

# 14 • Cartography and Literature in Early Modern France

NANCY BOUZRARA AND TOM CONLEY

In the concluding remarks to a major study of geography and the Renaissance, Numa Broc insists that literary creations are the finest proof of a revolution in cartographic awareness of the world from the age of the incunabulum to the early years of the seventeenth century. The works of François Rabelais, Michel de Montaigne, William Shakespeare, and Miguel de Cervantes, he contends, evince how geography and its spatial representations transformed inherited literary genres. He implies that cartography is especially felt in French literature because its authors, most of them humanists to a greater or lesser degree, were either affiliated or had contact with maps and their mapmakers. Their familiarity with maps exerted considerable influence on the vision and design of their works.<sup>1</sup>

Cartography had an impact on French literature multifariously. France had been a center of manuscript culture in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries; as a result, when printed books gained ascendancy, they drew inspiration from prevailing styles and forms of the illuminated manuscript.<sup>2</sup> Collaborations among artists and printers spawned the creation of composite objects, illustrated printed texts often colored by hand, that fostered experiment and novelty. Painters who executed topographic views for manuscripts, such as those seen in landscapes in the tradition of the International Style of painting and illumination, included artists of the caliber of the Limbourg brothers (Paul, Jean, and Herman) and Jean Fouquet. In the “Très riches heures du Duc de Berry,” the Limbourgs included a detailed map of Rome in a circular surround. Fouquet’s painted miniature city views and their surrounding countryside appeared in the books of “Heures d’Étienne Chevalier” and other manuscripts. In these works and others, a protocartographic consciousness is strongly felt.<sup>3</sup>

A second and related cause of cartographic impact on French literature owes to the activities of the School of Fontainebleau from the early 1530s to the 1560s. To make his kingdom the envy of the world, the Valois monarch François I (who reigned from 1515 to 1547) beckoned accomplished Italian engravers, woodcutters, and painters (Leonardo da Vinci, Rosso Fiorentino, Francesco Primaticcio, Nicolò dell’Abate, and others) to

refurbish royal residences and inaugurate decorative projects with iconographies reaching into pagan and classical myth.<sup>4</sup> His gallery at Fontainebleau became a model for innovation not only in painting and relief sculpture, but also in the poetry written by the Pléiade, a group of erudite writers who shaped their verse as if to imitate the tortuous quality of what they saw in these new spaces. The library at Fontainebleau housed lavish manuscripts that artisans covered with leather bindings of complex geometrical form. The reconstruction and design of Azay-le-Rideau, Chenonceau, Blois, and other châteaux along the River Loire attested to a shift from the fortified castle to the regal estate. Their layout and the design of their gardens were intimately tied to the art of mapping.<sup>5</sup>

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1. Numa Broc, *La géographie de la Renaissance (1420–1620)* (Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale, 1980).

2. In *Early Netherlandish Painting: Its Origins and Character*, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1953), Erwin Panofsky underscores the eminence of the International Style of painting and illumination in fifteenth-century France. In his *Renaissance and Resuscitations in Western Art*, 2 vols. (Stockholm: Almqvist and Wiksell, 1960), Panofsky posits that Italians were most likely to experience a Renaissance because, in the *quattrocento*, a new sense of historical distance from antiquity was gained through the rebirth of classical perspective. At that time France held more to Gothic styles, a point advanced by James S. Ackerman in a study of the history of the design of Milan Cathedral: *Distance Points: Essays in Theory and Renaissance Art and Architecture* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1991).

3. See Millard Meiss, *French Painting in the Time of Jean de Berry: The Limbourgs and Their Contemporaries*, 2 vols. (New York: G. Braziller, 1974), and François Avril, ed., *Jean Fouquet: Peintre et enlumineur du XV<sup>e</sup> siècle*, exhibition catalog (Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale de France, 2003).

4. On innovation in the printed book and the impact of Fontainebleau, see Henri Zerner, *L’art de la Renaissance en France: L’invention du classicisme* (Paris: Flammarion, 1996). The wealth of illustrated books is shown in Ruth Mortimer, comp., *Catalogue of Books and Manuscripts*, pt. 1, *French 16th Century Books*, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1964), a point of reference essential for any work on cartography and literature in sixteenth-century France.

5. See Anthony Blunt, *Art and Architecture in France, 1500–1700* (Harmondsworth, Eng.: Penguin, 1953). Zerner, in *L’art de la Renaissance*, studies book covers of the Fontainebleau School. Thierry Mariage, in *The World of André Le Nôtre*, trans. Graham Larkin (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), argues that the French castle and garden were influenced by cartography, a point that

A third cause was the breadth of the humanistic programs launched by the poets and artists under the patronage of François I. Among them prevailed a wish to bind a single nation under one vernacular idiom, French, that encouraged literary experiment exploiting pictorial, architectural, and cartographic forms. Humanists waged a “war” during the years 1510–40 to establish a literary heritage of writers and authors of decidedly French scion. They praised their nation by enriching the vulgar tongue and informing readers and listeners of a deeply embedded geographical heritage within and outside the borders of France. In this ambiance the *Geography* of Ptolemy was known and disseminated. A bedrock of learned cartography, its gazetteer provided place-names that went with the myths the poets were resurrecting in their verse.

Fourth, under the commissions of François I, oceanic travel and exploration brought to France some unique images of the New World. The reports from the travels of Giovanni da Verrazzano, Ferdinand Magellan, and Jacques Cartier were quickly put on maps. The Dieppe School, based at the port along the northern coast of Normandy, influenced writers who were familiar with their sea charts.<sup>6</sup> Fresh information in both textual material and images was quickly absorbed into new modes of travel writing. Two expeditions were noteworthy. Nicolas Durand Villegagnon’s modest settlement of Protestants at Fort Coligny at the mouth of the bay of Rio de Janeiro and René Goulaine de Laudonnière’s group of émigrés on the eastern coast of Florida were colonial failures that spawned precocious material relating to the ethnography of encounter. Literature related to these ventures was illustrated by the engraver and cartographer Theodor de Bry (who was born in Liège and later worked in Strasbourg and Frankfurt). The copperplate images of his Lesser Voyages series (1598–1628), drawn for a Protestant audience, include maps among scenes of encounters with the habitat of the New World.

Fifth, Rouen, Paris, and Lyons were cultural centers in which a great deal of information about navigation and mapping was in active circulation. Investors underwrote overseas trade in South America that yielded a lucrative commerce in brazil wood. A network of French traders and translators extended from the coastline of Brazil to the inner regions.<sup>7</sup> When civic leaders of Rouen prepared a royal entry for Henri II’s visit to the city in 1551, artists and artisans constructed an Edenlike landscape of Brazil and its peoples. Space was replete with exotic trees, long houses fashioned to copy the way the Tupinambá had constructed theirs, men and women at rest in hammocks strung between palm trees, and canoes paddled by locals wearing the plumed garb of Indians.<sup>8</sup> The same metropolitan centers speculated on what they learned in the time extending between the first voyage of Jacques Cartier to Canada in 1535 and those of Samuel de Champlain

in the early 1600s. North American beavers, first seen in maps of the Dieppe School, were avidly sought for the inner fur of their pelts. Commerce in felt hats quickly developed and lasted long into the seventeenth century in much of Europe. In cosmographies, accounts of the Canadian encounters and the new trade were illustrated with maps. Before Champlain completed his survey of the lands and natives of the estuary of the St. Lawrence, the new lands in the north had already become a literary topic.<sup>9</sup>

Paris and its universities were a center for illuminators, artists, and printers. The Collège de France, the free university founded by François I, was the site where the humanist cartographer Oronce Fine—also translator, editor, engraver, and writer—was named the first royal professor of mathematics. Before the middle of the sixteenth century, printers in Lyons, among them Jean de Tournes and Guillaume Rouillé, specialized in illustrated books filled with woodcuts executed by French artists informed by cartographic methods. They drew landscapes and city views for books of poetry, essays, histories, and compendia. As of the 1540s, cartographic images in woodcut were occasionally embedded in their textual mass.<sup>10</sup>

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Hilary Ballon also makes in her work on monuments and spaces designed at the end of the sixteenth century: *The Paris of Henri IV: Architecture and Urbanism* (New York: Architectural History Foundation, 1991).

6. Work of the Dieppe School is represented in Michel Mollat and Monique de La Roncière, *Sea Charts of the Early Explorers: 13th to 17th Century*, trans. L. Le R. Dethan (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1984).

7. Claude Lévi-Strauss, interview-introduction to *Histoire d’un voyage fait en la terre du Brésil (1578)*, by Jean de Léry, ed. Frank Lestringant (Paris: Livre de Poche, 1994), 5–14.

8. The illustrations of the royal entry are found in *Cest la deduction du somptueux ordre plaisantz spectacles et magnifiques theatres (1551)*; facsimile ed., *L’Entrée de Henri II à Rouen 1550*, ed. and intro. Margaret M. McGowan (Amsterdam: Theatrum Orbis Terrarum; New York: Johnson Reprint, 1970). Gayle K. Brunelle, in *The New World Merchants of Rouen, 1559–1630* (Kirksville, Mo.: Sixteenth Century Journal Publishers, 1991), documents the economic infrastructure that is represented in trade on maps from the Dieppe School.

9. The tale of Robertval in Marguerite de Navarre’s *Heptaméron* takes place in Canada. The episode is illustrated, furthermore, in a map in André Thevet’s *La cosmographie universelle (1575)*. The literary dimensions of Champlain’s cartography and allegorical mapping in the latter years of the seventeenth century is taken up in Jeffrey N. Peters, *Mapping Discord: Allegorical Cartography in Early Modern French Writing* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2004). The beaver trade is taken up in Cornelius J. Jaenen, ed., *The French Regime in the Upper Country of Canada during the Seventeenth Century* (Toronto: Champlain Society in cooperation with the government of Ontario, 1996); Bruce G. Trigger, *Natives and Newcomers: Canada’s ‘Heroic Age’ Reconsidered* (Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1985); and James Axtell, *Natives and Newcomers: The Cultural Origins of North America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001).

10. The *Mappe-monde nouvelle papistique* is exemplary. See pp. 390–92, figure 11.5, and chapter 12, note 31 (p. 410), in this volume.

Sixth, the Wars of Religion did not thwart the creation of writing related to cartography as might be suggested by the bleak economic picture of strife consuming the last four decades of the century. Polemical literature, *mazarinades*, pamphlets, and *discours* (invective poems invented by Pierre de Ronsard and later exploited by Agrippa d'Aubigné) resembled “theaters” and “menippean satires” in which were described and drawn comic pictures, some with cartographic material, of civil conflict. Henri IV, the king of Navarre who acceded to the throne in 1594 and soon ended the wars when he underwrote the Edict of Nantes in 1598, was known among writers as *un visuel*, a gifted visual thinker who used maps to his advantage to gain military victories over better-armed and more sizable Catholic opponents. His invention of a body of military experts, the *ingénieurs du roi*, was intended to revamp the defense of national borders. Their responsibilities included drafting site plans, topographies, and city views. The latter exerted influence on scientific and philosophical literature of the early seventeenth century in which were mixed the idiolects and iconographies of engineering, philosophy, and logistics.

Starting from these causes, an assessment of cartography and literature in early modern France can logically follow two paths of inquiry. Because many literary works emanated from the same sources and places as did maps, it is important to estimate how major cartographers were tied to literary creation. And conversely, the interpreter of the literary canon can discern how maps were internalized in new genres and styles that extended from the late fifteenth century to the completion of René Descartes's *Discours de la méthode* (1637), a founding work of modern literature and philosophy.

### THE CARTOGRAPHER AS WRITER

The importance of Oronce Fine in the cartographic sphere is attested.<sup>11</sup> A translator, mathematician, and engineer, he innovated in the production of illustrated books from 1517 to 1555. His copious work extends from an edition of Georg von Peurbach's treatise of astronomy (1516) to Fine's introductions to mathematics, astrology, cosmography, and solar calculations. His *Protomathesis* (1532), an important work in the history of the illustrated book (which includes a map of France), has uncommon literary resonance. In the didactic text and illustration of this work, along with his Latin editions of Euclid's *Geometry*, is found the measure of a poetic form. The translator was a geographer, a writer committed to crafting his sentences with a pair of dividers in order to obtain stylistic clarity and balance. Comparative treatment of the Latin of Fine's *De mundi sphaera* (1542) and its French version, *Le sphère du monde* (1551), reveals a technical prose of grace and elegance that not only in-

forms but also draws decorative elements into its verbal and printed texture. It is a model that merits comparison with the prose of other writers who domesticate technical vocabularies (literally, jargon) for an audience trained in vernacular French that would otherwise be incapable of rendering scientific concepts in its idiolect. Fine's texts and maps count among those of masters of a scientific style that merits comparison with Jean Martin's peerless translation of Vitruvius Pollio (1547), which includes illustrations by mannerist Jean Goujon, and Philibert Delorme in his *Premier tome de l'architecture* (1567), an illustrated technical manual written in pellucid French.<sup>12</sup>

Fine's writing brings forward a compelling paradox. The allegorical frame of his poetry is based on mathematical models that belong to the 1530s, the years in which he crafted his cordiform maps. In the 1550s the effects of the verse seemed antiquated in comparison to the emerging style of the Pléiade, but at the same time they also anticipated the scientific poetry that would take command in the early seventeenth century. At the end of *Le sphère du monde*, in the pages just following the presentation of a woodcut map of southern France and an explanation of the way that a cordiform map can be drawn, Fine appends a lengthy eulogy praising the seven liberal arts that places a special emphasis on mathematics. It is written in a compact measure and bears traces of the gentle didacticism of reformer Clément Marot and the traveler-poet Jean Parmentier. In the same way as the *rondeau* he composed in praise of Euclid that serves as a paraph to his edition of *Liure singulier & vtil, touchant l'art et pratique de geometrie* (1542) by Carolus Bovillus (Charles de Bouelles), Fine's poem teaches by way of a schematic form. To a strong degree Fine persisted in adhering to an older model that anticipated a future *mathesis* of language, a literature of engineering informed by the art of cartographic projection that would mark René Descartes. If the classical age of French literature was based on Aristotle and Euclid, Oronce Fine remained one of its avatars in the ways he “compassed” his texts with an eye to figural form and to geometry. The reader is drawn to the figural aspect of his characters, which also mark his single and double cordiform world maps and the map of France cut in wood in 1531 and 1536. The

11. Robert W. Karrow, in *Mapmakers of the Sixteenth Century and Their Maps: Bio-Bibliographies of the Cartographers of Abraham Ortelius, 1570* (Chicago: For the Newberry Library by Speculum Orbis Press, 1993), 168–90, notes that there is no gainsaying in stating that Fine was one of the great European cartographers of his generation, a cartographer who defined French work for much of the century. See also Robert Brun, *Le livre français illustré de la Renaissance: Étude suivie du catalogue des principaux livres à figures du XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Paris: A. et J. Picard, 1969).

12. For the importance of Delorme, see the conclusion to Zerner, *L'art de la Renaissance*.

observer discerns miniature signatures that prick the writing with rebuses and iconic shapes of simultaneously discursive and pictorial design.

Guillaume Postel is known to historians as the author of hermetic works of mystical inspiration and of allegories building historical geographies aimed at describing universal salvation and redemption. A polymath and a cosmographer, he composed a vernacular treatise titled *Des merveilles du monde, et principalement des admirables choses des Indes et du Nouveau Monde* (1553). Developing along the lines of his *De universitate liber* (1552), it tells of the creation and of the distribution over the globe of land (to the north) and water (to the south). For Postel, God placed on the surface of the world marvels that aimed at catching the attention of the human eye. They would be at once visible and legible signs of the principles informing the process of creation. According to Pelletier, in this way Postel differed from other historical geographers who merely considered the marvel of the earth “in itself and make of it something uncommon and worthy of wonder.”<sup>13</sup> He pushed further, searching for laws that order systems of creation and of the allegory of a universal Christian world by which the surface of one sphere, the Old World, would fold over another, that of the New World.<sup>14</sup> The textual allegory has its visual counterpart in his *Polo aptata nova charta universi* (first edition, no longer extant, 1578), a world map of two hemispheres based on a polar projection (see fig. 47.6). In this profusely illustrated and annotated map, a rare work of vision and science, Postel used cartographic means to shape his writings on the beginnings of the world and its eventual redemption.

The meridian of Postel’s world map is drawn through Paris before bisecting the upper arm of the African continent. The line follows this trajectory because Paris, notes Postel, “is the place where, more than any other, multiplies the man of knowledge.”<sup>15</sup> His nod to the city betrays a consciousness of the nation as a privileged region in the world at large. The sense of a national place with an intellectually generative center is evinced in his writing and in a map of France (1570) that appears next to another, by Petrus Plancius, in Maurice Bouguereau’s *Theatre francoys* (1594). A national space, national language, and national legacy are drawn into the allegory and science of the writer and the cartographer alike.

Allegory is a trait of the hand of Jean II de Gourmont, the engraver who cut the woodblocks for Postel’s world map. Gourmont, a printseller working in the shop of printer Christoffel Plantijn, is best known for the figure of a fool whose face is drawn in the shape of a world map (see fig. 53.4). A personification of the “vanity of vanities,” it appeared in Latin in Flanders, with a truncated cordiform map in the place of the face, and mostly in French in Paris, where it displayed a miniature Ortelian

world map. It ties satirical cartography to similar strains of literature. A portrait fashioned from a common homily in Ecclesiastes, the map-in-the-man is designed to make the cartographic figure stare down the viewer, who would otherwise wish to have an unimpeded gaze upon the projection. The map inspires vanity, a topic that writers exploit when they ponder the power of curiosity. The latter, on the one hand, is needed for any knowledge and experience of the world, but, on the other, it tampers with the secrets of God’s creations. The same tension marks an intermediate genre of works, many appearing after the middle of the sixteenth century, dedicated to the exploration of “the secrets of nature.”

With uncanny effect, Gourmont’s image inverts Peter Apian’s celebrated allegory, inspirational for poets and geographers alike throughout most of the sixteenth century, that compared the portrait of a human face to a world map and a city view to an isolated eye or ear.<sup>16</sup> Apian’s similitude had affirmed the nature of curiosity by having the viewer seek to discern relations between cartographic parts and wholes. Gourmont’s personification suggests that it would be vainglorious to do so. Comparison of the one to the other shows how analogy, a commanding principle of humanistic writing, is called into question in the way the map exploits satire to champion reason. Yet an analogy between the fool and the world map is used to deny the virtue of analogy. The wit of the image is felt in the souvenirs of maps abounding in the picture. The cordiform frame of the Latin version of the map makes the two arcs that meet at the bottom of the frame resemble a wry smile. The bells at the tips of the madcap resemble terrestrial spheres fastened by an equinoctial band, and the globe at the end of the fool’s staff (inscribed with *Vanitas vanitatum et omnia vanitas*) appears to be yet another world that both is and is not a world.

Michel de Montaigne exploits the same type of double bind in his long and highly geographic essay “De la vanité,” in which he takes impish delight in writing about vanity as if he were turning autobiography into an itinerary, an experience of himself in the European space that he had seen in a voyage to Italy in 1580–81. Satirizing itself by addressing the vanity of writing about vanity, the essay becomes an account of the experience of geography: “Who will fail to notice,” Montaigne observes at the outset, “that I’ve taken a road by which, ceaselessly and

13. Monique Pelletier, *Cartographie de la France et du monde de la Renaissance au siècle des Lumières* (Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale de France, 2001), 14.

14. Frank Lestringant, “Cosmologie et *mirabilia* à la Renaissance: L’exemple de Guillaume Postel,” in his *Écrire le monde à la Renaissance: Quinze études sur Rabelais, Postel, Bodin et la littérature géographique* (Caen: Paradigme, 1993), 225–52.

15. Cited by Pelletier, *Cartographie de la France*, 12.

16. See p. 404 in this volume.

without labor [*travail*], I will go for as much as there will be paper and ink in the world?"<sup>17</sup>

Montaigne's question sums up a good deal of literary cartography conceived in the mode of textual maps of travel, of "route-enhancing" texts that are at once itineraries and tales of adventure and encounter. In his *Poetics*, a work known to many humanists, Aristotle argued that good literature is made not from psychology but from human action, movement, and forces that men and women apply to the world in their midst. French writers were aware of this principle by virtue of the presence of guidebooks and *itineraria* that cartographers used when they put place-names on topographic maps. Such is Charles Estienne's *Guide des chemins de France* (1552), a book of toponyms and routes that Mercator consulted when he was drawing his maps of France.<sup>18</sup> Estienne's guidebook reaches back at once to the *routier*, to surveyors' maps and accounts (such as those of Jacques Signot), and to depictions of notable places (in the pocket guides of Gilles Corrozet and Symphorien Champier) at the same time it projects forward, too, to François de Belleforest's *La cosmographie universelle* (1575) and Maurice Bouguereau's atlas of France, *Le theatre francoys* (1594).

The guidebook is a paradigm or patron form for a good deal of literature, including François Rabelais's *Pantagruel* (1532–33 and 1542), a work of various geographical and social encounters that constitute the education or "institution" of a young prince who happens to be a very gentle giant. It also takes the form of a psycho-geography, a mapping of regional types and traits, in Charles Estienne and Jean Liébault's popular *Maison rustique* (first edition, 1564), a manual for earnest country living informed by material taken from geographers. The work was quickly expanded and translated. It became the model for a genre that yokes mapping, practical knowledge, topography, garden design, geology, and reformed ideology. It includes the elements of a regional psycho-geography that expands on Aristotle's *Physics*, in which complexions of humans are calibrated according to the latitudes at which they live and work. In the description of what the good father of the household must consider when hiring personnel who hail from different regions, humor and nation are correlated:

The Norman wants to be left in peace, and the Picard in his passion. The real Frenchman [from the Ile-de-France] is prompt and inventive, but he hastens only when he has to. You can choose between the subtle Bryais and the stupid Bryais. The Limousin is careful and thrifty, but if you don't watch out, he'll turn more profits to himself than to you. Gascons are passionate and irritable. The haughty Provençal detests being ordered about. The Poitevin is quarrelsome, and the Auvergnac enduring through time and fortune; but if he's aware of your gains, he'll try to get them if he can. The

Angevin, Tourangeois, and Manceau are keen, sharp, crafty with their money. The Chartrain, Beauceron, and Solognois are hardworking, peaceful, clean, and reserved. . . . Both the father of the family and the hired overseer have to reckon with all of these complexions, from the worst to the best . . . ; considering that the lands are diverse and especially enjoy what agrees with them, so too are some people better suited to one thing than any other.<sup>19</sup>

For Estienne, human character can be attributed to geographic causes. The imprint of humanistic cartography is felt in the discourse and its style.

It cannot be said that the largely unknown but seminal cartographer Jean Jolivet was given to writing, but his maps indeed share an uncommon relation with nascent geographical literature. Jolivet executed a woodcut map of France in the style of Oronce Fine that appeared in 1560, 1565, and 1570 as "a description of the Gauls"<sup>20</sup> before it appeared in every edition of Abraham Ortelius's *Theatrum orbis terrarum* and figured in Bouguereau's *Theatre*. In 1545 he drew two topographical maps, one of the Holy Land and another of the Berry, the latter to inform Marguerite de Navarre, sister of François I, patroness of the arts and gifted writer of novellas and poetry, of the nature of the space of her nation.<sup>21</sup> She might have applied her experience and what she saw to her unfinished *Heptaméron* (1559), a masterwork built upon principles of Pauline love and generosity, two elements of an ideology integral to the political iconography of the royalty.<sup>22</sup> The seventy-two stories and the discussions that their tellers and listeners engage in draw on legend, stray facts, and scripture. Three-fourths of the novellas take place in France, and by and large the sum yields a mosaic confirming the geographical variety of the nation. If Jolivet's maps figured in the composition of the *Heptaméron*, they were coordinated with the appeal that humanist mapmakers of the 1530s and 1540s made to Saint Paul, the Psalms, and the Song of Songs to promote geo-

17. Michel de Montaigne, *Essais*, ed. Albert Thibaudet (Paris: Gallimard, 1950), 1057.

18. See Bonnerot's introduction to his critical edition of Charles Estienne, *La Guide des chemins de France de 1553*, 2 vols., ed. Jean Bonnerot (1936; reprinted Geneva: Slatkine, 1978), and Frank Lestringant, "Suivre La Guide," in *Cartes et figures de la terre* (Paris: Centre Georges Pompidou, 1980), 424–35.

19. Charles Estienne and Jean Liébault, *L'agriculture et maison rustique* (Paris, 1572), fol. 11r.

20. See figure 48.3; the entry for Jolivet in Karrow, *Mapmakers of the Sixteenth Century*, 321–23; and François de Dainville, "Jean Jolivet's 'Description des Gaules,'" *Imago Mundi* 18 (1964): 45–52.

21. Pelletier, *Cartographie de la France*, 18.

22. See Anne-Marie Lecoq, *François I<sup>er</sup> imaginaire: Symbolique et politique à l'aube de la Renaissance française* (Paris: Macula, 1987), who studies the production of art, imagery, and public events through the evangelical filter of the court poets in the early years of the king's regime (1515–25).

graphical curiosity. The queen of Navarre's espousal of a reformed, Gallican religion based on evangelical principles offered at once a basis for an emotive geography tied to a textual or linguistic map of France. Jolivet's presence in Marguerite's world implies that politics, religion, and geographical representation were intimately related.

### A COSMOGRAPHER FOR THREE KINGS: ANDRÉ THEVET

The copious writing of cosmographer André Thevet melds literature and cartography. The "cosmographer of three kings" (Henri II, Charles IX, and Henri III) inaugurated what might properly be called a literature that draws directly from cartographic material. His first major publication, *Cosmographie de Levant* (1554), recounts the author's trip to the Orient and his discovery of unforeseen things, people, oddities, and "singularities" noted along the way. Based on the model of Bernard von Breydenbach's *Peregrinatio in Terram Sanctam* (first published in 1486; published in French in Lyons in 1488; later reedited in Paris in 1517 to stir interest in a crusade that never took place, and including a map of the Holy Land and two other woodcuts by Oronce Fine), Thevet's book is a piece of miniature cosmography: brilliantly illustrated by Bernard Salomon and cast in an elegant font, it is an object of travel made to be held and seen in the confines of a library. The woodcuts are in themselves "singularities" or "insularities," picture-islands amid the fluvia of writing ceaselessly arguing for the need of humans to obtain ocular experience of new and strange places. The reader swims about or goes with the flow of prose that collects, helter-skelter, images from myriad textual and cartographic origins, discovering that the exoticism Thevet champions is in the form of the book itself.

The same mode of construction informs the massive *Cosmographie universelle* in two volumes (1575), a compendium that incorporates the author's account of his brief but telling visit in 1556 to Villegagnon's short-lived Protestant colony at Guanabara. Rich in ethnographic material, it recasts and revises the material of *Les singularitez de la France antarctique, autrement nommée Amerique* (late 1557), in which Thevet provided the first elements of what Lévi-Strauss calls the French "ethnographer's breviary": a text that mixes received facts and strange impressions, observation and fantasy of the New World.<sup>23</sup> A work vital for the Protestant Jean de Léry's *Histoire d'un voyage fait en la terre du Bresil* (1578 and 1580), Thevet's account also provided material that Montaigne refashioned for his commentaries about Tupi life in his essay "Des cannibales," one of the first measured ethnographic documents in the history of anthropology.<sup>24</sup>

Thevet conceived his texts to be illustrated. His ambi-

tious *Les vrais portraits et vies des hommes illustres*, also in two volumes (1584), is a sort of human *isolario* or a "who's who" of notable persons in the classical and early modern ages. The remarkable compendium gives kings and cartographers the same rank as *caciques* from the tribes of the New World. Woodcut and copperplate images are set into the text in order to make each portrait an island-like picture whose pertinent traits need to be studied as might a map. The eye is invited to wander about the image in order to obtain a sense of the physiognomy that fleshes out what is described biographically in the surrounding prose. The vision that makes possible the composite creations of this stamp finds its unfinished masterwork in "Le grand insulaire et pilotage," a collection of over 200 copperplate images of islands, both real and imaginary, of a world that seems bereft of borders. These pictures comprise an archipelago, a vermiculated world of diverse shapes and forms that Thevet's death precluded from being put into general circulation.<sup>25</sup>

Thevet's descriptive and often derivative writing, of a style and signature of its own, finds contrast in the published work of cartographer Nicolas de Nicolay and the French editions of Gabriele Simeoni's dialog that accompanies a first printed map of Auvergne (1560).<sup>26</sup> Nicolay had translated Pedro de Medina's *Arte de navegar* into French (published in 1553) before he wrote an important document recording impressions of travel to the Orient, *Les quatre premiers livres des navigations et peregrinations orientales* (1568). It appears more veracious than Thevet's *Cosmographie de Levant*, offering detailed description and copious illustration of men and women in regional attire.<sup>27</sup> The work belongs to a transitional genre of writing that buttresses its descriptions with an insis-

23. Lévi-Strauss, interview-introduction to *Histoire d'un voyage*, 5.

24. Montaigne, *Essais*, 239–53.

25. Frank Lestringant has written copiously on Thevet: *André Thevet: Cosmographe des derniers Valois* (Geneva: Droz, 1991); idem, *Le livre des îles: Atlas et récits insulaires de la Genèse à Jules Verne* (Geneva: Droz, 2002); and idem, *L'atelier du cosmographe ou l'image du monde à la Renaissance* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1991), in English, *Mapping the Renaissance World: The Geographical Imagination in the Age of Discovery*, trans. David Fausett (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994). Karrow, *Mapmakers of the Sixteenth Century*, 529–46, is informative, as are the materials in Lestringant's "Thevet, André," in *Les atlas français, XVI<sup>e</sup>–XVII<sup>e</sup> siècles: Répertoire bibliographique et étude*, by Mireille Pastoureau (Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale, Département des Cartes et Plans, 1984), 481–95.

26. Karrow's entries for both Nicolay and Simeoni are standard introductions in English (*Mapmakers of the Sixteenth Century*, 435–43 and 525–28).

27. Nicolay was not the first person to do so. François Deserps published his *Recueil de la diversité des habits qui sont de present en usage tant es pays d'Europe, Asie, Affrique et Illes sauvages* (Paris, 1562), in English, *A Collection of the Various Styles of Clothing Which Are Presently Worn in Countries of Europe, Asia, Africa and the Savage Islands: All Realistically Depicted, 1562*, ed. and trans. Sara Shannon

tence on ocularity, the basis for what Thevet considered a “firsthand” experience of the world. A cartographer (and presumably a spy) who had mapped the Scottish Isles, Nicolay was both a mapmaker and a writer. He produced topographies of the Berry that revised Jolivet’s drawings and amassed a collection of maps that were later lost in a fire at the Château de Moulins. His accounts of his travels are given an emblematic aura through the presence of maps.

Gabriele Simeoni, by contrast, executed a detailed history-map titled *La Limagna d’Overnia* that reconstructs the battle of Caesar and Vercingetorix recounted in Caesar’s *De Bello Gallico*. Simeoni had been an archeologist of Roman remains in French soil. When employed by the bishop of Clermont, Guillaume Duprat, he drew a map in which successive events of the battle (which had taken place along the River Allier) are seen and are alphabetically coded and coordinated with a pedagogical dialog, accompanying the map, that takes place between the geographer (seen on a hillock in the map itself) and a student eager to learn of the history of this area of inner France. The woodcut image was recycled in Belleforest’s *La cosmographie universelle* and soon redrawn in simplified aspect in copper and included in Ortelius’s *Theatrum* (1570). It is noteworthy that the map makes an incursion into a fairly recent literary genre, the didactic and philosophical dialog, which had won favor in France among humanists affiliated with Erasmus and Rabelais.<sup>28</sup>

#### CIRCUMSTANCE AND TEXT OF THE FIRST FRENCH ATLAS

Maurice Bouguereau was not really a cartographer per se, but as editor of the first French atlas, *Le theatre francoys* (Tours, 1594), he exerted a strong influence on the cartographic literature both of his time and of the three generations that followed. The atlas, inspired by Ortelius, was conceived to serve the cause of the Protestant Henri IV in his campaign to win France over to his legal right, guaranteed by Salic law, to accede to the throne. The slender atlas is a composite collection of three maps of France and fifteen topographic views—some new, some taken from Gerardus Mercator and Ortelius—mounted on strips in the fashion of the *Theatrum orbis terrarum*. Offered to Henri for the purpose of allowing him to see the nation and use its geographic picture to administer its regions, the work is also, in a special way, a literary document. Bouguereau lards the introductory material with encomiastic poems from his own hand, with others by fellow citizens of Tours, among which is included an ode by Béroalde de Verville (then the canon of Tours) to advance the cause of the prince of Navarre and to proclaim that France ought to be under *un roy, une loy, une foy* (one king, one law, one faith).

Shards of text on the verso of the maps are copied from regional annals and *La cosmographie universelle* (1575), the work of a Catholic nemesis of Bouguereau, François de Belleforest, in which ample regional descriptions are cut and pasted into the columns of text on the sides of the maps. The limit imposed by a folio page required the editor to pare the ample prose of the cosmography to fit the reverse side of the map. The map thus imposed on the printed discourse greater brevity and salience, traits that would later be associated with classical ideals. One map, however, is an exception: on the verso of the map of the Touraine, the area most familiar to Bouguereau’s public, the text expands into two folios and includes history and political satire related to the recent *Satyre menippée . . . des estats de Paris* (1594). For the decorative bands of his edition Bouguereau had purchased decorated letters and blocks from Jamet Mettayer, the publisher of the *Satyre* and enthusiast of the cause of Henri of Navarre.

The *Satyre*, a farcical polemic and composite theater, had been composed by a group of intellectual moderates who ridiculed the Catholic Holy League’s outrageous plan to thrust an uncouth and unfit Charles, duke of Mayenne, onto the throne of France by way of an arranged marriage with the Infanta of Spain. The *Satyre* presents in words what the political register of *Le theatre francoys* gets at through its design regarding the circumstances and contingencies of Henri’s ascendancy when the future king was presiding in Tours. It was the intent of the atlas to show Henri what he could do with maps and, at the same time, to represent all of France and its provinces as they might be unified once the king acceded to the throne. Like the atlas, the *Satyre* culminates with an ample and compelling harangue by the citizen d’Aubray, an everyman of France who praises the geography of the nation through his admiration for Henri’s knowledge of French topography.<sup>29</sup>

Bouguereau’s atlas is an adventure in reading. The text elegantly betrays the hesitations and ambitions of an editor who seized upon the implications of a national atlas

(Minneapolis: James Ford Bell Library, distributed by the University of Minnesota Press, 2001). The work drew on material found in emblem books (such as Hans Holbein’s) and quite possibly illustrated material on manuscript maps.

28. Desiderius Erasmus’s *Moriae encomium* (1509) was a model for the war of words in Rabelais’s *Tiers liure des faictz et dictz heroïques du noble Pantagruel* (1546) and Louise Labé’s vivacious *Debat de folie et d’amour* (1555). Simeoni’s innovation is found in the shape of an early modern “geography lesson” made from a dialog and a map.

29. A detailed account of the history of the unfinished project is found in François de Dainville, “Le premier atlas de France: *Le Théâtre francoys* de M. Bouguereau—1594,” in *Actes du 85<sup>e</sup> Congrès National des Sociétés Savantes, Chambéry-Annecy 1960, section de géographie* (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1961), 3–50, reprinted in *La cartographie reflet de l’histoire*, by François de Dainville (Geneva: Slatkine, 1986), 293–342.

and used material of motley origin to fashion it and fasten it together. The grist of Charles Estienne's writings is found in the prose, but so also are topical descriptions of countrysides, and especially rivers, that are shown to be of the essence, strength, and beauty of France. Historians of cartography have confirmed that the influence of Bouguereau's atlas extends to the French atlases of the Leclercs from 1594 to 1630.<sup>30</sup> As literature, the atlas is of a Baroque style born of the relation of geographic writing to a moment of intense political and religious strife. As it unfolds from representations of Picardy and Boulogne (whose map is copied from an original by Nicolas de Nicolay) to the east and south, the atlas becomes a potamography: a fluvial atlas that follows the Loire from its origins to its mouth near Nantes. The extensive praise of the rivers of France underscores the commercial virtues of waterways; it also bears comparison to the treatment of rivers in contemporary novels, such as Honoré d'Urfé's *L'Astrée* (1596–1612), in which rivers—especially the fabled Lignon—become sites where the meanders of loves gained and lost are framed in pastoral utopias.<sup>31</sup>

### THE WRITER AS CARTOGRAPHER

If texts by cartographers can be treated as literature, can those of creative writers be considered to have cartographic potential? The answer is affirmative under two conditions. First, their works need to be seen as directly influenced by maps. Do the writers have cartographic fluency? Do they use maps either in printed writing, as illustrations that accompany texts, or in styles that describe or portray in their world what is on a map? If so, what Alpers has called a cartographic “impulse” is felt in the relation between the writing and maps.<sup>32</sup> Second, their writings must use a spatial rhetoric that invites the reader to discern surface tensions or schemes generated by plot points or even nascent cartographic grids within the syntax (the ordering or spacing of vocables and letters). A text can be studied by charting where and how words and letters are configured in subjacent cartographic or architectural plans. Where prose would be a model for response to the condition of cartographic fluency or evidence of map use, poetry would be a more logical matrix for response to the condition of spatial rhetoric.

On the one hand, prose, especially that of the cosmographer, would tend toward a form of ekphrasis, the textual description of an image that in this instance could be cartographic. The text describes what the eye of the writer sees and registers as it passes over the map. The result is a copious and often complex portrayal built from received information coordinated with the adjacent maps in the text. On the other hand, poetry would tend to use the spatial rhetoric of the map to create in its “paragrams” or “hypograms” visual schemes that are in dialog

with the ostensive meaning of the discourse.<sup>33</sup> In their remarks on the way they write, poets following the incunabular era had likened the ends of their lines to an edge or a geographic border, an *assiette*, literally, a site, a situation, or an architectural foundation.<sup>34</sup> The corners of their poems were imagined to be a cornice or a point where a crucial word was placed in order to be connected to others by implicit sightlines or invisible rhumbs drawn to other words or letters within the words. Thus a poem could be plotted or even navigated. Poetry was often written both as discourse and as a verbal picture, an entity coordinating the lexical and visual dimensions of words.

### THREE STYLES AND MOMENTS

Three cartographic styles of literature prevailed in early modern France. The first was born of the affiliation of humanist authors with cosmography and biblical geography. François Rabelais was counted among them. Born near Chinon in the Touraine, he was a member of the Franciscan order who had trained as a medical doctor before the comic epics he wrote in the early 1530s became bestselling works. A correspondent with Desiderius Erasmus, he called cosmography one of the most effective disciplines for those who wanted to learn of the complexities of the world. In 1534 he edited Bartolomeo Marliani's *Topographia Romae* for his mentor, Jean Du Bellay, the cardinal and adviser to François I, who was a prelate preparing to go to Rome. Rabelais's first two books, *Pantagruel* and *Gargantua*, bear signs of intimate familiarity with Ptolemy's *Geography*. The protagonists seek to be informed of the world at large. Descriptions of

30. Pastoureau, *Les atlas français*, 295–301.

31. See Frances Amelia Yates, *Astraea: The Imperial Theme in the Sixteenth Century* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975), a work that studies allegory to discern what ties the pastoral to the politics of nationhood.

32. Svetlana Alpers, *The Art of Describing: Dutch Art in the Seventeenth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), a section of which appears as “The Mapping Impulse in Dutch Art,” in *Art and Cartography: Six Historical Essays*, ed. David Woodward (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 51–96.

33. Michael Riffaterre, in his *Semiotics of Poetry* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1978), replaces the concept of the paragram (a key word whose characters are found scattered in a sentence), borrowed from the linguist Ferdinand de Saussure, with the hypogram, a kernal appearing “quite visibly in the shape of words” seen and read as “surface features” showing that the ways a text is perceived often means more than what it is said to mean.

34. In his *Art poétique français* (1548), Thomas Sebillet compares lines of poetry to building stones that must be arranged in accord with the foundation, the *assiette* of the poem. He later uses the same figure of speech to describe the shape and symbolic force of lines of verse. See Thomas Sebillet, *Art poétique français*, in *Traité de poétique et de rhétorique de la Renaissance*, ed. Francis Goyet (Paris: Librairie Générale Française, 1990), 37–183, esp. 62 and 104.

their hypothetical voyages follow the order of *itineraria* and are often listings of regions that approximate those of Ptolemy's gazetteers.<sup>35</sup>

Maps become a background for the heroes' discovery of worlds both in their midst, in the Touraine, and beyond the borders of France. The eighth chapter of *Pantagruel* is in the form of a letter Gargantua writes to his son: the father advises Pantagruel to study Greek, Latin, Chaldaic, and Arabic in order to understand "the cosmography of those who have written in them." He then suggests that the boy be a topographer and a chorographer, "so that you know the fish in every sea, river, and spring; all the birds of the air, all the trees, shrubs, and brush of the forests, all the grasses of the earth, all the metals hidden in the belly of the abysses, the gems of the entire Orient and Midi: may nothing be unknown to you."<sup>36</sup> The text of the chapter that follows becomes a "language-map" in which different idioms are juxtaposed. Pantagruel meets a future alter ego, Panurge, fallen onto hard times, who uses fourteen languages to beg for money to nourish his haggard body. At the end of the enumeration Pantagruel and Panurge discover that French is their common tongue.

The first two works of Rabelais (1532–33 and 1534–35) exude enthusiasm over discovery and the feeling that the limits of the world are expanding. They account for a revolution in the appreciation of world-space through an implicit knowledge of the Columbian discoveries. The works are open-ended in their promise that they will lead to revelation of new geographic secrets and new adventures. At the end of *Pantagruel* the narrator promises a new book describing how Panurge will have "passed the Caspian Mountains, navigated the Atlantic Sea and defeated the Cannibals, and conquered the Perlas Islands; how he married the daughter of the king of India called Prester John."<sup>37</sup> The final sentences of *Pantagruel* expand the reach of the novel, as do the new editions of Ptolemy's *Geography*, in which new regional maps are added to older models next to expanded world maps.

A second style, of a generation following that of Rabelais, marks the poetry of Pierre de Ronsard. The leader of a group of poets of the mid-sixteenth century who named themselves the Pléiade, Ronsard sought to make topography a virtue of his program to enrich and expand the powers of vernacular French both in the nation and in Europe. The design of the project required him (with other members of his "brigade") to show the world that they hailed from regional zones or local places that in the aggregate constituted a greater France. Descriptions of landscapes prevail in his loose imitations of Petrarch in *Les amours* of 1552 and 1553, such that the poems themselves bear evidence of ekphrasis and schemes by which the form of the verse can be read as if it were a picture or topography.<sup>38</sup>

Ronsard had been loosely affiliated with cartographers. He wrote encomiastic verse for André Thevet's cosmographic works, and in the *Discours de misères de ce temps* (1562) and elsewhere he included occasional references to the New World and its peoples. The poetry itself is the clearest sign of a mapping impulse that accompanied the cultural aims of the Pléiade. All of the members drew inspiration from emblem-poems, or poem-pictures, that were first launched in France in 1532 when scholars and writers printed and translated Andrea Alciati's *Emblematum liber*. The correlate of word and image often included iconic signs borrowed from the idiolects of cartographers. As a result, the language of the Pléiade is often enigmatic, studded with enigmas and riddled with signs of secret spaces and places that belong to the mystery of the nation.

A third type of cartographic and literary creation emerged in the shape of the personal essay, the genre that Montaigne inaugurated with the publication of the *Essais* (two volumes in 1580, three volumes in 1588, and in 1592, after the death of the author, a posthumous edition including notes and additions he had inked into a personal copy since 1588). The son of a local noble and a mother who had been a member of a family of refugees of the Spanish Inquisition, Montaigne was a lawyer practicing in Périgueux when, in the early 1560s, the Wars of Religion upset his native Bordelais and Gascony.

The *Essais* can be seen as a political, poetic, and autobiographical archipelago. The partitive quality of their chapter titles ("De la diversion," "Des coches," "De l'expérience," etc.)—indicates that they are willfully lacunary treatments of topics imagined as *sites* encountered and to be reflected upon. Now and again maps infuse them, sometimes by oblique allusion or at other times by a design that balances markers of location (in an abrupt, often jagged or "paratactic" style indicating *where* the reader is in an often opaque text riddled with secrets,

35. Frank Lestringant, in "Rabelais et le récit toponymique," in his *Écrire le monde à la Renaissance: Quinze études sur Rabelais, Postel, Bodin et la littérature géographique* (Caen: Paradigme, 1993), 109–28, shows how the guidebook (such as that of Estienne) shapes the narrative of *Pantagruel* (1532). In *The Self-Made Map: Cartographic Writing in Early Modern France* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 157–63, Tom Conley compares the enumeration of names and places in *Gargantua* (chap. 33) to the ordering of Ptolemy's *Geography*.

36. François Rabelais, *Œuvres complètes*, new ed., ed. Mireille Huchon (Paris: Gallimard, 1994), 244–45.

37. Rabelais, *Œuvres complètes*, 336.

38. On the relation of these maps to poetry, see the introduction to this section, chapter 12, note 15 (p. 406), in this volume. Graphic reading of Ronsard's verse as schematic and protocartographic creations are found in Tom Conley, *The Graphic Unconscious in Early Modern French Writing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 70–115, and idem, "Putting French Studies on the Map," *Diacritics* 28, no. 3 (1998): 23–39.

fashioned from citations) with a drive to get lost or adrift in a topic (enabling the reader to make unintended or chance encounters with things unknown): unmoored or detached from the standard point of view, the world can be discovered afresh and anew.

Montaigne plotted his essays so that center points in each volume can be seen along geometrical, geographical, and discursive axes. The ordering or spacing of his chapters simultaneously follows a latent cartographic and allegorical design. Each volume has an odd number of essays (vol. 1, 57; vol. 2, 37; vol. 3, 13) that seem to be divided into “hemispheres” of even units (28, 18, and 6) by a median chapter that cuts through the middle. In the first edition of the first volume, “Vingt et neuf sonnets d’Etienne de La Boëtie” happens to be the twenty-ninth chapter, which bisects the whole and cuts it into two equal parts of twenty-eight units on either side. Etienne de La Boëtie, the late friend for whom the work was written, is the presumed author of the sonnets that are literally entombed in and matched by the number of the chapter. The center point of the volume is adjacent to chapter 28, the essay on friendship. In that essay Montaigne recalls how he had known friendship with his late companion. The treatment arches forward and welcomes “Des cannibales” (of chapter 31) into the author’s world. The spatial reason of allegory literally sets the New World close to the center of the volume. Similarly the seventh chapter or hinge-chapter of the third volume, “De l’incommodité de la grandeur,” posits thoughts on the trials of kings, who sit at the center of a nation, next to horrible accounts of Spanish cruelties in the New World, in “Des coches,” the essayist’s avowed companion-piece to “Des cannibales.”

The essays are thus marked with multiple centers and peripheries. The text needs to be read as if it were a map describing an itinerary of the formation of the author at the same time that each of its chapter-units forms an isolated or partial whole in the modular design of the work. The legacy of the *isolario* is felt in the choice of a form that will change with the author, who is consubstantial with his creation as he lives with it and writes it. The *Essais* include an allusion to Ptolemy in the long and labyrinthine chapter “Apologie de Raimond de Sebonde,” which in its unrelenting attack on the limits of human reason turns topsy-turvy the great chain of being. “Des cannibales,” a text that appears to be inspired by the information circulating in Rouen at the time of the royal entry that the city prepared for Henri II in 1551, admonishes cosmographers for their distorted representations of the world; the essayist wishes to align ethnography with regional description. In a signal moment he asserts, “We need topographers to make particular descriptions of the places they have been.”<sup>39</sup> Thus begins, toward the end of the sixteenth century, a tradition of

ethnographic inquiry based on evidence brought to the public in the form of travel narratives and also cartographic materials.

## CONCLUSIONS

Three cartographic styles are embodied in the writing of Rabelais, Ronsard, and Montaigne. Rabelais’s early writing traces the itinerary of encounter and discovery of worlds old and new in the mold of a comic epic. The maps of Ptolemy inhere in the work, and so also does the humanistic cartography of Oronce Fine. Rabelais developed in a space where writers and mapmakers exploited the new virtues of print culture. Ronsard belonged to a generation in which the topography of the French nation was marked in maps and writing. He aspired at the same time to plot a poetic voyage that would meld the local spaces of his origins to his nation and to geography and myth. With Montaigne the essay became a place where experience of space was interiorized. He mapped the soundings of the soul through a form of writing that moved from self-portraiture and doubt to satire and autobiography. His readers discerned a new and compelling emotive mapping of the self in its relation to the world.

Two writers who capped the experience of literature and cartography in early modern France were Béroalde de Verville and René Descartes. Béroalde, polymath, alchemist, and canon of Tours who migrated between the regional city and Geneva, wrote an ode that appeared in the prefatory matter to Bouguereau’s *Theatre francoys*. He also composed a Baroque convivium, *Le moyen de parvenir* (ca. 1612), in which over one hundred guests assemble at a table where they tell tall tales, intercede with one another, and chatter and cackle. At the repast are the cartographer Oronce Fine and even, in the conversation, the specter of Jean Jolivet. The lengthy work, a riotous cacophony of voices that convey fictions from all corners of France includes, in the fashion of an emblem, the subtitle *mappemonde* (world map). As does Gourmont, with his image of a fool whose face is shaped as a world map, Béroalde baits the reader into seeing in his work the vanity of any effort to reduce the variety of the world to a single image. Béroalde’s facetious and satirical compendium of the total time and space of human creation undoes itself in its own process of construction.<sup>40</sup> At the conclusion (if a conclusion there is), the narrator invokes

39. Montaigne, *Essais*, 242.

40. A recent overview is Michael J. Giordano, “Reverse Transmutations: Béroalde de Verville’s Parody of Paracelsus in *Le moyen de parvenir*: An Alchemical Language of Skepticism in the French Baroque,” *Renaissance Quarterly* 56 (2003): 88–137. See Michel Jeanneret on Béroalde in *A Feast of Words: Banquets and Table Talk in the Renaissance*, trans. Jeremy Whiteley and Emma Hughes (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 228–55.

anamorphosis, the art of systematic visual distortion of perspective that reaches back to Hans Holbein and that is related to cartographic modes of projection, to indicate how he has composed a totality of fragmentary words and images. Cartographic order that would be taken as science and truth is thrown into literary chaos.

The fear of getting lost in a work, of losing one's visual and philosophical bearings, of mistaking a word for an image, is symptomatic of René Descartes's *Discours de la méthode* (1637), a work that caps the experience of cartography and literature in early modern France. Originally a preface to his study of dioptrics (including anamorphosis) and meteors, the work was first published unsigned. Possibly omitting his name in order not to risk censure by the Catholic Church, the author of the work compares his creation to a *tableau*, which can imply a picture, a portrait, a grid, or a map. It is also comparable to a "theater" in which he tells a "fable" (understood to be an illustrated text, a joke, or a slight tale) that traces a philosopher-geometer's intellectual itinerary.

At the central point of the work, between the third and fourth of its six chapters, the narrator notes that with

his provisional ethics, which constitute the basis of his method, he would be as much at home in the bustling cities of Europe under military protection as in a remote region. In either place he would be within himself *aussy solitaire et retiré que les desers les plus escartez* (as solitary and withdrawn as in the most remote deserts). In the geographical figure of a flat landscape is inscribed, by way of anagram and perspectival ruse, his own name, *des . . . cartes*, a name literally born from maps. Descartes thus became the engineer (*ingénieur*) of the kind he admired for the ability to draw plans of new cities on flat plains. Descartes's engineer possibly also refers to the *ingénieurs du roi* (king's engineers) who had been employed by Henri IV, Louis XIII, and Cardinal Richelieu to redraw the boundaries and refurbish the defenses of the French nation. Descartes sums up those activities in the nominal and tactical design of the first official masterpiece in the history of modern philosophy and literature. It, too, is a testament to the commanding presence of the intimate relation between cartography and literature in 140 years of fervent invention.