

THINKING WITH MONTAIGNE: EVIDENCE, SCEPTICISM AND MEANING IN EARLY MODERN DEMONOLOGY

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People are prone to apply the meaning of other men's writings to suit opinions that they have previously determined in their minds; and an atheist flatters himself by reducing all authors to atheism, infecting innocent matter with his own venom.

Michel de Montaigne¹

Abstract—In 1612 the Bordeaux witchcraft inquisitor Pierre de Lancre (1556–1631), himself linked by marriage to Michel de Montaigne (1533–1592), revealed that the essayist and sceptic was related on his mother's side to a leading authority on magic and superstition, the Flemish-Spanish Jesuit Martin Delrio (1551–1608). De Lancre confounded historians' expectations by using the revelation to defend Montaigne against his cousin's criticism. This article re-evaluates the relationships of De Lancre, Delrio and Montaigne in the light of recent scholarship, which casts demonology as a form of 'resistance to scepticism' that conceals deep anxiety about the existence of the supernatural. It explores De Lancre's and Delrio's very different attitudes towards Montaigne and towards evidence and scepticism. This, in turn, reveals the different underlying preoccupations of their witchcraft treatises. It hence argues that no monocausal explanation linking scepticism to witchcraft belief is plausible.

On 26 November 1599, the Spanish-Flemish Jesuit Martin Delrio (1551–1608), then at the Jesuit College of Leuven, received a letter from his friend, the Liège magistrate Petrus Oranus (1569–1618).² Delrio knew Oranus well, having spent the years 1591–93 and 1597–98 in Liège.³ The Jesuit had dedicated part of his

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¹ M. de Montaigne, *The Complete Works: Essays, Travel Journal, Letters*, trans. D. Frame (New York, 2003). References to the Frame edition are given in the standard format: F 397 (2:12).

² M. Delrio, *Disquisitionum Magicarum Libri Sex*, 3 vols (Leuven, 1599–1600), iii. 122 (hereafter: Delrio, *Disq1600*).

³ For Delrio's 1591–93 stay in Liège: the *Catalogi Breves* in the Jesuit archives: Rome, A[rchivum] R[omanum] S[ocietatis] I[esu], Flandro-Belgica, ff. 04v, 4r, 10v. The length of Delrio's second stay in Liège, which lasted from circa November 1597 to June 1598, can be deduced from his surviving correspondence with Justus Lipsius. P. Burman (ed.), *Sylloges Epistolarum A Viris Illustribus Scriptarum* 5 vols (Leiden, 1727), i. 543–8 (letters 519–23).

edition of the Senecan tragedy to his lawyer friend, while Oranus pried a manuscript of the *Song of Solomon* out of the hands of a Liège monastery on the Jesuit's behalf.⁴ Their friendship was not odd. Oranus formed part of a circle of aspiring humanists, who were immortalized as speakers in the *PolioreticΩn* (1596), a dialogue on ancient war machines composed by the famous Flemish humanist Justus Lipsius. In 1591, Delrio and Oranus had eagerly awaited the humanist's arrival in Liège—and his return to Catholicism—together.⁵

Delrio had spent much of his second stay in Liège revising his *Disquisitionum Magicarum Libri Sex* ('Six Books of Investigations into Magic', 1599–1600) for publication. It was only then that Oranus shared with Delrio the records of the trial of Jean del Vaulx, a monk from nearby Stavelot, who had been executed for witchcraft on 2 April 1597—a trial which Delrio referred to in passing throughout the *Disquisitiones*.⁶ Likely, it was Oranus' practical experience with witchcraft that prompted the letter to his theoretician friend, Delrio himself having never conducted a witchcraft trial.⁷ In his letter Oranus offered corrections and additions to the *Disquisitiones* and solicited advice. One issue raised implicitly by Oranus and seemingly unanswered by Delrio concerns us here: what did the Jesuit think of Michel de Montaigne's witchcraft scepticism?

There is a background to this question of which Oranus, in all likelihood, was not aware. In 1612, four years after Delrio's death, the Bordeaux judge and witchcraft inquisitor Pierre de Lancre (1556–1631) revealed that Delrio was related to Montaigne (1533–92) on his mother's side (they were, in fact, second cousins).⁸ De Lancre also alleged that Montaigne owed a spiritual and intellectual debt to another Jesuit with an interest in witchcraft, Juan de Maldonado (1533–83)—'the heart and soul of the *Sieur* de Montaigne'—whose manuscripts in turn had been cited by Delrio.⁹ In 1588 De Lancre had become Montaigne's

⁴ M. Delrio, *Syntagma Tragoediae Latinae*, vol. 3 (Antwerp, 1593–94), 363; M. Delrio, *Canticum Canticorum* (Ingolstadt, 1604), 24.

⁵ J. Lipsius, *Iusti Lipsi PolioreticΩn sive de Machinis, Tormentis, Telis Libri Quinque* (Antwerp, 1596), dedicated to Ernest of Bavaria, the prince-bishop of Liège (as Delrio's *Disquisitiones* would be later); Leiden University, Ms Lips 4: Martin Delrio to Justus Lipsius, 2 May 1591. 'Si huc ad nos, quo nihil mihi futurum iucundius neque optatius, non falles spem meam, et Petri Orani, et Dom[in]i c[ir]ci Lampsonii, amicorum avide te exspectantium.' This letter was not originally published in Burmannus, *Sylloges*. It is forthcoming as ILE IV 91 05 02 D in the *Iusti Lipsi Epistolae* series. I am grateful to Jeanine de Landtsheer for having made this letter available to me in advance of publication.

⁶ Delrio, *Disq 1600*, i. 190. 'quas accepi a Petro Orano, V.Cl. mihi doctrinae & integritatis nomine (ut fratre) caro, qui praeftuit anno 1597. & 1598.' On the Del Vaulx trial: J. Fraikin, 'Un Épisode de la sorcellerie en Ardenne et en région mosellane: l'affaire du moine de Stavelot, Dom Jean del Vaulx (1592–1597)', *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique*, 85 (1990), 650–68.

⁷ J. Machielsen, "'Marvellously consistent throughout the whole of Europe and across all Ages": the nature of evidence and the decline of witchcraft belief', in *Crossing Frontiers: Belief in Magic and Witch-Hunting as Culture Transfer*, ed. J. M. Schmidt and K. Moeller (forthcoming).

⁸ On the Antwerp branch of the López de Villanova family: B.A. Vermaseren, 'De Antwerpse koopman Martin Lopez en zijn familie in de zestiende en het begin van de zeventiende eeuw', *Bijdragen tot de Geschiedenis*, 56 (1973), 3–79.

⁹ P. de Lancre, *Tableau de l'inconstance des mauvais anges et démons, où il est amplement traicté des sorciers et de la sorcellerie* (Paris, 1612), 80–1. Translations have been adopted (and at times silently adapted) from G. S. Williams (ed. & trans.), *On the Inconstancy of Witches: Pierre de Lancre's Tableau de l'inconstance des mauvais anges et demons (1612)* (Tempe, AZ, 2006).

relative through his marriage to the latter's great-niece, Jehanne de Mons.¹⁰ This web of relationships, tying Montaigne to three important witchcraft authors, has become one of history's *curiosa*, a valuable nugget of information mentioned in passing (and with varying degrees of accuracy) but never explored.¹¹ Jonathan Pearl's attempt to spin this web into a tight network of Catholic political demonologists studiously ignores the spider (Montaigne), binding these men together.¹² It is the strange 'beauty and the beast'-like quality of these relationships that makes them worthy of investigation. After all, Montaigne's scepticism in witchcraft matters has become proverbial—'it is putting a very high price on one's conjectures to have a man roasted alive because of them'—and is invoked in any account of his seminal position within the history of scepticism.¹³

The standard view of De Lancre's revelation has been that Montaigne's scepticism was a threat that needed refutation. Yet, if De Lancre criticized anyone, it was Delrio, who 'did not treat [his cousin] with the accolades of honour' that he had accorded other relatives.¹⁴ Even Pearl noted De Lancre's 'gentle treatment' of the essayist, which he accounted for by invoking De Lancre's 'links of marriage and friendship to Montaigne'.¹⁵ Like De Lancre before him, Pearl invoked personal relationships to obfuscate two (seemingly) contrasting opinions. If De Lancre's revelation was, in fact, an attempt at evasion, this neat symmetry cannot be persuasive.¹⁶ Instead, De Lancre's defence of the

¹⁰ For a discussion of these ties, see note 16 below.

¹¹ For example I. Dardano Basso, *Il Diavolo e il magistrato: Il tratto du Sortilege (1627) di Pierre de Lancre* (Rome, 2011), 70–1n; C. Kummer, 'Beschreibung der Unbeständigkeit der bösen Engel und Dämonen: Pierre de Lancre's Hauptwerk 'Tableau de l'inconstance des mauvais anges et démons' von 1612 im Spiegel der modernen Geschichtsforschung' (PhD, University of Vienna, 2009), 75–8; available at <http://othes.univie.ac.at/5009/>; R. Popkin, *The History of Scepticism: From Savonarola to Bayle*, 3rd edn (Oxford, 2003), 45 (describing Delrio as 'an early French [*sic*] Jesuit'); D. Frame, *Montaigne: A Biography* (New York, 1965), 22–3.

¹² J. L. Pearl, *The Crime of Crimes: Demonology and Politics in France, 1560–1620* (Waterloo, ON, 1999), 74–5, 106–7.

¹³ F 962 (3:11). E.g. A. Hartle, 'Montaigne and skepticism', in *The Cambridge Companion to Montaigne*, ed. U. Langer (Cambridge, 2005), 183–206 (comment on Montaigne's witchcraft scepticism on p. 185).

¹⁴ P. de Lancre, *L'Incredulité et mescréance du sortilege plainement convaincue, où il est amplement et curieusement traicté de la vérité ou illusion du sortilege . . . et d'une infinité d'autres rares et nouveaux subjects* (Paris, 1622), 340. 'Il ne le traicte pas avec les eloges d'honneur, qu'il donne à un sien parent en ce ch. *Quanta qualisque sit vis imaginationis*, où il dit, *Ex paterno Lud. Delrio Vir honoribus clarus, ob fidelem Regi navatam operam*.' De Lancre's reference is to M. Delrio, *Disquisitionum Magicarum Libri Sex*, 3 vols (Mainz, 1603), i. 16. (hereafter: Delrio, *Disq1603*). On Louis del Rio (or Luis del Río): J. Versele, *Louis del Rio (1537–1578): reflets d'une période troublée* (Brussels, 2004).

¹⁵ Pearl, *Crime of Crimes*, 106.

¹⁶ Pierre de Lancre married Jehanne de Mons on 21 December 1588; according to Communay, Montaigne signed the marriage contract. This is the extent of the evidence about De Lancre's personal interaction with Montaigne. There is no evidence that Montaigne and De Lancre were friends. Cf. A. Communay, *Le conseiller Pierre de Lancre* (Agen, 1890). De Lancre does not reveal his own distant marriage ties to Montaigne, as one might expect him to, if he had wanted to show himself Montaigne's better cousin. I am grateful to Ana Maria Misdolea, who consulted Communay's very rare account on my behalf in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France.

essayist raises questions about possible intellectual debts which De Lancre owed to Montaigne and the role and scope of scepticism within witchcraft belief more generally. By studying how two demonologists, Martin Delrio and Pierre de Lancre, ‘thought with Montaigne’, I seek to reassess the role scepticism and belief played in early modern demonology. The allusion and debt to Stuart Clark’s *Thinking with Demons* is evident.¹⁷ But by studying authorial intent, this article also departs from this seminal work in a significant way. A study of evidential foundations of the work of these two authors shows that they pursued an interest in witchcraft for very different, intellectual and *personal* reasons.

In so doing, this case study challenges the argument put forward by Walter Stephens in his influential and generally well-received book *Demon Lovers: Witchcraft, Sex, and the Crisis of Belief* (2002). Stephens adduced only one motive for the writing of demonology in his study of the role of scepticism in early modern witchcraft theory. The attitudes of witchcraft theorists, Stephens argued, did not evince belief ‘but rather *resistance to s[ce]pticism*, [. . .] it betrays an uncommonly desperate *need to believe*’.¹⁸ Witchcraft theory was constructed to provide empirical proof for the reality of the world of the spirits within a Christian, Aristotelian framework. Being only an intellectual construct however, it failed to convince. A close reading of witchcraft texts showed Stephens the ‘depth of anxiety’ of demonologists who ‘need to believe but cannot quite manage’.¹⁹ Stephens was wary of spelling out *what* demonologists failed to believe but he maintained that both witchcraft theory and witch-hunting provided ‘a comfortably camouflaged way of exploring doubts about the validity of one’s Christianity’.²⁰ Stephens argued that resistance to scepticism must be ‘viewed within the history of attempts to defend God and the world of the spirit’.²¹ For Stephens, Pierre de Lancre’s sensational account of the witches’ Sabbath showed that ‘fantasies about witches required their addicts to increase the dosage constantly; otherwise the fantasies lost their ability to satisfy the underlying compulsion, even temporarily’.²²

Stephens’ debt to Richard Popkin’s *The History of Scepticism* (1960; 3rd edn 2003), although relegated to a single footnote, is unmistakable.²³ The same person, Gianfrancesco Pico della Mirandola, the nephew of the more famous Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, looms large in the works of both, respectively as the first person to employ the sceptical writings of Sextus Empiricus in the Renaissance and as the author of *Strix*, an early sixteenth-century witchcraft

¹⁷ S. Clark, *Thinking with Demons: The Idea of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe* (Oxford, 1997); S. Ditchfield, ‘Thinking with saints: sanctity and society in the early modern world’, *Critical Inquiry*, 35 (2009), 552–84.

¹⁸ W. Stephens, *Demon Lovers: Witchcraft, Sex, and the Crisis of Belief* (Chicago, 2002), 27 (Italics in the original text).

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 80, 101.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 101.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 31.

²² *Ibid.*, 102.

²³ *Ibid.*, 376 n39; Popkin, *The History of Scepticism*; Stephens’ reference is to the 1979, second edition.

treatise.²⁴ Popkin's discussion of fideist sceptics—most notably Montaigne—who believed in a Christian God *because* no certain knowledge was possible, is the precise inverse of Stephens' depiction of the witchcraft theorist, who could *not* believe because he could not accept the *impossibility* of true and certain (religious) knowledge. Stephens, by inverting Popkin's (to my mind, false) dichotomy between reason and faith, pushed the argument to its logical conclusion. If the destruction of reason demonstrated faith, the creation of proofs for the supernatural only evinced spiritual anxieties. Given the central importance attached to Montaigne in Popkin's argument as 'the best writer and thinker' involved in the revival of ancient scepticism, a reassessment of Montaigne's fideist scepticism raises corresponding doubts about Stephens' dichotomy.²⁵

Not surprisingly perhaps, modern literary scholarship has exchanged Popkin's Montaigne as a Pyrrhonian sceptic for a more multifaceted reading. If the—literally—central position of Montaigne's sceptical *Apology for Raymond Sebond* within the *Essays* must be acknowledged, so must the fact that the *Apology* was placed in the middle; Montaigne's exploration of Pyrrhonian scepticism was neither literally nor philosophically the end of Montaigne's journey. The essayist's famous motto—'Que sçay-je?'—must be placed alongside his self-discovery as 'an unpremeditated and accidental philosopher'.²⁶ For Montaigne, philosophy was a side-product of a journey of (self-)discovery. As Terence Cave observed, the *Essays* are foremost essays in the proper, original meaning of that word: they are attempts.²⁷ Similarly, Richard Scholar has privileged Montaigne's 'art of freethinking' (and the art of self-restraint), which has been misunderstood as irreligious since Blaise Pascal's hostile critique.²⁸ It has been only too easy to equate the free flow of Montaigne's thought, and the lack of commitment and certainty that entailed, with scepticism.

Such an approach reconciles the Montaigne who interviewed a suspected witch and disbelieved her testimony, with the Montaigne who, in his *Of Cannibals*, credits the testimony of a witness to the New World: 'a simple crude fellow—a character fit to bear true witness'.²⁹ Montaigne's scepticism was not absolute; he could be credulous as well. He was unique foremost because of the vast territory into which his mind wandered. 'Thinking with Montaigne' therefore instructs us to be wary of grand theories, whether they reduce demonology to a by-product of the Catholic League (as Pearl sought to do) or to the preserve of the spiritually anxious, without of course denying that such theories may hold true in some limited instances. A study and comparison of Delrio's and De Lancre's interaction with Montaigne reveals the extent to which their attitudes towards knowledge and its foundations differed. A study of Delrio's engagement with Montaigne in particular highlights the many

²⁴ Popkin, *History of Scepticism*, 25–26; Stephens, *Demon Lovers*, 87–98.

²⁵ Popkin, *History of Scepticism*, 44.

²⁶ F477; F497.

²⁷ T. Cave, *How to Read Montaigne* (London, 2007), 18–30.

²⁸ R. Scholar, *Montaigne and the Art of Free-Thinking* (Oxford, 2010), 186–90.

²⁹ F961; F184.

different and contradictory ways in which scepticism as a rhetorical strategy functioned within early modern witchcraft discourse. A comparison of De Lancre and Delrio shows the different purposes to which witchcraft theory were put. Before we re-evaluate their respective intellectual debts however, the relational web woven by De Lancre to gloss over these differences must be deconstructed. Careful examination of new and old evidence shows that both Montaigne and Delrio had ground in common. Both were sceptics, when they so chose. In all likelihood, however, Delrio only met Montaigne in print at Oranus' prompting.

I

Martin Delrio (or Martín del Río, Martinus Delrio) was born in Antwerp on 17 May 1551 as the eldest son of the Spanish merchant Antonio del Río and his wife Eleonora López de Villanova.³⁰ Antonio del Río first appears in court records as an associate of Eleonora's father, Martín López, in the mid-1540s.³¹ Antonio and Eleonora married on 14 December 1549.³² Earlier that year Martín López bought two houses on behalf of his future son-in-law.³³ That Antonio owed his success to the patronage of his father-in-law is perhaps evidenced by the name of his firstborn; Martín was a first name not borne by any other Del Río.³⁴ A substantial legacy left by Martín López allowed Antonio to buy a noble title on behalf of his son.³⁵ Yet the fact that the López de Villanova were New Christians of a rather more heterodox bent may be one reason why the marriage of Antonio and Eleonora was not a happy one.³⁶ Martin Delrio also later adopted his father's

³⁰ On the Antwerp branch of the López de Villanova family: Vermaseren, 'De Antwerpse koopman Martin Lopez'.

³¹ R. Fagel, *De Hispano-Vlaamse Wereld: De contacten tussen Spanjaarden en Nederlanders, 1496-1555* (Brussels, 1996), 90.

³² A. Delvigne (ed. & trans.), *Mémoires de Martin Antoine Del Rio sur les troubles des Pays-Bas durant l'administration de Don Juan d'Autriche, 1576-1578*, 3 vols (Brussels, 1869-71), iii. vii.

³³ *Ibid.*, iii. viii.

³⁴ V. Aricks, 'Het Spaans-Brugs geslacht Del Rio (1500-1650)', *Biekorf: Westvlaams Archief voor Geschiedenis, Oudbeeldkunde en Folklore*, 63 (1962), 77-83. Aricks' genealogy shows an otherwise extremely limited repertoire of names.

³⁵ Note the marginal comment made on: Antwerp, M[useum] P[latin]-M[oretus], M167. [H. Rosweyde], *Martini Antonii Del-Rio E Societate Iesu LL. Lic. S. Tb. Doctoris Vita Brevi Commentariolo expressa* (Antwerp, 1609), 1. 'se [Antonio] compro para el de una manda quele dexo Martin Lopez de Vilanova su aquello materno y por modestia a dexo el nombre a su padre que consta por la donacion que entrando en religion con licentia de su superior en España hizo en su hermano el Capítan Ger[ónimo] Delrio el qualla vendió.' Martin's brother Gerónimo del Río is almost certainly the author of these marginal notes.

³⁶ The documents relating to the Del Río family were confiscated by the Antwerp magistracy during bankruptcy proceedings and give a glimpse of the family difficulties. On the argument between Antonio and Eleonora, see the outcome of their son's attempt at mediation: Antwerp, Felix Archief, IB 2390, fo. 5r. Letter from Martin Delrio to Jan Cruyt, 11 May 1577. 'bien veo me castiga dios por mis peccados principalmente por no le aver obedecido a su llamam[iento] aunque lo hize yo con intericion de asistir a mi senora [Eleonora López], pero pues veo, que otra es su divina voluntad, y que tampoco no puedo yo emendar ey[er]ros agenos y andar templando teclas tan discordes aure a la fin de mirar por mi.'

first name—an attempt, perhaps, to distance himself from his maternal heritage.³⁷ Martin's younger brother Gerónimo at least was very keen to play up the, supposedly ancient, roots of the rather prosaic Del Río name, which he attempted to trace back to the mythical beginnings of the Spanish *Reconquista*.³⁸ As late as 1624 Martin's brother joined the military Order of Santiago, the membership of which (supposedly) established purity of blood.³⁹

It is within this context that we should place Pierre De Lancre's revelation—in his typically rambling fashion—that 'according to what they say [*on dict*'], [Delrio] was somehow related [to Montaigne] on his mother's side, who was a descendant of the Spanish López family, which amazes me'.⁴⁰ The source for De Lancre's information is unknown. Ian Maclean's suggestion to me that Montaigne's mother Antoinette Louppes (who survived her son) may have informed De Lancre seems very plausible. De Lancre's 'amazement', however, is easily enough understood, for he drew attention to the Marrano ancestry that Montaigne and Delrio shared. The revelation is particularly salient in light of De Lancre's own vituperative anti-Semitism, which was also directed against those who 'judaize in France under Spanish and Portuguese names'.⁴¹ The influence of Marrano thought on Montaigne has been much debated but is very likely much overblown. Certainly, as the disillusionment expressed in Antoinette's will makes clear, Montaigne was not (in his chosen path, at least) his mother's son.⁴²

Nevertheless, the lives of the two cousins are not without parallel. If Antoinette and Eleonora López de Villanova were ever in contact, they would have had much to discuss—both had cause to feel betrayed by their husbands and families.⁴³ Their husbands' social behaviour at least was strikingly similar. Antonio Delrio had acquired a noble title and had destined his eldest son for a political career from an early age, much as Pierre Eyquem, a second generation member of the nobility, had done for his son.⁴⁴ Martin Delrio did not have

³⁷ Antwerp, MPM, M167, 1. 'El nombre de Martin es de baptismo, el de Antonio siendo ya grande de edad le mando su padre por patronimico y despues le dexo como parece por sus ultimos libros porque de ordin[ari]o le llamaban el padre Martin Antonio, sin darle sobrenombre.'

³⁸ See the short biographical account given in: M. Delrio, *Adagialia sacra Veteris et Novi Testamenti* (Lyon, 1612), fo. a4r. Gerónimo del Río composed the dedication of this posthumous work.

³⁹ Versele, *Louis del Río*, 17. A summary of the document, which is in the Archivo Histórico Nacional in Madrid, is available online: 'Pruebas para la concesión del Título de Caballero de la Orden de Santiago de Jerónimo del Río y López, natural de Amberes (Flandes).' Its signature is OM-CABALLEROS_SANTIAGO_EXP.6998 (retrieved from the database <http://pares.mcu.es/on> 31 July 2011). I am grateful to Raymond Fagel for providing me with this reference.

⁴⁰ De Lancre, *Tableau de l'inconstance des mauvais anges*, 80-1. 'le sieur de Montagne, duquel mesme, à ce qu'on dict, il estoit aucunement parent du costé de sa mere; qui estoit d[e]scendue de la famille Espagnolle des Lopeze, dequoy ie m'esmerveille.'

⁴¹ De Lancre, *L'Incredulité*, 447. 'judaïsant en France sous le nom d'Espagnols & Portugais.'

⁴² Frame, *Montaigne*, 25-6, 28.

⁴³ See Frame's discussion of Antoinette's last will: *ibid.*, 26-7. On Antonio's treatment of Eleonora see below.

⁴⁴ For a discussion of the political aspirations of an emerging Spanish-Flemish elite, see: R. Fagel, "Es buen católico y sabe escribir los cuatro idiomas": Una nueva generación mixta entre españoles y flamencos ante la revuelta de Flandes', in *Las redes del imperio: Élités sociales en la articulación de la monarquía hispánica, 1492-1714*, ed. B. Yun Casalilla (Madrid, 2009), 289-312; Frame, *Montaigne*, 9.

Montaigne's luxury to retreat to his library; he had lost his in the course of the Dutch Revolt.⁴⁵ Yet the cousins were, for better or worse, destined to make a much greater impact on the world of letters than the world of politics.

As we have seen, concern for *limpieza de sangre* meant that social climbers such as the Delrios had good cause to disown their links to the López de Villanova family. A more immediate source of embarrassment was the conversion to Calvinism of Eleonora's half-brother and half-sister. They were prosecuted by the Council of Troubles established by the Duke of Alba and fled the country, at a time when Antonio del Río acted as the Council's treasurer.⁴⁶ There can be little doubt that Martin Delrio was well aware of the existence of these relatives—he referred to one of them in a surviving letter—but he had little reason to dwell on their existence.⁴⁷ This was still more the case after the Society of Jesus in 1593 banned the admission of those of Jewish extraction (a ban not rescinded until after the Second World War). If Pierre De Lancre's revelation had been made in Delrio's lifetime, it would have been, at the very least, highly embarrassing. Martin Delrio, ethnically a New Christian but devoid of the many virtues claimed for that particular group, severely muddies the waters of recent scholarship on Jesuit attitudes towards purity of blood laws.⁴⁸

There is, in other words, little incentive for Delrio to have acknowledged or entered into contact with his cousin. But there is a tantalizing (albeit short) time frame when the two men may have overlapped in Bordeaux. Delrio's political career in the Low Countries had faltered after the death of his patron, Don Juan of Austria (r. 1576–78). The recently acquired family castle had been sacked and then confiscated by soldiers acting on behalf of the States General. His father, Antonio, had abandoned the Low Countries without even settling his arrears with the family chaplain, and left behind his wife to fend for herself.⁴⁹ Late in 1579 Martin Delrio resigned his political posts and on 9 May 1580 entered the

⁴⁵ Delrio, *Mémoires*, i. 160.

⁴⁶ P. J. Hauben, 'Marcus Pérez and Marrano Calvinism in the Dutch Revolt and the Reformation', *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance*, 29 (1967), 121–32; and the brief re-examination by G. Marnef, *Antwerpen in de tijd van de Reformatie: Ondergronds protestantisme in een handelsmetropool, 1550–1577* (Amsterdam, 1996), 137. Ursula Pérez and Martín López feature on Verheyden's list as defendants 7087 and 7088. A. L. E. Verheyden (ed.), *Le Conseil des Troubles: Liste des condamnés (1567–1573)* (Brussels, 1961).

⁴⁷ Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional de España, MS 18692. Martin Delrio to Juan de Piñeda, 12 July 1605. 'Lo que me pregunta dessos señores; El parentesco es, quae el s[er]ior Luis Perez tuvo por her[ma]no mayor a Marcos Perez, que se caso con dona Ursula Lopez de Villanova her[ma]na de mi madre; y [h]oy día en Emberes Marco Antonio Perez hijo de dicha Ursula, primo her[ma]no esta casado con una hija de Martin de Baron.' This child of Pérez and Ursula López is not mentioned by Vermaseren.

⁴⁸ R. A. Maryks, *The Jesuit Order as a Synagogue of Jews: Jesuits of Jewish Ancestry and Purity-of-Blood Laws in the Early Society of Jesus* (Leiden, 2010). Maryks is right to bring our attention to the conflicts within the Society of Jesus, but his division of the Society as between *convertos* and hardliners seems rather two-dimensional in light of the evidence adduced here. The equation of ethnicity and identity seems problematic, given the existence of Marrano 'hardliners' such as Delrio and Maldonado. See in particular Delrio's defence of Maldonado's pure-blood lineage against the imputations of Joseph Scaliger: [M. Delrio], *Peniculus Foriarum* ([Antwerp?], 1609), 130–40.

⁴⁹ J.-B. Stockmans, *Notice historique sur le Chateau de Cleysdael* (Antwerp, 1892), 63–4.

Society of Jesus in Valladolid, clutching a chest filled with contemplative literature and just enough funds to buy a new set of clothes.⁵⁰ He did not wish or plan to return to the Low Countries, and when in 1584 he was ordered to, he feigned illness upon arrival in Bordeaux (he had travelled overland for fear of piracy) and there he remained put for more than two years.⁵¹ In the preface of his *Syntagma Tragœdiæ Latinæ* (1593–94), Martin Delrio claimed that he had spent a year in Bordeaux to recuperate from his illness and edited the Senecan tragedies to engage his mind.⁵² The severity of Delrio's debilitating illness is unclear but it was certainly not the main reason for his continued residence in Bordeaux, as everyone involved well knew. According to the Jesuit *Catalogus Triennalis* of 1593 Delrio had been well enough to teach dialectics during this period.⁵³ Writing in January 1586 and sounding rather exasperated, the Visitor of the Belgian Province, Olivier Manare, concluded a lengthy discussion: 'Meanwhile I will do my best that he may understand from my letters that nothing is to be feared here'.⁵⁴ What finally prompted Delrio to leave is bound to remain a puzzle, as it even mystified his contemporaries. On 23 December 1586 the rector of the Bordeaux college, Pierre Lohier, reported that 'Martinus Delrio, who for sometime had wished to stay in this college with a view to teach Philosophy has left for the Low Countries. I do not know the reason for this change of heart, except that perhaps he realised that he could not happily succeed in the duty of teaching philosophy using the compendium of logic'.⁵⁵ It does not seem that Delrio left on a bad note; he continued to correspond with fellow members of the Society living in Bordeaux until his death.⁵⁶

In this two-year window between late October 1584 and December 1586 Martin Delrio lived in the city of which his cousin was mayor. Ravaged by plague however, Bordeaux was not the best place to recuperate from illness. Delrio recalled watching the roses in the garden of Bordeaux's Jesuit College blooming

⁵⁰ Madrid, Biblioteca de la Real Academia de la Historia, Legajos de Jesuitas: 9/7240. The manuscript is reprinted with minor errors in J. Moya (trans.), *La Magia Demoníaca (libro II de las Disquisiciones Mágicas)* (Madrid, 1991), 19–20n.

⁵¹ Much of the evidence (or lack thereof) in Delrio's published writings has already been collated by Henri Busson, who, however, only consulted the French translation of the *Disquisitiones Magicae*; what follows also draws on archival material not accessed by Busson. H. Busson, 'Montaigne et son cousin', *Revue d'histoire littéraire de la France*, 60 (1960), 481–99. Delrio recounts his reluctance at great length in a letter to Claudio Acquaviva, dated 23 October 1584. Rome, ARSI, Gal. 91 ff. 269rv.

⁵² M. Delrio, *Syntagma Tragoediæ Latinæ*, 3 vols (Antwerp, 1593–94) i. **2v.

⁵³ Rome, ARSI, Flandro-Belg. 9, fo. 220v.

⁵⁴ Rome, ARSI, Ep. Germ. 164, fo. 45r. 'Interea temporis dabo operam ut meis litteris intelligat nihil sibi hic esse timendum.'

⁵⁵ Rome, ARSI, Ep. Gal. 92, fo. 290. 'Magister Martinus del Rio, qui aliquando voluerat in hoc Collegio manere, docendæ Philosophiæ causa, [...] profectus est in Belgium. Causam mutati animi nescio, nisi fortasse quod non ita foeliciter vidit sibi succedere docendæ Philosophiæ munus in Compendio logicæ applicando.'

⁵⁶ Delrio acknowledged the help of Petrus Du Jarric and Balforaeus Scotus, both Bordeaux Jesuits, in obtaining manuscripts. Cf. M. Delrio, *Vindiciæ Areopagiticæ* (Antwerp, 1607), 21, 68; a few lines of a letter to Du Jarric, dated 1 March 1606, have been preserved in: F. Remondus, *Carmina & Orationes* (Antwerp, 1623), fo. +6r.

in winter—seen as a sure sign of the impending plague epidemic of the summer and autumn of 1585.⁵⁷ The plague epidemic is one reason for Montaigne's extended absence from the city. Two letters do unequivocally place Montaigne in Bordeaux in late May 1585 but they concern Montaigne's preparations to ready Bordeaux for the resumption of the religious wars—this may not have been the time to reconnect with distant relatives.⁵⁸ The absence of evidence does not necessarily mean the absence of any contact between the two men but, given a lack of incentive, it makes such communication less likely. Similarly, absence of evidence makes any contact between Delrio and De Lancre improbable as well. When De Lancre, in his second, rarely consulted demonology, excerpted two anecdotes from Delrio concerning the latter's time in Bordeaux, he gave no indication that he had ever met the Jesuit.⁵⁹ I argue that it is on balance more probable that if he had met Delrio in Bordeaux, De Lancre would have divulged it at that point.

One additional reason given by Jonathan Pearl, following Margaret McGowan, in support of the kinship of Delrio and De Lancre, is the possibility (Pearl calls it 'highly probable') that both attended the lectures on angels and demons given in Paris by the Spanish Jesuit Juan de Maldonado (who, as we saw, later met Montaigne).⁶⁰ Martin Delrio did indeed study under Maldonado and occasionally cited his lectures on demons.⁶¹ Nevertheless, Delrio's studies in Paris date to the late 1560s, while Maldonado gave his lectures on demons in 1572.⁶² Delrio explicitly cited a manuscript copy, and manuscripts of Maldonado's lectures circulated widely.⁶³ More problematically for this argument, McGowan does not cite a source for her claim 'that the Jesuits at the Collège de Clermont had

⁵⁷ Delrio, *Disq1600*, ii. 269. 'Si rosae violaeve sub auctumnum iterum floeant, pestilitas imminet. Burdigalae, quae pestim illam magnam praecessit hyems, aliquas in horto nostro rosas protulit; quas & vidi.'

⁵⁸ Frame, *Montaigne*, 239, 241; F 1323-7: Letters 29 and 30 to Marshal de Matignon, 22 and 27 May 1585.

⁵⁹ De Lancre, *L'Incredulité*, 259, 429.

⁶⁰ Pearl, *The Crime of Crimes*, 74; Margaret M. McGowan, 'Pierre de Lancre's *Tableau de l'inconstance des mauvais anges et démons*: The Sabbat Sensationalized' in Sydney Anglo (ed.), *The Damned Art: Essays in the Litterature of Witchcraft* (London, 1977), 182-201, here 187.

⁶¹ Delrio does this most prominently in the prologue where he draws from Maldonado five reasons why witchcraft and heresy are entwined. Delrio, *Disq1600*, i, 6-8. This is the only example that Pearl uses to support his (baseless and otherwise unsubstantiated) claim that 'much of [Delrio's] work reads like a paraphrase of Maldonat'. Pearl, *The Crime of Crimes*, 66.

⁶² Entries in two *alba amicorum* place Delrio in Paris in April 1567 and January 1568; The Hague, KB, 130 e 28, fo. 320r; Frankfurt, Museum für Angewandte Kunst, L. St. 152, fo. 25v; United States, Cornell University Library, Archives 4620 Bd. Ms. 64 no. 3, Juan de Maldonado, 'Disputatio De daemonym distinctione et de praestigiis [. . .] Lutetiae Parisiorum in Collegio Claremontano habita 1572'. Delrio's whereabouts for 1572 can be accounted for. Delrio was judged worthy of a bachelor's degree in civil and canon law in Leuven on 8 May 1571. Delrio remained there until 28 August 1572 at least, when he received an attestation of legitimacy. Delrio incorporated his degree in Salamanca on 1 December 1572. Copies of the relevant documents have been preserved as: Salamanca, Salamanca University Library, AUS 778, fo. 127v-128v.

⁶³ Delrio, *Disq1600*, i, 201. 'Traditum invenio, in quibusdam P. Ioan. Maldonati dictatis, *de Daemonibus*.' Their eventual French translator, François de la Borie, reported how he came across them: 'Estant à Perigueux ces années passées, voyant ce beau & digne Traicté des Anges & Démons au cabinet de ce grand Archidiacre.' F. De La Borie (trans.), *Traicté des Anges et Demons* (Paris, 1605), fo. 4r.

trained [De Lancre] well', and I know of no evidence that De Lancre ever studied in Paris.⁶⁴ Maldonado only appears in De Lancre's 1612 account to offer yet another link between Delrio and Montaigne. There is therefore no evidence that De Lancre met either Maldonado or Delrio. Certainly, the evidence presented here shows that Pearl's claim that as 'members of a large extended family [that is, via Montaigne] and members of the small elite of a provincial capital' Delrio and De Lancre 'must have known each other fairly well' is baseless.⁶⁵ We must look elsewhere than family and friendship if we are to understand De Lancre's revelation. We will need to study Delrio's treatment of Montaigne and return to Petrus Oranus' letter to Delrio, when the Jesuit first met his cousin in print.

II

The importance of Martin Delrio's *Disquisitiones Magicae* for our understanding of early modern witchcraft belief cannot be overstated. Even if the print history of demonological texts still remains only poorly understood, the seminal status of the *Disquisitiones* within this corpus cannot be ignored. It went through more than twenty editions and was last reprinted in Venice in 1746 and Cologne in 1755.⁶⁶ A French translation appeared in Paris in 1611.⁶⁷ By contrast, the now much better known *Malleus Maleficarum* appeared at this time only as part of larger compendia and was reprinted only once after 1620.⁶⁸ A heavily abbreviated English translation has meant that the *Disquisitiones* has now made it onto the reading lists of undergraduates, but the Latin original remains little read and understood.⁶⁹ Stephens did not cite it and the work received only passing references in Clark's *Thinking with Demons*. Scholars continue to assert that the work was a reflection on Delrio's personal experience with witchcraft persecution, but, as I have argued elsewhere, Delrio only once claimed to have met a magician—when he was a student in Paris in the 1560s.⁷⁰ This person had the name and trappings of a street magician, one Master Gouvinus, who escaped punishment allegedly by tricking the Paris Parlement into executing the mule of its *premier president* instead.⁷¹ Rather, Delrio's reputation as a humanist and an editor of classical texts is the key to understanding his interest in demonology.

⁶⁴ McGowan, 'The Sabbat Sensationalised', 183. According to Communay, De Lancre studied law in Turin and travelled through Italy in the years 1574–78.

⁶⁵ Pearl, *Crime of Crimes*, 74.

⁶⁶ There is an (incomplete) inventory in: E. Fischer, 'Die "Disquisitionum magicarum libri sex" von Martin Delrio als gegenreformatorische Exempel-Quelle' (PhD, Johann Wolfgang Goethe-Universität, 1975).

⁶⁷ A. Du Chesne (trans.), *Les Controverses et recherches magiques de Martin Delrio* (Paris, 1611).

⁶⁸ A. Schnyder, 'Der "Malleus Maleficarum": Fragen und Beobachtungen zu seiner Druckgeschichte sowie zur Rezeption bei Bodin, Binsfeld und Delrio', *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte* 74 (1992), 323–64 (list with editions on pp. 360–1).

⁶⁹ P. G. Maxwell-Stuart (trans.), *Investigations into Magic* (Manchester, 2000).

⁷⁰ Machielsen, "'Marvellously consistent throughout the whole of Europe and across all ages'", forthcoming.

⁷¹ Delrio, *Disq1600*, ii. 73.

Delrio met his witches, among them Seneca's Medea and Lucan's Erichtho, in the course of his reading. Much like Montaigne, Delrio spent his days in his study surrounded by his commonplace books.⁷²

In Petrus Oranus' letter, included as an appendix in the third volume of the *Disquisitiones*, we find the same unexpected combination of demonology and humanist philology.⁷³ Oranus also ventured to correct some of Delrio's facts—for example, that Joan of Arc had lived and died under Charles VII, not Charles VI.⁷⁴ But Oranus wrote in particular to approve of Delrio's attack on the legal scepticism of Andrea Alciato. The Liège magistrate offered additional evidence that Alciato 'falls from one error into another' and expressed amazement that 'the most learned Frenchmen had followed Alciato's wandering'.⁷⁵

Michel de Montaigne has fallen into the same error [as Alciato] in the third book of his *trials* or *attempts* ([which] our Lipsius calls *tastings*, [but] the author of the work truly [calls] *essays*), chapter 11, under the title *On Cripples* [*des Boiteux*]. I could have my secretary copy it, unless [Justus] Lipsius has it in his library, where, if you wish, you could read it.⁷⁶

Montaigne had added *On Cripples* to the second 1588 edition of the *Essays*. The essay is often regarded as Montaigne's response to Jean Bodin's *Démonomanie* (1580), which had appeared in the same year as the first edition of the *Essays*.⁷⁷ In *On Cripples* Montaigne questioned the reality of witchcraft on both judicial (as Oranus indicated) and metaphysical grounds. Montaigne had interviewed a suspected witch and dismissed her confession as madness.⁷⁸ But Montaigne also likened received wisdom about witchcraft to the Italian proverb that 'he does not know Venus in her perfect sweetness who has not lain with a cripple'—a proverb Montaigne himself had put to the test and found wanting.⁷⁹ He concluded that 'our invention is flexible in forging reasons for all sorts of dreams'.⁸⁰

⁷² On the *Essays* as a commonplace book: A. Moss, *Printed Commonplace-books and the Structuring of Renaissance Thought* (Oxford, 1996), 212–13; my comments on Delrio are elaborated in: Machielsen, "Marvellously consistent throughout the whole of Europe and across all ages", forthcoming.

⁷³ Note Oranus' mention of textual emendations by Joseph Scaliger, Denys Lambin and Isaac Casaubon: Delrio, *Disq1600*, iii. 123; iii. 128; iii. 130.

⁷⁴ Delrio, *Disq1600*, iii. 128; the only point on which Delrio said he had changed his mind, cf. *ibid.*, iii. 130.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, iii. 123; iii. 124. 'ex uno errore in alium labitur Alciatus'; 'Demiror Gallos doctissimos errationem Alciati insecutos'.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, iii. 125. 'In eundem errorem delatus Michael Montanus libro tertio periculorum, seu tentamentorum (Lipsius noster gustus, Auctor vero operis, *Essais* vocat) capite undecimo, tit. *des Boiteux*. Curassem ab Amanuensi meo describi, nisi Lipsius in libraria sua haberet, a quo si voles, legendum accipies.'

⁷⁷ For a comparison between Bodin and Montaigne: V. Krause, 'Confessional fictions and demonology in Renaissance France', *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, 35 (2005), 327–48.

⁷⁸ F 961 (3:11).

⁷⁹ F 962.

⁸⁰ F 963.

Nevertheless, rather than a statement of scepticism, the essay concludes with an appeal to the middle ground ('Every medal has its reverse'); a rejection of scepticism as well as of certainty. 'The pride of those[,] who attributed to the human mind a capacity for all things[,] produced in others, through spite and emulation, the opinion that it is capable of nothing. [. . .] man is immoderate in all things, and cannot be stopped except by necessity and inability to go further'.⁸¹ The essay, then, was the product of Montaigne's freethinking. Montaigne's scepticism was not anchored, as Delrio's was (as we shall see), to a commitment to orthodoxy, and it was not absolute. After publication its author scrawled another disclaimer in the margins of his personal copy, whether out of concern for censorship or hesitancy: 'For in what I say I guarantee no certainty except that it is what I had at the time in my mind, a tumultuous and vacillating mind'.⁸²

There is no evidence that Oranus had Montaigne's essay copied or that Delrio consulted the copy in the library of his friend Justus Lipsius (who had been a correspondent of Montaigne's and had provided a prefatory *carmen* for the *Disquisitiones*).⁸³ Delrio, who also published his reply to Oranus, did not respond to his friend's comment on Montaigne. However, a receipt in the archives of the Plantin-Moretus Museum in Antwerp informs us that on 14 June 1600 the Plantin Press sent Delrio a copy of Montaigne's essays at a cost of fl. 5.25.⁸⁴ Like the *Essays*, the *Disquisitiones*, too, was subject to revision. By the time of the 1603 edition, Delrio had now read the *Essays* and refers to Montaigne on exactly four occasions. An analysis of these instances shows how Delrio used or 'thought with' Montaigne. As will become evident, they reveal muddled divisions between 'scepticism' and 'credulity' within the thinking of both authors.

Of these four instances, one simply incorporated Oranus' information on Alciato. In 1600 Delrio had claimed that many Protestants, following Luther and Melancthon, had held that witches attended the Sabbath only in spirit and by demonic illusion. The Jesuit added that 'even' some Catholics, such as Alciato, believed this. A list of Frenchmen, which included Montaigne, was added to the 1603 edition.⁸⁵ This list corresponds neatly with the list of 'most learned

⁸¹ F 964.

⁸² F 962.

⁸³ Lipsius had sent Montaigne a copy of his *Politica* and published the accompanying epistle in his *Centuriae Duae* (1590). Jeanine De Landsheer et al. (eds), J. Lipsius, *Iusti Lipsi Epistolarum Centuriae Duae* (Leiden, 1590), p. 107. Republished as ILE III [89] 09 17 in: [reference to modern correspondence]. Debate continues about whether Montaigne's comment about 'the learned and laborious web of [Lipsius'] *Politics*' constituted praise or irony. F 131 (1:26). Cf. A. Moss, 'The politics of Justus Lipsius and the commonplace-book', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 59 (1998), 421–36, at 429.

⁸⁴ Antwerp, MPM, Arch 172, fo. 82v.

⁸⁵ Delrio, *Disq1603*, i. 146.

Frenchmen' that Oranus had included in his letter.⁸⁶ It was the same passage in the 1603 edition of the text that later compelled De Lancre's revelation.

The three other references show more substantial engagement with the *Essays*. Delrio cited an example drawn from Montaigne's *Libri Experimentorum* in the context of a discussion on whether demons could change their victim's gender. It is the story of a girl called Marie, who, after jumping up and down suddenly, had male genitals burst out, and had become a man called Germain.⁸⁷ 'He [Montaigne] attributed this to [her] vehement imagination but I add that the constitution of the body inclines towards this'.⁸⁸ Montaigne, who learned the story on his travels (it is also mentioned in his travel journal), reported that the girls in the town of Vitry-Le-François still chant a song about the dangers of sudden and violent movement.⁸⁹ Delrio was more sceptical, however, speculating that such women must have been androgynous to begin with and, dissatisfied with the idea that women were only imperfect men, he expanded this discussion again in 1608.⁹⁰

Elsewhere, Delrio was again sceptical of Montaigne's claims for the power of the imagination. Montaigne had reported that 'at his house a cat had been seen watching a bird on a treetop, [. . .] the bird let itself fall as if dead between the cat's paws, either intoxicated by its own imagination or drawn by some attracting power of the cat'.⁹¹ Delrio was dismissive of Montaigne's assertion that 'a bird-catcher by sight and imagination alone can pull down birds from the sky'.⁹² But Delrio preserved his most severe criticism for his chapter on ligatures (magic preventing sexual intercourse). 'I think, reader, that from [what we have said] you can easily comprehend that Michel de Montaigne rashly removes these *maleficia* from the [power of the] devil, so that he can ascribe it to the powers of imagination. This can sometimes cause a degree of impotence in the venereal business, no one denies that. But truly, to ascribe so many varied and multiple effects only to the imagination, not even Orestes [*a figure from Greek mythology associated with lunacy*] would have said that in his lucid moments'.⁹³

⁸⁶ Compare 'ex Gallis Duarenus, Aerodius, & Mich. Montanus' with Oranus' letter. Delrio, *Disq1600*, iii. 124-5. 'Demirror Gallos doctissimos errationem Alciati insecutos' followed by a discussion of Franciscus Duarenus, Petrus Erodus, and Michel de Montaigne.

⁸⁷ Delrio, *Disq1603*, i. 176.

⁸⁸ Ibid. 'Ille hoc vehementi imaginationi tribuit: sed addo corporis constitutionem eo vergentem.'

⁸⁹ F 83 (1:21); the story of Germain (who, when still a girl, was called the 'Bearded Mary' on account of her facial hair), as one of three memorable stories the travel party learned in Vitry-Le-François. F 1059-60.

⁹⁰ Delrio, *Disq1603*, i. 176-7. Cf. M. Delrio, *Disquisitiones Magicae* (Lyon, 1608), 105.

⁹¹ F 90-91.

⁹² Delrio, *Disq1603*, i. 14-15. 'primo non posse aucupem solo visu & imaginatione aves coelo detrahare, quod tamen asseruit Michaël Montanus, *lib. 1. des Essais. c.2[1]*.'

⁹³ Delrio, *Disq1603*, ii. 63. 'Ex his puto facile (lector) intelligis temere Mich. Montanum l.1.des essais c.21. adimere haec maleficia daemoni, ut adscribat viribus imaginationis. Potest illa impotentem aliquem ad res veneris reddere, nemo negat; verum effectus tam varios ac multiplices uni adscribere imaginationi nec Orestes quidem dixerit in dilucidis intervallis.'

These three passages are instructive. First, none in fact refer to *On Cripples*. Delrio's reception of Montaigne was in fact quite limited. The passages in question refer to a single essay (1.21) *Of the Power of the Imagination* and are contained within 9 pages of Frame's 1045-page classic English translation. Martin Delrio's attitude towards Montaigne was characteristic of his attitude towards texts more generally. Delrio was held up as an inspirational model in a Jesuit handbook on note-taking; Hieremias Drexelius' *Aurifodina artium et scientiarum omnium* ('The Gold Mine of All Arts and Sciences', 1638) and, as I have argued elsewhere, Delrio treated texts as sources simply to be mined for information.⁹⁴ Secondly, his attitude towards Montaigne's text appears ambiguous. He copied the *exemplum* of Marie Germain while also castigating Montaigne for his views. In this, however, his attitudes are not unlike Montaigne's, who in the same essay claimed that 'I refer the stories that I borrow to the conscience of those from whom I take them'.⁹⁵ Most importantly, the passages also show that Montaigne's and Delrio's attitudes could be very similar—their scepticism simply differed in their object of attention. If Montaigne in *On Cripples* castigated the extremes, those who believed they knew all and those who believed they knew nothing, Delrio could similarly cast Montaigne's sceptical attitude towards love ligatures as one such extreme, claiming that Montaigne had sought to reduce manifold possibilities to a single answer. When it came to the power of the imagination, it was Delrio who was sceptical, and Montaigne who was credulous. The Jesuit, in short, was sceptical of Montaigne's scepticism.

This brings us to the heart of Delrio's use of scepticism. Delrio's demonology is necessarily contingent on a level of doubt—not about the existence of demons but about causation. Throughout the *Disquisitiones* we are confronted by a persistent demand for cause and effect to match up. Demons were lurking behind those instances where they did not. Witchcraft was consequently only a small part of Delrio's project. Montaigne had mused in the opening lines of his *On Cripples* how the Gregorian Calendar Reform had not changed belief in 'harmful and propitious days' in any way.⁹⁶ His cousin was similarly sceptical of popular beliefs in good and bad days. Delrio was incredulous to hear about the belief that when an egg laid on Good Friday was placed in a fire it would extinguish the flames. In his refutation the Jesuit demanded the evidence:

Tell us then. Is this a natural power? From where? From the day or its mother [the hen]? No one would say *that*. For which is more absurd? No special prerogative belongs to the mother; but then, none [belong to] a day, in no way do the celestial spheres or stars influence a single event. This is a supernatural power then. Why

⁹⁴ Machielsen, "Marvellously consistent throughout the whole of Europe and across all ages", forthcoming.

⁹⁵ F 91.

⁹⁶ F 954 (3:11).

does the same not belong to [the ones laid] on the Day of the Resurrection or on the Day of the Birth of the Lord? It is due to a special privilege, they will say. Tell me, if you please, how [*litt.* from where] do you know? To whom and when was this conceded? It is proven by experience, they will say. But [experience] is deceitful, and how [*litt.* from where] can you be certain that the effect does not arise from a [demonic] pact?⁹⁷

There was equally no good reason to plant trees on the Day of the Annunciation or to tap the blood of a horse on St Stephen's Day.⁹⁸ Cakes baked and handed out to beggars on St Lupus Day could not obtain protection against attacks by wolves.⁹⁹ These examples show that *both* Montaigne and Delrio were sceptical; it was only the object of their scepticism that differed. Yet, Delrio's scepticism, unlike—I think—Montaigne's, also served an ulterior purpose. By destroying alternative forms of causation (the power of stars, signs and words), and dismissing—in these particular instances—God's miraculous intervention, the Jesuit created a void that could possibly be filled up by demons. If there was no obvious natural or divine explanation, and the 'non-sense' actually proved effective, then its efficacy must be demonic in origin, especially if no valid authority could be given. Delrio's scepticism was not free-ranging. It, and the demons that it invoked, reduced the natural to the explicable. The *Disquisitiones Magicae* was a defence of orthodoxy and it was firmly rooted in authority, not empiricism.

As Delrio's scorn for Montaigne's credulity shows, a simple division between scepticism and superstition is untenable. We must privilege instead Montaigne's freethinking, if we are to grasp the difference between these two men. When we do so, Pierre de Lancre's ambivalent intellectual relationship to both men, and the motive behind his revelation, become clear.

IV

Pierre De Lancre remains a somewhat mysterious figure. The little that could be gleaned from archival sources was already collated in the late nineteenth century by Arnaud Communay but this work, the only copy of which survives in Paris, has only rarely been consulted.¹⁰⁰ De Lancre's non-witchcraft writings have also regularly been ignored and scholars continue to give the

⁹⁷ Delrio, *Disq1600*, ii. 112-13. 'cedo enim, vis haec naturalisne? unde? a die, vel matre? nemo hoc dicat. nam quid absurdius[?] nulla matri praerogativa tum praecipua competit: nihil diei, caelestis orbes tum vel sidera singulare influunt. Vis illa, supernaturalis ergo. cur non idem competit enixis die Anastasis, vel natalis Domini? speciali, iniquent[,] privilegio. dic sodes, unde nosti? cui & quando concessum? constat experientia, dicent. Sed illa fallax, & unde certus es, non ex pacto effectum nasci?' The punctuation of this passage was corrected in the 1603 edition. Cf. Delrio, *Disq1603*, ii. 94. I would like to thank Juliane Kerkhecker for discussing this translation with me.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, ii. 110.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, ii. 113. Delrio says that this is common in villages around Leuven.

¹⁰⁰ I am grateful to Ana Maria Misdolea, who consulted this copy in the BnF on my behalf.

(wrong) impression that De Lancre's first work, the *Tableau de l'inconstance et instabilité de toutes choses* (1607; 2nd edn 1610), was a work of demonology.¹⁰¹ Even the debate about De Lancre's year of birth (1556) continues, although the author revealed this in the second (1610) edition of the *Tableau*.¹⁰²

If De Lancre's first publication, as he himself admitted, was the product of middle age, so too was his interest in witches. In 1609, together with Jean d'Espagnet, he was commissioned by Henri IV to investigate an outbreak of witchcraft in the Basque-speaking *Pays de Labourd*. Little is known of this witch-hunt, apart from what De Lancre himself tells us in his *Tableau*. The archives of the Bordeaux *Parlement* burnt down in 1710.¹⁰³ De Lancre's claim that the Labourd was 'almost like a nursery' for witches has led to vastly inflated estimates of up to 600 victims.¹⁰⁴ Nevertheless, De Lancre's commission was time-limited and faced substantial opposition.¹⁰⁵ Spanish Inquisition documents blamed the outbreak of witchcraft paranoia on the Spanish side of the border on De Lancre's activities and estimated that some eighty people died, which seems to me a reasonable upper limit rather than a conservative estimate.¹⁰⁶

Considerable effort has been put into moulding De Lancre into the image of 'the Catholic Reformation man', the image of the crusading magistrate once put forward by Robert Muchembled.¹⁰⁷ According to Pearl, 'De Lancre constantly emphasized the distastefulness of the task in which he was engaged'.¹⁰⁸ But De Lancre was no lay defender of Catholic orthodoxy. In his 1607 treatise he gossiped at great length about papal elections (the inconstancy of which only highlighted the final intervention of the Holy Spirit), speculated about the possibility to redefine the Holy Trinity as a 'Quatenaire', and suggested that holy persons filled angelic vacancies in heaven.¹⁰⁹ This was the same man who had his witnesses re-enact the dance of the witches' Sabbath: 'our purpose being to deter them from such filth, making them recognize how even the most restrained movement was dirty, nasty and unbecoming to an honest girl'.¹¹⁰

¹⁰¹ For example, Williams, *On the Inconstancy of Witches*, xxviii; Pearl, *Crime of Crimes*, 129.

¹⁰² De Lancre, *Tableau de l'inconstance de toutes choses* (Paris, 1610), 428r. The best reconstruction of De Lancre's life is: Joëlle Dusseau, *Le juge et la sorcière* (Bordeaux, 2002). She, nevertheless, opted for the year of birth given in Communay (1553). In his writings, however, De Lancre expressed the hope to be able to attend the 1625 Roman Jubilee, 'si la Nature ne nous desnie d'arriver jusqu'à l'an 1625[,] qui sera lors le soixante neufviesme de nostre aage'.

¹⁰³ Pearl, *Crime of Crimes*, 134.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 50–1; McGowan, 'The Sabbat Sensationalised', 183.

¹⁰⁵ De Lancre, *Tableau de l'inconstances des mauvais anges*, 117, where De Lancre complains that executions had to be discontinued because of popular unrest.

¹⁰⁶ G. Henningsen (ed.), *The Salazar Documents: Inquisitor Alonso de Salazar Frías and Others on the Basque Witch Persecutions* (Leiden, 2004), 344.

¹⁰⁷ Pearl, *Crime of Crimes*, 149.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 143.

¹⁰⁹ De Lancre, *Tableau de l'inconstance de toutes choses*, 432r–35v, 505v–09v, 468r.

¹¹⁰ De Lancre, *Tableau de l'inconstances des mauvais anges*, 207–8. 'Nous fimes en plusieurs lieux dancier les enfans & filles en la mesme façon qu'elles dançoient au sabbat, tant pour les deterrer d'une telle saleté, leur faisant reconnoistre, combien le plus modeste mouvement estoit sale, vilain & mal seant à une honeste fille.'

Such condemnation sits rather uneasily with De Lancre's own boasts about his reputation as a dancer—as a young man he had even impressed the dissolute Pietro de Medici with his dancing moves.¹¹¹ De Lancre was also keen to accept as fact that witches had held a Sabbath in his bedroom. 'Three famous witches climbed under my [bed] curtains with the intention and evil design of poisoning me' but failed because none of their poisons would work.¹¹²

De Lancre relished the testimony offered by his child witnesses and described his findings in great detail. One witness claimed that the devil's penis was attached to his backside.¹¹³ Another told De Lancre that the devil had a scaled organ; yet another that it was made of half-flesh, half-metal.¹¹⁴ A seventeen-year-old girl said that it was the size of that of a mule, as big as an arm, which led De Lancre to conclude that 'all the female witches of the Labourd are better served by Satan than those [*described by Henri Boguet*] of the Franche-Comté'.¹¹⁵ A fifteen-year-old girl confessed that the devil had sex with pretty women from the front and with the ugly ones from behind. 'Such a shameful thing to say,' De Lancre commented, 'that one can clearly recognize what she said [as] true.'¹¹⁶ These detailed investigations were not the preoccupations of a zealous magistrate concerned with morality, but of someone who had already fostered one illegitimate child.¹¹⁷ De Lancre's interest in the female sex was not restricted to observation alone.

Pearl has argued that De Lancre's 'main intellectual influence' was Delrio.¹¹⁸ But De Lancre's attitude towards Delrio could be ambivalent. Delrio was 'the most enquiring and exact investigator of witchcraft so far', but he was also half-dismissed as having no practical experience in judging witchcraft matters.¹¹⁹ At the heart of De Lancre's *Tableau* was the witches' Sabbath. *Maleficia*, the witches' alleged crimes, were rarely mentioned. In the final pages De Lancre argued that a witch deserved to die for attending the witches' Sabbath alone, even if no *maleficia* had been committed. That claim is particularly curious because any mention of the devil's pact in this discussion is lacking.¹²⁰ As it is fairly obvious that De Lancre's teenage witnesses, some of whom confessed to having had sex at the Sabbath on more than 100 occasions, escaped unscathed,

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 204–5.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 142. 'trois notables sorcieres s'estant mises sous mes rideaux en intention & avec ce mauvais dessin de m'empoisonner.'

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 217.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 224–5.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 225. 'Si bien que les sorcieres de Labourt sont mieux servies de Satan que celles de la Franche-conté.'

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 217. 'Or encore que cela sort sale à le prononcer si peut on recognoistre clairement qu'elle dict vray.'

¹¹⁷ Joëlle Dusseau, *Le juge et la sorcière* (Bordeaux, 2002), 60.

¹¹⁸ Pearl, *Crime of Crimes*, 141.

¹¹⁹ De Lancre, *Tableau de l'inconstances des mauvais anges*, 564: 'que ie tiens pour le plus curieux & exacte rechercher de sorcelerie qui ayt esté iusqu'icy'; *ibid.*, 109.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 566–7.

the comment also reveals De Lancre's own inconstancy as an inquisitor.¹²¹ Those witches who were convicted were described as old and ugly. His witnesses, by contrast, were either very young or, in the case of the twenty-eight-year-old Marie de la Ralde, 'very beautiful' and did not fit the witch stereotype.¹²² De Lancre's depictions are indeed, as Robin Briggs observed, 'a kind of scholarly pornography' and they belong to a class all on their own.¹²³

If for De Lancre witchcraft offered an exploration of female sexuality, Delrio (to my knowledge) only once observed that there were more female than male witches.¹²⁴ As we have seen, Delrio grouped witchcraft together with popular lay practices. Superstition as the early modern period defined it was any form of belief or worship that was not directed towards God—devil worship included. For that same reason, Euan Cameron assigns a seminal role to the *Disquisitiones* in his important new study on the changing conceptions of superstition in the early modern period.¹²⁵ In another significant addition to the 1603 *Disquisitiones*, Delrio refuted those who argued that magicians who *believed* in weather magic were superstitious: 'they are superstitious *because* they *are* magicians'.¹²⁶ Delrio was concerned with larger questions of true and false belief, of which witchcraft was only one part. He was not concerned with discovering the sexual positions adopted by the devil during the witches' Sabbath. Certainly, Montaigne would have been horrified at De Lancre's activities in the Labourd, but given Delrio's criticism of the inquisitorial methods advocated by the *Malleus Maleficarum*, by Jean Bodin and by Petrus Binsfeld, we should not take for granted that Delrio would have praised De Lancre's activities without reservation.¹²⁷

If casting De Lancre as Delrio's disciple looks unpromising, then presenting the insalubrious De Lancre as a follower of Montaigne might appear even more problematic. Nevertheless, Henri Busson has argued that De Lancre's first work,

¹²¹ Sixteen-year-old Jeannette d'Abadie, whose testimony De Lancre returned to again and again. Not surprising given that 'dans le sabbat elle avoit un merveilleux plaisir en ces accouplemens: voire elle nous tesmoignoit un merveilleux plaisir à le dire & le conter, nommant toutes choses par leur nom plus librement & effrontément que nous ne le luy osions faire demander'. Ibid., 134.

¹²² Many seem to have been middle-aged women. However, the two oldest witches (aged seventy-three and eighty) executed by De Lancre were male; *ibid.*, 125; Marie was described as 'agee de vingt-huit ans tres-belle femme laquelle a quité cette abomination puis cinq ou six ans'. Ibid., 126.

¹²³ Robin Briggs, *Witches & Neighbours: The Social and Cultural Context of European Witchcraft* (London, 1996), 32.

¹²⁴ Delrio, *Disq1600*, ii. 65. This is not to say that Delrio did not share the prejudices of his day; he also, for instance, maintained that all things being equal, credence should be given more readily to the revelations of men than of women. Ibid., ii. 167. But in contrast also to the *Malleus Maleficarum*, Delrio's Latin discussions of witches are kept in the (gender neutral) masculine.

¹²⁵ E. Cameron, *Enchanted Europe: Superstition, Reason, and Religion, 1250–1750* (Oxford, 2010).

¹²⁶ Delrio, *Disq1603*, i, 121. 'censuit magos id credentes esse superstitiosos. superstitiosi sunt, quia magi.' (Author's emphasis).

¹²⁷ Delrio, *Disq1600*, iii. 46; iii. 49; iii. 64; iii. 74.

the *Tableau de l'inconstance et instabilité de toutes choses*, made the Bordeaux lawyer Montaigne's 'fils spirituel' until the Pays de Labourd infected him with the witchcraft bug.¹²⁸ Busson's claim has been investigated at length by Isa Dardano Basso. She concluded that Montaigne's agnosticism was not compatible with De Lancre's place in 'the bosom of the Mother Church' and, unsurprisingly, she cited 'above all' De Lancre's 'passion for demonology and the occult sciences', at which point she, equally unsurprisingly, refers to Montaigne's *On Cripples*.¹²⁹ Yet we have already seen that De Lancre's orthodoxy has been overrated. Both scholars also identified numerous, often verbatim, borrowings from the *Essays*, including (for example) the story of the androgynous Marie Germain.¹³⁰ There are certainly vast differences between Montaigne and De Lancre, but the question should not be whether De Lancre *was* Montaigne's 'spiritual son' (in some objective sense) but whether he wished and sought to be intellectually affiliated to him.

If we adopt this less exacting standard of evidence, Busson's argument appears more plausible, although it remains, by its very nature, hard to substantiate fully. The fact that De Lancre's *Tableau de l'inconstance et instabilité de toutes choses* invokes the title of one of Montaigne's essays is perhaps indicative. The work was printed by the same printer who had not only printed the 1588 edition of the *Essays* but also the posthumous edition edited by Marie Gournay.¹³¹ There is no doubt that the *Tableau* was derivative; the theme of inconstancy being a favourite theme of baroque philosophy. De Lancre himself felt the weight of his subject matter. Mindful, perhaps, of his own extramarital dealings, he declared that 'dealing with inconstancy, I have hardly been able to avoid its stain'.¹³² This was not the work of an intellectual genius; by defining inconstancy as changeability, De Lancre struggled to explain that changing one's mind for the better was not an act of inconstancy.¹³³ And concern about its reception might explain why De Lancre originally published the work under his initials only. Whereas Montaigne declared in the preface of the *Essays* that he would have appeared in the nude, if he could have, De Lancre entered the world of print with considerable trepidation.¹³⁴ He revealed his identity only hesitantly in

¹²⁸ Busson, 'Montaigne et son cousin', 484. 'il a été atteint du microbe qui désolait le Labourd et d'inquisiteur il est devenu quelque peu sorcier.'

¹²⁹ I. Dardano Basso, *L'Ancora e gli specchi: Lettura del Tableau de l'inconstance et instabilité de toutes choses di Pierre de Lancre* (Rome, 1979), 11-44 (at 41, 42). 'Lancre vive nel seno della madre Chiesa'; 'Ma è soprattutto la passione per la demonologia, per le scienze occulte'.

¹³⁰ De Lancre, *Tableau de l'inconstance de toutes choses*, 181r, 115r.

¹³¹ The Paris printer Abel l'Angelier, who died on 19 January 1610. The second edition of the *Tableau* was published by his widow, Françoise de Louvain. J.-D. Mellot & É. Queval (eds), *Répertoire d'imprimeurs/libraires (vers 1500-vers 1810)* (Paris, 2004), 326. See also the inventory drawn up: J. Balsamo and M. Simonin (eds), *Abel l'Angelier & Françoise de Louvain (1574-1620), suivi du catalogue des ouvrages publiés par Abel l'Angelier (1574-1610) et la veuve l'Angelier (1610-1620)* (Geneva, 2002), 360 (entry 453; described as 'un ouvrage imité des Essais'), 387 (entry 510).

¹³² De Lancre, *Tableau de l'inconstance de toutes choses*, fo. a2v. 'Traictant de l'Inconstance, ie n'en ay guere bien peu éviter la teinture.'

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 7v-8r.

¹³⁴ F 2.

the preface of his second, 1610 edition. Having spent fifty years of his life 'behind the curtains', he now wished to show his work 'to the world' and begged that, in one of his many gendered metaphors, it was seen 'not as a prostituted Muse, but as a young maiden who thus far possessed some shame to appear in the light'.¹³⁵

De Lancre's treatment of inconstancy is radical, even if his treatment of ancient scepticism is confused.¹³⁶ De Lancre maintained that the senses were corrupted. The eye, 'the most noble and as the king of our senses', could be deceived by the changes in the air, the distance of a place, the humours, sudden movement, 'and by a thousand other natural and artificial, true and deceitful impediments of men and demons'.¹³⁷ Human reason similarly falls victim to the humours, and as a result 'he who does not know he is sick cannot search a doctor, nor does he accept any remedy'.¹³⁸ Inconstancy pervaded everything and everyone: 'None of us is the same as yesterday morning; even myself in writing that everything changes, have changed before I have written it'.¹³⁹ In the face of change and uncertainty, De Lancre clung to the belief that God alone was unchanging: hence the *Tableau's* motto, taken from Malachi 3:6 ('I the Lord do not change'). De Lancre was faced, as Montaigne had been, with the unreliability of the senses and of reason, and on a similar, possibly borrowed, quest of discovery. And yet, De Lancre cannot be labelled a 'fideist sceptic', that mould in which Popkin cast Montaigne. Lacking a criterion of knowledge, De Lancre simply chose to believe everything.

Busson's claim that De Lancre abandoned Montaigne for witchcraft is, however, improbable. De Lancre saw a clear progression in his writings. The inquisitor regarded his *Tableau de l'inconstance des mauvais anges et demons* (1612) as a logical companion to his first book. In his preface to the reader he admitted that the title may seem odd. 'Reader, you will forgive me if, having given the same title to the first volume of my discourses, I wanted to retain the same title for the second volume. I am certain that there is nothing more inconstant and flighty than demons'.¹⁴⁰ Similarly, he told the work's dedicatee

¹³⁵ De Lancre, *Tableau de l'inconstance de toutes choses*, fo. ã2r. 'Je veux maintenant (ô Lecteur) que mon Livre apprenne à comparoir devant le monde, non comme une Muse prostituee; mais comme une ieune pucelle qui a eu quelque vergogne cy-devant de se produire en lumiere. Je m'estoy mis iusqu'icy derriere le rideau, à fin que mes cinquante ans, qui me font majeur par les loix du monde.'

¹³⁶ Ibid., 140v. De Lancre's criticism of Pyrrhonian scepticism ('tout ainsi qu'affirmer, qu'on ne peut rien affirmer, est une espece d'affirmation') is in itself an argument in favour of the Pyrrhonian position of *ataxaria*.

¹³⁷ Ibid., 141v. 'L'oeil qui est le plus noble & comme le Roy de nos sens, peut-estre eludé en son operation, voire du tout empesché par l'obscurité des tenebres, par l'alteration de l'air [. . .] & par mille autres empeschemens naturels & artificiels, vrais & prestigieux, d'hommes & de demons.'

¹³⁸ Ibid., 149v. 'Celuy qui ne se recognoist malde ne peut chercher Medecin, ny accepter aucun remede.'

¹³⁹ Ibid., 527r. 'Nul de nous n'est au matin celuy d'hier; moy-mesme en escrivant que tout se change, ie suis changé avant l'avoir escrit.'

¹⁴⁰ De Lancre, *Tableau de l'inconstance des mauvais anges*, fo. 11r. 'Enquoy lecteur tu me pardonneras, si ayant donné mesme nom au premier tome de mes discours, i'ay voulu continuer ce mesme titre en ce second: estant certain qu'il ny a rien de plus inconstant & volage que les Demons.'

that 'I have earlier described to France the inconstancy of men, and compared all nations to establish which was more or less inconstant. But I now will describe to you things of much greater weight and consideration, namely the inconstancy of evil angels and demons'.¹⁴¹ Explaining the deeds of the devil, De Lancre later insisted, was like 'using one of the little glow worms that shine in the night to bring light to the whole universe, which even the sun can barely do'.¹⁴² The protean nature of the demonic did not disturb De Lancre. Rather, he embraced it in all its contradictory guises.¹⁴³ And with that, Stephens' argument for the need of witchcraft as empirical proof for the supernatural is dissipated, at least so far as De Lancre is concerned. De Lancre lacked the Aristotelian framework, which had problematized the existence of demons in the first place and which made such empiricism necessary. Instead, De Lancre's philosophy, with its emphasis on inconstancy, was marked by the absence of a framework.

De Lancre was, in no straightforward sense, a follower of either Delrio or Montaigne. Whether the inquisitor in Delrio needed the example of Montaigne's 'tumultuous and vacillating mind' is a moot point. We will never know whether De Lancre himself saw any parallels between Montaigne's 'simple crude' witness of the New World and his own witnesses of the witches' Sabbath. We can only be certain that De Lancre saw parallels between the people of the New World and the Pays de Labourd.¹⁴⁴ Perhaps, De Lancre himself did not fully grasp the extent of his debts. Nevertheless, Delrio's criticism of Montaigne forced him to confront his inconsistent borrowings, when he discussed the claims that travel to the witches' Sabbath was only illusory:

Among those who subscribe to this opinion, one counts [Andrea] Alciato and many other wise men. To my regret, Martin Delrio, after having listed many heretics of the last hundred years, such as Luther, Melancthon, and others, adds (speaking of the French) the *Sieur de Montaigne*, to whom he himself is related on the side of his mother, who was descended from the Spanish López family, which surprises me.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴¹ Ibid., fo. ā2v-ā3r. 'I'ay cydevant representé à la France l'inconstance des hommes, & ay mis en comparaison toutes les nations, pour sçavoir quelle estoit plus ou moins inconstante. Mais maintenant ie vous represente des choses de beaucoup plus haute levee & consideration, qui est l'inconstance des mauvais Anges & Demons.'

¹⁴² Ibid., 110. 'Quiconque veut esclairer les actions du Diable es mysteres du sortilege; c'est tout autant que s'il pensoit avec un de ces petit vers luisans qui esclairent la nuit, esclairent universellement tout le monde, ce qu'à peine peut faire le soleil.'

¹⁴³ See also Sophie Houdard's very appropriately titled essay 'Pierre de Lancre et le diable protégé' in: S. Houdard, *Les Sciences du diable* (Paris, 1992,) 161-216.

¹⁴⁴ De Lancre, *Tableau de l'inconstance des mauvais anges*, 38-9.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 80-1. 'En cette opinion on compte Alciat & plusieurs autres gens doctes: & ne suis marry que de ce que Del Rio apres y avoir logé plusieurs Heretiques au deçà de cent ans, comme Luther, Melancthon, & autres, il met (parlant des François) le sieur de Montagne, duquel mesme, à ce qu'on dict, il estoit aucunement parent du costé de sa mere; qui estoit descendue de la famille Espagnolle des Loppez, dequoy ie m'esmerveille.'

De Lancre's treatment of Montaigne, as even Pearl noted, was surprisingly gentle. But, as should be clear by now, it cannot simply be explained by De Lancre's distant links to Montaigne by marriage. And it is not only Montaigne's relationship with Delrio that is used to exonerate both. Delrio had cited Juan de Maldonado in his support, and De Lancre used the Spanish Jesuit to build another bridge between two contradictory intellectual influences:

Because after Delrio has held the contrary, namely that the said transport [to the Sabbath] is real and happens bodily, naming all the philosophers, lawyers and theologians who are of this opinion, which he holds for certain and indubitable, and entirely conform to the beliefs of the Catholic, Apostolic and Roman Church, he says that it was also the opinion of [Juan de] Maldonado and that he had taken it out of his writings. But Maldonado was the heart and soul of the *Sieur* de Montaigne, who held it for sufficient that when they were together in Rome, and the said *Sieur* held some opinion which he could not well defend, he considered it a good way-out to say that this was the opinion of Father Maldonado, believing him to be one of the most knowledgeable men of his time and of his acquaintance and his close friend. He based his beliefs entirely on Maldonado's opinions.¹⁴⁶

This second revelation was again used to gloss over differences in opinion, the implication being that if Montaigne had known of Maldonado's manuscripts, he would have changed his mind. Montaigne's travel journal, rediscovered in the late eighteenth century, confirms that Montaigne and Maldonado had met in Rome, and indeed elsewhere.¹⁴⁷ The source of De Lancre's personal knowledge

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 81. 'Car apres que Del Rio a soustenu du contraire, & que ledict transport se faict reellement & corporellement, & nommé tout un feuillet de Philosophes, Jurisconsultes & Theologiens qui sont de cet advis, lequel il tient pour certain & indubitable, du tout conforme à la creance de l'Eglise Catholique, Apostolique & Romaine, il dict que c'estoit aussi l'advis de Maldonat, & qu'il l'a tiré de ses escrits. Or Maldonat estoit le cœur & l'ame du sieur de Montaigne, qui le tenoit pour si suffisant, qu'estans à Rome ensemble, lors que ledict sieur soustenoit quelque advis du pere Maldonat, le croyant un des plus suffisans hommes de son temps & de sa cognoissance & son intime amy: il appuyait tout à faict sa creance sur ses opinions.'

¹⁴⁷ The journal that Montaigne kept during his travels through Italy in 1580–81 was rediscovered in 1771. See Frame's 'Note on the Travel Journal', F 1049–55. Montaigne also met Juan de Maldonado at Epernay on 8 September 1580, where the two men discussed the baths of Spa. Cf. F 1058. Maldonado (1533–83) came to Rome for the election of the new Superior General. J. M. Prat SJ, *Maldonat et l'Université de Paris au XVIe siècle* (Paris, 1856), 475–89. On the one issue they are known to have discussed in Rome, the two men agreed: 'On the Wednesday after Easter, when Monsieur Maldonado, who was then in Rome, asked me what opinion I had of the mores of this city, and especially in the matter of religion, he found his judgment entirely in conformity with mine: that the common people were incomparably more devout in France than here; but the rich, and especially the courtiers, a little less' (F 1171). Naturally, Montaigne's relationship with Maldonado has been imaginatively reworked by Catholic apologists: C. Sclafert, 'Montaigne et Maldonat', *Bulletin de Littérature Ecclésiastique*, 52 (1951), 65–93, 129–46.

is unknown—Antoinette Louppes seems an unlikely source in this instance—but the purpose of the revelations (namely, to reconcile seemingly opposing intellectual debts) is perfectly clear. And De Lancre's wanderings continue to twist and turn, now in an attempt to soften Delrio's tone:

In truth, Delrio never exactly says that Montaigne is a heretic but he says that Luther and Melancthon do not believe in the reality of transportation and that several Catholics, and Montaigne among others, have followed the opinion of these two heretics.¹⁴⁸

And still not satisfied, he added to the 1613, second edition the following line:

But the truth is that the *Sieur* de Montaigne in his chapter *On Cripples* makes it seem at the start that he does not believe all what has been said on witchcraft and witches but in the end he says that he would not want to depart from the common opinion nor the laws.¹⁴⁹

In his second witchcraft treatise, *L'Incredulité et mescreance du sortilege plainement convaincue* (1622), De Lancre could not help but return to Delrio and Montaigne. De Lancre, as we have seen, now condemned Delrio more strongly for not showing Montaigne the respect he had shown to other relatives. 'They say that the *Sieur* de Montaigne was his relative on the side of his mother who was Spanish of the house of López'.¹⁵⁰ But De Lancre also had now discovered how Montaigne should be read:

But to say what seems to me, the truth is that the *Sieur* de Montaigne gave himself the liberty to speak and put down in writing, neither settled opinions on whatever the subject was, nor agreed with the books but simply his conceptions, which when they had been convicted of absurdity, impertinence and falsehood, he apologized and thought to escape by saying that he had written only for his family and friends, as if others than them must not see his book, and that he desired (he says in his preface) to show himself to them completely naked if it had been possible. And thus he did not present

¹⁴⁸ De Lancre, *Tableau de l'inconstance des mauvais anges*, 81. 'A la verité il ne dict pas que Montagne soit heretique, mais il dit que Luther & Melancthon ne croyoient le transport reel, & que plusieurs Catholiques, & Montagne entre autres, ont suivy l'opinion de ces deux heretiques.'

¹⁴⁹ P. de Lancre, *Tableau de l'inconstance des mauvais anges et demons* (Paris, 1613), 77-78. 'Mais la verité est que le sieur de Montagne au ch. Des Boiteux faict semblant au commencement de ne croire pas tout ce qu'on dit du sortilege & des sorciers, mais en fin il dit qu'il ne se veut point esloigner de l'opinion commune ny des loix.'

¹⁵⁰ De Lancre, *L'Incredulité*, 340. 'Bien qu'on die que le sieur de Montaigne estoit son parent du costé de sa mere qui estoit Espagnolle de la maison de Lopes.'

as true this proposition [on the imagination] but leaves all things in doubt, although he seems to boldly and absolutely decide them.¹⁵¹

It is this liberty and freethinking that De Lancre had also granted to himself.

V

Thinking with Montaigne has opened up some of the more unusual foundations of demonological thought. As with Montaigne himself, the sources, arguments and beliefs of demonologists too should not be confined to a single theory. Martin Delrio's use of scepticism did not serve to destroy all reason. By reducing the natural to the explicable, scepticism broadened the scope of activity open to devils and demons. The realm of the unknown was theirs. Delrio's concern for witchcraft was motivated by a desire to divide religion from superstition, true from false belief, and to assign both popular practices *and* the activities of witches to the latter category.

The foundations of De Lancre's treatise are in many ways the opposite of Delrio's. It was based on witness accounts rather than texts; on credulity, rather than scepticism. Where Delrio's scepticism was prompted by a criterion of knowledge—Delrio was sceptical of what he knew to be false—De Lancre's credulity was founded on the absence of one. De Lancre's epistemology was based on a belief in the inconstancy of all things except God. Such a framework allowed De Lancre's mind freedom to roam. The inconstancy of his subject matter gave him the leeway to take the opinion of children and teenagers seriously without having to worry about contradictions between them; a devil's penis could come in all shapes and sizes. De Lancre was no 'fideist sceptic'. He believed, because he did. Witchcraft gave him the coveted opportunity to speak 'a bit too openly' about sex, as he warned his reader.¹⁵² It allowed him to dwell on female sexuality in middle age and again in retirement on his estate in Loubens, his 'Mont Parnasse de mes Muses'.¹⁵³ In 1627 De Lancre paid a publisher to have forty copies of his witchcraft works reprinted, not intended for sale, but 'for his personal pleasure'.¹⁵⁴ Even more than shared intellectual

¹⁵¹ Ibid. 'Or pour en dire ce qui m'en semble, la verité est que le sieur de Montaigne se donnoit liberté de dire & coucher par escrit non des opinions réglées de quelque subiect que ce fut, ny concertées avec les livres: ains simplement ses conceptions, lesquelles quand elles eussent esté convaincuës d'absurdité, d'impertinence & de fausseté, il excusoit & pensoit eschapper, en disant qu'il n'avoit escrit que pour ses parens & amis, comme si autres qu'eux seuls n'eussent deu voir son livre, & comme desirant à ceux-là (dit-il dans son epistre liminaire) se monstrier tout nud s'il eust esté possible. Ainsi il n'a pas donné pour veritable ceste proposition [. . .] laissant ainsi toutes choses en doute, quoy qu'il semble hardiment & absolument les decider.'

¹⁵² De Lancre, *Tableau de l'inconstance des mauvais anges*, fo. e4v. 'si parlant de l'accouplement i'ay esté forcé d'en parler un peu trop ouvertement.'

¹⁵³ De Lancre, *L'Incredulité*, 1.

¹⁵⁴ J. Delpit, 'Pierre de L'Ancre et la sorcellerie; a propos d'une rareté bibliographique', *Bulletin du bibliophile et du bibliothécaire* (1885), 81-9 (at 83). 'son contentement particulier'. De Lancre carried the cost of this republication. It should also be pointed out that, as the contract stipulated, the copies could not be sold, because of the printer's privilege conceded to the original publisher Nicolas Buon.

debts, De Lancre's revelation of the relationship of Montaigne and Delrio reveals in turn the individuality of these authors and the different journeys on which they embarked. In neither of these two authors do we find witchcraft theory as a form of resistance to scepticism. Their different epistemology underscores very different intellectual and personal preoccupations. Any scholar of early modern witchcraft should be sceptical of grand narratives—and remind themselves that the devil is in the details.