been suggested.

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1. French orthography before the 16th century

The history of written French as we know it begins in 842, with the "Strasbourg Oaths". This text was produced in particular circumstances, which account for its nature. Two of the sons of Charlemagne, Louis the German and Charles the Bald, decided to form an alliance against their brother Lothair. However, the two brothers concluding the pact did not speak the same language: Louis was a German speaker, and Charles spoke the French vernacular known as Romance, which had already become sufficiently detached from Latin to form a spoken language in its own right. The text of the Oaths was therefore written in three languages: Latin, Old High German and Romance, and, according to Roger Wright (1982: 122–126), the Romance version was written in a way which would enable a German speaker with no knowledge of the French vernacular but who was familiar with written Latin, to pronounce the Oath in such a way that it would be intelligible to Charles and his followers. For pragmatic reasons, what counted in this situation was not that the text should survive in a written form, but that it should be pronounced orally before witnesses, who could understand it in this form.

The first French literary text that has come down to us is the *Sequence of Saint Eulalia*, which dates from around the year 880. In this text, Latin letters are used to represent the phonemes of vernacular speech; however, the system of correspondence used is not always consistent, and there is also some interference from Germanic habits (the scribe who wrote the manuscript of *Eulalia* also wrote the text in German which follows it). For example, the phoneme /k/ is transcribed variously as <k> (*eſkoltet*, *kriſt*, *koſe*), <ch> (*chi*, *chief*), <qu> (*quelle*, *qued*) and <c> before <a>, <o> and <u> (*coſe*, *colpeſ*). We may add to this list the conventional Latin abbreviation *xpſ* for *Christ(us)*. These variants were not, however, used indifferently: <qu> tended to be used in grammatical morphemes that descended directly from Latin and had retained a similar form in the vernacular, and the ecclesiastical abbreviation *xpſ* could stand equally for the Latin word and for its vernacular equivalent.[1] The grapheme <ch> (as in *chief*) allowed the scribe to note simultaneously the pronunciation of /k/ before <i>, and to give a visual reminder of the etymology (Latin *caput*). These simple examples demonstrate that written French, from the very beginning, was a mixed system, in which the phonogrammic, etymological, morphogrammic and ideographical principles coexisted.[2]

Medieval French orthography would deserve a chapter of its own, which cannot be provided here.[3] However, we would like once and for all to dispel

the myth of a "phonetic" orthography of French that supposedly existed during the Middle Ages.[4] French orthography has *always* been a mixed system, although the "mix" of its various components and principles (proportions of the phonological, morphological, historical and etymological principles) has varied from period to period and from place to place.

2. Sources of 16th-century French orthography

The type of orthography that we find in the earliest printed texts is a direct descendent from manuscript orthography. Just as the printed book, in its earliest years, borrowed numerous features that were already present in manuscript books, so also did the orthography used in these books borrow a great number of features from the orthography of manuscripts.

To present a rather simplified view, we can say that the manuscript writing of the late 15th century had to conform to two imperatives, which might seem at first sight to be contradictory and irreconcilable: on the one hand, that of speed, and on the other hand, that of legibility. In order to cope with an ever-increasing demand for books and documents, professional scribes had to write as quickly as possible, without raising pen from paper. However, this led to the development of a particular type of cursive writing, *l'écriture gothique*, in which numerous letters (<i>, <m>, <n>, <u>) could be confused. We should also remember that, at this time, <u> and <v> were not distinguished according to their phonetic value, and nor were <i> and <j>.[5] This problem was remedied by inserting a number of mute letters, mostly consonants, which had several functions. First of all, these consonants were generally etymological (Latin), and they gave individual words a particular "physiognomy" which immediately reminded readers of the corresponding Latin words.[6] A further point that should be mentioned is the fact that the system of abbreviations used in Latin and French was practically the same (the tilde used to replace a nasal consonant, <^{9}> for *-us*, <q;> for *que*, the ampersand <&> for *et* – the form of the conjunction being identical in Latin and in French –, as well as the abbreviations for *per*, *pro* and so on).[7] This was especially useful for members of the scholarly community, who had learned to read and write first of all in Latin, and for whom Latin was the main language for reading and writing. This allowed them to gain rapid access to the meaning of a text without necessarily having to oralize it, and even allowed non-French speakers to "read" texts in French without necessarily knowing how to speak the language. Finally, at this time, the spoken language was extremely variable, despite the more or

less well-established existence of a "standard": the form of the language that was spoken at court and in Parisian administrative spheres. Having a written language that was not based on anyone's particular speech but was anchored in a prestigious language which could no longer change made everyone equal and removed any potential obstacles to understanding. Added to these mute etymological letters, pseudo-etymological letters such as <y>, initial <h->, and <x> also had a calligraphic and distinctive role. For example, a mute <h> before <u> informed the reader that the <u> in question was a vowel and not a consonant: the reader was thus able to distinguish between *huitre* 'an oyster' and *vitre* 'a pane of glass'.[8]

Although the extent of this variation has often been greatly exaggerated, the use of many notations, such as <i> and <y>, was left to the appreciation of the writer. In the latter case, <y> tended to be used in word-final position (*amy* 'friend', plural *amis*), as it was more legible: this convention has been carried on into English orthography (cf. *lady/ladies*). <Th>, <ch>, <ph> and <rh> were widely used in words from Greek and Latin, although imperfect knowledge of etymology often led to the use of pseudo-learned spellings.[9] The letter <e> stood for a variety of vowel phonemes,[10] and vowel length was often noted by adding a mute <s>: this, however, caused potential problems of mis-reading, as there were also many words in which the <s> was pronounced in a pre-consonantal position.[11] Finally,[12] the palatal consonants /ʎ/ and /ñ/, unknown in Latin, both had a wide range of variant spellings.[13]

To sum up, we can say that, at this time, the French language had an extremely rich phonological system,[14] and only the 23 letters of the traditional Roman alphabet[15] to write it with. This led, inevitably, to a large number of *ad hoc* adaptations, consisting mainly of added letters (digraphs, mute letters), with all the ambiguity and sometimes obscurity that resulted.

3. The impact of printing[16]

This type of orthography was, naturally, carried over from the manuscript to the printing press. However, various factors led to the orthography of vernacular works becoming increasingly variable. First of all, there was at the time no accepted written standard, and indeed no way of imposing a written standard that could be approved and followed by all.[17] Secondly, the various agents who intervened during the process of setting a text in print were unequally literate: unlike professional scribes and administrative clerks, the workers in printing houses very often had received little or no

formal training, and did not intervene to regularise the spelling forms of the works they reproduced. Thirdly, unlike scribal manuscripts, the production of a printed text was the work of many hands. We shall outline here the typical process which led to the production of a printed book.

3.1. The process of printing a book

First of all, in the case of an original work, the author would establish his manuscript, and then, in most cases, would have a copy made for the printer by a professional scribe. The author's own orthography could therefore be modified even at this early stage. Once the manuscript arrived in the printing-house, it would be annotated and divided up, different parts being given to different compositors. Generally speaking, several compositors would be working at the same time, but they did not work through the text in a linear fashion: each one would compose the parts of the text which would make up a form, and no compositor would have access to the text as a whole. Compositors did not have to have any particular linguistic competence; indeed, they did not even have to know the language of the text they were composing: they simply set into movable print what they had in front of them, using the characters that they had at their disposal. Skilful compositors no doubt understood the text they were transcribing and did so with relatively few errors; this was not, however, the case all the time. In this second process, therefore, variants due to errors or due to the compositor's own orthographical practices and preferences (supposing that he had any) could then be introduced.

Next, the whole text, once composed and a first draft printed off, would be read by a corrector, who would introduce a number of corrections. Correctors were generally more literate than compositors, and some of them, such as Raphelengius or Lipsius who worked for Christopher Plantin, were indeed very eminent humanist scholars.[18] However, it would be false to suppose that all correctors, or even most of them, were excellent scholars. Some correctors would have had their own ideas or have been given guidelines concerning the orthography of texts in French; others would not. Finally, we must take into account the views and practices of the master printer or bookseller. The major printing houses evidently had some kind of "house style", and in certain cases it is possible to say, with reasonable certainty, which printing house a particular text came from by studying its orthography;[19] however, this is far from being a general rule.

Most printed texts of the first part of this century present, therefore, a large number of variants, both internal (i.e., within the same text) and external (i.e., between one text and another), and it is often impossible to say whose orthography is actually represented in them.

3.2. Printing and standardization

Although the shift from script to print brought about, initially, a huge mix of orthographical practices, as the century advances, we also see the opposite effect, due to the same technological changes. That variants were gradually reduced over time has been amply demonstrated by corpus-based analyses.[20]

Several factors can explain this trend towards standardization. First of all, compositors, when faced with a text, could only use the characters that they had in their case: unlike scribes, they couldn't improvise, and they couldn't introduce new or personal variants. Secondly, printing workers were an extremely mobile profession, moving between cities and printing houses. As they did so, they no doubt brought with them the practices and innovations that they had acquired elsewhere. As a result, we see regional variants gradually disappearing, and it is very often impossible to tell where a text was printed, using only its orthography as an indication. Next, as texts gradually gained in readability and the price of books decreased, a whole new reading public emerged, and spellings that might be a hindrance to certain readers, who had little or no experience in reading Latin (such as abbreviations and etymological spellings) tended to disappear. Finally, for numerous reasons,[21] a number of printers took it upon themselves at various periods to write treatises aimed mainly at their fellow printers, calling for a certain number of standards and innovations. We shall look at some of these innovations in the next section.

4. Accents and auxiliary signs

The first innovations to appear in 16th-century orthography were a number of accents and auxiliary signs, and these were mostly the work of printers belonging to what Nina Catach (1968: 31–41) called the "orthotypographical" movement. The aim of these printers was not to attempt a full-scale reform of the written language, but rather to remedy some of the main problems and deficiencies of the existing system.

It is no coincidence that the first appeal to codify the written French language came from a man who was not only a King's printer, but also a scholar, a letter-designer, translator and philologist: Geofroy Tory. In his *Champ Fleury* (1529), a curious mixture of medieval scholasticism and the new humanist learning, Tory not only appeals to some "noble spirit" to "set the French language down according to firm rules",[22] but also pinpoints a number of areas in which he feels the written language to be particularly lacking: the different values of *e*, (unwritten) elision of mute *e*, the use of <c> with a "soft" value before <a>, <o> and <u>, diacritic <u> after <g> before a vowel, and so on. His aim is not only to codify and renovate the written language, but thereby to make French as illustrious as Latin, and to encourage his countrymen to write in their native language rather than in Latin.

The first innovation inspired by Tory's declarations was introduced in works printed in 1530 by his fellow humanist and King's printer, Robert Estienne, and consisted in introducing an acute accent on word-final <e> when the letter represented the "*e*-masculine" phoneme /e/, in order to differentiate it from the "mute" *e*, pronounced /ə/. This enabled readers to distinguish, for example, present-tense verb forms such as *(il) aime* from past-tense ones such as *(il a) aimé*.[23] Estienne also printed the following year[24] the *Isagoge* of Jacques Dubois (Sylvius), which presented a very particular orthographical system (which we will examine more closely in section 5.1. below), but which also proposed certain innovations which were adopted by other printers: namely, the apostrophe (which Tory had recommended to note elision), the trema (¨) on vowels in hiatus, and a means of distinguishing three separate values of *e*: not according to syllabic value, as Estienne had done the previous year, but according to aperture: <é> "sonum habens plenum" corresponding no doubt more or less to a closed /e/, <ē> "sonum habens medium" corresponding no doubt to a more or less open *e* (/ɛ/), and <è> "sonum habens exilem", corresponding to the mute or feminine *e* (/ə/).

4.1. The *Briefue Doctrine* (1533)

A lot has been written[25] about this small treatise, which was the first complete theoretical work on auxiliary signs to be written in French. Although the treatise is anonymous, since Catach (1968: 51–70), building on previous work by Beaulieux (1927) and by the printing historian Jeanne Veyrin-Forrer (1956), it has been widely accepted among historians that it was the

product of three pairs of hands: those of the philologist and printer Geofroy Tory; of Antoine Augereau, a printer and letter-engraver; and of Clément Marot, poet and courtier. The collaboration of the three men was, in this case, essential: Tory provided the theoretical and grammatical basis for the innovations described in the treatise, Augereau created the new characters,[26] and Marot put the recommendations into practice with examples from his own verse. The treatise went through several editions. The first edition, which was published during the autumn of 1533 (Tory died in October 1533), only comprises three and a half pages, and was printed together with some anonymous *Epistres Familieres*, which illustrate the use of the new signs. The signs in question are: the apostrophe, the apocope (which uses the same sign as the apostrophe) and the synalephe. All these signs were useful especially in verse, in order to indicate whether a final <e> was elided or not, and whether or not it should be counted as a syllable. There are also one or two isolated uses of the trema. In December 1533, another improved and augmented edition was published: this time, in addition to the signs presented in the first edition, we also find the cedilla, the acute accent on final <e> to note /e/, the circumflex accent noting the syncope, and a tonic accent used before enclitic particles. The synalephe (which was described in the first edition, but not noted by any particular sign) is indicated here by an <ɇ> with an oblique stroke through it. The *Epistres Familieres* once again are used to illustrate the new signs, but added to these is a work by the sister of the reigning king Francis I, Marguerite de Navarre, entitled *Miroir de l'ame pecheresse* ("The Mirror of the Sinful Soul"). Marguerite and Marot were very close, and both shared similar Evangelical religious convictions. Because of certain rather un-Catholic passages, the *Miroir* had been banned by the Paris Faculty of Theology, the Sorbonne, in the summer of 1533.

We find here, for the first time, evidence of a link which will prove to have been quite strong, between reformers of the written language and religious reformers. However, the beginnings of religious unrest were to put a stop to these orthographical innovations, at least in Paris. Following the so-called "Affaire des Placards" in 1534,[27] King Francis I carried out a major clampdown against "heretics". Marot was exiled, and Augereau was burned at the stake. With Tory already dead, the main proponents of the new auxiliary signs were all out of the way, and Parisian editions reverted to their usual, traditional orthography.

However, the new signs "went underground" and were adopted in other printing centres in France and abroad, in intellectual climates which were more favourable to the "new religion": in Geneva (from 1533 onwards), in

Lyon (1538) and in Antwerp (1540). The Lyonnese printer Etienne Dolet produced a new, revised version[28] of the Parisian treatise, which went through several editions, and became a reference work for printers.

While Parisian editions tended to stagnate, between 1533 and 1550,[29] printing centres outside of the zone of influence of the Sorbonne were quick to adopt the new signs, and Paris eventually had to follow. With the *Briefue Doctrine* and its reeditions, practically all of the auxiliary signs used in modern French were already put in place. With the circumflex accent (used to denote long vowels) which came into use around 1550,[30] and the grave accent[31] in the following century, the whole set of accents and auxiliary signs necessary to written French would be complete. The new signs came into use remarkably quickly, thanks to the printers: by 1550, nearly all printers were using the apostrophe and the acute accent on final <e>; by the end of the century, practically all of the 16th century innovations were in general use (Baddeley 1996).

To give an idea of the extent to which the introduction of accents and auxiliary signs at this time changed the face of printed texts, here is an extract from Marguerite's *Miroir*: from the first edition of 1531, in traditional orthography, and from the edition of 1533, including the innovations of the *Briefue Doctrine*. Changes between the two versions appear in italics.

Table 1. Comparison of two editions of Marguerite's *Miroir*

1531	*1533*
Il neſt iuge qui puiſſe condemner	Il *n'eſt Iuge*, qui puiſſe condemner
Nul / puis que dieu ne le veult point damner.	Nul / puis que *DIEV* ne le veult point *dāner*.
Ie nay doubte dauoir faulte de biens /	Ie *n'ay* doubte *d'auoir* faulte de biens /
Puis que mon dieu pour mon pere ie tiens.	Puis que mon *DIEV* pour mon *Pere* ie tiēs.
Mon ennemy nul mal ne me fera /	Mon ennemy nul mal ne me fera *:*
Car mon pere ſa force deffera.	*Quar* mon *Pere* ſa force *defera*.
Si ie doib riens / il payra tout pour moy :	Si ie *doy* riens / il *pai^ra* tout pour moy :
Si iay gaigne la mort / luy comme roy	Si *i'ay gaigné* la mort / luy comme *Roy*
Me donnera grace & miſericorde /	Me donnera *gracȩ* & miſericorde /
Me diliurant de priſon & de corde.	Me *deliurant* de priſon, & de corde

5. Theoretical approaches and phonetic scripts

During the 16th century, for the first time, a full-scale debate took place nationally, concerning the need to reform the orthographical system. It was during this period that the first phonetic scripts for French emerged. However, the debate involved more than just a discussion of letter-sound correspondences: the role of writing in society, literacy, teaching and the status of religious texts all came under scrutiny at one time or another.[32]

5.1. Jacques Dubois or Sylvius

The first would-be reformer was a professor of medicine from Amiens, Jacques Dubois, who Latinized his name as Sylvius. After publishing several scholarly works on medicine in Latin, Sylvius then turned his attention to the spelling of his native language, in order to "rest and renew his mind" after such a lengthy and tiring enterprise.[33] The work is in fact a grammar of the French language, written in Latin and modelled on the Latin grammars that were in use at the time. After a short chapter on the alphabet and the pronunciation of the letters in French, Sylvius then goes on to present a kind of historical and etymological study, explaining how French words had evolved from their Latin equivalents, and the changes in sound (and subsequently in spelling) that were involved. Although there are inevitably a few errors, Sylvius' etymological intuition was in fact remarkably accurate.

In order to renew the links that had been lost, over time, between Latin and French, Sylvius proposed a curious new orthography, which aimed both at indicating the present pronunciation of French in a more satisfactory way, while at the same time indicating the Latin form from which the French word derived. Sylvius achieved this by inventing a kind of "two-tiered" set of printed characters, in which the upper part indicated the pronunciation, and the lower part the Latin form. For example, the form *lig*$^{s}_{g}$*ons*, with an <s> above the <g>, allows the reader to find both the French pronunciation, *lisons*, and the Latin, *legamus*. Sylvius was extremely fortunate in being able to persuade his printer, Robert Estienne, to have a whole set of new characters engraved just for this work: Estienne was never to use these particular characters again.

Although Sylvius does not indicate explicitly who the work was intended for, he says in his introduction that he hopes that it will encourage French people to gain a better understanding of their own language, instead

of just learning it "parrot-fashion", for it is shameful for a person not to know his or her own native language.[34] As the work is dedicated to the new queen of Francis I, Eleanor of Austria, we may suppose that the author also had in mind the needs of foreigners who had to learn French.

As we indicated earlier, Sylvius' system did include a number of notations (especially accents and auxiliary signs) that were eventually adopted by other authors and printers. However, generally speaking, his orthographical system was felt to be too complicated, and needed costly investment in completely new characters before it could be adopted by anyone else.

5.2. Louis Meigret

Although the first real "phonetic" reformer of French orthography, Louis Meigret, was also a humanist and a man of learning, his admiration for Latin and other ancient languages led him not to be a slave to them, like Sylvius, but to attempt to produce a whole new orthography for French in which, just as in Latin,[35] the graphemes of the written language were the exact reflection of the phonemes of the spoken language.

Although Meigret's first publication, the *Traité touchant le commun vsage de l'escriture francoise* was not published until 1542, it seems likely that his work on French orthography began much earlier, in Paris, during the early 1530s. Meigret was a member of an illustrious family, several members of which were strongly linked to the Reformation,[36] and Meigret's own religious views, as they are expressed occasionally in his work, leave no doubt as to his Protestant convictions. This probably explains why Meigret "laid low" during the 1530s, and did not return to Paris and publish his work until the 1540s.

In his *Traité touchant le commun vsage*, Meigret asks the fundamental questions: what is a writing system, and how does one go about constructing an ideal one? Like the good humanist that he is, he "goes back to the sources", and reminds us that, according to Priscian,[37] the letters or "notes" of the alphabet (*notae*) were invented originally in order to represent articulated speech according to a principle of bi-univocity: one letter, one sound. Meigret then compares the orthography of the French language of his time against this yardstick, and is compelled to admit that French orthography is very far from this ideal. He therefore proposes a new orthography, in which words are spelt as they are sounded, and sounded as they are spelt: a system that is ideal for coding and decoding. Meigret anticipates the many objec-

tions that will be raised by the opponents of such a project, and in particular the usual arguments of tradition, usage, distinction of homophones, morphological alignment, etymology, history and so on, but rejects all of these in turn, opposing to them all the iron law of "reason". It is interesting to see, at this point, the arguments and especially the terminology that Meigret uses to combat the old orthography: he speaks of "abuse", "superstition", "ignorance and false doctrine", "an abyss of errors and confusion", and opposes the "light of truth" to this mass of "shadows". Meigret's religious convictions undoubtedly appear in this quasi-theological vocabulary: sometimes, the reader has the impression of reading a work by Calvin.

When, in 1550, Meigret finally found a printer who would accept to print his works in this particular orthography (the Reformist printer Chrestien Wechel), there was a general outcry, and one author in particular, the poet Guillaume Des Autels, took a strong stand against Meigret and his "maigre ortographe".[38] The main objection raised by Des Autels, who was a Burgundian, was that Meigret's system reflected his own pronunciation (Meigret was a native of Lyon), and his pronunciation alone. A whole exchange of pamphlets[39] ensued between the two men, and the initial rational arguments on both sides soon gave way to invective and insults. Jacques Peletier du Mans, another author and poet, also joined the debate, but although his arguments were much more subtle and measured, he received in exchange the same barrage of insults that Meigret had given Des Autels.

It seems likely that Meigret, with his extreme and uncompromising positions, discredited the cause of a more simplified orthography: his works were not reprinted, and the printer Chrestien Wechel, like Robert Estienne, never again used the phonetic characters introduced by Meigret.[40] Indeed, in 1554, a rather resigned and disillusioned Meigret says, in the preface to his *Discours de Louis Meigret touchant la creation du Monde* (printed in the ordinary orthography of the time) that his printer, Wechel, was to blame for not continuing to use Meigret's orthography, as he "preferred financial gain to reason".[41]

5.3. Jacques Peletier du Mans

Jacques Peletier was an important figure of the mid-16th century: a poet and courtier, friend of Ronsard and the Pléiade group of poets, he was also a distinguished mathematician, author of an influential treatise on algebra, as well as another on poetics. His contribution to the reform of French orthography influenced, to some extent, Ronsard and his disciples, many of

whom adopted his spellings in their works: for a certain time, at least.[42] However, for language historians, Peletier is mostly to be remembered for his *Dialogue de l'ortografe* of 1550, an extremely lucid and lively account of the spelling debate that was flourishing in France at the time.

Peletier entitled his work "Dialogue", but in fact there are four protagonists: Peletier himself (who hardly speaks), Jean d'Auron, who is Peletier's spokesman, Théodore de Bèze, poet and Protestant reformer (who had not yet emigrated to Geneva to become Calvin's right-hand man) and Denis Sauvage, who plays something of the part of Candide. The "dialogue" is presented as the transcription of a genuine discussion that took place between the four men. The subject is the reform of French orthography, and two main viewpoints are presented: the pro-reform viewpoint of Peletier/d'Auron, and the conservative, anti-reform view of Bèze.

D'Auron develops a lot of the arguments that had already been put forward by Meigret (the arguments of reason against arbitrary usage, of simplicity, and the Classical ideal of writing as the mirror of speech), but in a less dogmatic fashion. He underlines especially the need for French to be written and read outside of France, and to gain the status of a "noble" language like Latin or Greek. He also has a thought for the future generations, so that they will be able to "see, as in a mirror, the portrait of the French that was spoken in our time" (Peletier 1550: 2). Bèze, who is something of the "villain" of the piece,[43] then responds, with a number of extremely cogent and compelling arguments. First of all, he refutes the well-established idea that the Romans wrote as they spoke (and offers examples to back up his argument), and points out that writing should not necessarily be a true reflection of speech. Even if such a thing were possible (which he doubts), it would not be desirable, as each person would write as he spoke and, since there are so many differences in spoken language, people would not be able to understand each other. He also puts forward another reason: writing, he says, does not have the same function as speech. When a person reads a text, he does not oralize the written forms that he has in front of him, but "extracts" the meaning directly. Moreover, if a person reads a text written with an orthographical system that resembles one that he is already familiar with (Bèze is referring here to Latin), the "resemblance of letters and syllables will appeal to his memory, and remind him that [words having] the same composition and proportion must have the same, or a similar, meaning" (Peletier 1550: 47). This is, of course, an apology for the "ideographic" type of traditional orthography that we described earlier in section 2 of this article. Finally, Bèze refutes the idea of a "spelling for the masses": writing, he says, is not something that everyone needs to use.

Women and artisans, for example, have no education and therefore no need of it. Should they have to write documents, there is always someone who will be able to do it for them. Unlike speech, writing is and should remain the preserve of the elite.

It is interesting to see here that Bèze, a passionate Reformer, was also (unlike Meigret) a fierce opponent of the democratization of writing. While spelling reform was largely the work of Protestants (as we shall see in the next section), Bèze and Calvin are major exceptions to this rule. It should be pointed out however that Bèze was of aristocratic origin, and, like Calvin, an excellent Latin scholar. He published, indeed, a treatise on French pronunciation in Latin,[44] so that the educated elite of Europe would be able to read it. Whatever Bèze's reserves concerning phonetic scripts, he was an extremely acute observer of the French language, and his descriptions of the articulation of French phonemes are quite remarkable.

5.4. Pierre de la Ramée (Ramus)

Pierre de La Ramée, better known in the Latinized version of his name, Ramus, was one of the greatest spelling reformers of all time, as well as a major figure of the Protestant Reformation: he died, in appalling circumstances, during the Saint Bartholemew's Day massacre of Protestants in August 1572. Like Sylvius, he was of humble origins, and, like his countryman (Ramus, like Sylvius, was from Picardy), eventually became a professor at the University of Paris through hard work and brilliant studies.

Ramus was of a strong, uncompromising temperament, and at several points in his career clashed with the tenants of tradition. He contested the omnipresence of Aristotle in University studies, introduced the new Italian humanist pronunciation of Latin (against the Sorbonne), and was the first professor to lecture in French at the Collège Royal (now the Collège de France).

In 1562, not long after Ramus definitively embraced the Protestant faith, he published his *Gramerę*, a grammar of the French language, printed in a particular phonetic script that he had developed himself. Although Ramus gives no explanations concerning this particular orthography, it was evidently closely based on Meigret's phonetic system. Like Meigret, Ramus uses the <j>, and the <z> to replace intervocalic *s*; he introduces special signs to note palatal *l* and *n* (/ʎ/ and /ñ/) and distinguishes the different values of *e* on the same lines as Meigret. However, on many points, Ramus goes further than Meigret: he cuts out all double letters, he also eliminates

the variants that subsisted in Meigret's system (<i/y>, <q/c>, <ç/s>) and truly applies the principle of "one sound, one letter". It is significant to note that this first edition of Ramus' Grammar was printed by André Wechel, who was the son of Chrestien Wechel, Meigret's printer.[45]

In 1572, a new edition of the Grammar was printed again by André Wechel:[46] this time, however, Ramus introduced some new features into his orthographical system, such as the use of the letter <k>[47] to note /k/ in all positions, special signs for the vowel digraphs <au>, <eu> and <ou> (borrowed from the poet Jean-Antoine de Baïf), and a more satisfactory description and notation of the values of *e*. In this new version of his Grammar, Ramus uses several times the term "Gaulloys" (instead of "François") to mean "French", and by doing so he showed his belief in a new, Protestant-inspired idea that the French language (and French orthography) descended not from Latin but from the Gauls.[48] However, due no doubt to an unfavourable reception of his first *Gramęre*, printed entirely in his reformed orthography, Ramus makes a concession to potential readers by printing it, this time, on two opposite pages: one page in reformed orthography, and the other in the traditional one. Ramus explains the reasons for this semi-retreat, in rather disenchanted tones:

> It would have been better for us if we had to create new characters and set in place a new orthography, because there had never been one in use. However, the great usefulness of such a thing is not sufficient to dispel well-established habits, based on legitimate rights and on possession in good faith [of a spelling system].[49]

The outcry that followed the publication of Ramus' works was similar to that provoked by Meigret's works: the jurist Estienne Pasquier rejected Ramus' works as "illegible",[50] and Bossuet, in the following century, talked of "Ramus' impertinent orthography".[51] However, it is no doubt an indication of the lasting influence of Ramus' work that, following his example, the letters <j> and <v> came to be distinguished by printers, and were often referred to as "letters Ramistes".

6. Protestants and orthography

From what has been said in the earlier sections of this article, it will have become clear to the reader that Protestants had an important part to play both in the debate concerning orthography and in the changes in the written

language that took place throughout the century. As we shall see in the following section, most pedagogical works for teaching spelling were also the work of Protestants.

Even before the Reformation became "officially" established in France,[52] scholars such as Lefèvre d'Etaples had been promoting the use of French in theological texts and in scripture, so that "common people" could have access directly to the word of God without necessarily knowing Latin. The need to make printed texts more accessible to a less well-educated audience resulted, in 1523, in the publication of a French-language version of the New Testament translated by Lefèvre and printed by the humanist and Reformist printer Simon de Colines. Lefèvre and Colines did all that could be done, at the time, to make their edition as accessible as possible: it was printed in in-octavo format, in two separate volumes (so that people could buy them separately),[53] the orthography, without yet being modernised or (even less) made "phonetic", was kept as simple and un-etymological as possible[54] and the use of abbreviations was kept to a minimum. Moreover, unlike most French texts of the time, the text of the New Testament was punctuated quite densely, in order to help the inexperienced reader.[55] The publication was condemned as heretical by the Paris parliament in August 1525.

Lefèvre was close to the circle of Parisian humanist printers that included Geofroy Tory, Robert Estienne (who was Colines' stepson) and Antoine Augereau, the latter two especially being involved in the publication of Reformed literature. Tory's convictions were never clearly expressed, and he died in 1533, before the major clampdown against the Evangelical movement. Augereau was to die at the stake because of his illicit printing activities and his active involvement in the Affaire des Placards, and Estienne fled to Geneva.

As we saw earlier, the publication of the *Briefue Doctrine* in 1533 involved a group of men (Tory, Marot and Augereau) who were linked by their religious convictions, and who benefited from the protection of the king's sister, Marguerite of Navarre. Indeed, the whole "microcosmos" of Parisian printers, authors, scholars and a large number of courtiers constituted a very favourable breeding-ground for what was then termed "*les idées nouvelles*", and was not then out-and-out protestantism.[56] When, after the Affaire des Placards of 1534 and the persecutions that followed it, a large number of intellectuals and members of the printing profession fled from Paris, the "new" orthography that was just being put in place came to an abrupt halt. However, the innovations were taken up in other printing centres, more favourable to the Reformation: mainly Lyon and Geneva.

In 1533 (which was, as we have seen, a crucial year for orthography in France), the translator of the French Bible from Greek and Hebrew, Pierre-Robert Olivétan, wrote a small treatise for the Vaudois children of the valleys of Piedmont, where he was a teacher. The little book, entitled *Instruction des enfans*, explained the use of the "new" accents and auxiliary signs that had been presented in the *Briefue Doctrine*.[57] The aim of the book (and of Olivétan's teaching) was to allow the Vaudois[58] people who inhabited the Piedmont valleys to learn to read French and therefore be able to read the French translation of the Bible that Olivétan was then working on, and whose publication indeed the Vaudois people had largely financed. In 1536, in the separate edition of the New Testament given by the Genevan printer Jean Gerard, the accents and signs taught by Olivétan are all used, and continue to be used in all Genevan editions of the Bible and the Psalms, as well as in Gerard's other publications, from then onwards.

In Lyon, pro-Reformation printers[59] such as Dolet also adopted the new orthography: Dolet, indeed, wrote a treatise for other printers, explaining its use. With the arrival of the "phonetic" ideas of Meigret and Peletier, "avant-garde" Lyonnese printers such as Jean de Tournes (who was Peletier's friend and printer) began to use a new, very simplified orthography in their printed works: a system that Nina Catach (1968: xxiv) termed "orthographe modernisée". This system was widely favoured by poets (Lyon was an important literary centre) since, with this system, the relations between writing and sound were more straightforward, and their verses could be read aloud more easily.

This simplified, modernized orthography was propagated through numerous Biblical editions and literary works. Its use in such works naturally gave it a certain prestige, and it was tending to become the norm towards the end of the century. However, Nina Catach notes, in the corpus of editions she studied, a reversion to a more traditional type of orthography in the latter part of the century, linked to a decline in the standards of the printing houses: "Le recul de l'orthographe nouvelle, sauf exception, semble donc bien correspondre en fait à un recul de l'imprimerie" (Catach 1968: 253). After the Saint Bartholomew Massacre of 1572 and the beginnings of the Counter-Reformation, many of the best printers and their workers left France for more favourable parts. Printers were closely watched, and a system of monopolies and privileges was created and put in the hands of a few "reliable" printers and booksellers.

The "new" orthography did not, however, completely disappear. As in the 1530s in Paris, it "went underground": in this case, to Antwerp, where it was carried on in the prestigious printing establishments of Plantin and his

successors, the Waesberghes and Elseviers. When France regained prosperity, in the 17th century, and orthography once more became a subject of debate, these "Dutch editions" were seen as a model upon which the spelling of French should be based.

7. The legacy of 16th-century orthography

In her 1990 doctoral thesis published in 1992 with the title *Les grands courants orthographiques au XVII^e siècle et la formation de l'orthographe moderne*, Liselotte Biedermann-Pasques identified, throughout the whole of the 17th century, the existence of three main types of orthography: traditional (etymological), modernized, and phonetic. These three orthographical types have their origins in the 16th century, and although the situation is not quite the same from one century to another,[60] the 17th-century situation reproduces to a great extent that of the 16th. The same heated debates were held between partisans and opponents of modernised and phonetic orthographies, and the arguments and suggested reforms were often the same. The argument of "usage" had, however, become a more compelling one by the 17th century, with the expansion of printing and of literacy. French had gained increasing international prestige and was recognised as the language of science, and the reign of Louis XIV is generally held to be the "golden age" of French literature.

Much of the debate concerning orthography took place between members of the newly-created Académie Française, founded by Richelieu in 1635. The main task entrusted to the Académie was to produce an "official" dictionary of the French language, as well as standard reference works on grammar, poetics and rhetoric. The latter three were never produced; after an extremely long and difficult gestation period, the Dictionary was finally published in 1694. After a huge amount of debate,[61] the members of the Académie, following the opinion of Bossuet and Régnier-Desmarais, finally decided to adopt "l'ancienne Orthographe receuë parmi tous les gens de letters, parce qu'elle ayde à faire connoistre l'Origine des mots".[62] Although the Académie modernized the spelling of its dictionary quite substantially in the second edition of 1718, and even more so in the third edition of 1740, the Académie dictionary, which was to become the main model for written French, has rarely been an example of avant-garde progress, especially in the field of orthography.

8. Conclusion

16th-century French spelling is a mine of information which interests scholars from many disciplines: linguists (of course), but also social historians, historians of culture and of ideas, educational historians, printing specialists, bibliographers, specialists of translation and even of biblical exegesis, and literary scholars. Although a great deal has already been written on the subject,[63] much still remains to be explored.

However, the main lessons that can be learned from this episode in the construction of the national language would appear to be the following. Although French is a Romance language, just like Spanish and Italian, its written form like its phonological form has always tended to be more complex. With phonetic erosion (and especially the effacement of a large number of final consonants, from the 16th century onwards), the presence of morphological spellings has traditionally been a means of distinguishing homophones, indicating morphemes to note differences of number, gender and person, and of showing links between members of word-families.

Although in France, as elsewhere in Europe, phoneticians dabbled with new "ideal" systems of orthography, the main obstacles to the adoption of these reforms were both technological and social. Whereas the printing press was a main factor in introducing and disseminating certain innovations (and here, we must point to the crucial role of networks and of collaborations between authors and printers), the cost involved in creating new characters and the risk of texts printed in a radically different orthography being unacceptable to the increasing reading public constituted a major argument against the adoption of such reforms. Technological advance can be seen in this case as a two-edged sword: while it made wide-scale radical spelling reforms possible, it also curbed this tendency by diffusing evermore standardized texts. Théodore de Bèze, speaking in Peletier's *Dialogue* in 1550, says that a radical reform should have been proposed "twenty or thirty years ago", but that by the time at which he was speaking, it was too late.

Furthermore, in France, as in other countries, orthographical reform was related to Protestantism, and many innovations were disseminated through editions of the Scriptures. However, Protestantism in France never became a state religion, and with the repeal of the Edict of Nantes (which had instituted a certain religious tolerance), the "new" orthography continued to be associated with Protestantism and with major Protestant figures such as Ramus, and consequently rejected. Throughout the 17th century, reformed or phonetic scripts continued to be produced; however, these scripts would

have little or no impact on general usage, and the Académie dictionary at the end of the century would fix the "old" traditional orthography for several decades.

Notes

1. It is not surprising that, throughout the Middle Ages, ecclesiastical terms such as *Christus*, *Deus*, *Iesus* tended to be written in their conventional Latin abbreviated forms. A large number of abbreviations functioned as "logograms" or "word-pictures", allowing for different phonemic realizations.
2. For a fuller description of the orthographical system used in *Eulalia*, see Biedermann-Pasques (2001).
3. There is no comprehensive study to date of medieval French orthography. Beaulieux (1927) provides a rather biased view of the subject, based on carefully selected literary texts copied by selected scribes, rather than on a wider usage. A balanced (but rather succinct) overview is provided by Cerquiglini (2004).
4. An excellent and much-needed "debunking" of this persistent and pernicious myth has been carried out by Cerquiglini (2004: 14–24).
5. The problems of <u> and <v>, <i> and <j> are not entirely symmetrical. Whereas <v> was used in word-initial position and <u> internally and in word-final position, <j> was little-used, and is found occasionally as the final element of Roman numerals such as *vij*, *viij*. In Gothic characters, the capital <I> tends to resemble a present-day <J>, but should nevertheless be transcribed as <I< in titles of books and so on.
6. Etymological letters gave a kind of "consonantal skeleton" to written words. For example, when the French word *moult* (in which the <l> had ceased to be pronounced for decades, even centuries) was written with this particular spelling, experienced Latinate readers would immediately be put in mind of the Latin word *multum*, thanks to the consonant "core", *mlt*.
7. These abbreviations often formed veritable "logograms", or "word-signs" which, like numbers, could be used to correspond to either language.
8. Other examples of this non-etymological initial <h> that are still to be found in present-day French are *huit* (Lat. *octo)*, *huile* (Lat. *oleum)* and *huis* (Lat. *ostium)*.
9. For example, *rhyme*, from the Frankish word **rim*, in which the <rh-> and <y> are analogical spellings, establishing a (spurious) connection with the Greek *rhuthmos* "rhythm". It is significant that, in this example again, English is seen as having retained the traditional (albeit erroneous) spelling.

10. The exact number of values of *e* is somewhat difficult to determine, but varies, according to speakers, between three and four. There is the additional complication of long and short vowels: vowel-length was less well described than vowel-timbre, but certain authors, such as Claude de Sainliens (1580), attest three different values for vowel-length, which could push the total number up to seven for certain speakers.
11. Compare, for example, *feste* (modern French *fête*, 'festival') and *peste* 'plague'. For the uninitiated, there was no way of knowing whether the written <s> was mute or not. For grammarians and teachers of French as a foreign language such as Palsgrave (1530) and even as late as Bellot (1578, 1588), the only way of getting around the problem was to draw up long lists of words in which the <s> was pronounced.
12. This is by no means an exhaustive list of potential spelling variants. For a more complete list, see the introduction to Catach et al. (1995).
13. For /ʎ/, for example, Pope (1934: 277) identifies ten different variants in the Domesday Book for the place name *Taillebosc*, and nine different ways of noting /ñ/. Although some of these graphic variants had become very rare by the 16th century, most of them are still attested during this period.
14. Estimates of the exact number of phonemes differ. In what must no doubt be considered a "maximalist" view, Morin (2008) lists a possible 38 vowel phonemes and 26 consonant phonemes.
15. I.e., our present-day alphabet, minus <j> and <w>, and with <u> and <v> being considered as positional variants of a single letter.
16. The best account of the impact of printing, the distribution of tasks in printing houses and an analysis of printed production is to be found in Catach (1968).
17. The first French dictionary that could have been used as a reference was Robert Estienne's *Dictionnaire Francoislatin* of 1539.
18. During the earlier period of Humanist printing (pre-1550), scholars and teachers such as Lefèvre d'Etaples, Geofroy Tory or Pierre Danès also worked as correctors for the main printing houses. Later on, the work of corrector became a full-time job. On correctors, see the *Dictionnaire Encyclopédique du Livre* (2002), article "Correcteur".
19. This has been demonstrated notably by Catach (1968), who studied a corpus of texts by author and by printer, and was able to identify the orthographical characteristics of the work of a certain number of printers.
20. Mainly those of Catach (1968) and Baddeley (1993), based respectively on over 900 and 500 editions.
21. Obviously, it made economic sense to have more or less fixed orthographical practices, not only in the same printing house, but from one printing house to another. However, the humanistic and philological background of several printers led them to become interested in the written form of their mother tongue, and to make French a "noble" language, on an equal footing with Latin.
22. "Pleuſt a Dieu que quelque Noble cueur ſemployast a mettre & ordõner par Reigle noſtre Lãgage Francois" (1529: fol. A8).

23. This device had already been used in pedagogical works used in England for the teaching of French as a foreign language, and most notably by Palsgrave (1530). Palsgrave, however, used the accent on all tonic vowels: not only on <e>, and not only in word-final position. However, Palsgrave includes a long list of words distinguished only by the value of the final <e>, such as *peche/peché*, *coste/costé*, etc. Whether Estienne owed anything to Palsgrave is not certain; however, both men worked in Court circles (Palsgrave as teacher to the English royal family, and Estienne as King's printer), so it is not implausible that Estienne had either come into contact with Palsgrave's work, or else had heard of it.
24. The title page bears the date "1531", but in fact the book was printed early in 1532 (new style): with the "old style" of dating, the new year began at Easter.
25. See: Beaulieux (1927: II, 103 et sq.), Catach (1968: 51–70), Baddeley (1993: 140–161).
26. Tory no doubt designed the characters, but it was Augereau who engraved them and who printed the whole treatise.
27. Tracts against the Roman Catholic mass, of a very virulent nature, had been stuck up all over Paris, some even in the king's personal quarters.
28. Dolet added the distinctive grave accent (on words like *à*, *là*, *où*), borrowed from Genevan editions.
29. In 1535, King Francis I issued an edict banning printing. Needless to say, the edict had no effect at all outside of Paris, and indeed very little effect inside Paris. However, the action speaks volumes about the relations that existed at the time between the monarchy and the printing world.
30. Although the accent had been recommended by phoneticians as early as 1549 (Thomas Sebillet, *Iphigene*), it was popularized essentially thanks to the editions of the Antwerp printer, Christopher Plantin. On the circumflex accent, see Cerquiglini (1995) who has devoted a whole book to the history of this accent.
31. The grave accent was used for various purposes, but not to note an "open" *e* until it was adopted by Pierre Corneille in the mid-seventeenth century.
32. The best account of these theoretical discussions can be found in Citton and Wyss (1989).
33. "Vigiliis, curis, labore fractus, materiā diſquiſiui, in qua ingenii vires longiore ſtudio & grauiore feſſas recrearem, atque reficerem" (Sylvius 1531: fol. aiiii).
34. "… ſui ſermonis rationem cōdiſcant, ne picarum aut ſturnorum more à parentibus audit, ſed nunquam animaduerſa, nunquam perpēſa, nunquā intellecta, ſemper effundant: quū ſit foedum, hominem in ea lingua videri hoſpitē, in qua natus est" (Sylvius 1531: fol. A5–A5v°).
35. Obviously Meigret, like most of his contemporaries, had a rather idealised view of classical Latin orthography and of the sound-sign correspondences of this language.
36. His half-brother Aimé Meigret was one of the first Reformed preachers in France. Another half-brother, Lambert, was a King's chamberlain and had the reputation of being a Lutheran; he was exiled to Switzerland in 1530. Finally,

his brother Laurent was also King's chamberlain, and was a close acquaintance of Marot and Guillaume Du Bellay. He was condemned in Paris in March 1532, together with his brother Louis and Clément Marot, for eating meat during Lent, and he also left Paris for Geneva. It may be supposed that Louis went the same way as his brothers, and only returned to Paris once the political climate had become more favourable (Baddeley 1993: 114).

37. Priscianus Caesariensis (5th–6th century AD), Latin grammarian and author of the *Institutiones Grammaticae*, which formed the basis for the teaching of Latin during the Middle Ages and well into the 16th century.
38. There is, of course, a pun here on the surname of Meigret and the adjectif *maigre*, which means "poor", "thin", "underfed".
39. For this exchange, see Citton and Wyss (1996).
40. Meigret proposed the distinction between <i> and <j> according to pronunciation (but, curiously, not the distinction between <u> and <v>). He also proposed special notations for the palatal consonants /ʎ/ and /ñ/, and ways of distinguishing the different values of *e*. However, his system is not strictly phonetic or even bi-univocal: in many cases, several letters represent the same sound: <ç> or <s> for /s/, <q> or <c> for /k/, and so on.
41. The argument that texts in phonetic script "don't sell" is still used by printers and booksellers in the 17th century: see Biedermann-Pasques (1992).
42. Ronsard is a case in point, illustrating the contradictions of spelling reform. As a young poet, eager to shake off convention and make himself known by causing a bit of a stir, he readily adopted many of the innovative standpoints of Meigret and Peletier, and persuaded his printers to do the same. In later life, however, having become a court poet and an "establishment figure" (especially after the Amboise Conspiracy, a Protestant plot against the monarchy, in 1560), he reverted to a more traditional way of spelling in his works.
43. Bèze had left for Geneva by the time the *Dialogue* was published. In spite of his Protestant sympathies, Peletier chose to stay in France, to conform and to compromise. For this reason, Peletier was subsequently labelled as a "Nicodemite" (i.e., a religious hypocrite) by Bèze.
44. *De francicae linguae recta pronuntiatione Tractatus* (1584). Geneva: Eustache Vignon.
45. André Wechel, who also had Protestant convictions, was lucky to escape Paris after the Saint Bartholomew's Day massacre, and fled to Frankfurt.
46. On the two editions of the Grammar, see Swiggers (1989).
47. <k> was very little used in French orthography in the 16th century, except in certain proper names and loan-words from Greek (such as *kalendes*). It had been used more widely during the Middle Ages, especially in texts from the Picardy area, but never really "caught on" in Central French. It would therefore be perceived as a "foreign" element when used by Ramus.
48. This ideology was quite widespread among Protestant writers at the time. It seems to have been initiated by Tory (1529) and developed by various authors

including Hotman (1574) and Bonivard (1563). For more information on this episode of "Celtomania", see Droixhe (2002).

49. "Tout cela seroit a soubhaicter, si nous auions a forger comme vng nouueau chiffre, & a cõmencer vne orthographe, ou il ny en eust jamais este aucune en vsage: mais ceste vtilite, combien quelle soit grande, nest pas suffisante pour abolir vne si longue praescription fondee sur vng droict legitime, & sur vne possession de bonne foy" (1572: 13–14).
50. "Plus vous fourvoyez de nostre ancienne orthographe, et moins je vous puis lire" [the further you diverge from our old orthography, the less I am able to read you] (Pasquier 1974: book III, letter 4).
51. See Beaulieux (1927: 199).
52. The Reformation in Europe "officially" dates from 1517 and the posting up of Luther's 95 theses on the door of the chapel in Wittenberg. In France, after a long period of ambiguous relations between the Reformed movement and the monarchy, made up of repression mixed with occasional bouts of tolerance, the first Reformed church was set up in Meaux in 1540.
53. The whole Bible was to have been available in 8 volumes.
54. Concessions, of course, had to be made to other readers of the time, and to printing-house habits.
55. On this edition, see Baddeley (1995: 89–91).
56. The French words *Protestant* (in this particular religious sense) and *Huguenot* date from 1542 and 1552 respectively.
57. Plus the use of the grave accent on *à* preposition.
58. The Vaudois (Waldensians) were a dissident sect, similar to the Lollards, and who shared the Lollards' belief that the Scriptures should be read by all, in one's native language.
59. In Lyon at the time, practically *all* the printers were pro-Reformation!
60. Obviously, some uses that were considered "new" or "modern" in the 16th century, such as accents, had become part of everyday printed use in the 17th.
61. The debates among the Academicians were painstakingly transcribed by the secretary of the time, Mézeray. They were published by Beaulieux in 1951. The members of the Académie who were present at the dictionary sessions were, generally speaking, not the great literary figures of the time. Moreover, they often had radically opposite viewpoints; thus, according to who was present, a decision would be voted at one session, and a completely contradictory decision voted at the following session. The Academicians occasionally had quite harsh exchanges of viewpoints among themselves, such as the following, quoted by Cerquiglini (2004: 149) concerning the adjective *délié*:
    Perrault: Pour *deslié* qui signifie subtil et menu, j'y mettrois un *s*.
    Tallemant le jeune: Bon.
    Mézeray: O le grand docteur ! Qui ne scait pas que *délié* vient de *delicatus*.
62. "The old orthography, which is commonly used among all men of learning, because it allows them to know the origins of words" (Preface to the edition of 1694).

63. A critical bibliography of literature on the subject carried out in 1999 (Baddeley 1999) revealed almost one hundred books and articles dealing in one way or another with the question of French 16th-century orthography. Several other publications have been added to this list since then.

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Primary sources

Many 16th-century editions can be consulted and downloaded from the Gallica website of the Bibliothèque Nationale de France: www.gallica.bnf.fr. The collection of digital texts in the Bibliothèques Virtuelles Humanistes, created by the Centre d'Etudes Supérieures de la Renaissance in Tours offers a more limited number of texts, but the images of the texts are of better quality and they are easier to browse through, being accompanied by an indication of contents (www.cesr.univ-tours.fr). The CESR team are currently preparing a number of 16th-century editions in text form.

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