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## Rebels for the faith: The Sorbonne's seditious propaganda during the French Wars of Religion

**Abstract:** The French Wars of Religion (1562-1598) were not fought just with arms, but also with words: at a time when the printing press came of age and the public opinion began to play a greater and greater role, winning the propaganda battle was essential for the final success in a civil conflict where the complete destruction of the opponent was impossible. All sides involved in the French Wars of Religion – the Huguenots, the radical Catholics and the royalists – understood this and, therefore, tried their hardest to persuade their own supporters to stand firm and those of the adversary to defect. For this purpose, they made use of all institutions that could sway public opinion one way or the other – and, for the Catholic side, one of the most important was the University of Paris and its famous Faculty of Theology, the Sorbonne. It regarded itself as a guardian of the Catholic faith, but it was also devoted to the French monarchy, which had nurtured and protected it from its inception in the twelfth century. When the Wars of Religion broke out, the Sorbonne was confronted with a painful dilemma: stand with a Valois monarchy that seemed to fail in its duty to defend the Catholic faith or speak in favour of rebellion and deposition of an unworthy king. This paper seeks to analyse how and in what circumstances did the Sorbonne start to criticize, and then attack – to the point of justifying the deposition of the king – the Valois monarchy.

**Keywords:** Sorbonne; Wars of Religion; France; Catholic Propaganda.

### The Sorbonne and the Politics of France before the Wars of Religion

Gradually taking shape during the late twelfth century and at the beginning of the thirteenth, the University of Paris rapidly became one of the most influential institutions in Western Europe: a large part of its prestige was due to its Faculty of Theology, the Sorbonne, whose pronouncements on matters of faith were seen as having an authority close to that of the papacy, which regarded the University as one of its most useful tools for protecting Catholic dogma. Thus, it is no wonder that both the Holy See and the French monarchy had shown special favour to the University, with the latter being often referred to as “the favourite daughter of the kings of France”. In fact, its prestige led even to a presumption on infallibility, on

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matters of both faith and morals<sup>1</sup>, at the peak of its influence, and this translated into a political influence which was not at all irrelevant. After all, as many medieval historians remarked, theology and politics, in the Middle Ages, were closely linked. The French took great pride in the prestige of the University and it was a common remark that “the Italians had the papacy, the Germans the Empire and the French, the University”. The persistent myth that France knew no heresies, which the French kept repeating until confronted with the shock of the Reformation, was also linked to the influence of the University, which was credited with the intellectual suppression of heterodox ideas and with preserving the dogmatic purity of the faith. However, it’s the involvement in the politics of the kingdom of France and those of the Church had its drawbacks and it also resulted in several blows for the University in the first half of the fifteenth century.

First, during the Great Schism (1378-1417), the University became a staunch supporter of conciliarism through the voice of two prominent theologians and churchmen, Jean Gerson and Pierre d’Ailly, and it played a significant role at the council of Konstanz (1414-1418), which ended by electing Martin V as pope. However, conciliarism would slowly lose ground during the next decades in favour of the papacy: with the schism ended, there was no longer a great need to proclaim the councils of the Church as being superior to the pope – and, with the papacy, unlike the councils, being a permanent institution, the popes managed to reassert their power and reduce the councils to their previous subordinate status. Second, the University became entangled in the Lancasterian phase of the Hundred Years War – and in a way which was not likely to endear it to the Valois dynasty. After the capture of Paris by the Burgundian forces in 1418 and the subsequent alliance of Burgundy with England one year later, the University threw its lot with the occupiers and supported the new Anglo-French monarchy that Henry V of England was attempting to create. When Charles VII recovered Paris, the University was in the position of the penitent who had to repent for its sins and this experience caused the French kings to take a dim view of its influence in politics – especially since, despite its professions of loyalty, the University was not always accommodating to the royal desires and could act with a mind of its own, as it did at the beginning of the reign of Francis I, when it objected to the Concordat of Bologna. Even so, although its political influence diminished, its theological influence endured: it was no accident that Henry VIII asked for the opinion of the University of Paris, obviously hoping for a favourable answer, when he wanted to divorce Catherine of Aragon in defiance of the papal will.

During the sixteenth century, when the Reformation started to make inroads into France, the University of Paris, through the same Faculty of Theology, continued to play a key role: as it saw itself as the bastion of Catholic orthodoxy, whose pronouncements were authoritative for the whole Catholic world, the

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<sup>1</sup> G.H.M. Posthumus Meyjes, *Jean Gerson, Apostle of Unity: His Church Politics and Ecclesiology*, translated by J. C. Grayson, Leiden and Boston, Brill, 1999, p. 12-13.

University could not avoid taking a stand in the new religious controversies – and it had no wish to avoid such a thing. In April 1521, shortly after Luther's excommunication by the pope, the Faculty of Theology formally condemned the theses of Luther, while the Parlement of Paris decided on 18 March that all books to be published in France had to be approved first by the University. Quickly, while the king was basically ignoring the advance of Protestantism, which, at this moment, he regarded as merely another harmless movement for moral reform within the framework of the Catholic Church, the Faculty of Theology took the lead in the fight against the new heresy – even in defiance of the royal will. One of the main targets during this initial period was the so-called “circle of Meaux” – a group of humanist theologians sympathetic towards the Reformation, gathered by the Bishop of Meaux, Guillaume Briçonnet, in order to carry out spiritual work in his diocese, and under the protection of the king's own sister, Marguerite d'Alençon. The most well-known clash between the Sorbonne's intransigence and the king's leniency was the affair of Louis de Berquin, an official of the royal court, who was caught in possession of forbidden Lutheran books. After Berquin was arrested and released several times, the Sorbonne managed to induce the Parlement of Paris to send him to the stake before the king could intervene<sup>2</sup>. The “circle of Meaux” ended up dismantled – Berquin dead, many others driven into exile or forced into silence –, but the Sorbonne continued its campaign of attacks against heretic preachers and theologians, finding targets even within the entourage of the king's sister, like Gérard Roussel, her personal preacher, whose sermons were regarded as suspicious. Although the Faculty itself was bound to obey the king's order to desist and asked its members not to directly attack individuals associated with the royal family, not all of them could be so easily dissuaded, and there were instances of preachers who incited violence against people like Roussel, urged rebellion in order to defend the faith and even denounced the king, his sister and bishop Jean du Bellay<sup>3</sup>.

Since the Sorbonne could not actually prosecute heretics itself – a task which fell upon the Parlement of Paris (and, outside of its jurisdiction, on the other provincial parlements) –, the Faculty focused on the ideological front, becoming the main instrument of censorship in France. It was the task of the Sorbonne to examine all books printed in France for their religious orthodoxy and determine which were acceptable and, just like the papal index in Italy, it would regularly draw up lists of prohibited works<sup>4</sup>. Censorship led to book burnings, like in 1542, when the Sorbonne decided to publicly burn a copy of Calvin's *Institutes of the*

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<sup>2</sup> For a detailed analysis of the clash between the Sorbonne and the “circle of Meaux”, including the prosecution and execution of Louis de Berquin, see Jonathan Reid, *King's Sister – Queen of Dissent: Marguerite of Navarre (1492-1549) and her Evangelical Network*, Leiden and Boston, Brill, 2009, p. 215-367.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 419-426.

<sup>4</sup> Christopher Elwood, *The Body Broken: The Calvinist Doctrine of the Eucharist and the Symbolization of Power in Sixteenth-Century France*, Oxford and New York, Oxford University Press, 1999, p. 60-61.

*Christian Religion*<sup>5</sup>. In order to make censorship efficient, the Sorbonne had to clearly define the articles of faith: this it did in 1543, and they were ratified by Henry II as well, being thus made “the law of the land, to mark the boundary between Catholic orthodoxy on the one hand and heresy or even just Christian humanism on the other”<sup>6</sup>. But once again, the Sorbonne could not avoid pursuing the king’s own servants, such as it happened in 1552, when it censored some works of the jurist Charles Dumoulin, “as containing the heresies of the Vaudois, Wicklefists, Hussites and Lutherans, and as reviving the doctrines of Marsilius of Padua from the fourteenth century”<sup>7</sup>. Even so, during the reign of Henry II, both the king and the Sorbonne generally acted in concert, driven by their antipathy towards the Reformation. But things were going to change after Henry II’s death on 10 July 1559: his successor was his eldest son, Francis II, who reigned for only a bit more than a year, and was totally dominated by his uncles by marriage, François de Guise and his brother, the cardinal Charles de Lorraine. The new government tried to continue Henry II’s harsh policies against the Protestants, which culminated with the savage repression of the “tumult of Amboise”, a Huguenot conspiracy to kidnap the king in order to remove him from under the influence of the two Guise brothers. However, it was clear that the suppression of Protestantism by force was not working and a new approach was needed.

### **The First Clouds over the Monarchy’s Faith**

When the Crown started to change its policies towards the Protestants in 1560 and tried a more lenient approach, many Catholics reacted with alarm, especially since the failed conspiracy of Amboise seemed to have confirmed their accusations that the Protestants were inherently seditious. The members of the Sorbonne were amongst those who made their voice heard to caution the Crown against taking this course and in favour of a harsh policy towards heresy. Such was Jean de la Vacquerie, a doctor of the Faculty of Theology, who wrote a tract called *Remonstrance adressee au Roy, aux princes catholiques, et a tous magistrats et gouverneurs de Republicques, touchant l’abolition des troubles et emotions qui se font aujourd’huy en France, causez par les heresies qui y regnent et par la chrestienté*, originally published in 1560. Vacquerie could seem deliberately flattering and sycophantic when he claimed that “after God, and for the defence and the teaching of the Christian faith and religion, we could not choose a more competent and better judge than the Most Christian King”, but his words reflected a deep conviction. More so, his words were not just praise, but also reminders for the king of his duties: “because he is Most Christian, he possesses a zeal to guard

<sup>5</sup> Janine Garrisson, *A History of Sixteenth-Century France, 1483-1598: Renaissance, Reformation and Rebellion*, translated by Richard Rex, Basingstoke, MacMillan, 1995, p. 101.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 202-208.

<sup>7</sup> John Hearsay MacMillan Salmon, *Renaissance and Revolt: Essays in the Intellectual and Social History of Early Modern France*, Cambridge and New York, Cambridge University Press, 2002, p. 160.

the honour of God; because he is a powerful and virtuous king, he will not allow the Catholic Church in his kingdom to be oppressed and harmed; since from the day of his coronation and his assumption of the kingdom, he has sworn and promised God that he will be a loyal protector of the Christian faith”<sup>8</sup>. The qualities of the king are clearly linked by Vacquerie to the fulfilment of his Catholic duty: it is not specified what could happen if those expectations were not met, but the unspoken implication was that the religious legitimacy of a king was placed in doubt in such a case. But Vacquerie's argument is not just moral and theological and he does not limit himself to pointing out that the king undertook an obligation towards God to extirpate heresy: he also insists on the seditious nature of the Huguenots and on the idea that religious unity was the cement keeping a kingdom together. Vacquerie does not hesitate to point out to the king that the Huguenots' doctrines were instigating rebellion<sup>9</sup> – a premature statement at a time when the Huguenot monarchomach literature did not exist yet and the Huguenots were trying their best to convince the monarchy to join their side. Vacquerie's assertion, if he was not deliberately lying, reflected the impression created by the Amboise conspiracy and maybe the writings of Protestants from outside France, such as the Marian exiles or the magistrates of Magdeburg.

The new-found tolerance of the Crown towards Protestantism quickly led to popular anger, which was not directed only against the Huguenots – although they remained the favourite target –, but against the royal government as well. As usual, the main instigators were popular Catholic preachers, who pretty much urged the populace of Paris to take matter into their own hands and defend the Catholic Church on their own<sup>10</sup>. That was most certainly a very bad look for the Crown (and a portent of things to come), because it was the monarchy's duty, as it was expressed through the coronation oath, to defend the Church: if it was no longer considered reliable to do this, that was a major blow to its religious legitimacy. It could have led to comparisons between Charles IX and the useless kings of the Merovingian period – or the Biblical kings who ignored God's will and ended up punished for it. The University, despite being a royal institution, would find itself drawn into these attacks against the Crown when one of its students, Jean Tanquerel, would argue in a debate that “the pope, as sole vicar of Jesus Christ and monarch of the Church, possessed, in both temporal and spiritual matters, a sovereign and absolute power over all faithful and he can deprive of their kingdoms the princes who do not wish to obey his decrees”<sup>11</sup>. Jacques-Auguste de

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<sup>8</sup> Jean de la Vacquerie, *Remonstrance adressee au Roy, aux princes catholiques, et a tous magistrats et gouverneurs de Republiques, touchant l'abolition des troubles et emotions qui se font aujourd'huy en France, causez par les heresies qui y regnent et par la chrestienté*, Lyon, Benoist Rigaud, 1574, p. 7.

<sup>9</sup> Mack. P. Holt, *The French Wars of Religion, 1562-1629*, Cambridge and New York, Cambridge University Press, 2005, p. 44-45.

<sup>10</sup> Barbara Diefendorf, *Beneath the Cross: Catholics and Huguenots in Sixteenth-Century Paris*, Oxford and New York, Oxford University Press, 1991, p. 56-62. See also Denis Crouzet, *La sagesse et le malheur: Michel de l'Hôpital, chancelier de France*, Seyssel, Champ Vallon, 1998, p. 521-526.

<sup>11</sup> Jacques-Auguste de Thou, *Histoire Universelle*, vol. IV, Londres, 1734, p. 105-106.

Thou, who describes this episode in his universal history, also points out that Tanquerel was believed to have been just a patsy and that the Crown thought there were more influential members of the Sorbonne behind him, who used this opportunity to strike at the government's policies. In his comments on a letter sent by Catherine de Medici to the Parlement of Paris, Hector de la Ferrière is more specific than de Thou and points out that the incriminated claim was about "the right of the pope to depose kings and emperors who favoured heresy"<sup>12</sup> – something that makes more sense, because not even the biggest supporters of papal power would suggest that secular sovereigns owed unconditional obedience to the pope in all matters. Even so, it was an incendiary statement, that was bound to attract the ire of the authorities. The royal government ordered the arrest of Tanquerel, but he fled before he could be apprehended: therefore, the Sorbonne was the one who had to make amends in his name, in an assembly consisting of the Dean, the doctors and all bachelors of the college. The ceremony was presided by the leadership of the Parlement of Paris and the Sorbonne formally abjured Tanquerel's thesis in his name, proclaimed its loyalty towards the Crown and asked for the king's forgiveness<sup>13</sup>.

Many historians of the French Wars of Religion pointed out that, at this stage, the radical Catholics who favoured all-out war against heresy were still largely loyalist and were trying to persuade the king instead of seriously considering replacing him. However, such episodes as the diatribe of Jean Tanquerel showed that the temptation to take things further and actually threaten the monarchy existed already – and the royal government was sufficiently concerned to take matters seriously and impose serious penalties on anyone who might have been suspected of harbouring such thoughts. Henri Morel argues that the Sorbonne had hesitated to "take sides in the interest of the monarchy"<sup>14</sup>: Morel does not make it clear what this statement is based on, but he could be referring to the fact that any member of the Sorbonne who was absent from the ceremony condemning the thesis of Tanquerel was threatened with the loss of all rights and privileges granted by the king – a measure that would seem excessive if the suspicions the royal government had about the Sorbonne's involvement are not taken into account. On his part, Denis Crouzet considers this incident part of the "temptation to desacralize the monarchy in case it persevered in the policy of appeasement and refused to carry out the divine justice that the exclusivist imaginary projected in the grand gesture of a bloody crusade that was to come",

<sup>12</sup> Hector de la Ferrière (ed.), *Lettres de Catherine de Médicis*, Vol. I, Paris, Imprimerie Nationale, 1880, p. 251.

<sup>13</sup> Jean-Louis Brunet (ed.), *Traitez des droits et libertez de l'Eglise gallicane*, Vol. I, 1731, p. 50-54. Sylvie Daubresse, *Conjurer la dissension religieuse: la justice du roi face à la Réforme (1555-1563)*, Seyssel, Champ Vallon, 2019, Chapter 5 (epub). John Hearsay MacMillan Salmon, *Renaissance and Revolt*, p. 160.

<sup>14</sup> Henri Morel, *L'Idée gallicane au temps des guerres de religion*, Aix-en-Provence, Presses Universitaires d'Aix-Marseille, 2003, p. 88.

with a rhetoric oscillating between the invective against the king and the possibility of deposition<sup>15</sup>.

After the Tanquerel incident, though, there were no other instances when the Sorbonne would openly express anti-royalist sentiments: this affair had occurred at a moment when many Catholics genuinely thought that the monarchy could actually side with the Protestants and even convert to the new faith – and it would take a similar crisis, more than two decades later, in order to push the Sorbonne again into accepting the possibility of rebellion and of overthrowing a legitimate king. The Edict from January 1562, which granted many freedoms to the Huguenots, was badly received by a large part of the Catholic public opinion – and many radical preachers fulminated against it, and also against other subsequent Edicts of Pacification, while warning the royal family about the perils of incurring God's wrath. The Sorbonne's opposition during this period manifested itself through its reluctance to censor the books, pamphlets or preachers criticizing the royal policy<sup>16</sup> – and, when Saint-Bartholomew occurred, it seemed it had become superfluous, especially since Charles IX died on 30 May 1574 and was replaced by Henry III, the Catholic champion who, as duke of Anjou, had led the royal army in 1569 to two major victories against the Huguenots. However, such hopes proved to be illusory.

### **Deposition of a “Tyrant”: The Sorbonne against Henry III**

Immediately after his ascension, Henry III had to confront an extremely menacing coalition of rebels, consisting of the Huguenots and disaffected Catholics, including his own brother, François. Having no adequate means to face them in battle, the king had to yield to their demands and sign the peace of Beaulieu in 1576, which granted unprecedented concessions to the Huguenots. This came as a shock to the radical Catholics and it marked the moment when their opinion of the new king started to go downhill, with constant suspicions that he was working with the heretics to the detriment of the Catholic faith. One first answer was the formation of the Catholic League to defy the clauses of the peace: the fact that the Peace of Beaulieu was cancelled by the subsequent Estates General and remained a dead letter took the wind out of the League's sails for the moment – but the beginning had been made. However, when the king's brother, François, died in 1584 and Henry of Navarre, a Huguenot, became heir presumptive, the concern of the ultra-Catholics reached fever pitch: for them, it was unimaginable that a king would not try to impose his own faith on his subjects and suppress rival religions. The events in England, where Catholics were subjected to significant persecutions by the government of Queen Elizabeth I, reinforced such beliefs. Consequently, the Catholic League of 1576 was revived, this time with Spanish

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<sup>15</sup> Denis Crouzet, *op. cit.*, p. 527.

<sup>16</sup> Luc Racaut, *Nicolas Chesneau, Catholic Printer in Paris during the French Wars of Religion*, p. 29, in “The Historical Journal”, 52 (2009), 1, p. 23-41.

support, with two distinct wings, one aristocratic and more traditionalist, another bourgeois and more revolutionary. This League immediately started to act against the king, both openly – although, just like the Huguenots two decades before, it avoided declaring itself in rebellion – and covertly. The struggle was also ideological, in order to win the French public opinion over, and the Sorbonne, as one of the key institutions shaping the political ideology of France just as much as it shaped Catholic theology, naturally played an important part in it. The influence of the Sorbonne in this regard was correctly assessed by Henry of Navarre himself, who, in order to make his case and counter the propaganda of the League, sent letters to both the Parlement of Paris and the Sorbonne, where he argued in favour of the legitimate dynastic succession and also alluded that his conversion might be possible, while contrasting his Capetian lineage with the foreign origin of his Guise enemies<sup>17</sup>. In his letter for the Sorbonne, Navarre declared himself willing to accept the decisions of a national Church Council, as long it was “free and legitimate” – which, for the Protestants, meant free of papal influence –, “where all the controversies on religion should be debated and decided”, and insisted upon the difference between heresy and error: since, in his opinion, Navarre adhered to the fundamental tenets of the Christian faith, he argued that he could not be considered a heretic<sup>18</sup>.

The Sorbonne, though, was clearly on the side of the League and, due to its devotion to an extreme Catholicism, uncompromising towards the Huguenots, was not willing to take into consideration the dynastic arguments: on the contrary, it was starting to support even the potential deposition of Henry III, on account of his inability or unwillingness to solve the heresy problem. Thus, on 16 December 1587, the Sorbonne – acting under the possible influence of the preacher Jean Boucher, as the king himself believed – passed a secret resolution “that government should be removed from princes who do not act correctly”<sup>19</sup>. Henry III was not directly named, but the hint was more than clear. However, while the Sorbonne had to cover their actual opinions of Henry III with the veil of secrecy and still profess formal allegiance to the legitimate king of France, it had no reason to show similar restraint with respect to his potential successor, Henry of Navarre, with whom the League was actually engaged in open warfare. Still, events were moving more and more towards an open confrontation between the League and Henry III: when the king tried to bring troops into Paris in May 1588, the League answered with a general uprising which forced Henry III to flee the city. Members of the Sorbonne were directly involved in the revolt, their students taking part in

<sup>17</sup> Janine Garrisson, *op. cit.*, p. 272.

<sup>18</sup> Berger de Xivrey (ed.), *Recueil des lettres missives de Henri IV*, Vol. 2, Paris, Imprimerie Royale, 1843, p. 138-142. See also Jean-Pierre Babelon, *Henri IV*, Paris, Fayard, 2009, p. 338 and Nicole Mary Sutherland, *Henri IV of France and the Politics of Religion 1572-1596*, Bristol and Portland, Elm Bank, 2002, p. 122-123.

<sup>19</sup> Nicole Mary Sutherland, *op. cit.*, p. 174. Also Robert J. Knecht, *Hero or Tyrant? Henry III, King of France 1574-1589*, Farnham, Ashgate, 2014, p. 249 and Stuart Carroll, *Martyrs and Murderers: The Guise Family and the Making of Europe*, Oxford and New York, Oxford University Press, 2009, p. 268.

the erection of barricades through the streets of Paris and their doctors leading groups of armed monks and priests<sup>20</sup>.

Contrary to what could have been expected, the revolt of Paris did not immediately lead to an open breach between the king and the League, as the latter's leadership still sought to find an accommodation with the former – although one where Henry III basically would have consented to become a League puppet. The explanation for this behaviour is that the League, especially its aristocratic leadership, still felt they needed the legitimacy provided by the person of the king in order to wage a successful war against the Huguenots and Henry of Navarre. Thus, they tried to bully Henry III into accepting their demands and this goal seemed to be achieved when the king signed the Edict of Union in July 1588. The Sorbonne gave its approval to the Edict and asked its members to take an oath expressing their adherence to its clauses, while also publishing a propagandistic text, *Formulaire du serment fait par messieurs de la Faculté de théologie à Paris sur l'édit d'Union du roy tres chrestien Henry troiesieme l'an 1588*. Its purpose was to justify their decision, establishing an equivalence between the law of catholicity demanding that the king be a Catholic and the Law of the Old Testament and promoting the image that the Sorbonne doctors had of themselves, that of a kind of sixteenth-century embodiment of the Biblical Levites<sup>21</sup>.

After the Edict of the Union, the League seemed free to pursue both their goals of war against the Huguenots and of reshaping the French monarchy during the Estates General that gathered at Blois in October 1588. During this period, the theological weight of the Sorbonne could be brought to bear especially against the moderate Catholic prelates who were hesitant to support the League and were more inclined to accept the succession of Henry of Navarre, at least under some specific conditions, in particular his possible conversion: one such prelate, for instance, was Claude d'Angennes, bishop of Le Mans, who argued during the Estates General of 1588 in favour of Navarre, with the reasoning that heretics should be brought back into the Catholic Church by "instruction and good example". However, this possibility was anathema to the League, regardless of the status of Navarre's religion, and something for which they were prepared to defy even the will of the pope, as it will be seen in the future. Both the First Estate and the Sorbonne voted to censor d'Angennes for his willingness to seek a compromise with Navarre<sup>22</sup>. More so, a doctor of the Sorbonne rushed to preach a sermon where he argued the exact opposite, namely that heretics "had to be pursued by all means", while the Estate of the Clergy referred to Angennes' opinions as an "evil doctrine, contrary

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<sup>20</sup> John Hearsey MacMillan Salmon, *Renaissance and Revolt*, p. 245.

<sup>21</sup> Thierry Amalou, *Une Sorbonne régicide? Autorité, zèle et doctrine de la Faculté de Théologie de Paris pendant la Ligue (1588-1593)*, p. 85-88, in *Actes du colloque de l'association des historiens modernistes des universités françaises tenu le 23 janvier 2010*, Paris, Presses de l'Université Paris-Sorbonne, 2013, p. 77-116.

<sup>22</sup> Frederic J. Baumgartner, *Change and Continuity in the French Episcopate: The Bishops and the Wars of Religion*, Durham, Duke University Press, 1986, p. 163.

to the deliberations about the Huguenots previously accepted by the Estates” and a further attempt at defending the Bishop of Le Mans was rejected<sup>23</sup>.

Pressured by the League and slowly stripped of his essential powers, Henry III could see no other way out and ordered the assassination of Henry de Guise and his brother, the cardinal Louis de Guise, on 23-24 December 1588. Just like Charles IX and Catherine de Medici believed when they ordered the massacre from the night of Saint-Bartholomew, Henry III also thought a decapitation strike against the League’s leadership could restore the situation in his favour and render the League impotent. Instead, it was a fatal miscalculation and the final blow for his reputation amongst the ultra-Catholics: the League was no longer willing to even feign loyalty and declared its open defiance of the king, rising up in rebellion and taking control of Paris and large swathes of the kingdom, including many of the most important cities. Being not just the capital of France, but also a hotbed of radical Catholicism, Paris immediately assumed a critical importance – and so did the two major institutions that Paris hosted, the Parlement and the Sorbonne, who were used by the League in order to grant legal and theological justifications to its rebellion. The most significant action carried out by the Sorbonne during this period occurred on 7 January 1589, when it released the French people from its oath of loyalty to Henry III and urged all Frenchmen to take up arms against him. On that day, a memoir was presented to the Sorbonne on the part of League, which basically asked whether “they were released from their allegiance and free to bear arms against a king who had ‘violated public faith’ at the estates of Blois”<sup>24</sup> – and, as stated, the League received a positive answer. In its declaration, the Sorbonne took care to emphasize that it was a decision that they reached after “free deliberation”, thus free of any constraint – in order to counter possible accusations from the king and his adherents that the radicals of Paris were terrorizing the Faculty –, that the decision was based on “the Holy Scriptures, canonical sanctions and papal decrees” and it was unanimous, with “nobody contradicting it”. Henry III was accused in the declaration of having prejudiced the Catholic religion, the Edict of Union – which he himself had sworn just 6 months before – and the “natural liberty of the assembly of the three Estates of the kingdom”<sup>25</sup>. However, despite the claims to the contrary in the text, the decision had not been taken in unanimity and there were significant dissenting voices: the dean himself, Jacques Le Fevre, opposed it and he was joined by several others doctors of the Faculty. The members of the Sorbonne associated with the League still managed to impose their will, with the help of the younger members, who formed a majority – but this pretext will be used later, after the triumph of Henry IV, to claim that the decision had been extorted

<sup>23</sup> Henri de l’Épinois, *La ligue et les papes*, Paris, Société Générale de Librairie Catholique, 1886, p. 254.

<sup>24</sup> Nicole Mary Sutherland, *op. cit.*, p. 232.

<sup>25</sup> Simon Goulart, *Mémoires de la Ligue, contenant les événements les plus remarquables depuis 1576, jusqu’à la paix accordée entre le roi de France & le roi d’Espagne, en 1598*, Vol. 3, Amsterdam, Arkstée & Merkus, 1758, p. 181-183.

from the Faculty through violence<sup>26</sup>. However, the decision lacks any elaboration, because, as pointed out by Thierry Amalou, “the published opinions of the Sorbonne are rarely backed up with many authorities; the exchanges and disputes took place in oral debates, but they were not reiterated in print; only the conclusion mattered”<sup>27</sup>.

The Sorbonne likely knew they were on shaky grounds on the matter of the king's deposition: it was more than questionable whether its decision alone would have sufficed in order to deprive a legitimate king of his throne and it was unlikely to persuade anyone who was not already won over to the League's cause. Therefore, the Sorbonne asked for papal approval<sup>28</sup>, hoping that the murder of a cardinal – a grievous crime according to the canons of the Catholic Church, which led to the automatic excommunication of the guilty individual – would sway Sixtus V to their side. In the meantime, the Sorbonne's declaration was put to other uses: thus, the League governor of Paris, the duc d'Aumale, together with the municipal council, sent the declaration, on 27 January 1589, to the other towns in France, in order to give greater weight to the League's appeals for rebellion<sup>29</sup>. The text makes it clear that the League feared the old oaths of loyalty might still prevail over their accusations against the king, urging the receivers to not allow themselves to be retained by “respect for human considerations or by fear or scruples of conscience”: the declaration of the Sorbonne was meant to provide a moral justification for the rebellion, but, at the same time, the Parisian leadership of the League also played the self-defence card, by arguing that the Catholics were under attack. In these circumstances, the oath sworn by the members of the League had to take precedence, especially since “the arms that were raised to extirpate heresy” were now “turned against Catholics”. For this purpose, the declaration of the Sorbonne had to be given the greatest publicity, the towns associated with the League which received this message being instructed “to give the said resolution of the masters of the Sorbonne to your priests and other superiors, so that it could be read in public during their sermons and nobody could claim ignorance”<sup>30</sup>.

A new resolution was published by the Sorbonne on 8 February 1589, nominally addressed to the clergy of Rouen, which elaborated on its reasons to declare Henry III deposed from his throne: it claimed that Catholics were bound to unite against heretics, albeit not necessarily because of the oath taken with the occasion of the Edict of Union, because that would have meant, ironically, re-establishing their ties with Henry III himself, who had been part of it, although, as the League suspected now, only as a ruse. Because of the murder of the cardinal

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<sup>26</sup> Michel Félibien, *Histoire de la Ville de Paris*, Vol. 2, Paris, Guillaume Desprez & Jean Desessartz, 1725, p. 1176

<sup>27</sup> Thierry Amalou, *op. cit.*, p. 92.

<sup>28</sup> Robert J. Knecht, *The French Wars of Religion, 1559-1598*, Harlow and London: Longman, 2010, p. 72.

<sup>29</sup> John Harsey MacMillan Salmon, *Society in Crisis: France in the Sixteenth Century*, London and Tonbridge, Ernest Benn, 1975, p. 251.

<sup>30</sup> François Bonnardot, *Registres de délibérations du Bureau de la Ville de Paris*, Vol. IX, Paris, Imprimerie Nationale, 1902, p. 273.

de Guise, because Henry III had “violated public faith” and because of his “dissimulation and inequity”, which could only lead to “tyranny and the total ruin of the religion and the state”, the Sorbonne admonished anyone who would still grant Henry III, who was to be referred only as “Henry de Valois”, his royal title and argued that no Catholics could still consider themselves his subjects. At this point, just like the League, the Sorbonne was treating Henry III as de facto excommunicated and obeying such an individual was forbidden by canon law: more so, in this particular case, having in mind the actions of Henry III, obedience to him meant “exposing religion to an obvious peril”, which was, naturally, a grave sin. Since the king was a perjurer and an oath-breaker, no oaths sworn to him were valid anymore and anyone who had taken them could consider themselves released, in good conscience<sup>31</sup>. On 18 February 1589, when the city of Paris wrote a letter, confirming the adherence to the League of multiple towns, to be circulated through France, it invoked the authority of the Sorbonne in support of its decision<sup>32</sup>.

On 5 April 1589, the Sorbonne decided to cancel the prayers for the king that were uttered during Mass: according to their reasoning, because Henry III had been automatically excommunicated when he ordered the murder of a cardinal, it was impossible for the Catholic clergy to keep praying for him, and they acted to punish those prelates that still did so<sup>33</sup>. Meanwhile, Sixtus V, despite his reluctance to antagonize the king of France and despite his lack of enthusiasm for the League, could not ignore the death of the cardinal de Guise and had to take some kind of action against Henry III, although less drastic than the League would have liked. On 5 May 1589, the pope issued a monitorium against Henry III, which asked him to release the prelates that had been arrested in December 1588, at the time of the murders, and called on him to either personally come to Rome or send a representative for what was going to be an ecclesiastical trial. Henry III had tried to defend himself from a possible excommunication in two ways: first, by accusing the Guise brothers of plotting against his life – thus presenting the murders as an act of self-defence –, second by claiming that, as king of France, he enjoyed immunity from papal censure. However, the papal monitorium made clear that none of these justifications were taken into account: no absolution granted by anyone else other than the pope was considered valid and no privileges could shield anyone involved in the murders from being held accountable for their deed. Naturally, the League could not have liked such half-hearted measures and the Sorbonne complained that the monitorium still referred to Henry III as king of France (thus casting doubt on the validity of the Sorbonne’s declaration of deposition from 7 January 1589) and that it did not provide for his immediate excommunication, which remained for the moment only a threat<sup>34</sup>.

<sup>31</sup> *Advis et resolution de la sacrée Faculté en théologie de Paris sur ceste question, a sçavoir s’il est loisible de jurer l’edict d’Union*, Paris, Guillaume Chaudière, 1589, p. 6-13.

<sup>32</sup> François Bonnardot, *op. cit.*, p. 297-299.

<sup>33</sup> Simon Goulart, *op. cit.*, p. 540-541. See also Thierry Amalou, *op. cit.*, p. 95-98.

<sup>34</sup> Nicole Mary Sutherland, *op. cit.*, p. 258-259.

The authority of the Sorbonne was also invoked in the most important Leaguer tract of political theory written during this period, by Jean Boucher, one of the most significant preachers of the League. Boucher's task was to justify the rebellion and he went much further than his Huguenot counterparts from the 1570s, giving the right to pronounce the deposition of the monarch not just to the Estates General, but also to the Catholic clergy, who could act as moral guides of the French nation, and basically accepting and approving the possibility of regicide. Boucher was having the same difficulty as the League leadership: the much-awaited formal excommunication of Henry III was not coming, with Sixtus V dragging his feet, so Boucher had to fall back upon the authority of the Sorbonne. Although he spoke as if the papal excommunication was inevitable, Boucher argued that the League could not afford to wait and that the Sorbonne's declaration of deposition was sufficient in order to justify the act of collectively taking up arms against the tyrant Henry III and his killing by any private individual<sup>35</sup>. Thus, because of Sixtus V's hesitations and coolness towards the League, the Sorbonne was basically substituting for the pope.

### **Denying the Legitimacy of the King: The Sorbonne and Henry IV**

While the Sorbonne and the League were waging this propagandistic war against Henry III, their situation in the field worsened: the king joined forces with his potential successor, Henry of Navarre, and, together, they pushed back the forces of the League, managing to reach the outskirts of Paris and put the city under siege. However, an unforeseen event turned the tide: on 1 August 1589, Henry III was stabbed by a Dominican monk, Jacques Clément, dying from his wound the next day. This immediately resulted in a strengthening of the position of the League, because a part of the Catholic troops in the royal army refused to follow Henry IV, who was still a Huguenot, and it led to changes on the propaganda front as well, with the League shifting its rhetoric from fulminating against the "tyrant Henry de Valois" to denying the legitimacy of Henry IV. Both the leader of the League, Charles de Mayenne, and the Parlement of Paris immediately acknowledged the cardinal de Bourbon, the eldest relative of Henry of Navarre, as king under the name of Charles X and urged all their supporters to do the same. The Sorbonne joined this position only on 10 February 1590<sup>36</sup>, when it launched an attack against Henry IV, condemning the new king, whom they referred to only as "Henry de Bourbon", as a relapsed heretic and debarred from the throne, and urged all its members "that whenever they named the king in the

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<sup>35</sup> Mack P. Holt, *op. cit.*, p. 134. For an analysis of Jean Boucher and his work, see also Frederic J. Baumgartner, *Radical Reactionaries: The Political Thought of the French Catholic League*, Genève, Librairie Droz, 1975, p. 123-144 and Cornel Zwierlein, *The Political Thought of the French League and Rome 1585-1589: De justa populi gallici ab Henrico tertio defectione and De justa Henrici tertii abdicatione (Jean Boucher, 1589)*, Genève, Librairie Droz, 2015.

<sup>36</sup> Thierry Amalou, *op. cit.*, p. 99.

presence of the people, they should make it clear and undoubtable that it is of our natural king and most Christian prince Charles X that they intended to speak of”<sup>37</sup>. The Faculty’s resolution clearly identified the main dangers for the League, which will bring about its collapse in the future, and tried to forestall them: first, the Catholic supporters of Henry IV, whom the Sorbonne tried to pretend they were automatically hit by the same excommunication which covered Henry IV himself, and second, the possibility for Navarre’s conversion, which is declared to be “invented by the devil in order to sow and entrench heresy in our France”<sup>38</sup>. This event also undermined the credibility of the papal legate in France, Enrico Caetani, because he specifically condoned the oath requested by the Sorbonne, to “approve all the said articles and determinations of my mother, the Faculty of Paris, and never preach or say anything that will contradict them, nor promote, advance or strengthen the party of the heretic Navarre, relapsed and excommunicate, or of those who favour or support him”<sup>39</sup>. More so, in order to shore up the authority of its resolution and subsequent oath, the Sorbonne attached to them some letters from the pope of 2 October and 30 December 1589, “addressed to the doctors of the Sorbonne, praising their zeal in maintaining the Catholics in the Union”<sup>40</sup>, something they could not have done without the legate’s knowledge and sanction: that meant a full commitment to the cause of the League, while the pope still wanted to keep his options open and maintain a path for a potential reconciliation with Henry IV.

Ideological pronouncements were often accompanied by more practical actions: thus, the members of the Sorbonne also participated in the armed processions which took place in Paris during this period and claimed that all who died in the war against Henry IV would receive the crown of martyrs. On the other hand, the discontent that the most radical part of the League was feeling towards their aristocratic leader, Charles de Mayenne, was shared by the Sorbonne as well, who joined the pressure on Mayenne to take even more drastic measures against those suspected of insufficient zeal for the Catholic cause. However, there were some lengths that the Sorbonne would not go to: when the radical faction of the League lynched several members of the Parlement of Paris suspected of treason, on 15 November 1591, their action might have been endorsed by radical theologians such as Jean Boucher, but Thierry Amalou points out that “nothing proves they received the sanction of their institution in order to carry out ‘in good conscience’ their seditious enterprise”<sup>41</sup>.

In the meantime, the Sorbonne clashed with Sixtus V, because the pope, hesitant to see the power of Spain increasing at the expense of France – which

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<sup>37</sup> *Acte de ce qui s’est passé au collège de Sorbonne en l’assemblée de la Faculté de théologie le dixième de février*, Paris, Guillaume Chaudière, 1590, p. 6-7.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 6-7.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 9.

<sup>40</sup> Nicole Mary Sutherland, *op. cit.*, p. 301-302.

<sup>41</sup> Thierry Amalou, *op. cit.*, p. 104-105.

would have entailed dangers for the Holy See as well –, was starting to take into consideration the possibility of Henry IV's conversion. On 29 April 1590, the Sorbonne sent a letter to the pope, complaining that the Catholic supporters of Henry IV had not been excommunicated, asking the pope to make his position clear and urging him to send the League more substantial aid<sup>42</sup>. The Sorbonne went even further on 7 May 1590, when, after much internal debate, it issued a decree that Navarre was debarred from the throne even if he was absolved by the pope. That was a direct challenge to the papal power, because its power of absolution was considered to be unlimited, and it clearly emphasizes the theological contradictions in the positions of the Sorbonne and the League: after all, when the same Sixtus V issued his first excommunication against Henry IV, in 1585, accompanied by a decision that declared him incapable to succeed to the throne of France, the ultra-Catholics had welcomed the papal initiative, although both the Huguenots and the gallican Catholics (the ones that the League derisively referred to as “politiques”) were incensed at this open interference in French internal affairs and dynastic succession. Now, however, when Sixtus had changed his mind and was proving himself less accommodating to the desires of the League, the latter, using the Sorbonne as its instrument, was ready to deny him the power that they admitted five years before. Sixtus took immediate action against this provocation and declared his intention to proceed against the Dean of the Sorbonne, while launching reprisals against the partisans of the League from the papal curia, like cardinal Pellevè, who was excluded from the consistory, or Camillo Caetani, brother of the papal legate Enrico Caetani and intermediary between the legate and the pope, who was placed under house arrest<sup>43</sup>. However, Sixtus V died on 27 August 1590 and his successors changed their position: in particular, Gregory XIV – who reigned for less than a year, from 5 December 1590 to 16 October 1591 – took an extremely pro-League stance and excommunicated again Henry IV on 1 March 1591, while ordering all his Catholic supporters to abandon his cause. Multiple bachelors of the Sorbonne published, under the form of placards, defences of the idea that the power of the pope was superior to that of the kings and of the decisions taken by Gregory XIV<sup>44</sup>.

## Conclusions

Despite the fiery anti-Huguenot rhetoric and the apparent success of the radicals in imposing their opinions upon the whole Faculty, the attempts of the Sorbonne to influence public opinion in favour of a relentless war against Henry IV, regardless of the cost, were meeting with failure. Propaganda, even inspired by religious zeal, could not counter forever the setbacks on the field of battle and the vicissitudes of war. The siege of Paris from the summer of 1590, which took a

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<sup>42</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 105.

<sup>43</sup> Nicole Mary Sutherland, *op. cit.*, p. 333.

<sup>44</sup> Thierry Amalou, *op. cit.*, p. 110-115.

terrible toll on the population of the city, pushed into starvation, contributed significantly to cooling the bellicose ardour of even the citadel of Catholicism that was the capital of the kingdom. The radicalism of a part of the League was also starting to frighten its more moderate members and its open consorting with the traditional Spanish enemy caused significant discontent among those who were not willing to sacrifice the independence of France for the sake of religion. All this gradually discredited the most extremist position and a powerful faction arose within the League itself that pushed for an accommodation with Henry IV and the restoration of peace, with him as king, as long as he could be persuaded to return to the Catholic fold. Thierry Amalou also argues that “the recourse to the papal authority in order to push Henry IV away from the throne created a bold ecclesiological system, but one totally contrary to the Gallican liberties”<sup>45</sup>.

After Henry IV converted to Catholicism on 25 July 1593, despite the efforts of Leaguer preachers, Boucher chief amongst them, to cast doubt on the sincerity and the validity of the conversion, the defections to his side would soon start: by far the most important was the surrender of Paris in March 1594. With the capital in the king’s hands, the institutions previously controlled by the League were forced to make amends and the Sorbonne made no exception, having to revoke its previous denunciations of Henry IV<sup>46</sup>. More than that, in a display of loyalty to the new king, the Sorbonne started to take action against the theories of regicide and everyone suspected of harbouring them, like the Jesuits. The latter, due to their commitment to the pope, which made many Gallican Frenchmen doubt their loyalty to France, and due to their unfortunate links with some of the attempts against the king’s life, were regarded with suspicion by royal institutions such as the Parlement and came under attack. In an ironical twist of fate, the Sorbonne, which, five years before, had urged the French people to take up arms and fight against Henry III, now pushed for the banishment of the Jesuits<sup>47</sup>, in order to consolidate the emerging monarchy of Henry IV.

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<sup>45</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 116.

<sup>46</sup> John Hearsey MacMillan Salmon, *Society in Crisis*, p. 272.

<sup>47</sup> Nicole Mary Sutherland, *op. cit.*, p. 533.

## ABREVIERI

<i>AARMSI</i>	= Analele Academiei Române, Memoriile Secțiunii Istorice
<i>AARMSL</i>	= Analele Academiei Române, Memoriile Secțiunii Literare
<i>AARPAD</i>	= „Analele Academiei Române”, seria II, București, 1879-1916
<i>AA.SS.</i>	= <i>Acta Sanctorum</i> , ed. Bollandisti, III <sup>a</sup> ediție, Paris 1863-1870
<i>AB</i>	= Arhivele Basarabiei
<i>ACNSAS</i>	= Arhivele Consiliului Național pentru Studierea Arhivelor Securității
<i>AE</i>	= L'Année Epigraphique, Paris
<i>AIR</i>	= Arhiva Istorică a României
<i>AIAC</i>	= Anuarul Institutului de Istorie și Arheologie Cluj
<i>AIIAI</i>	= Anuarul Institutului de Istorie și Arheologie „A. D. Xenopol”, Iași
<i>AIIC</i>	= Anuarul Institutului de Istorie Cluj
<i>AIINC</i>	= Anuarul Institutului de Istorie Națională, Cluj
<i>AIIX</i>	= Anuarul Institutului de Istorie „A. D. Xenopol”, Iași
<i>ALIL</i>	= Anuarul de Lingvistică și Istorie Literară, Iași
<i>ALMA</i>	= <i>Archivum Latinitatis Medii Aevi</i> . Genève.
<i>AM</i>	= Arheologia Moldovei, Iași
<i>AMAE</i>	= Arhiva Ministerului Afacerilor Externe
<i>AmAnthr</i>	= American Anthropologist, New Series, Published by Wiley on behalf of the American Anthropological Association
<i>AMM</i>	= Acta Moldaviae Meridionalis, Vaslui
<i>AMMB</i>	= Arhiva Mitropoliei Moldovei și Bucovinei, Iași
<i>AMN</i>	= Acta Musei Napocensis
<i>AMR</i>	= Arhivele Militare Române
<i>AMS</i>	= Anuarul Muzeului din Suceava
<i>ANB</i>	= Arhivele Naționale, București
<i>ANC</i>	= Arhivele Naționale. Serviciul Județean Cluj
<i>ANSMB</i>	= Arhivele Naționale. Serviciul Municipiului București
<i>ANG</i>	= Arhivele Naționale. Serviciul Județean Galați
<i>ANI</i>	= Arhivele Naționale, Iași
<i>ANIC</i>	= Arhivele Naționale Istorice Centrale
<i>ANR-Cluj</i>	= Arhivele Naționale, Cluj-Napoca
<i>ANR-Sibiu</i>	= Arhivele Naționale, Sibiu
<i>ANRM</i>	= Arhivele Naționale ale Republicii Moldova, Chișinău
<i>ANRW</i>	= Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt, Berlin-New York
<i>ANSMB</i>	= Arhivele Naționale. Serviciul Municipiului București
<i>ANV</i>	= Arhivele Naționale, Vaslui
<i>AO</i>	= Arhivele Olteniei
<i>AP</i>	= Analele Putnei
<i>APH</i>	= Acta Poloniae Historica, Varșovia
<i>AqLeg</i>	= <i>Aquila Legionis. Cuadernos de Estudios sobre el Ejército Romano</i> , Salamanca
<i>AR</i>	= Arhiva Românească
<i>ArchM</i>	= Arhiva Moldaviae, Iași
<i>ArhGen</i>	= Arhiva Genealogică
„Arhiva”	= „Arhiva”. Organul Societății Științifice și Literare, Iași
<i>ArhMold</i>	= Arheologia Moldovei

- ASRR = Arhiva Societății Române de Radiodifuziune  
AȘUI = Analele Științifice ale Universității „Alexandru Ioan Cuza”, Iași  
ATS = Ancient Textile Series, Oxbow Books, Oxford și Oakville  
AUAIC = Arhiva Universității „Alexandru Ioan Cuza” din Iași  
AUB = Analele Universității „București”  
BA = *Biblioteca Ambrosiana*, Roma, Città Nuova Editrice  
BAR = Biblioteca Academiei Române  
BArchB = Bundesarchiv Berlin  
*BAR int. ser.* = British Archaeological Reports, International Series  
BBRF = Buletinul Bibliotecii Române din Freiburg  
BCIR = Buletinul Comisiei Istorice a României  
BCMI = Buletinul Comisiei Monumentelor Istorice  
BCU-Iași = Biblioteca Centrală Universitară, Iași  
BE = Bulletin Epigraphique  
BF = Byzantinische Forschungen, Amsterdam  
BJ = Bonner Jahrbücher, Bonn  
BMI = Buletinul Monumentelor Istorice  
BMIM = București. Materiale de istorie și muzeografie  
BNB = Biblioteca Națională București  
BNJ = Byzantinisch-Neugriechische Jahrbücher  
BOR = Biserica Ortodoxă Română  
BS = Balkan Studies  
BSNR = Buletinul Societății Numismatice Române  
*ByzSlav* = Byzantinoslavica  
CA = Cercetări arheologice  
CAI = Caiete de Antropologie Istoriceă  
*CartNova* = *La ciudad de Carthago Nova 3: La documentación epigráfica*, Murcia  
CB = Cahiers balkaniques  
CBI = *Der römische Weihebezirk von Osterburken. Corpus des griechischen und lateinischer Beneficiärer – Inschriften des Römischen Reiches*, Stuttgart  
CC = Codrul Cosminului, Suceava (ambele serii)  
CCAR = Cronica cercetărilor arheologice din România, CIMEC, București  
CCh = *Corpus Christianorum*, Turnhout  
CChSG = *Corpus Christianorum. Series Graeca*  
CCSL = *Corpus Christianorum Series Latina*, Turnhout, Brepols  
CDM = *Catalogul documentelor moldovenești din Arhivele Centrale de Stat*, București, vol. I-V; supl. I.  
CDȚR = *Catalogul documentelor Țării Românești din Arhivele Statului*, București, vol. II-VIII, 1974-2006  
Chiron = Chiron: Mitteilungen der Kommission für Alte Geschichte und Epigraphik des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, 1971  
CI = Cercetări istorice (ambele serii)  
CIL = *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*, Berlin  
CL = Cercetări literare  
CLRE = *Consuls of the Later Roman Empire*, eds. R. S. Bagnall, A. Cameron, S. R. Schwartz, K. A. Worp, Atlanta, 1987  
CN = Cercetări Numismatice  
CNA = Cronica Numismatică și Arheologică, București  
CSCO = *Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium*, Louvain  
CSEA = *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiae Aquileiensis*, Roma, Città Nuova Editrice  
CSEL = *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum*, Wien, De Gruyter  
CSPAMI = Centrul de Studii și Păstrare a Arhivelor Militare Centrale, Pitești  
CT = Columna lui Traian, București

- CTh* = *Codex Theodosianus*. Theodosiani, Libri XVI cum constitutionibus Sirmundianis, I, edidit adsumpto apparatu P. Kruegeri, Th. Mommsen, Hildesheim, 1970-1971
- Cv.L* = Convorbiri literare (ambele serii)
- „*Dacia*”, *N.S.* = Dacia. Nouvelle Série, Revue d'archéologie et d'histoire ancienne, București
- DGAS* = Direcția Generală a Arhivelor Statului
- DI* = Diplomatarium Italicum
- DIR* = *Documente privind istoria României*
- DIRRI* = *Documente privind Istoria României. Războiul pentru Independență*
- DOP* = Dumbarton Oaks Papers
- DTN* = *Din trecutul nostru*, Chișinău
- DRH* = *Documenta Romaniae Historica*
- EB* = *Études Balkaniques*
- EBPB* = *Études byzantines et post-byzantines*
- EDCS* = *Epigraphik-Datenbank Clauss-Slaby* (<http://www.manfredclauss.de/>)
- EDR* = *Epigraphic Database Roma* (<http://www.edr-edr.it/default/index.php>)
- EpigrAnat* = Epigraphica Anatolica, Münster
- ERAsturias* = F. Diego Santos, *Epigrafiă Romana de Asturias*, Oviedo, 1959.
- EuGeSta* = *Journal of Gender Studies in Antiquity*
- Gerión* = Gerión. Revista de Historia Antigua, Madrid
- GB* = Glasul Bisericii
- GCS* = *Die Griechischen Christlichen Schriftsteller*, Leipzig, Hinrichs, 1897-1969
- GLK* = *Grammatici Latini Keil*
- HEp* = *Hispania Epigraphica*, Madrid
- „*Hierasus*” = *Hierasus*. Anuarul Muzeului Județean Botoșani, Botoșani
- HM* = Heraldica Moldaviae, Chișinău
- HU* = Historia Urbana, Sibiu
- HUI* = Historia Universitatis Iassiensis, Iași
- IDR* = *Inscripțiile din Dacia romană*, Bucurști-Paris
- IDRE* = *Inscriptions de la Dacie romaine. Inscriptions externes concernant l'histoire de la Dacie*, I-II, Bucarest, 1996, 2000
- IGLN* = *Inscriptions grecques et latines de Novae*, Bordeaux
- IGLR* = *Inscripțiile grecești și latine din secolele IV-XIII descoperite în România*, București, 1976
- ILLPecs* = *Instrumenta Inscripta Latina. Das römische Leben im Spiegel der Kleininschriften*, Pecs, 1991
- ILAlg* = *Inscriptions latines d'Algérie*, Paris
- ILB* = *Inscriptiones Latinae in Bulgaria repertae. Inscriptiones inter Oescum et Iatrum repertae*, Sofia, 1989
- ILD* = *Inscripții latine din Dacia*, București
- ILN* = *Inscriptions latines de Novae*, Poznan
- ILLPRON* = *Inscriptionum Lapidarium Latinarum Provinciae Norici usque ad annum MCMLXXXIV repertarum indices*, Berlin, 1986
- ILS* = *Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae*, 1892
- IMS* = *Inscriptiones Moesiae Superioris*, Belgrad
- IN* = „Ioan Neculce”. Buletinul Muzeului Municipal Iași
- ISM* = *Inscripțiile din Scythia Minor grecești și latine*, București, vol. I-III, 1983-1999
- JGO* = *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas*
- JL* = Junimea literară
- JRS* = The Journal of Roman studies, London
- LR* = Limba română
- Lupa = *Ubi Erat Lupa* (<http://lupa.at/>)
- MA* = Memoria Antiquitatis, Piatra Neamț

- MCA = Materiale și cercetări arheologice  
 MEF = *Moldova în epoca feudalismului*, vol. I-XII, 1961-2012, Chișinău  
 MEFRA = *Mélanges de l'École française de Rome: Antiquité*, Roma  
 MGH = *Monumenta Germaniae Historica inde ab anno Christi quingentesimo usque ad annum millesimum et quingentesimum auspiciis societatis aperiendis fontibus rerum Germanicarum medii aevi*, Berlin 1877-  
 MI = Magazin istoric, București  
 MIM = Materiale de istorie și muzeografie  
 MM = Mitropolia Moldovei  
 MMS = Mitropolia Moldovei și Sucevei  
 MN = Muzeul Național, București  
 MO = Mitropolia Olteniei  
 MOF = Monitorul Oficial al României  
 Navarro = M. Navarro Caballero, *Perfectissima femina. Femmes de l'élite dans l'Hispanie romaine*, Bordeaux, 2017.  
 NBA = *Nuova Biblioteca Agostiniana*, Roma, Institutum Patristicum Augustinianum  
 NDPAC = *Nuovo Dizionario Patristico e di Antichità Cristiane*, I, A-E, 2e edizione, Marietti, 2006; III, P-Z, 2e edizione, Marietti, 2008  
 NEH = Nouvelles études d'histoire  
 OI = Opțiuni istoriografice, Iași  
 OPEL = *Onomasticon provinciarum Europae latinarum*, vol. I-IV, Budapesta-Viena, 1994-2002  
 PG = *Patrologiae cursus completus, Series Graeca*, ed. J.-P. Migne, Paris, 1886-1912  
 PIR = *Prosopographia Imperii Romani. Saec. I.II.III*, editio altera, Berlin.  
 PLRE = *Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire*, 3 vol., eds. A. H. M. Jones, J. R. Martindale, and J. Morris, Cambridge, 1971-1992  
 RA = Revista arhivelor  
 RBAR = Revista Bibliotecii Academiei Române, București  
 RC = Revista catolică  
 RdI = Revista de istorie  
 REByz = Revue des Études Byzantines  
 RER = Revue des études roumaines  
 RESEE = Revue des études Sud-Est européennes  
 RGI = Revista Generală a Învățământului  
 RHP = *Die römischen Hilfstruppen in Pannonien während der Prinzipatszeit. I: Die Inschriften*, Viena  
 RHSEE = Revue historique de Sud-Est européen  
 RI = Revista istorică (ambele serii)  
 RIAF = Revista pentru istorie, arheologie și filologie  
 RIB = *Roman Inscriptions of Britain*, Londra  
 RIM = Revista de Istorie a Moldovei, Chișinău  
 RIR = Revista istorică română, București  
 RIS = Revista de istorie socială, Iași  
 RITL = Revista de istorie și teorie literară  
 RIU = *Die römischen Inschriften Ungarns*, Budapesta  
 RJMH = The Romanian Journal of Modern History, Iași  
 RM = Revista muzeelor  
 RMD = *Roman Military Diplomas*, Londra  
 RMM = *Römische Militärdiplome und Entlassungsurkunden in der Sammlung des Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseums*, Mainz  
 RMM-MIA = Revista muzeelor și monumentelor, seria Monumente istorice și de artă  
 RMR = Revista Medicală Română  
 RRH = Revue roumaine d'histoire

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<i>RRHA</i>	= Revue roumaine de l'histoire de l'art
<i>RRHA-BA</i>	= Revue Roumaine d'Histoire de l'Art. Série Beaux Arts
<i>RSIAB</i>	= Revista Societății istorice și arheologice bisericești, Chișinău
<i>Rsl</i>	= Romanoslavica
<i>SAHIR</i>	= Studia et Acta Historiae Iudaeorum Romaniae, București
<i>SAI</i>	= Studii și Articole de Istorie
<i>SANIC</i>	= Serviciul Arhivelor Naționale Istorice Centrale
<i>SCB</i>	= Studii și cercetări de bibliologie
<i>SCh</i>	= <i>Sources Chrétiennes</i> , Paris
<i>SCIA</i>	= Studii și cercetări de istoria artei
<i>SCIM</i>	= Studii și cercetări de istorie medie
<i>SCIV/SCIVA</i>	= Studii și cercetări de istorie veche (și arheologie)
<i>SCN</i>	= Studii și Cercetări Numismatice, București
<i>SCȘI</i>	= Studii și cercetări științifice, Istorie
<i>SEER</i>	= The Slavonic and East European Review
<i>SHA</i>	= <i>Scriptores Historiae Augustae</i>
<i>SJAN</i>	= Serviciul Județean al Arhivelor Naționale
<i>SMIC</i>	= Studii și materiale de istorie contemporană, București
<i>SMIM</i>	= Studii și materiale de istorie medie, București
<i>SMIMod</i>	= Studii și materiale de istorie modernă, București
<i>SOF</i>	= Südost-Forschungen, München
<i>ST</i>	= Studii Teologice, București
<i>StAntArh</i>	= <i>Studia Antiqua et Archaeologica</i> , Iași
<i>T&amp;MBYZ</i>	= <i>Travaux et Mémoires du Centre de recherches d'histoire et de civilisation byzantines</i>
<i>ThD</i>	= Thraco-Dacica, București
<i>TR</i>	= Transylvanian Review, Cluj-Napoca
<i>TV</i>	= Teologie și viața, Iași
<i>ZPE</i>	= Zeitschrift für Papyralogie und Epigraphik
<i>ZSL</i>	= Zeitschrift für Siebenbürgische Landeskunde