

# THE VOYAGE *of* THOUGHT

Navigating Knowledge across the  
Sixteenth-Century World

MICHAEL WINTROUB





## The Voyage of Thought

*The Voyage of Thought* is a micro-historical and cross-disciplinary analysis of the texts and contexts that informed the remarkable journey of the French ship captain, merchant, and poet, Jean Parmentier, from Dieppe to Sumatra in 1529. In tracing the itinerary of this voyage, Michael Wintroub examines an early attempt by the French to challenge Spanish and Portuguese oceanic hegemony and to carve out an empire in the Indies. He investigates the commercial, cultural, and religious lives of provincial humanists, including their relationship to the classical authorities they revered, the literary culture they cultivated, the techniques of oceanic navigation they pioneered, and the distant peoples with whom they came into contact. Ideal for graduate students and scholars, this journey into the history of science describes the manifold and often contradictory genealogies of the modern in the early modern world.

Michael Wintroub is Associate Professor at the University of California, Berkeley. He authored *A Savage Mirror: Power, Identity and Knowledge in Early Modern France* (2006) and has published widely in journals such as the *American Historical Review*, the *British Journal for the History of Science*, *ISIS*, the *Renaissance Quarterly*, *Annales: Histoire, Sciences Sociales*, and the *Sixteenth Century Journal*. Wintroub has received numerous awards and honours, including grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the American Council of Learned Societies, the Mellon Foundation, and the Sixteenth Century Society, where he is a two-time winner of the Nancy Lyman Roelker Prize.



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Sixteenth-Century World*

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Michael Wintroub

*University of California, Berkeley*



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University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom  
One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA  
477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia  
4843/24, 2nd Floor, Ansari Road, Daryaganj, Delhi – 110002, India  
79 Anson Road, #06-04/06, Singapore 079906

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Information on this title: [www.cambridge.org/9781107188235](http://www.cambridge.org/9781107188235)

DOI: [10.1017/9781316946459](https://doi.org/10.1017/9781316946459)

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First published 2017

Printed in the United Kingdom by TJ International Ltd. Padstow Cornwall

*A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library.*

*Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data*

Names: Wintroub, Michael, author.

Title: The voyage of thought : navigating knowledge across the sixteenth-century world / Michael Wintroub.

Description: Cambridge, United Kingdom ; New York, NY :

Cambridge University Press, 2017. |

Includes bibliographical references and index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2017008195 | ISBN 9781107188235 (hardback)

Subjects: LCSH: Parmentier, Jean, –1529. | Voyages and travels–History–16th century. | Scientific expeditions–History–16th century. | Discoveries in geography–French. | Explorers–France–Biography. |

BISAC: TECHNOLOGY & ENGINEERING / History.

Classification: LCC G440.P216 W56 2017 | DDC 910.4/5–dc23

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2017008195>

ISBN 978-1-107-18823-5 Hardback

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# Contents

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<i>List of Figures</i>	<i>page</i> vi
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	x
Introduction	1
1 Information: Pilgrimage in a Church of Poems	8
2 Expertise: The Heavens Inscribed	67
3 Translation: Translating the Body of Thought	92
4 Scale: The Heart of the Matter	122
5 Confidence: A Balance of Trust	154
6 Replication: Replicating a Thought	200
Epilogue: Pirate Epistemologies	257
<i>Bibliography</i>	264
<i>Index</i>	283

## Figures

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- 1.1 Saint-Jacques as the Matamoros, stained-glass windows at Notre-Dame-en-Vaux, Châlons-en-Champagne (c. 1525). Photo: G. Freihalter, Wikimedia Commons, public domain. *page* 29
- 1.2 Plan of l'église Saint-Jacques, Dieppe. Lucien Lefort (1912). Courtesy of the Médiathèque de l'Architecture et du Patrimoine, Charenton-le-Pont, France. 30
- 1.3 Anonymous, "Frise des Sauvages," sculpted in stone, l'église Saint-Jacques, Dieppe (c. 1525–1535). Photo: Christophe Kollmann © (1981) Courtesy of the Inventaire général Région Normandie. 36
- 1.4 Jan van Doesborch, Woodcut broadsheet, *De novo mondo* (Antwerp, originally 1511, here 1520). Courtesy of the British Library. 40
- 1.5 Anonymous Broadsheet, *Dise figur anzaigt uns das Folck und Insel die gefunden ist durch den christenlichen Kunig zu Portigal oder con seinen Underthonen [This Figure Shows Us the People and Island Discovered by the Christian King of Portugal or His Subjects]*. (Augsburg, c. 1503). Courtesy of the Münchener Digitalisierungszentrum (MDZ). 41
- 1.6 Hans Mair von Landshut, Drawing in ink, "Ein Geharnischer (Oberschwäbischer Landsknecht), um 1500." Courtesy of the "Kunstsammlungen der Veste Coburg," [www.kunstsammlungen-coburg.de](http://www.kunstsammlungen-coburg.de). 42
- 1.7 Detail, "Frise des Sauvages," l'église Saint-Jacques, Dieppe (c. 1525–1535). Photo: Christophe Kollmann © (1981). Courtesy of the Inventaire général Région Normandie. 43
- 1.8 Detail, "Frise des Sauvages," l'église Saint-Jacques, Dieppe (c. 1525–1535). Photo: Christophe Kollmann © (1981). Courtesy of the Inventaire général Région Normandie. 43
- 1.9 Hans Leonhard Schäufelein, "Landsknecht mit geschulterter Helmbarte" (c. 1507). Courtesy of the Staatliche Grafische Sammlung, Munich. 44

- 1.10 Albrecht Dürer, “Landsknecht” (1505). Public Domain. 44
- 1.11 Urs Graf, “Reisläufer von vorn gesehen” (1513). Courtesy of the Kunstmuseum Basel, Kupferstichkabinett. Photo: Kunstmuseum Basel, Martin P. Bühler. 45
- 1.12 “Summer” from Petrarch’s triumphs, sculpture in the Galerie d’Aumale of the Hôtel Bourgtheroulde, Rouen (c. 1523). Photo: M. Wintroub. 45
- 1.13 Georg Glockendon, Woodcut Broadsheet, “Natives of Guinea and Algoa, natives of Arabia and India.” Early copy of Hans Burgkmair. ©Trustees of the British Museum. 46
- 1.14 Jan van Doesborch, Woodcut Broadsheet, *De novo mondo* (1520). Courtesy of the University of Rostock Library, UB Rostock Qi-39. 48
- 1.15 Godefroy Le Batave, Manuscript illumination, “Petrarch’s Triumph of Chastity,” Rouen, BnF. Ms. Fr. 594 (c. 1503), fol. 102<sup>r</sup>. Courtesy of the Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des Manuscrits. 50
- 1.16 Hans Holbein, title-page, Desiderius Erasmus, *Querela Pacis* (Basel: Johann Froben, 1517), San Marino, Huntington Library 32796. Courtesy of the Huntington Library. 51
- 1.17 Detail, “Frise des Sauvages,” l’église Saint-Jacques, Dieppe (c. 1525–1535). Photo: Christophe Kollmann © (1981). Courtesy of the Inventaire général Région Normandie. 53
- 1.18 Louis IX and the translation of the Crown of Thorns to Sainte Chapelle. Manuscript illumination, *Les Riches heures de Jeanne de Navarre*; BnF NAL 3145, fol. 12 (c. 1336–1340). Courtesy of the Bibliothèque Nationale de France. 55
- 1.19 Arrival of emperor Charles IV in Paris, 1378. Manuscript illumination, Grand Chroniques de France. BnF. Ms. Fr. 2813, fol. 469<sup>r</sup> (c. 1375–1380). Courtesy of the Bibliothèque Nationale de France. 56
- 1.20 Detail, “Frise des Sauvages,” l’église Saint-Jacques, Dieppe (Dieppe, c. 1525–1535). Photo: Christophe Kollmann © (1981). Courtesy of the Inventaire général Région Normandie. 58
- 1.21 Detail of Masaccio’s expulsion of Adam and Eve, fresco, Brancacci Chapel in the church of Santa Maria del Carmine (Florence, c. 1425). Photo: Marie-Lan Nguyen, Wikimedia Commons, Public Domain. 59
- 1.22 Graffiti Ship on the trésor of l’église Saint-Jacques (early sixteenth century, Dieppe). Photo: M. Wintroub. 61
- 3.1 Hans Burgkmair, Woodcut frontispiece, Johannes Geiler von Kayserberg, *Navicula penitentie* (Augsburg, 1511). Courtesy the Austrian National Library. 95

3.2	Nave of l'église Saint Jacques, Dieppe. Photo: Paul M. R. Maeyaert, Wikimedia Commons, Public Domain.	96
3.3	Manuscript illumination accompanying Jean Parmentier's poem, "Au parfaict port de salut et de joie," BnF Ms Fr. 379, fol. 24 <sup>v</sup> (c. 1528–1540). Courtesy of the Bibliothèque National de France.	120
4.1	Alberti's <i>definitio</i> o <i>finitorium</i> from <i>De Statua</i> (1462), as depicted by Pio Panfili's engraving for <i>Della architettura della pittura e della statua</i> (Bologna, 1782). Courtesy of the Getty Research Institute.	125
4.2	A Mariner's measure, from Jean Rotz's <i>Boke of Idrography</i> , Royal MS 20 E. IX, fol. 4, the Rotz Atlas (c. 1534). Courtesy of the British Library.	126
4.3	Geoffroy Tory, the Design of Letters scaled to human proportion, <i>Champ fleury</i> (Paris, 1529), fol. 120. Courtesy of the Bibliothèque Nationale de France.	138
4.4	Geoffroy Tory on human anatomy and the letter, the muses, the cardinal virtues, the liberal arts and the graces and their correspondences with the vital channels and noble organs of the body, <i>Champ fleury</i> (Paris, 1529), fol. 72. Courtesy of the Bibliothèque Nationale de France.	139
4.5	Oronce Fine, Cordiform Projection (1531). Recens et integra orbis descriptio... [Document cartographique] / Orontius F[inaeus] Delph[inas], Regis[s] mathematic[us] facebiat. CPL GE DD-2987 (63 RES), Parisii: Orontius F. (c. 1534). Courtesy of the Bibliothèque nationale de France, département Cartes et plans.	143
4.6	Cordiform Book of Hours, à l'usage d'Amiens, Picardie, BnF, Ms. Lat. 10536 (fifteenth century), fols. 71 <sup>v</sup> –72 <sup>r</sup> . Courtesy of the Bibliothèque Nationale de France.	149
6.1	Jean Juste, Detail of Louis XII's and Anne de Bretagne's effigies, lower tier of their transi tomb, Basilique Saint-Denis (completed 1531). Courtesy of Bridgeman Images Ltd.	222
6.2	Jean Juste, Transi tomb of Louis XII and Anne de Bretagne, Basilique Saint-Denis. Photo: P. Poschadel, Wikimedia Commons, Public Domain.	223
6.3	Oronce Fine, <i>Nova, et integra universi orbis</i> (1532). Courtesy of the John Carter Brown Library.	226
6.4	Detail, Oronce Fine, <i>Nova, et integra universi orbis</i> (1532). Courtesy of the John Carter Brown Library.	227

- |      |  |     |
|------|--|-----|
| 6.5  | Detail of Jean Rotz's <i>Boke of Idrography</i> , Royal MS 20 E. IX, the Rotz Atlas (c. 1534), fol. 18 <sup>r</sup> . Courtesy of the British Library.   | 228 |
| 6.6  | Detail of Jean Rotz, <i>Boke of Idrography</i> , Royal MS 20 E. IX, the Rotz Atlas (c. 1534), fol. 13 <sup>v</sup> . Courtesy of the British Library.  | 229 |
| 6.7  | Detail of Jean Rotz, <i>Boke of Idrography</i> , Royal MS 20 E. IX, the Rotz Atlas (c. 1534), fol. 11 <sup>v</sup> . Courtesy of the British Library.  | 230 |
| 6.8  | Detail of Jean Rotz, <i>Boke of Idrography</i> , Royal MS 20 E. IX, the Rotz Atlas (c. 1534), fol. 9 <sup>v</sup> –10 <sup>r</sup> . Courtesy of the British Library.  | 231 |
| 6.9  | Detail of Jean Rotz, <i>Boke of Idrography</i> , Royal MS 20 E. IX, the Rotz Atlas (c. 1534), fol. 13 <sup>v</sup> . Courtesy of the British Library.  | 232 |
| 6.10 | Giacomo Gastaldi, attributed, Map of Sumatra, Woodcut, included in Ramusio's publication of the <i>Discourse of the Great Captain from Dieppe</i> (1556).<br>Wikimedia Commons, Public Domain.   | 235 |
| 6.11 | Detail of the Queen Mary Atlas, Diogo Homem, Add. Ms. 5415A (1558). Courtesy of the British Library.   | 240 |
| 6.12 | Detail of North America from the Planisphere of Andreas Homem, Res GE CC 2719 (1559). Courtesy of the Bibliothèque Nationale de France.  | 241 |
| 6.13 | Detail of the Atlas published with Petrus Apianus's <i>Cosmographia</i> by Gemma Frisius (1544). Courtesy of the J. Willard Marriott Library, University of Utah.  | 243 |
| 6.14 | Detail of a map by Sebastian Munster, <i>Typus orbis universalis</i> (Basal, 1545). Courtesy of the James Ford Bell Library, University of Minnesota.  | 244 |
| 6.15 | Detail of Abraham Otrelius's <i>Nova totius terrarium orbis</i> (1564). Courtesy of the Bibliothek der Universität Basel.  | 245 |
| 6.16 | Detail of Humphrey Gilbert's world map (1576).<br>Courtesy of the John Carter Brown Library.   | 246 |
| 6.17 | George Beste, <i>A true discourse of the late voyages of discoverie, for the finding of a passage to Cathaya, by the Northwest, vnder the conduct of Martin Frobisher Generall</i> , etc. (London, 1578). Courtesy of the John Carter Brown Library. | 247 |

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## Acknowledgments

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I would like to thank a number of colleagues, friends and students for having read and commented on various chapters of this book; in particular, H el ene Mialet (without whom I could never have imagined, let alone written, this book), Beate Fricke, Mario Wimmer, Jessie Hock, Jeffrey Hadler, Simon Schaffer, David White, John  demark, Guillaume and Isabelle Sannie, Tony Sandset, Ron Makleff, Anooj Kansara, Alexander Arroyo and Gloria Yu. I would also like to thank the Townsend Center at UC Berkeley whose fellowship support enabled me to dig into the writing of several of the book's chapters. A grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities allowed me to complete the manuscript. [Chapters 2](#) and [3](#) have been published in somewhat different form, in the *British Journal for the History of Science* and the *Renaissance Quarterly*, respectively.

# Introduction

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We are on the confines of the Frozen Sea, on which, about the beginning of last winter, happened a great and bloody fight between the Arimaspians and the Nephelibates. Then the words and cries of men and women, the hacking, slashing, and hewing of battle-axes, the shocking, knocking, and jolting of armours and harnesses, the neighing of horses, and all other martial din and noise, froze in the air; and now, the rigour of the winter being over, by the succeeding serenity and warmth of the weather they melt and are heard.

– François Rabelais<sup>1</sup>

Out of sight of land for days, weeks and sometimes months, intrepid men on leaky ships sailed dangerous waters in the hunt for pepper, ginger, gold and souls. Along the way, they collected intelligence about themselves, about others, and about the world: where to find water, food, safe ports-of-call, valuable commodities, dangerous reefs, good winds, strong currents, and the height of the stars. New techniques were tried and instruments used; information was collected and refined into rituals of standard practice and inscribed onto paper, wood, and metal; onto the bodies of experienced sailors; and into the design of the ships that carried them. This routinization was associated with the establishment of trade routes over impossibly long distances, and eventually into disciplines seemingly as far removed from standards of navigational practice as archaeology, history, geography and anthropology. This book is about such journeys. It is a charting of the physical trajectory of two ships that sailed from Northern France to the Indonesian island of Sumatra and back again early in the sixteenth century. It is also about the charting of attempts to operationalize metaphors, appropriate space, and discipline men and their relations with the world through an examination of their modes of action, their styles of thought, and their manifold entanglements with techné and technology, nature and things. These two ships,

<sup>1</sup> François Rabelais, *Five books of the lives, heroic deeds and sayings of Gargantua and his son Pantagruel*, trans. Sir Thomas Urquhart of Cromarty and Peter Antony Motteux (New York, 2005), 563.

the relatively small and more maneuverable *Le Sacre*, and the larger, *La Pensée*, were sailed across the seas by Jean Parmentier and his younger brother, Raoul. Their expedition was sponsored by the maritime kingpin, Jean Ango, an owner of ships and employer of sailors, a banker and financial backer – an *armateur* and entrepreneur – who put together consortiums to finance and provision long-distance voyages up and down the Atlantic coast; from Flanders to the North, and Africa to the South, and across the seas to France Antarctique (Brazil), Terre-Neuve (Canada), Guinée, the Antilles and the Indes orientales.<sup>2</sup>

Dieppe, by the standards of the day, was a relatively large city, having a population of approximately 15,000 in 1550.<sup>3</sup> Its size was matched by the importance of its port. Ango harnessed his status in Dieppe and beyond to the success of his maritime ventures, whether in cloth and spice in Antwerp, brazilwood in Brazil, cod in Acadia or booty captured from Portuguese, Spanish, Flemish and English ships by his fleet of pirate-privateers.<sup>4</sup> With his profits, he bought land and titles (the *domaine de Varengeville* and the *fiefs de la Rivière à Offranville, Desmaillets, Saint-Pierre l'Advis, Sainte-Marguerite, and Gerponville*), as well as offices (*Grénétier-Receveur de la Vicomté, Conseiller de la Ville, Vicomte, Capitaine du château pour le Roi, and Gouverneur de Dieppe*).<sup>5</sup> At the height of his career he was in charge of virtually every aspect of Dieppe's political and fiscal governance. Along with money, he acquired taste, sponsoring artists, mapmakers, poets, sculptors, and translators. His power flitted between his fleet of ships and his cultural sophistication to grow into a reputation that merited the friendship of the king's sister, Marguerite de Navarre, and even a visit by the king himself – who he entertained in his spectacular quayside home, named, like his ship, *La Pensée*.<sup>6</sup>

Embellished with sculpture and bas-reliefs carved in wood and plated with gold, and decorated with furniture, sculpture and paintings of the

<sup>2</sup> On Ango see Paul Gaffarel, *Jean Ango* (Rouen, 1889); Gabriel Gravier, *Jean Ango: Vicomte de Dieppe* (Rouen, 1903); and Eugène Guénin, *Ango et ses pilotes* (Paris, 1901). Indes, here, will refer to the *Indes orientales*; Indies, on the other hand, will refer to the lands discovered to the west.

<sup>3</sup> Philip Benedict, "French Cities from the Sixteenth Century to the Revolution: An overview," in Philip Benedict (ed.), *Cities and Social Change in Early Modern France* (London and New York, 1992), 8.

<sup>4</sup> Ango had at least 60 ships; as many as 30 more were mentioned, in passing, in Portuguese archives. See Michel Mollat, *Le commerce maritime normand à la fin du Moyen Age: Étude d'histoire économique et sociale* (Paris, 1952), 501. On Ango's sponsorship of acts of piracy see *ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 506.

<sup>6</sup> See F. Génin (ed.), *Lettres de Marguerite d'Angoulême, soeur de François I<sup>er</sup>, Reine de Navarre* (Paris, 1841), 252–255.

very best quality, La Pensée was reputed to be the finest wooden home in all of France.<sup>7</sup> It was also the hub of a wide-ranging merchant empire, a clearing-house for navigational information, an outpost for humanist learning in the provinces, and a meeting place for mapmakers, sailors, poets, pirates, and privateers. Through its namesake (and other ships like it), La Pensée was connected to the world. It was, quite literally, “a thought” extended along networks of maritime trade and exploration that spanned the globe. Thus, though La Pensée might have referred to a violet or yellow flower – a “pansy” – it most certainly embraced its homonym, a “thought.”<sup>8</sup> Indeed, between flowers and thought there was less daylight than one might think, as pansies were emblematic of thoughts, dreams, and memories.<sup>9</sup> As Ophelia, in Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*, said: “And there is pansies, that’s for thoughts.”<sup>10</sup> Derived from the Latin, *pendere* or *pensare*, pensée thus referred not only to a flower, but to think, to reflect, to be poised and deliberate, to judge, to consider carefully, and to weigh. It is interesting to note in this regard that the meaning of the English verb “to weigh” – “to bear from one place to another; to carry, to transport” – has an uncanny similarity to the meaning of translation, which derives from *trans*, meaning to cross over or go beyond, and *fero*, meaning to bear or carry.<sup>11</sup> One can thus imagine La Pensée, as both home and ship together, forming a material-neural network of translation along which Ango could take the measure of the world and his progress within it. Put another way, it was through the combined (inter) actions and displacements – the ongoing, and back and forth, translations – of these “thoughts” that Ango was able to leverage and mediate enormous geographic and social distance so as to materialize his dreams for profit, glory and respectability, whether in ginger, pepper and gold, or the visit of kings.

In 1529 two of Ango’s men, the brothers Parmentier, led a mission to the Indes in search of profit and glory; it was a third of a trilogy of failed voyages to find spice in the Far East, the first two having never returned. They set off on Easter Day and sailed for seven months before reaching what would be their final destination, the village of Ticou on

<sup>7</sup> Guénin, *Ango et ses pilotes*, 7.

<sup>8</sup> For Randle Cotgrave, “la pensée” was “a thought, supposal, conjecture, surmise, cogitation, imagination; one’s heart, mind, inward conceit, opinion, fancie, or judgment; also, the flower Paunsie.” See Cotgrave, *A Dictionarie of the French and English Tongues* (1611), s.v. *pensée*.

<sup>9</sup> See Pamela Porter, *Courtly Love in Medieval Manuscripts* (Toronto, 2003), 11.

<sup>10</sup> William Shakespeare, *The Tragicall Historie of Hamlet Prince of Denmarke* (London, 1603), Act 4 Scene 5, fol. H<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>11</sup> *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn (Oxford, 1989), also available as the OED Online, s.v. translation.

the central west coast of Sumatra. Little trace remains of their voyage. There is a shipboard journal, and there is poetry.<sup>12</sup> Jean Parmentier, and his *cosmographe* (his navigator), Pierre Crignon, were, as it turns out, not only famous merchant-explorers who led ships to Brazil, Guinée, La Terre-Neuve and the Indes orientales, they were also poets of renown.<sup>13</sup> More than just poets, however, they were men of learning steeped in the classics. In 1528 Parmentier translated *The Catiline Conspiracy* by the Roman historian, Sallust, for his patron, Jean Ango; he was working on a translation of the *War with Jugurtha* for François I when he died on board La Pensée in 1530. The poems they wrote were crowded with literary allusions to Roman and Greek history, philosophy, and mythology, with references to Pliny, Pythagoras and Cicero rubbing shoulders with Phebus, Pallas and Neptune. Just as importantly, their poetry vividly recalls their lives at sea. They wrote of navigational instruments and maps; sailing techniques and astronomical observations; the power of the oceans, the contingencies of the weather and the constancy of the stars. Their words gave voice to lives entangled in ropes, sails, and ships harnessing the winds; at the same time, their poems sang of a longing for God's guidance and of their devotion to the Virgin Mary, mother of God. In intermingling these social, spiritual and natural worlds, their verse translated ships into vessels of "sovereign beauty" that would transport humanity "to the sacred port where glory abounds";<sup>14</sup> into navigational instruments, like astrolabes, that mirrored the "perfect symmetry of the Virgin" as drawn by God's "error free compass";<sup>15</sup> and into world maps and the siting of the pole star that would guide wayward and desperate sailors to both God and to profit.<sup>16</sup> In their poetic prayers and theological verse one can also discern sophisticated and recondite mathematical techniques; knowledge of geography and geodesy, and the practical skills and bodily techniques of expert sailors. We can additionally find in their obscure and difficult to read verse, displays of linguistic mastery over the complex and esoteric grammatical rules that governed the writing of poetry in the fashion of the *Rhétoriciens*.<sup>17</sup> Their poems were read out

<sup>12</sup> See John Nothnagle, *Pierre Crignon: Poète et navigateur. Oeuvres en prose et en vers* (Birmingham, AL, 1990), hereafter, Crignon; and F. Ferrand (ed.), *Jean Parmentier, Oeuvres poétiques* (Geneva, 1971), hereafter, Parmentier.

<sup>13</sup> See [Chapter 2](#).

<sup>14</sup> Parmentier, *Oeuvres*, 27–29.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 62–65.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 25.

<sup>17</sup> See, for example, Pierre Fabri's *Le Grant et vray art de pleine rethorique* (Rouen, 1534). See [Chapter 2](#), and Michael Wintroub, *A Savage Mirror: Power, Identity and Knowledge in Early Modern France* (Stanford, 2006), esp. chapter 4. More generally, see Paul Zumthor, *Le masque et la lumière: la poétique des rhétoriciens* (Paris, 1978).

to audiences and judges of like-minded merchants, sailors, humanists, priests and nobles in several different Norman poetry confraternities; and, as we will see, one was even read aboard *La Pensée* as a means of inspiring her hard-pressed crew to continue on their intrepid course across dangerous and unknown waters. For all these reasons, the poetry of Crignon and Parmentier will help orient us by mapping crucial stages of *La Pensée*'s and *Le Sacre*'s voyage; it will also provide clues to the more expansive – social, epistemic and spiritual – nature of their journey.

*The Voyage of Thought* is thus not simply a story about the relatively little-known early attempts by the French to challenge Portuguese oceanic hegemony and carve out a trading empire in the Indies; it is also an investigation into the commercial, cultural and religious lives of provincial humanists in Dieppe, examining their relationship to the classical authorities they revered, the literary culture they cultivated, the techniques of oceanic navigation they pioneered, the distant peoples that they met, and the ways in which all these different ideas, practices and values were wrapped up in histories of spiritual and rhetorical practice as evinced by the poetry they wrote and publically recited on the feast days of the Immaculate Conception and the Assumption.

Each chapter of this book is based on a moment of *La Pensée*'s and *Le Sacre*'s journey, from its inception to its return; and each is oriented around a word: *Information, Expertise, Translation, Scale, Confidence* and *Replication*. My aim in pursuing this itinerary is not simply to explore the physical trajectory of these Norman merchants as they crossed the world in search of profit, glory and redemption, but to trace the specifically early modern resonance of ideas and practices that have come to be so important to our present-day understandings of science and its history. Far from being an attempt to locate modern practices and modes of thought and action in the early modern world however – my aim here will be to explore the particular historical, social, and cultural etymologies of these “key” words at a time when their meanings were far from fixed and settled.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Put another way, I propose we pursue a kind of “connected history” by following a series of words – *Information, Expertise, Translation, Scale, Confidence* and *Replication* – down the interweaving rabbit holes of their diverse and related meanings. We will thus trace entanglements of religion, politics, commerce, culture, class and classification schemes as they intersected, broke away from and/or reinforced each other in practice – that is, on ships crossing oceans, led by poets armed with the latest methods, to trade (not so successfully) with peoples living on the other side of the world. See Sanjay Subrahmanyam, “Connected Histories: Notes towards a Reconfiguration of Early Modern Eurasia,” in Victor Lieberman (ed.), *Beyond Binary Histories: Re-imagining Eurasia to c. 1830*, (Ann Arbor, 1999), 289–316; Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *Explorations in Connected History: From the Tagus to the Ganges* (Oxford, 2005); Kapil Raj, *Relocating Modern Science: Circulation and the Construction of Knowledge in South Asia and Europe, 1650–1900* (Basingstoke and

“No man is an *Iland*, intire of it selfe; every man is a peece of the *Continent*, a part of the *maine*,” said John Donne in the early seventeenth century; one could say the same for a word. Meaning, as enacted in the world, is ambiguous and agonistic; it is situational, though mobile (with a great deal of work); it is distributed, fractured, argued over and inflected; it is caught in webs tremulously vibrating across space and time, between people and peoples, and it is entangled with things, techniques, interests, bodies in action, affect, and, of course, with other words. Rabelais knew this well when he described the sound of frozen words discovered on glacial seas thawing in the spring: a cacophony of sounds – the sounds of a battle between different voices: men, women, horses and the clashing spears – all muddled together into unintelligible gibberish. The idea of fixing such words, of encasing them between the covers of definitive collections as artifacts frozen outside of time, place or interest, might have been the dictionary’s promise and the lexicographer’s dream, but for a man like Rabelais it would have been, literally, nonsense.<sup>19</sup>

Rabelais was perched at the edge of a divide in the making – a divide composed by dreams of order, purity and truth wending themselves into a world that was discontinuous, halting, filled with contradictions and reversals, mercurial desires and unpredictable fears. His contemporaries, Jean Ango, Jean Parmentier, and Pierre Crignon, were similarly positioned, though with a different point of view. These were ambitious, anxious and apprehensive men who sought to collect and give order to their experiences in the world – whether it be of language, customs, manners and dress, the directions of the winds, the geography of the human body, or the height of the stars. Theirs was a form of life based on mastering distance and translations of scale: the idea that the impossibly large, the unimaginably small, the abstract, the contingent, the particular, and the invisible, might be translated – contained, constrained, and disciplined – into models, instruments, practices, representations and inscriptions that could be gauged and engaged – “up close and faraway” – by observant eyes and practiced hands.

New forms of civility and cultural status, and new forms of territorial and administrative power, were implicated in these acts of observation and inscription, of setting out, setting down, and making mobile. Dictionaries and grammars, for example, were, like maps, a projection

New York, 2007); Amit Prasad, *Imperial Technoscience: Transnational Histories of the MRI in the United States, Britain, and India* (Cambridge, MA, 2014), esp. 1–9; and Michael Wintroub, “Translations: Words, Things, Going-Native and Staying True,” *American Historical Review* 120:4 (October 2015): 1185–1217.

<sup>19</sup> And thus, surely, a commentary on his own practices as an author.

of distance; they were a distanciation and a decontextualization; they were ordered geographies of languages as spoken and written and translated into metrologies of appropriate linguistic usage (and social prestige).<sup>20</sup> Yet alongside dictionary definitions and grammatical rules, usage resisted; as Rabelais' description of frozen words illustrates, words were voiced in unredeemable contexts, in elusive interactions, in inflected narratives, in juxtapositions and combinations with other words, with things, peoples and situations that made their meanings ambiguous, paradoxical and contradictory. Thus, while this book will focus on attempts to stabilize and discipline contingent and singular experiences into definitions, algorithms, recipes, standard practices, and maps capable of transforming voyages of geographical discovery into regularized trade routes, and voyages across epistemic space into definitive expressions of social distance and authority, it will also be attentive to the precariousness of such translations. Rabelais was right, the meaning of words as used, spoken, written about and understood was ineluctably contextual, trapped in complex interactions, and entangled in environments of interacting peoples, animals, things and interests: a battle indeed, but one lost in time and in space. The aim of the present work will be to reanimate some of these early modern battles among men, technologies and nature; to give them back their contingency, their aspirations, their horror, their joy, and their pain; and by so doing to chart a kind of historical topology of meanings made in practice: a *Begriffsgeschichte* of the purifying impulse of the modern.<sup>21</sup>

A generation before Rabelais wrote about Pantagruel's frozen words, Jean Parmentier and his brother Raoul set off for the other side of the world; they had only primitive and inaccurate maps; their translations were never sure and were often wrong; their movements across scale struggled to find sure measure; confidence was difficult to come by, and trust was hard to win; at the end of each day, they had a hope and a prayer, but they had no idea if they would succeed in reaching their final destination, or return home again. This book is about how such hopes and prayers were historically operationalized in the coordination of men, ships, seas and stars such that one voyage across the world could become many, and many worlds could become one.

<sup>20</sup> In this sense, we can perhaps view metrology as a kind of naturalization of social hierarchy.

<sup>21</sup> See especially, Bruno Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern* (Cambridge, MA, 1993).

# 1 Information: Pilgrimage in a Church of Poems

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We live in the “Information Age.” Few would argue with this, but the word, “information,” connotes different things to different people. In France, for example, it might mean the nightly news, or more generally the *presse d’information* (the news media). In an ideal world, the news would be an unbiased recounting of the “facts” of contemporaneous events; however, even the most biased adamantly claim to live in an “objective” world. Recall, for example, that France’s *Ministère de l’Information* from 1942–4 was the Nazi collaborator, Pierre Laval. It is thus perhaps not surprising that information is so often defined today in terms of its opposition to knowledge and understanding. This can be linked not only to its association with propaganda and bias (and, of course, to men like Laval), but also with putative attempts to escape from them. Information here is taken in the sense of “raw” and “neutral” data rather than opinion, interpretation, knowledge or analysis. This has not only had the effect of producing a supposed distance between information and bias, but also of establishing a disjuncture between information and knowledge. Put another way, the meaning of “information” has flown into and merged with the data in which we are all (presumably) drowning. This opposition, as a possibility, derives from a striking reversal in the historical meaning of the word. The reification of data – as facts deracinated from the schema, the metaphors, and the knowledge-interests that created their conditions of possibility – has, in this sense, bled into the concept itself, disrupting, or rather, weighting our understanding of information toward one particular side of its multifaceted meaning. Indeed, if we track information’s roots back in time, the tensions inhabiting its current meanings become both more pronounced and more complicated.

From the Latin *informatio*, information was the formation, creation, teaching, or arrangement of knowledge, as in the “instruction” or “formation” of a supplicant, a student, a citizen, or a criminal.<sup>1</sup> More abstractly, it was also understood as that which gives an idea or a concept

<sup>1</sup> OED, s.v. “Information.”

form. Among the earliest meanings of information was juridical: to conduct a criminal inquest – “*faire des enformacions*.”<sup>2</sup> The collection of information, in this sense, was part of a process of policing. An inquest was both a retrieval of knowledge (to be informed about), and an imparting of knowledge – to (re)form or instruct. Put somewhat differently, information implies a hermeneutics of control: to know so as to inculcate, instill, reform, subdue. In this sense, information flows simultaneously in two directions: from the weak (e.g. criminals and heretics) to the powerful (e.g. inquisitors and jurists), and then back from the powerful to the weak. The reputations of the subjects of inquisition necessarily colored information’s meaning, as did the less than exemplary reputations of those associated with the gathering and communication of this intelligence – the informants, the eyewitnesses, the spies, the snitches, the stoolpigeons and the traitors, and the others (the many others) who were compelled to give up their information, whether by persuasion or force. Randle Cotgrave’s *A Dictionarie of the French and English Tongues* (1611) documents some of these pejorative associations: “informe,” he tells us, is “shapeless, ill-favoured, fashionless; ouglie, rude.”<sup>3</sup>

Information was not only human, it also had material instantiations as “evidence” – that is as “data.” On the one hand, such evidence could testify when there were no human witnesses available; on the other, evidence could serve to replace and/or discipline the testimony of humans who were prone to exaggerate, selectively edit, misrepresent or lie. Proof was here embodied in discrete items that could be seen, touched, examined, collected and moved; thus would a judge be instructed by the perusal of incriminating letters, maps, books, and perhaps even dead bodies to form an argument of guilt or innocence.

The credibility of information, as either proof or deception (*mésinformation*), in its most stark formulation, tracked closely to traditional notions of social place and power; in juridical and theological contexts, it was also inseparable from a great deal of violence and coercion. A source’s trustworthiness was, in this sense, a condition of perceived social reliability: priests and nobles were more credible than merchants, Jews, soldiers, sailors, heretics, and spies.<sup>4</sup> But means could also be employed to ensure the veracity of information obtained from less creditable sources: blackmail, threats and coercion (e.g. judicial torture).

<sup>2</sup> *Trésor de la langue française*, s.v. *information*.

<sup>3</sup> Cotgrave, *A Dictionarie*, s.v. *information*.

<sup>4</sup> See, for example, Lisa Voigt, *Writing Captivity in the Early Modern Atlantic: Circulations of Knowledge and Authority in the Iberian and English Imperial Worlds* (Chapel Hill, 2009), 41; and Andrea Frisch, *The Invention of the Eyewitness: Witnessing and Testimony in Early Modern France* (Chapel Hill, 2004), for example, chapter 2.

Information was necessarily intertwined with power. If it was to be reliable, information and its sources needed to be closely monitored, checked and disciplined.

The judicial hunt for information against murderers and thieves was, as we have noted, called an inquest, which in turn, derives from the Latin, *quaesitus* or *quaero*, to seek, to inquire, to hunt. From the twelfth century, it came to be closely associated with inquisition – the interrogation – of faith. Indeed, information could derive from supernatural as well as human sources; most notably, the divine inspiration of the Holy Spirit.<sup>5</sup> As Lydgate put it, Christ was “First a prophete by holy informacion.”<sup>6</sup> But just as human informants were not always trustworthy, so too supernatural sources needed to be carefully vetted. Indeed, how was one to be sure that such sources of instruction did not derive from the devil himself? Information, as inquisition, was the process whereby unbelievers, heretics and criminals could be identified by the testimony of informers; it was then employed to inform, instruct and exemplarily prosecute those who had been denounced.<sup>7</sup> Information was thus closely allied with governmentality through the hunt for wayward and “ouglie” souls, miscreants, heretics, and erstwhile subjects that were to be fashioned, (in)formed, disciplined, and instructed.

Inquisition (*enquête*) received a slightly different inflection in accounts of the chivalrous exploits – the *quests* – undertaken by Arthurian knights. These quests, like the persecutory inquisitions of heretics, aimed at proving faith by the exercise of heroic deeds – e.g. the search for perfect (chaste) love, the pursuit of the Holy Grail, or the defense of the faith against Saracen invaders. A quest, however, could also take more worldly forms, namely, the search for objects of great symbolic and/or material value. Such quests were frequently infused with religious significance, as for example the medieval French cleric and trader (thief) of relics, known to us today only as Felix who plied his trade less as a form of religious devotion than for profit, that is, as a “*questus causa*.”<sup>8</sup> A “quest for profit” could thus be inflected in a spiritual direction, lending legitimacy and status to more worldly forms of trade. Jean Parmentier, for example, wrote (c. 1527) of a ship called *La Marie* that voyaged to faraway countries to bring back a “beautiful belly full of rich red wood ... for the great profit of all humanity.”<sup>9</sup>

<sup>5</sup> OED, s.v. “Information.”

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> R. I. Moore, *The War on Heresy* (Cambridge, MA, 2012), 206.

<sup>8</sup> Michael McCormick, *Origins of the European Economy: Communications and Commerce AD 300–900, Paris 300–900* (Cambridge, 2001), 284, n. 4.

<sup>9</sup> Parmentier, *Oeuvres*, 27–29.

*Enquête* has its roots in the hunt, and in particular, the barking of dogs at the sight of prey; as the Norman poet Gace de La Buigne put it: “*chercher la bête ou les traces de bête avec les chiens courants.*”<sup>10</sup> It is interesting to note, in this regard, that though clerics were forbidden to hunt,<sup>11</sup> those most closely associated with the founding of the Inquisition, the Dominican order, were known – after their name – as the “Dogs of the Lord” (*Domini canes*). While Dominicans could only hunt for the heresy hiding in the hearts of men, nobles saw hunting as a manly quest for symbolic capital; it was viewed as the exclusive purview of their class. As Stuart Carroll has put it, hunting was the “cornerstone of noble sociability.”<sup>12</sup> Hunting for food by the lower classes, on the other hand was, quite simply, poaching. Like the clerical inquisitions of heretics, there was a great deal of discipline and setting apart in the noble hunt, which sought to monopolize hunting by the establishment of reserves, parks and warrens, and by the enactment of laws that strictly forbade – with consequences for life or limb – hunting by non-nobles.

Information, far from simply signifying the datum, *les données*, of the material world as it often does today, was directed at searching them out, acquiring and subduing them. In these senses, it was closely related to *enquête*’s cognate: *querir* – to look, to search for, to seek. It was also closely related to *requérir* (to seek, search, look after, hunt for, request, beseech, implore, or to demand, as in the *Requerimiento* (1513) read by Spanish conquistadors to uncomprehending natives throughout the New World); *acquérir* (to acquire, find, obtain, purchase, to search for, to claim); and, of course, *conquérir* (to conquer, possess, vanquish, overcome, but also to get, to purchase, to win or gain).<sup>13</sup> Material, spiritual and political meanings thus intermingled among the roots of information. While on the one hand it was the act of hunting for and seeking out, it also moved to embrace its prey (its objects): profit, truth and power as well as their expression in commerce, religious practice and colonial acts of domination (whether against law-breakers and heretics at home, or savages in New and faraway worlds). There was, and perhaps still is, something deeply imperial about information.

The material, quantifiable nature of information – as in “a piece” of information, data or knowledge – can be identified as early as the fourteenth century, but it reaches fuller definition by the nineteenth, and

<sup>10</sup> Gace de La Buigne, *Roman des Deduis*, 2890 ds T.-L., as quoted in the *Trésor de la langue française*, s.v. *querir*. See also the OED, s.v. *quest*.

<sup>11</sup> See, for example, The Fourth Lateran Council, canon XV: “We interdict hunting or hawking to all clerics.”

<sup>12</sup> Stuart Carroll, *Blood and Violence in Early Modern France* (Oxford, 2006), 62ff.

<sup>13</sup> Cotgrave, *A Dictionarie*, s.v. *conquérir*.

finds critical mass in the late twentieth, i.e. in our so-called “Age of Information.” One can see traces of this meaning, however – as “raw” data – in definitions provided by early modern dictionaries. Information, in this context, refers not only to informing, instructing or investigating but, as Cotgrave intimates, something “shapeless” or “rude,” or as Estienne said in his *Dictionarium Latinogallicum* (1552), citing Cicero, as the unsullied, the primitive, the raw form of intelligence: it is the “savage (*rude*) imagination which isn’t at all fashioned” (*Imagination rude, qui n’est pas du tout faconnee*).<sup>14</sup> The solidification – the materialization – of information as raw, unfashioned, rude, savage, data that could be decontextualized as discrete “bits,” was surely tied to the importance of information, and of record-keeping, for matters of commerce, law and administration. Perhaps it was also related to the concern that the words of informants, and indeed, the textual artifacts of antiquity, might be less trustworthy than the brute reality of things – e.g. coins, medals, seals, as well as kidnapped natives, artifacts, postmortem examinations and exotic commodities.<sup>15</sup>

Information about distant places continued to dance between the persuasive powers of the marvelous and the practical judgments and calculating observations of merchants, explorers, and sailors. Flowing alongside the exoticism of wonder cabinets, travellers’ tales and *mappae mundi*, were collections of seagoing and proto-ethnographic information to be found in logs, rutters and charts, and also, of course, in the embodied experience of navigators, pilots, merchants, and sailors who frequented ports up and down the Atlantic coast. Themes of conquest and plunder in exotic lands were characteristic of these quests, whether as chivalrous romances, travel accounts, or cabinets of curiosity.

Just as wonders, monsters and prodigies were often associated with the credulity of the lower orders, so too, the collection of empirical data, however useful, was associated with physical labor, the fleeting material world of particulars, and with those who stood at the bottom of the social hierarchy. The meaning of information straddled these tensions, tipping this way and that, from the collection and study of empirical phenomena and wonderful singularities as data (as intelligence), to information as an organizing principle (*scientia*) that could give form to the formless. Information was both wax and seal. The social tensions implicit in this relation were mediated first by wonders and curiosities, and then, with growing success, by the conversion of information into re-contextualized

<sup>14</sup> Robert Estienne, *Dictionarium latinogallicum*, s.v. *Informatio*.

<sup>15</sup> A. Momigliano, “Ancient history and the antiquarian,” *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 13 (1950): 285–315.

raw material – data – to be collected and arranged in treasuries, archives, libraries, and cabinets, and then later in museums, academies and trading houses. Beyond the social-cognitive tensions encapsulated by these various definitions of information, what is of particular interest is the ways in which they were all mediated as expressions of a colonial-mercantile-missionary-administrative ideology; in one way or another, they were all implicated in a hunt – a quest, for land, goods, and souls.

In the pages that follow, we will begin by examining information collected and carried in print that may have informed Parmentier's journey to Sumatra. Information's reach, however, was not simply in intelligence gathered and inscribed, it also embraced processes of mobilization and deployment. We will thus follow the informational nexus of hunt, quest and conquest through its circulation in networked assemblages beginning with, and extending from, Ango's quayside home, called *La Pensée* (like Parmentier's ship), into Dieppe's most important place of worship, *l'église Saint-Jacques*, and on to its otherworldly patron, *Saint-Jacques le Majeur*. We will then follow these extended informational networks into the mnemonic/associational devices employed in the church to make spiritual, meditative, and geographical voyages possible, tracing them both to their uses by humanist circles associated with Ango's business interests in Italy, and to widely disseminated and popular Northern European texts, such as Erasmus' *Colloquies*. We will then pursue a series of inscriptions originating in the Church – in its sculptural program, in graffiti, and in poetry – as a means of fleshing out the materiality of information's entanglement with long-distance exploration and trade.

### **Spies, Maps and Facts**

Expeditions made for profit, adventure and God, such as the one launched by Jean Parmentier and his brother in 1529, were also quests for information, as demonstrated by Pierre Crignon's Log of the voyage, which carefully recorded information about winds, latitudes, faraway lands, and faraway peoples. Crignon's text, however, was not simply a day-by-day recounting of the expedition's progress toward Sumatra; it was an anticipatory act of preparation for the next voyage. The routinization of the inaugural event of discovery into repeatable voyages depended on records supplied by voyages that had already been completed.<sup>16</sup> It also depended

<sup>16</sup> See Bruno Latour, *Science in Action: How to follow scientists and engineers through society* (Cambridge, MA., 1987), 215–257, and his essay, "Visualization and Cognition," *Knowledge and Society* 6 (1986): 1–40.

on reasons to “go again,” that is, on desires to be satisfied, expectations to be fulfilled, and goals to be achieved. For example, Jean Parmentier stated in his “Oration on the marvels of God and the nobility of man” (a poem he wrote and read aloud to his men while on board *La Pensée* in 1529), that his voyage was made for God, king and country;<sup>17</sup> yet despite his poetic gloss, as we will see, it was also made for gold, spice, converts, and glory. Whatever the case might be, prior experience – whether the embodied presence of informants who had already been there, or books, maps, instruments, hearsay and rumor – was the *sine qua non* of overseas exploration and trade. As might be expected, the port of Dieppe was a crossroads of such information.<sup>18</sup> Spanish, Portuguese, Flemish, English and Italian sailors could be found there; some were perhaps spies, others were hired hands, others were taken as captives by Jean Ango’s predatory pilots; indeed, experience was an invaluable commodity, well worth acquiring whether by money or violence if the opportunity presented itself.<sup>19</sup> Intelligence gathered in Dieppe by Portuguese spies and sent back to Lisbon provides both a sense of how information traveled and the urgency motivating its collection. Thus dispatches from Portugal’s ambassador in France, João da Silveira, recount the exploits of one of Ango’s most audacious pilots, Jean Fleury, who set off from Dieppe in 1524 with eight ships: *L’Espagnole*, *le Pitipança*, *la Salamandre*, *la Citare*, *la Lingoteira*, *la Marie*, *le Papa et le Dragon*.<sup>20</sup> Remarkably, Silveira’s intelligence also included the names of Ango’s partners in backing Fleury’s pirate fleet: Nicolas Morel, Guyon d’Etimauville, Belleville [Cardin d’Esquille-Bléville?], Michel Feré, Silvestre Billes, and several associates in Tours and La Rochelle.<sup>21</sup> The quality of the information collected by Portuguese spies in Dieppe strongly suggests that they had someone “on the inside” who could provide detailed intelligence about Ango’s activities; it is also indicative of how seriously the Portuguese took

<sup>17</sup> Parmentier, *Oeuvres*, 92.

<sup>18</sup> The “international” array of coins in use in early sixteenth-century Normandy was surely indicative of this; see [Chapter 5](#). Crignon’s Log refers to crew members of *La Pensée* and *Le Sacre* as Basque, Flemish, Scottish, and Portuguese. On this point see Pablo E. Pérez-Mallaína, *Spain’s Men of the Sea: Daily Life on the Indies Fleets in the Sixteenth Century*, translated by C. R. Philips (Baltimore, 1998).

<sup>19</sup> Francis Drake would have fitted in well with Ango’s pilots. As Lisa Voigt documents, Drake had an insatiable desire for information acquired through piracy – that is, for the booty of maps, charts, papers, dispatches, and instruments (e.g. Nuno da Silva’s astrolabe). A summary of Silva’s deposition before the Inquisition (for heresies committed while Drake’s captive) indicates that Drake carefully checked, and modified where necessary, this purloined information against his own experience. Voigt, *Writing Captivity*, 256.

<sup>20</sup> See Mollat, *Le commerce*, 501.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 501–502.

the threat posed by Normandy's merchant-pirate-explorers.<sup>22</sup> Fleury had succeeded in capturing some thirty Spanish and Portuguese ships that year alone.<sup>23</sup> A January 16, 1530 letter from the João III to Silveira makes specific mention of French corsaires having taken more than 300 Portuguese ships. Of particular interest, in the present context, was the capture of two Portuguese carracks returning from the Indies charged with spice, silk, gold and precious stones that the Portuguese valued at more than 400,000 ducats.<sup>24</sup> Surely, these ships also held instruments, charts, sailors, pilots, go-betweens and translators that could provide valuable information about the lands they had just visited.

The reach of Ango's men extended up and down the Atlantic coast as far as the New World; not only did they attack the Portuguese, but also Spanish, English, and Flemish vessels. One of their most spectacular exploits occurred in 1522 when Fleury succeeded in carrying away two of the three ships transporting the spoils of Cortés' conquest of Mexico back to Emperor Charles V. The treasure that Fleury and his men confronted in the holds of the Spanish vessels must have been shocking. Though news of Cortés' exploits had arrived in Spain as early as 1519, the enormity of Aztec wealth was largely unknown. In addition to gold, the captured booty included emeralds, pearls, the jewels of Moctezuma, the bone of a giant, and three jaguars.<sup>25</sup> Fleury's spectacular and spectacularly profitable act of piracy was commemorated by members of his crew with the *ex voto* offering of stained glass windows at *l'église Saint Martin de Villequier* in 1523. In

<sup>22</sup> Regarding acts of piracy by Ango and his men see, for example, John W. Blake, *West Africa: Quest for God and Gold* (London, 1977), 106, and Édouard Gosselin, *Documents authentiques et inédits pour servir à l'histoire de la Marine normande et du commerce Rouennais pendant les XVI<sup>e</sup> et XVII<sup>e</sup> siècles* (Rouen, 1876), 157–158. Of course, the distinctions between privateers, pirates, and merchants backed by the authority of the French king were ambiguous. In general, a privateer had the institutional sanction of a letter of marque and was not responsible for his actions; rather, he was an agent of the state in an official act of war or reprisal. Piracy, on the other hand, was an individual and indiscriminate act with no official sanction. Having said this, what for a Frenchman was a legitimate competition for markets, goods, and the freedom of the seas, was for the Spanish and Portuguese simply piracy. See Michel Mollat, *Études d'histoire maritime: 1938–75* (Torino, 1977), 473–486; Janice Thompson, *Mercenaries, Pirates, and Sovereigns: State-Building and Extraterritorial Violence in Early Modern Europe* (Princeton, 1996), 22; Michael Kempe, “‘Even in the Remotest Corners of the World’: Globalized Piracy and International Law, 1500–1900,” *Journal of Global History* 5:3 (2010): 353–372; and A. C. Vigarié, “France and the Great Maritime Discoveries – Opportunities for a New Ocean Geopolitics,” *Geo-Journal* 26:4 (1992): 477–481.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 502.

<sup>25</sup> *Hernán Cortés: Letters from Mexico*, translated, edited and introduced by Anthony Pagden (New Haven and London, 1971), 330 and 439–440. Cortés valued the gold to be worth 3,000 gold pesos, and the jewels at 500,000. Diaz claimed that the gold was worth 58,000 Castellanos (*pesos de oro*). See Bernal Díaz del Castillo, *The History of the Conquest of New Spain*, edited and introduced by David Carrasco (Albuquerque, 2008), 323.

addition to treasure in gold, one can only imagine the wealth of information that these ships, and their now captive crews, carried. Indeed, gold, jewels, and curiosities were not the only items of value to be found on Cortés' ships – they also contained detailed reports of his exploits and information about the riches to be found in the New Worlds he had conquered. This information was found not only on paper, but also in the experience of the ships' captured crews, as for example, Alonso de Ávila, Cortés' bookkeeper, who was to be held prisoner in France for the next three years.<sup>26</sup>

The enormous value attributed to the market for information can be gauged both by the steady stream of detailed reports sent back to Lisbon by spies recounting Norman ventures into waters claimed by the Portuguese,<sup>27</sup> and by the lengths taken to prevent maps and experienced pilots from falling into the wrong hands.<sup>28</sup> Though not without consequence, attempts to control information were far from uniformly successful. How could they be? Rumors flew, gossip spread, charts and maps meant to be "state secrets" were traded and sold, as were the skills of translators and experienced navigators and sailors. Ango's quayside home must have been a gravitational center for the collection and distribution for both this information and the informants who trafficked in it.

### A Petit-Monde

Found where the *rue du Petit-Monde* (rue d'Ango today) meets the water (present day, Quay Henri IV), Ango's home was reputed to be the finest wooden house in all of Normandy. Like his, and Parmentier's ship, it was named *La Pensée*.<sup>29</sup> According to Cotgrave, *la pensée* means, among other things, thinking, weighing, examining and considering.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>26</sup> See Guénin *Ango et ses pilotes*, 22–26, and Hernán Cortés, 329–330. Interestingly, upon his release Ávila returned to the "New World" to join in Francisco de Montejo's conquest of the Yucatán; some ten years later, he fell into the hands of the Inquisition as a relapsed Jew and a heretic, accused by Bishop Juan de Zumárraga "of keeping a crucifix under his writing desk and stepping on it." See Norman Fiering, *The Jews and the Expansion of Europe to the West, 1450 to 1800* (New York and Oxford, 2001), 188.

<sup>27</sup> See Wintroub, *A Savage Mirror*, chapter 2.

<sup>28</sup> Similar efforts were waged by the Spanish. See Jaime Cortesão, "The Pre-Columbian Discovery of America," *Geographical Journal* 89:1 (1937), 31–32; Lach, 151–154; Alison Sandman, "Controlling Knowledge: Navigation, Cartography, and Secrecy in the Early Modern Spanish Atlantic," in James Delbourgo and Nicholas Dew (eds.), *Science and Empire in the Atlantic World* (New York and London, 2008), 31–51; and Voigt, *Writing Captivity*, for example, 255–319. Regarding Spanish secrecy see Maria Portuondo, *Secret Science: Spanish Cosmography and the New World* (Chicago, 2009). On the limits to such strategies of information hoarding see Joan-Pau Rubies, *Travel and Ethnology in the Renaissance: South India through European Eyes, 1250–1625* (2000), 3–4.

<sup>29</sup> Guénin, *Ango et ses pilotes*, 8; Gravier, *Jean Ango*, 16.

<sup>30</sup> Cotgrave, *A Dictionarie*, s.v. *pensée*.

The nerves channeling this particular thought extended well beyond La Pensée's quayside location, however, ranging far and wide through networks of merchants, bankers, courtiers, pilots, sailors, spies, cosmographers, looted ships, and interrogated prisoners.<sup>31</sup>

Ango's house made the world small, like the street upon which it sat – a *petit monde* – it was a microcosm embracing within its walls assemblages of people, things, and ideas that were dispersed far and wide across Europe and the world.<sup>32</sup> One can thus trace Ango's "thought" through contacts extending from the brightest lights of provincial humanist culture, to cosmographers, pirates, businessmen and royal patrons: men such as Jean Doublet and the brothers Miffant, translators of Terence, Cicero and Xenophon;<sup>33</sup> the mathematician and cartographer, Pierre Desceliers;<sup>34</sup> merchants, explorers, and cartographers such as Jean Parmentier, Jacques Cartier, Jean Rotz, and Giovanni da Verrazano; fellow investors like Zanobi and Alessandro Rucellai, cousins to the Strozzi and to the Medici;<sup>35</sup> pirate-explorers like Jean Fleury; and royal patrons, such as the Cardinal Georges d'Amboise, Marguerite de Navarre, and the King himself, François I, who visited La Pensée in 1534.<sup>36</sup> One can imagine that guests who partook in Ango's hospitality at La Pensée also included sailors, navigators, cartographers, and pilots whose names have now been forgotten, such as the Portuguese pilots of his ships, captained by Pierre Caunay and Jean Breuilly, which sailed to the Indes in 1526 and 1528.<sup>37</sup> Others, however, were extremely well known, as for example the famous Portuguese "turncoat" Jean Fonteneau, a.k.a. Jean Alfonse de Saintonge, who arrived in France just around the time that Parmentier embarked for Sumatra in 1529.<sup>38</sup> Did Ango keep prisoners from the two vessels captured by Fleury in 1524 at La Pensée? Perhaps. Whatever the case, Parmentier certainly brought – and Ango sent – Portuguese informants along with him to Sumatra. For example, Antoine, known

<sup>31</sup> Guénin, *Ango et ses pilotes*, 192.

<sup>32</sup> See, in particular, Mialet on the notion of the distributed centered subject; the best account of this can be found in *L'entreprise créatrice* (Paris, 2008), this might be compared and supplemented fruitfully with Foucault's notion of heterotopia, Michel Foucault, "Of Other Spaces"; how, for example, might human subjects be understood, like geographic sites, as dispersed – while centered – in extended networks?

<sup>33</sup> Guénin, *Ango et ses pilotes*, 20–21.

<sup>34</sup> On Desceliers, see Chet Van Duzer, *The World for a King: Pierre Desceliers' World Map of 1550* (London, 2015).

<sup>35</sup> According to Charles de La Roncière, *Histoire de la marine française*, 3 volumes (Paris, 1906), Vol. 3, 246, who overstates the closeness of the relation.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 246–247.

<sup>37</sup> Christian Buchet, Michel Vergé-Franceschi, *La mer, la France et l'Amérique latine* (Paris, 2006), 269–270.

<sup>38</sup> Who some identify as Rabelais's hero, Xenomanes. La Roncière, *Histoire*, 222–333.

as “the Portuguese,” features prominently in Crignon’s Log as an opinionated – and often assertive – navigator, who frequently disagreed with Parmentier’s and Crignon’s observations, measurements and judgments (see [Chapter 5](#)). To Antoine, we can add the expedition’s Malay-speaking *truchements*, Jean Masson and Nicolas Bout, who could only have been instructed in the Malay language while in the service of the Portuguese.

La Pensée’s dispersal into the world and the work it carried out as a conduit of information took place not only through the bodies of informants, but also in things that could inform, that is, through texts, instruments, and maps. As is evident from their poetry, Parmentier and Crignon were steeped in the classics; recall for example, that Parmentier dedicated his translation of Sallust’s *Catiline Conspiracy* to his patron, Jean Ango, and that he was working on a translation of the *Jugurtha* for the King when he died. Ango, the Parmentiers and Crignon, moreover, surely read – and discussed – accounts of Sumatra (Taprobana) in Strabo’s *Geographia*, in Pomponius Mela’s *De totius orbis descriptione*, and in Ptolemy’s *Geographica*, all of which were published in multiple editions in the first quarter of the sixteenth century.<sup>39</sup> Similarly, they must have been familiar with texts by Marco Polo, Odoric of Pordenone and Mandeville. More current accounts, of course, might also have been available. For instance, they must have attentively read the French translation of Pigafetta’s account of Magellan’s voyage, *Le voyage et navigation, fait par les Espaignolz es Isles de Mollucques* published in Paris by Jacques Lefèvre d’Étaples and Simon de Colines (1525 and 1526); and the account by Maximilian of Transylvania, *De Moluccis insulis atque aliis pluribus mirandis quae novissima castellanorum navigatio Sereniss*, published in 1522 and 1523 in Rome. Perhaps they also read – or heard about – manuscript copies of the *Livro de Duarte Barbosa*, Tomé Pires’s *Suma Oriental*, Francisco Rodrigues’s *Livro de geographia Oriental*, or the *Itinerario de Ludouico de Varthema Bolognese*, which talked about Sumatra’s pepper, its gold and its perfumed woods (first published in Rome in 1510, and then again in multiple editions in Venice, Milan, Augsburg, Strasbourg, and Seville);<sup>40</sup> perhaps they had even seen (smelled, tasted and bought)

<sup>39</sup> From the late fifteenth century, and prior to Parmentier’s departure in 1529, Strabo’s *Geographica* was published in Venice, Basel, Treviso, Strasbourg and Paris (the 1512 edition by Lefèvre d’Étaples, for example); Mela’s *De totius orbis* was similarly widely published, including an edition by Geoffroy Tory (Paris, 1507), as was Ptolemy’s *Geographica*, which similarly saw multiple editions in the same span of time, for example, Waldseemüller’s 1513 Strasbourg edition.

<sup>40</sup> See *The Travels of Ludovico di Varthema in Egypt, Syria, Arabia Deserta and Arabia Felix, in Persia, India, and Ethiopia, A.D. 1503 to 1508*, introduced and edited by G. P. Badger, and trans by J. W. Jones (London, 1863), see esp. 237–243. Regarding the edition printed in Augsburg by Hans Miller, 1515, and illustrated by Jörg Breu, see Stephanie Leitch,

samples of this pepper, as well as other spices, that were being imported in ever greater amounts to Lisbon and Antwerp.<sup>41</sup> In addition, maybe they also had a chance to read Martín Fernández de Enciso's *Summa de geographia* (Seville, 1519), or Andrea Corsali's epistolary accounts of his travels in 1516 and 1517 that spoke of his desire to correct – with his trusty astrolabe – the many errors in Ptolemy's understanding of the Orient's geography, such as his conflation of Ceylon and Sumatra under the name Taprobane.<sup>42</sup> It is perhaps worth noting that Corsali's travels were underwritten by Giuliano di Lorenzo de' Medici, cousin to the business associates with whom Ango sponsored Verrazano's 1524 voyage, the Rucellai.<sup>43</sup> Though Parmentier probably did not read Verrazano's manuscript account of this expedition seeing that it was written for the eyes of the king, François I, maybe he saw a draft, or a copy, or heard about it from Verrazano himself, or from sailors, navigators and pilots with whom he came into contact, whether at La Pensée, on the docks, at Church or in a Tavern.<sup>44</sup>

One can imagine that pamphlets, such as the Portuguese king's letter to Pope Julius II (*Epistola serenissime Regis Portugalliae de victoria contra infidels*), printed in Paris in 1507, came into La Pensée's orbit and into Ango's and Parmentier's hands. In this letter, the king recounts news of Almeida's 1505 arrival in Ceylon, including Almeida's success in reaching the "famous island of Taprobane (Sumatra)," which was, he says, considered as "another world" – *alterum aliquando orbem*.<sup>45</sup> Apian's gloss and emendation of Ptolemy in his *Cosmographicus* was surely a book that they had all seen,<sup>46</sup> perhaps they had also seen the compilations published in 1502 by

*Mapping Ethnography in Early Modern Germany: New Worlds in Print Culture* (New York, 2010), 103ff; see esp. Rubies, *Travel and Ethnology*, chapter 4.

<sup>41</sup> According to Donald F. Lach, "in the decade after 1505, Portuguese vessels annually brought into Lisbon spice cargoes averaging from 25,000 to 30,000 hundredweight [of pepper]. See *Asia in the Making of Europe*, Volume I: *The Century of Discovery*, Book 1 (Chicago, 1994); he cites as his source Gino Luzzato, *Storia economica dell'età moderna e contemporanea* (Padua, 1938), t. I: 157.

<sup>42</sup> See W. G. L. Randles, "La diffusion dans l'Europe du XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle des connaissances géographiques dues aux découvertes portugaises," in Randles, *Geography, Cartography and Nautical Science in the Renaissance* (Burlington and Hampshire, 2000), 269–277, at 275.

<sup>43</sup> See Bernard Beck, "Les Italiens de la mer. Marins et cartographes au service de la Normandie au XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle," *Cahier des Annales de Normandie* 29 (2000). Les Italiens en Normandie, de l'étranger à l'immigré: Actes du colloque de Cerisy-la-Salle (8–11 octobre 1998): 129–142, 133–134; and Michel Mollat and Jacques Habert, *Giovanni et Girolamo Verrazano, navigateurs de François I<sup>er</sup>* (Paris, 1982), xx.

<sup>44</sup> The Manuscrit Cèllere at the John Pierpont Morgan Library, New York, ms. MA 776; and as transcribed, translated and annotated by Mollat du Jourdin and Habert, *Giovanni et Girolamo Verrazano*, 11–49.

<sup>45</sup> W. G. L. Randles, *La diffusion*, 271.

<sup>46</sup> With corrections and additions by Gemma Frisius (Antwerp, 1529).