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The Preface and *Catalogue des Docteurs et Conciles* in Guy de Brès' *Le baston de la foy chrestienne*

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Abstract

On occasion of the celebrations for the fifth centenary of Guy de Brès' birth, as well as the publication of the first volume of the critical edition of his theological works, this article aims at analysing the epistle-like preface and *Catalogue des Docteurs et Conciles* included in de Brès' first theological/polemical treatise, entitled *Le baston de la foy chrestienne* (first published in 1555). The preface is placed within the context of anti-Anabaptist polemics and in continuity with previous Reformed efforts to convince civil authorities across Europe that the Reformed church did not harbour seditious troublemakers or detested heretics; the *Catalogue* of doctors and councils, alongside the preface, constitutes a summary of the apologetical and polemical reply *Le baston* expressed against a Roman Catholic work by Nicole Grenier entitled *Le bouclier de la foy* and directed against Reformed believers and their doctrine. While the patristic and canonical sources used by de Brès for the writing of *Le baston* remain to be fleshed out more precisely, the critical edition of *Le baston* will shed new light on this and other matters, representing a further step towards the understanding of the life and theology of a key protagonist of the European Reformation of the mid sixteenth century.

Keywords

Guy de Brès – *Le baston de la foy chrestienne* – Reformed Church – John Calvin – Church fathers – councils – Catalogue of Doctors and Councils – polemics

“A battle-handbook for the people at a modest price” (“manuel populaire de combat au prix modique”) was the apt definition given by Émile Michel Braekman in his 1976 study of the editions of Guy de Brès *Le baston de la foy chrestienne*.¹ As has been remarked more recently by Erik de Boer, *Le baston* can indeed “be regarded as a French bestseller”² in its own right, as it boasted at least seventeen editions in de Brès’ lifetime, and many more beyond.³ If we consider de Brès’ role in the composition of a crucial sixteenth-century confession of faith such as the Belgic Confession as well as his plentiful theological and polemical production, it is only natural to highlight his pivotal role and to acknowledge his rightful place as a reformer, a theologian, and a polemicist⁴ in what has been labelled as a nascent movement of “international Calvinism”⁵ or—with a clear reference to contemporary political ideology—the “Calvinist International,”⁶ and which could be defined more comprehensively as a European Reformed network.⁷ The scope of our brief study of the epistle-like

1 É.M. Braekman, “Les éditions du *Baston de la foy chrestienne*,” *Revue d’histoire et de philosophie religieuses* 56/3 (1976), 315–345, here 315.

2 E.A. de Boer, “Guy de Brès’s *Le baston de la foy chrestienne*: From Personal Notebook to Patristic Anthology,” *Zwingliana* 40 (2013), 73–99, here 73.

3 Most quotes from *Le baston de la foy chrestienne* in the body of the text of this article are taken from the 1577 English translation by John Brooke, *The Staffe of Christian Faith, profitable to all Christians, for to arme themselves against the enimies of the Gospell: and also for to knowe the antiquitie of our holy fayth, and of the true Church ...* (London: John Daye, 1577), henceforth *The Staffe* (1577). In every single case, a cross-check has been made with the 1555 and 1565 French editions, and the French original has been provided in footnotes. Any additions or changes are duly considered and analysed in corresponding footnotes. The abbreviations used are *Le baston* (1555) = *Le baston de la foy chrestienne, Livre tresutile a tous Chrestiens, pour s’armer contre les ennemys de l’Evangile: & pour aussi cognoistre l’ancienneté de nostre saincte foy, & de la vraye Eglise ...* (Lyon, 1555); *Le baston* (1565) = *Le baston de la foy chrestienne, Livre tresutile a tous Chrestiens, pour s’armer contre les ennemys de l’Evangile: & pour aussi cognoistre l’ancienneté de nostre saincte foy, & de la vraye Eglise ...* (s.l., Par Thomas Courteau, 1565).

4 The growing awareness of Guy de Brès’ importance for the history of the early Reformation has led to the recent publication of an interesting illustrated story for children: see W. Boekestein and E. Hughes, *Faithfulness under Fire: The Story of Guido de Brès* (Grand Rapids MI, 2010).

5 M. Prestwich, ed., *International Calvinism, 1541–1715* (Oxford, 1985); A. Duke, “Perspectives on International Calvinism,” in *Calvinism in Europe, 1540–1620*, ed. A. Duke, G. Lewis, and A. Petegree (Cambridge, 1994). For a recent reappraisal, and the use of “international Calvinisms,” see M.P. Holt, “International Calvinism,” in *John Calvin in Context*, ed. R. Ward Holder (Cambridge, 2020), 375–382.

6 D.R. Kelley, *The Beginning of Ideology: Consciousness and Society in the French Reformation* (Cambridge, 1981), 38.

7 See for instance B. Gordon, *The Swiss Reformation* (Manchester, 2002), Chapter 9, where it is implied that the expression “international Zwinglianism” is equally as tenable as “interna-

preface and the *Catalogue des Docteurs et Conciles* in Guy de Brès' *Le baston de la foy chrestienne* is characterised by inevitable constraints and limits, not least the difficulties in clarifying its author's biography beyond what a number of dedicated and expert scholars have done in the past,⁸ as well as in defining precisely the patristic and canonical sources de Brès used for the composition of the first edition of *Le baston*, when he still lacked a formal theological education.⁹ However, we will aim at offering to the reader some seminal frameworks for further study and research, thanks to the meritorious project of the critical edition of de Brès' works on occasion of the fifth centenary of his birth which has been kickstarted with the first known treatise he authored, i.e. *Le baston*, edited by Wim Moehn.¹⁰

The issues connected with the clarification of the key passages of de Brès' biography are, of course, deeply intertwined with the difficulties in the definition of the genesis, sources, scope, intended audience, and immediate impact of the 1555 *editio princeps* of *Le baston de la foy chrestienne*. Few solid conclusions can be drawn about the development of de Brès' theology and the level of his education just from *Le baston*. Recent scholarship has underlined *Le baston's* nature as a sort of anthology/compendium of *loci communes* drawn from the Church fathers and the Bible, "the kind of notebook students had more commonly":¹¹ or, with a reference to more sophisticated and systematic theological treatises, a kind of Bucerian *Florilegium patristicum* (c. 1539) under construction. Not by chance was the *editio princeps* of *Le baston* dedicated to de Brès' flock in the congregation of Lille, where he served as minister until

tional Calvinism": we concur with the idea that the use of a broader terminology allows for the inclusion of those Reformed believers who did not necessarily follow mainstream Genevan theology, especially on double-decree predestination (among several other issues such as the extent, if any, of the spiritual presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper).

8 Biographies of, and biographical studies on, de Brès include A. Braekman and E.A. de Boer, eds., *Guido de Bres. Zijn leven, zijn belijden* (Utrecht, 2011); J. Decavele, "La place de Guy de Brès dans la Réforme et son époque," in *The Belgic Confession at 450*, ed. P.J. Tomson et al. (Maastricht, 2012), 30–40; L.A. van Langeraad, *Guido de Bray: Zijn leven en werken. Bijdrage tot de geschiedenis van het Zuid-Nederlandsche protestantisme* (Zierikzee, 1884); P.N. Kruijswijk, *Guido de Brès. Een blik in de geschiedenis der reformatie in de zuidelijke Nederlanden* (Amsterdam and Pretoria, 1897).

9 Some efforts towards this goal have already shown to bear fruit, as in de Boer, "Guy de Brès's *Le baston de la foy chrestienne*," 93–99; see also the studies cited therein, n. 61. The critical edition of *Le baston* will include a list of books contained in de Brès' collection, but it remains very difficult, if not impossible, to establish when exactly he had acquired every single item he owned at the end of his life.

10 W.H.Th. Moehn, ed., *Guy de Brès, Le baston de la foy chrestienne. The Staffe of Christian Faith (1555–1565)*, (Geneva, 2024).

11 De Boer, "Guy de Brès's *Le baston de la foy chrestienne*," 82.

he fled to Ghent late in 1555 or early in 1556,¹² and stands as testimony to his efforts—still lacking a formal theological education which he underwent later in his life—towards the understanding of the Word of God and of the wisdom of the Church fathers.¹³

Yet, as we will see, *Le baston's* polemical undertone has not been overlooked. The epistle constituting the *incipit* of *Le baston's* first edition (1555) is preceded by a catalogue of doctors and councils (*Le cathalogue des Docteurs et Conciles*): in the 1565 edition, the ordering of the two pieces is swapped. In the latter edition, the title of the catalogue laconically stated its relevance to the contents of the book; in the *editio princeps*, on the other hand, the original title of *Le cathalogue* fleshed out the motives behind the choice of the inclusion of such a piece at the opening of the treatise: “for the approval of the articles of our faith, and to show when [the Doctors and Councils] flourished.”¹⁴ Therefore, it can be safely assumed that, in the original intentions of the author, the opening epistle and the catalogue of doctors and councils—although formally separate pieces of writing—were meant to be read as a whole. This was done to help the intended audience (much broader, of course, than the congregation of Lille as the dedicatee of *Le baston*) contextualise, and understand the rationale for, the matters tackled by the author in the body of the text, and to place Reformed believers as unjustly persecuted sheep amidst the wolves' rage.¹⁵

12 On Lille, see R.S. DuPlessis, *Lille and the Dutch Revolt: Urban Stability in an Era of Revolution, 1500–1582* (Cambridge, 2002); C.-L. Frossard, *L'église sous la croix pendant la domination espagnole. Chronique de l'église réformée de Lille* (Lille, 1857).

13 *Le baston* (1555), fols. 4r–4v: “A l'Eglise de Dieu qui est en .L. Guido desire grace et paix et misericorde de Dieu, par Jesus Christ nostre Seigneur, et une perpetuelle perseverance en la cognois[san]ce du saint Evangile du filz de Dieu. Amen. Cognoissant la guerre et le combat que soustenez journellement pour maintenir et garder la vraye et pure doctrine Chrestienne de l'ancienne et vraye Eglise de Dieu, contre un tas de glorieux espritz abuseurs, qui se couvrent et se vantent à fauces enseignes du nom et tiltre de l'ancienne Eglise et des anciens docteurs, je vous ay bien voulu dedier, mes très aimez, ce present livre, intitulé Le baston de la Foy, recueilly et amassé des livres des anciens Docteurs de l'Eglise, et des Conciles et de plusieurs Autheurs, afin que par ce moyen vous apreniez tous ensemble à batailler contre voz ennemis avec le propre baston duquel ilz bataillent contre vous, asavoir les anciens.”

14 *Le baston* (1555), fol. 3v: “Le cathalogue des Docteurs et Conciles, desquelz avons recueilly ce present livre, pour l'aprobation des articles de nostre foy, et pour monstrier en quel temps ilz ont flory”; *Le baston* (1565), 19: “Le Catalogue des Docteurs et Conciles, desquels ce present livre a esté recueilli”; *The Staffe* (1577), fol. B5v: “The Catalogue of the Doctors, and Councils, out of the which we have gathered together this present booke, for the approbation of the Articles of our Faith, and to shewe in what time they flourished and were celebrated.”

15 On the development of the rhetoric of martyrdom in the francophone Reformed milieu,

It is no wonder that a Reformed author writing in the 1550s took pains to uphold the legitimacy and theological soundness of the Christian faith he was publicly confessing and professing, even more so considering that he did it in the vernacular and by means of the printing press (with all the legal consequences such an editorial operation entailed).¹⁶ Such rhetorical stance, in de Brès' case as well as in many others, served two main purposes. Firstly, it announced the loyalist political attitudes of Reformed believers both to civil authorities and to the urban population, and was meant to dispel any rumours of political seditiousness:

And as touching you, O ye Princes, Judges, and Magistrates, betweene whose handes this present booke shall happen to fall: I desire and require you in the name of the living God, and of his sonne Jesus Christ our Lorde which hath shed out all his bloud upon the crosse for the love of us, that you doe give right judgement upon the poore faithfull people, of whome your prisons are at this time full, through the furor and madnesse of those worshippers of the fathers, and bee no more the hangmen of that wicked Vermine: for it is not counted a thing honest nor meete among men, that the Kings, Emperours, Princes, and Magistrates shoulde bee made the hangmen of beggers. Be ye then more ashamed than ever you were, bicause that you beare the name of God, and the power to governe the people is given you from God, not for to abuse it in punishing the good, and defending the wicked, but to maintayne and ayde the good, and to punish the wicked (as the Apostles have taught us.) But alas my God, into what blindness is the worlde fallen into, to esteeme and thinke that they which holde and keepe the true auncient doctrine are heretikes.¹⁷

see among others N. Shepardson, *Burning Zeal: The Rhetoric of Martyrdom and the Protestant Community in Reformation France, 1520–1570* (Bethlehem PA, 2007); B. Gregory, *Salvation at Stake: Christian Martyrdom in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge MA, 1999); D. El Kenz, *Les bûchers du roi. La culture protestante des martyrs* (Seyssel, 1997).

- 16 See at least F. Higman, *Censorship and the Sorbonne: A Bibliographical Study of Books in French Censured by the Faculty of Theology of the University of Paris, 1520–1551* (Geneva, 1979); L. Catteeuw, *Censures et raisons d'État. Une histoire de la modernité politique (xvie–xviiie siècle)* (Paris, 2013); J.-L. Quantin, "Les institutions de la censure religieuse en France (xvie–xviiie siècles)," in *Hétérodoxies croisées. Catholicismes pluriels entre France et Italie, xvie–xviiie siècles*, ed. G. Fragnito and A. Tallon (Rome, 2017), 97–194; L. Bianchin, *Dove non arriva la legge. Dottrine della censura nella prima età moderna* (Bologna, 2005).
- 17 *The Staffe* (1577), fols. A7v–A8r. Cfr *Le baston* (1555), fol. *1v: "Et quand à vous Princes, Juges, et Magistratz, entre les mains desquelz ce present livre pourra tomber, je vous prie et requers au nom du Dieu vivant, et de son Filz nostre seigneur Jesus Christ, qui a respandu tout son sang en croix pour l'amour de nous, que vous ayez à juger juste jugement des

Secondly, it showed—by way of accurate Biblical and patristic testimonies—the theological soundness of their Christian faith:

Now notwithstanding their shamelesse malyce they rebuke and checke us with a whores face, that we are enemies of the fathers, despisers and contemners of their doctrine, and disturbers of the world. I would to God that they would permitte and suffer us to compare our doctrine openly, and before all the world with theirs, to the end that all men might knowe who be the contemners and enemies of the fathers: somuch it wantith that we should be found condemners and enemies of those good fathers, that altogether it woulde be seene that the same doctrine that we hold and keepe at this day, is the very same for whiche manye of those good fathers have shead their bloud: and would shead it, if they were nowe alive.¹⁸

Thus, such refined rhetorical standpoints were put in place and disseminated in print to demonstrate to all intended audiences that Reformed believers were not seditious troublemakers,¹⁹ but trustworthy subjects of God-given civil

povres fideles, desquelz voz prisons sont remplies aujourd'huy par la fureur des venerateurs des peres, et ne soyez plus les bourreaux de ceste meschante vermine. Car ce n'est pas une chose honneste ne quy doit avoir lieu entre les hommes, que les Roys, Empereurs, Princes et Magistratz soyent faictz les bourreaux des brinbeurs et medians. Soyez donc plus vergoigneux que vous n'aves esté jusques icy, à cause que vous portez le nom de DIEU, et que la puissance de gouverner les peuples vous est donnée de Dieu, non pour abuser en punissant les bons et deffendant les mauvais, ains pour maintenir et aider les bons, et pour punir les mauvais (comme les Apostres l'ont enseigné). Mais hélas, mon Dieu, en quel aveuglement est tombé le monde, d'estimer que ceux qui tiennent la vraye doctrine ancienne soyent Heretiques."

18 *The Staffe* (1577), fol. A6v. Cfr *Le baston* (1555), fols. 7v–8r: "Or nonobstant leur malice effrontée, ils nous reprochent avec un front de putain, que nous sommes ennemis des peres, contempteurs de leur doctrine et turbateurs du monde. Je voudroye qu'il nous fut permis au moins de confronter nostre doctrine publiquement et devant tout le monde avec la leur, afin que tous cogneussent qui sont les contempteurs et ennemis des peres, tant s'en faut que nous fussions trouvez contempteurs et ennemys de ces bons peres, que mesme on verroit que la mesme doctrine que nous tenons aujourd'huy, est la mesme pour laquelle plusieurs de ces bons peres ont espandu leur sang, et espandroyent, s'ilz estoient encor en ceste vie."

19 See for instance *Le baston* (1555), fol. *7r: "Gardez-vous bien d'estre en scandale à personne, j'entens en mal faisant. Soyez beningz, doux et misericordieux les uns avec les autres, ne rendans à personne mal pour mal, mais rendez le bien pour le mal. Vivez si saintement que si les hommes vous veulent punir et persecuter, qu'ilz ne pussent rien en vous que la justice et la bonne vie. Et en ce faisant vous vous declarerez estre les enfans de Dieu. Veillez en tous temps, prians que vous soyez faictz dignes d'éviter toutes choses qui sont à advenir, et que puissiez assister devant le filz de l'homme après la fin de voz jours."

magistrates and political authorities: more precisely, that their articles of faith included the full recognition of such magistrates and authorities to be divinely appointed. They were God's true children, who upheld the genuine Christian faith and doctrine, thus fostering the 'true Church.' In short, they were not Anabaptists and were unjustly and wrongfully persecuted:

For we are dayly assaulted with so many ennemyes, that sathan riseth agaynst us, for to make us forsake and abandon our Lord Jesus Christ, and to renounce his Gospell: One day we have warre agaynst the Heretickes Anabaptistes, an other day agaynst Libertines, Epicures, Arians, Davidistes, and agaynst dissemblers, and consequently, against the worshippers of the fathers, through whose zeale the children of God are put to death. Have not we then great neede of weapons?²⁰

Against the backdrop of anti-Anabaptist polemics, the reference to the sacrament of "baptisme purely administered"²¹ the Reformed church wholeheartedly committed to was not merely a rhetorical device to counter the qualms of those Roman Catholics who denied the legitimacy of the Reformed church on sacramental grounds, but also a subtle allusion—with the civil and political authorities' audience very much in mind—to the complete lack of involvement of the Reformed church with any movements or beliefs disavowing the practice of infant baptism. Not only is this perfectly in line with de Brès' subsequent theological and polemical works characterising his complex intellectual journey as a Reformed faithful persecuted on account of religion,²² but

20 *The Staffe* (1577), fol. B2v. Cfr *Le baston* (1555), fol. *5v: "Car nous sommes journellement assaillis de tant d'ennemis que Satan suscite contre nous pour nous faire abandonner nostre Seigneur Jesus Christ, et renoncer son Evangille. L'un des jours nous avons la guerre contre les Heretiques, Anabaptistes, l'autre jour contre les Libertins et Epicuriens, contre les Arriens et contre les Davidistes, et contre les dissimulateurs, et consequement contre les venerateurs des peres, par le zele desquelz les enfans de Dieu sont mis à mort. N'avons-nous pas donc bien grand besoing de bastons d'armes?."

21 *The Staffe* (1577), fol. Biv. Cfr *Le baston* (1555), fol. *4r: "C'est merveilles de leurs ruses et cautelles, et de ceste envye contre la verité. Cependant je voudroy volontiers qu'ilz fussent d'accord avec nous, de confronter leur doctrine avec la nostre, leur croix et persecution avec la nostre, leur vie avec la nostre, leur Eglise avec la nostre. On verroit clairement par ce moyen s'ilz sont les enfans de Dieu ou nous. Pour le premier, n'avons nous pas le baptesme purement administré, comme nous lisons que les Apostres l'ont administré sans nulles inventions des hommes, seulement selon la parolle de Dieu ? Qu'on lise l'Escriture, et on vaira qui c'est qui a adjousté aux Sacremens, ou nous, ou eux."

22 The following major theological work de Brès authored was, not by chance, entitled *La racine, source et fondement des Anabaptistes ou Rebaptisez de nostre temps. Avec tre-*

clear statements of dissociation from any possible suspicion of contiguity with Anabaptism, and animosity towards such movements, are unexceptional in the context of the Reformed communities of the 1550s and 1560s, as is the appeal to kings, princes, and in general to civil authorities to legalise and support the Reformed church. As we will see in greater detail, recourse to the Church fathers and to the conciliar and canonical tradition were powerful arrows in the Reformed polemicists' and theologians' quiver, and the defence of the Reformed articles of faith de Brès was upholding and proclaiming, as well as the blending of rhetorical devices which can be seen throughout *Le baston*—walking the fine line between apologetics and polemics—was commonplace in the context of the nascent Reformed International mentioned above.

Indeed, Calvin himself had dedicated the first edition of his *Institutes of the Christian Religion* to Francis I as early as in 1536. The dedicatory epistle to the king of France—which “continued to be printed in editions of the *Institutes* long after the king was dead”²³—was replete of references to the Church fathers. It could be argued that appeal to the authority of the Church fathers is one of the key themes of the whole epistle. In several passages, Calvin stressed the Reformed church's deference and respect of the Church fathers, albeit acknowledging that—unlike the Holy Scriptures—they could occasionally be

sample refutation des arguments principaux, par lesquels ils ont accoustumé de troubler l'Eglise de nostre Seigneur Iesus Christ, & seduire les simples ([s.l.]: Abel Clemence, 1565), and was published—equally not by chance—the same year as the second French edition of *Le baston*. On the conundrum of the identity and place of the printer who ran this secret albeit quite productive press, see G. Clutton, “‘Abel Clémence’ of ‘Rouen’: A Sixteenth-Century Secret Press,” *The Library* 20 (1940), 136–153. For an overview of the editions of de Brès' works, see J.-F. Gilmont, “Les écrits de Guy de Brès: Éditions des XVII^e et XVIII^e siècles,” *Bulletin de la Société d'Histoire du Protestantisme Belge* 5/8 (1971), 265–275.

- 23 B. Gordon, *John Calvin's Institutes of the Christian Religion: A Biography* (Princeton and Oxford, 2017), 24. On this subject, see by way of introduction J. van Oort, “John Calvin and the Church Fathers,” in *The Reception of the Church Fathers in the West: From the Carolingians to the Maurists*, 2 vols., ed. I. Backus (Leiden, New York, and Cologne, 1997–2001), 661–700; U. Zahnd, “The Early John Calvin and Augustine: Some Reconsiderations,” *Studia Patristica* 87 (2017), 181–194; H.A. Oberman, “*Initia Calvini*: The Matrix of Calvin's Reformation,” in *Calvinus Sacrae Scripturae Professor*, ed. W.H. Neuser (Grand Rapids MI, 1994), 111–147; G. Soderberg, *Ancient Discipline and Pristine Doctrine: Appeals to Antiquity in the Developing Reformation* (MA Thesis, University of Pretoria, 2007); J. van Oort, “Notes on Calvin's Knowledge, Use, and Misuse of the Church Fathers,” *HTS Theologiese Studies / Theological Studies* 71/3 (2015), <http://dx.doi.org/10.4102/hts.v71i3.3059>. More in general on Augustine, A.S.Q. Visser, *Reading Augustine in the Reformation: The Flexibility of Intellectual Authorities in Europe* (Oxford, 2011).

mistaken in their judgments: de Brès, although in more succinct and certainly less erudite terms, used the very same rhetorical weaponry Calvin availed of in his letter to Francis I when he drafted his epistle-like preface of *Le baston*.²⁴ In the years of the dynastic crisis which followed the sudden death of Henry II, French Calvinists repeatedly pleaded for a “holy and good council” (a “saint et bon concile”) of the Gallican church to settle the religious issues of the kingdom of France, echoing Luther’s appeal to a general council to judge upon his doctrinal statements.²⁵

As for what concerns the anti-Anabaptist polemical framework, in 1544 Calvin and Guillaume Farel wrote a work against Anabaptists,²⁶ which Guy de Brès may have had access to, that set the tone of the doggedness, resolve, and self-confidence which would always characterise the Reformed attitude against such movements. The case of the German Hanseatic town of Wismar in 1553—when a group of Dutch Reformed refugees arrived and reversed the

24 See by way of comparison *Le baston* (1555), fol. 8r: “Il semble que cela ne soit pas vray que j’ay dit, que si les peres estoient encor en ceste vie, qu’on les mettroit cruellement à mort, comme des meschans Heretiques. Voire mesme ceux qui aujourd’huy se glorifient d’estre leurs enfans obeissans, et qui font des boucliers de leurs livres. Entendez et retenez, mes amis, voicy ce present livre nous pourra servir d’argument certain de cela, lequel est composé et recueilly fidelement des propres livres des anciens docteurs, que si je veux presenter le present livre (où il n’y a rien du mien, ains tout des anciens) pour confession de ma foy à ses ennemis des peres, je ne doute pas que quand et quand je ne soye comme un meschant heretique condamné à estre bruslé tout vif en cendre. Or voyez, mes freres, et jugez juste jugement devant Dieu selon vostre conscience, si nous sommes ennemis des peres ou eux” and cf. J. Calvin, *Prefatory Address to King Francis I of France*, in *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 2 vols., ed. John T. McNeill, transl. F. Lewis Battles, vol. 1, 18: “Moreover, they unjustly set the ancient fathers against us (I mean the ancient writers of a better age of the church) as if in them they had supporters of their own impiety. If the contest were to be determined by patristic authority, the tide of victory—to put it very modestly—would turn to our side. Now, these fathers have written many wise and excellent things. Still, what commonly happens to men has befallen them too, in some instances. For these so-called pious children of theirs, with all their sharpness of wit and judgment and spirit, worship only the faults and errors of the fathers. The good things that these fathers have written they either do not notice, or misrepresent or pervert. You might say that their only care is to gather dung amid gold. Then, with a frightful to-do, they overwhelm us as despisers and adversaries of the fathers! But we do not despise them; in fact, if it were to our present purpose, I could with no trouble at all prove that the greater part of what we are saying today meets their approval.”

25 See for example A. Tallon, *La France et le Concile de Trente (1518–1563)* (Rome, 1997), 455–490.

26 A recent edition is J. Calvin, *Brieve instruction pour armer tous bons fideles contre les erreurs de la secte commune des anabaptistes*, ed. M. van Veen, in *Ioannis Calvini scripta didactica et polemica*, Series IV, vol. 2 (Geneva, 2008).

conciliatory attitude that had characterised both the local Lutheran majority and the civil authorities towards Menno Simons and his brethren—stands as testimony to the breadth of such uncompromising stances in all European Reformed milieus.²⁷ As we have seen above in the text of *Le baston's* preface, Anabaptists were not the sole targets of de Brès' hostility. Curiously, all but one²⁸ of the manifestations of heresy de Brès listed in *Le baston*, that is Anabaptists, libertines,²⁹ Epicureans,³⁰ "Arians" (i.e. Antitrinitarians),³¹ and "dissemblers" (i.e. Nicodemites),³² mirrored the anathemas found in the 1557

27 See M. van Veen, "Calvin and the Anabaptists," in *John Calvin in Context*, 364–372, here 364–365.

28 With the only exception of the 'Davidistes,' i.e. followers of David Joris. On Joris, see U. Plath, *Calvin und Basel in den Jahren 1552–1556* (Zurich, 1974), 194–196 and 219; G.K. Waite, *David Joris and Dutch Anabaptism, 1524–1543* (Waterloo ON, 1990). The reason why Joris features in de Brès' list of heretics and not in the Poitiers *Articles politiques* is that his legacy was certainly stronger in the Low Countries than it could be in the kingdom of France.

29 Calvin's 1545 work against the "libertins spirituelz" was his main contribution to this debate. See J. Calvin, *Contre la secte phantastique et furieuse des libertins qui se nomment spirituelz*, in *Ioannis Calvini scripta didactica et polemica*, Series IV, vol. 1, ed. M. van Veen (Geneva, 2005). The definition of the term *libertin* in Calvin's thought has engendered debate. See J.-C. Margolin, "Libertins, libertinisme et 'libertinage' au xv^e siècle," in *Aspects du libertinisme au xv^e siècle*, ed. A. Stegmann (Paris, 1974), 1–33; M.D. Goulder, "Libertines? (1 Cor. 5–6)," *Novum Testamentum* 41 (1999), 334–348; F. Zuliani, "I libertini di Giovanni Calvino: ricezione e utilizzo polemico di un termine neotestamentario," *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 104 (2013), 211–244.

30 Epicureanism saw a significant surge in Renaissance France and Italy following the revival of Lucretius' works. Calvin considered Lucretius a "filthy dog" and Epicureans "crass despisers of piety." See C. Partee, *Calvin and Classical Philosophy* (Leiden, 1977), especially 97–104.

31 The publication of Calvin's *Defensio orthodoxae fidei* was achieved in 1554, shortly after Michael Servetus' execution in Geneva and roughly a year before the first edition of *Le baston*. See J. Calvin, *Defensio orthodoxae fidei de sacra Trinitate, contra prodigiosos errores Michaelis Serueti Hispani*, ed. J. Kleinstuber, in *Ioannis Calvini scripta didactica et polemica*, Series IV, vol. 5 (Geneva, 2009).

32 Calvin's condemnation of religious simulation is encapsulated in his *Excuse à Messieurs les Nicodémistes* (1544) and in other works. On this subject, see the classic work by C. Ginzburg, *Il nicodemismo. Simulazione e dissimulazione religiosa nell'Europa del Cinquecento* (Turin, 1979). See also G.H. Tavad, "Calvin and the Nicodemites," in *John Calvin and Roman Catholicism: Critique and Engagement, Now and Then*, ed. R.C. Zachman (Grand Rapids MI, 2008), 59–78; F. Zuliani, "The Other Nicodemus: Nicodemus in Italian Religious Writings Previous and Contemporary to Calvin's *Excuse à messieurs les Nicodémistes* (1544)," in *Discovering the Riches of the World: Religious Reading in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, eds. S. Corbellini et al., 311–333; K. Gunther, *Reformation Unbound: Protestant Visions of Reform in England, 1520–1590* (Cambridge, 2014), and in particular Chapter 3, eloquently titled "Anti-Nicodemism as a Way of Life."

Articles polytiques of the Reformed congregation of Poitiers, a prototype of a local ecclesiastical discipline which predated the drafting and implementation of the French Reformed church's national *Discipline ecclésiastique*.³³ This shows how the European Reformed network's discussions over several subjects went beyond political and linguistic borders, and that these were not just the shadow of Calvin's weight and influence as a leading theologian, or a reaction to the ferment of activity of such nonconformist movements in those very years,³⁴ but also a result of patterns of cross-fertilisation and of the activity of networks of religious refugees which still have to be properly assessed by scholars. Both the Belgic Confession (1561)—in whose composition and publication de Brès played a pivotal role³⁵—and the Gallican Confession (1559)³⁶ featured an explicit (the former) and implicit (the latter) condemnation of the doctrinal errors of the Anabaptists³⁷ as well as an unambiguous assertion of the Reformed church's legitimist stance towards God-ordained political authorities, with a clear condemnation of those who supported practices of community of property.³⁸

In and of itself, the choice to insert a *Catalogue des Docteurs et Conciles* in *Le baston de la foy chrestienne*, alongside the references to the Church fathers

33 Cf. *Articles polytiques pour l'Eglise reformee selon le saint Evangile, fait à Poitiers, 1557*, in *L'organisation et l'action des églises réformées de France. Synodes provinciaux et autres documents*, ed. P. Benedict and N. Fornerod (Geneva, 2012), 3–4.

34 In the very same years, in Northern Italy—another obvious potential geopolitical outlet for the preaching of the Reformed guise of the Reformation—a circle of Anabaptists held a synod to discuss doctrinal issues. See the critical edition of the sources connected to the meeting by D. Dainese, “Concilium Venetianum-Ferrariense, 1550—The Council of Venice-Ferrara, 1550,” in *Synods of the Churches of and after the Reformation*, dir. A. Melloni, ed. G. Braghi, *Corpus Christianorum Conciliorum Oecumenicorum Generaliumque Decreta*, vol. 6.1.1 (Turnhout, 2023), 493–529.

35 See N.H. Gootjes, *The Belgic Confession: Its History and Sources* (Grand Rapids MI, 2007).

36 The Gallican Confession had already been taking its shape and discussed well before the officialisation and formal adoption of its final text by the so-called national synod of Paris of May 1559. See G. Braghi, “Between Paris and Geneva: Some Remarks on the Approval of the Gallican Confession (May 1559),” *Journal of Early Modern Christianity* 5/2 (2018), 197–219; Braghi, “‘Imprimée de différentes manières’: The Gallican Confession and its First Printed Editions (1559?–1561),” *Zwingliana* 46 (2019), 45–72.

37 *Belgic Confession*, Article 34; *Gallican Confession*, Articles 28 and 35.

38 *Belgic Confession*, Article 36; *Gallican Confession*, Articles 39 and 40. The preface to the first Strasbourg edition of the Gallican Confession also included polemical references against seditious people who claimed to be true children of God. See G. Braghi, *The Emergence of Pastoral Authority in the French Reformed Church, c. 1555–c. 1572* (Leiden, 2021), Chapter 3.

and the ancient canons in the body of the text, already sufficed as evidence that its author and the Reformed community it was dedicated to were not Anabaptists. Then why call upon the wisdom of the Church fathers, who were certainly wise but—as Calvin himself had affirmed in his dedicatory epistle to Francis I—not exempt from human error, unlike the Holy Scriptures? And most of all (as de Brès himself announced in the frontispiece of *Le baston*, his epistle-like preface, and then clearly stated in black and white in his *Catalogue*), why bring up authors who clearly did not fall into the category of the Church fathers in the first place, and even listing their names side by side to the names of the ancient and respected fathers of the Church?³⁹ De Brès' intent was, once again, polemical. Indeed, the epistle-like preface to *Le baston* made an explicit reference to a 1547 Catholic polemical work entitled *Le bouclier de la foy* (*The Shield of the Christian Faith*), albeit without naming its author, Nicole Grenier,⁴⁰ who is deemed “the first serious, committed Catholic apologist in French.”⁴¹ Canon regular and *prieur-vicaire* of the abbey of Saint-Victor in Paris, Grenier was a steadfast and staunch polemicist who understood before many others that the most effective way of engaging with his Reformed rivals was to use the vernacular instead of the established Latin in which works of theological controversy and *disputationes* were traditionally

39 *Le baston* (1555), fols. 4r–4v: “[...] je vous ay bien voulu dedier, mes très aimez, ce present livre, intitulé Le baston de la Foy, recueilly et amassé des livres des anciens Docteurs de l'Eglise, et des Conciles et de plusieurs Autheurs, afin que par ce moyen vous apreniez tous ensemble à batailler contre voz ennemis avec le propre baston duquel ilz bataillent contre vous, asavoir les anciens” (the emphasis is mine). The frontispiece of the 1555 edition described *Le baston* as having been “[r]ecueilly et amassé des livres des anciens docteurs de l'Eglise et des Conciles, et de plusieurs autres Docteurs” (the emphasis is mine).

40 *Le baston* (1555), fols. 6v–7r: “Si j'osoye, j'en nommeroye volontiers un, qui en ce mestier a faict son apprentissage, pour ceste cause est-il appellé nostre maistre, en son livre qu'il a intitulé Le bouclier de la foy, là où il monstre la subtilité de son engin, alleguant les anciens docteurs en latin, puis les allant translater en François à tous les coups qu'il y trouve Sacrificium, ou semblable maniere de parler, au lieu d'y mettre sacrifice, ou sacré mistere, il les translate tousjours 'le sacré mystere de la Messe.' Et par ainsi il font trouver ce mot de Messe aux livres de ces bons peres, ce que jamais n'ont pensé ne faict.” The work de Brès refers to is N. Grenier, *Le bouclier de la foy, en forme de Dialogue. Extrait de la Sainte escriture, & des saintz peres & plus anciens docteurs de l'Eglise: dedié au Roy de France treschrestien* (Paris: s.l., 1548²). Henceforth, *Le bouclier de la foy*.

41 See R.E. Hallmark, “Defenders of the Faith: The Case of Nicole Grenier,” *Renaissance Studies* 11.2 (1997), 123–140, here 124. On his life and career, F. Bonnard, *Histoire de l'Abbaye royale et de l'Ordre des chanoines réguliers de Saint-Victor de Paris*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1904–1908), vol. 2, 58 and following.

written.⁴² By the time that *Le baston* was published in 1555, Grenier's work had seen at least eighteen editions, which stand as testimonies to its success and wide dissemination. *Le bouclier* did not go unnoticed by the Reformed side of the confessional divide: in 1554, Reformed polemicist Barthélemy Causse published his own dialogue—also initially entitled *Le bouclier de la foy*—to counter Grenier's arguments. From the second edition onwards, Causse's polemical response bore the title of *Le vray bouclier de la foy chrestienne* and was printed in Geneva, first in Jean Crespin's and later in Zacharie Durand's workshops.⁴³

The polemical intent of de Brès can be deduced by the wording of the title he chose for *Le baston*: indeed, whether he was aware of Causse's earlier reply to Grenier or not, he decided not to label his work as another “shield of the Christian faith,” or a “true shield” as Causse did, but as a “staff”: not a piece of armour, but a blunt weapon which could penetrate the spurious shield of the false Roman Catholic church Grenier tried to defend.⁴⁴ De Brès designed *Le baston* for a fair fight against Grenier's *Le bouclier*, considering that more than half of the Church fathers he included in his catalogue of doctors and councils matched with those chosen by Grenier to compile the list placed between *Le bouclier's* table of contents and the beginning of the first dialogue. However, unlike Causse, de Brès abandoned the dialogical genre to reply to Grenier's arguments and chose a different battlefield—a full-scale apologetical/polemical treatise—with which he perhaps found himself more comfortable for the treatment of the subjects he chose. Interestingly, both authors drafted their lists of doctors and councils with the declared aim of backing the doctrinal arguments they sustained:

42 Hallmark, “Defenders of the Faith,” 125. On the issues of the use of Latin and the vernacular for theological controversy, see F. Higman, “‘Il seroit trop plus decent respondre en latin.’ Les controversistes catholiques du XVII^e siècle face aux écrits réformés,” in *Lire et découvrir. La circulation des idées au temps de la Réforme*, ed. F. Higman (Geneva, 1998), 515–530.

43 De Boer, “Guy de Brès's *Le baston de la foy chrestienne*,” 84–85.

44 Interestingly, Grenier also authored a 1551 work entitled *L'espee de la foy*, which de Brès also might have known. We consulted N. Grenier, *L'espee de la foy, pour la deffence de l'Eglise Chrestienne, contre les ennemis de verité: extraicte de la sainte escriture, des saints Conciles, & des plus anciens peres & Docteurs de l'Eglise. Avec un Appendix de la liberté Evangelique & Chrestienne ...* (Paris: Guillaume Cavellat, 1562).

Grenier, *Le bouclier de la foy* (1547)de Brès, *Le baston de la foy* (1555/1565)

Les noms des saintz peres & anciens docteurs de l'Eglise, desquelz les sentences sont alleguées en ce present livre, pour approbation des articles de nostre Foy en iceluy contenuz, avec l'an auquel ilz ont fleury, ou sont decedez en l'eglise Chrestienne selon Tritheme en son livre des escripvains Ecclesiasticques.⁴⁵

Le catalogue des Docteurs et Conciles, desquelz avons recueilly ce present livre, pour l'approbation des articles de nostre foy, et pour monstren en quel temps ilz ont flory.⁴⁶

While Grenier explicitly referred to Johannes Trithemius' *Liber de scriptoribus ecclesiasticis* as his source,⁴⁷ establishing de Brès' wellspring for his knowledge of the Church fathers is more problematic, especially considering that he still lacked any formal education in Latin at the time of the publication of the *editio princeps* of *Le baston*. It has been suggested that de Brès might have used a French translation of Hermannus Bodius' patristic anthology titled *Unio dissidentium, omnibus unitatis et pacis amatoribus utilissima, ex praecipuis ecclesiae christianae doctoribus* (1527).⁴⁸

As similar as Grenier's and de Brès' titles may look, it is worthwhile to underline some of the differences they feature, especially in an effort to understand the extent of de Brès' polemical and apologetical attitudes. First, while Grenier explicitly referred to the ancient Church fathers (and exclusively to the fathers), de Brès chose the more generic wording "Docteurs," without labelling them "saintz," "anciens," or "de l'Eglise": after all, as we have mentioned above, *Le baston's* frontispiece announced that the author would refer to "plusieurs autres Docteurs" in addition to the ancient fathers. De Brès' choice to include a miscellany of other authors in addition to a selection of widely-recognised Church fathers could be connected to a second issue, i.e. to the very title of the catalogue. Indeed, Grenier had not ventured into giving his list a fully-fledged

45 Grenier, *Le bouclier de la foy*, fols. B4r–B4v.

46 *Le baston* (1555), fols. 3r–3v.

47 Trithemius' work was first published in Basel in 1494 in Johannes Amerbach's workshop. Grenier probably used the *Catalogus scriptorum ecclesiasticorum, sive illustrium virorum, cum appendice eorum qui nostro etiam seculo doctissimi claruere. Per venerabilem virum, Dominum Iohannem à Tritthenem Abbate Spanhemensem, disertissimè conscriptus* ([Cologne]: [Peter Quentell], 1531).

48 De Boer, "Guy de Brès's *Le baston de la foy chrestienne*," 84–85.

title and had left it with its anodyne description: on the other hand, de Brès gave his piece a formal title (note the “Le”) and chose the precise word “catalogue” as if he was placing this list into a different framework of meaning. In Edmond Huguet’s *Dictionnaire de la langue française du seizième siècle*, the lemma curiously features an example taken from *La Couronne Margaritique*, a work by Jean Lemaire des Belges—one of the non-patristic authors included in de Brès’ *Le catalogue*—in which Saint Radegund is said to have been admitted in the “catalogue of the saint crowned souls, in heaven.”⁴⁹ It is tempting to speculate whether in de Brès’ understanding—while a mere list of names such as Grenier’s did not imply any particular value for the names included except for their broadly-established reputation among Christian scholars and theologians—the recording of an individual’s name into a ‘catalogue’ was not a matter of human preference or of status, but needed God’s direct intervention and choice (as happened to Saint Radegund in Lemaire des Belges’ work).

Before offering to the reader a synoptic table for comparison, a third point should be stressed: indeed, while most names in both lists of Church fathers or “Doctors” were followed by a year, showing “in what time they flourished,”⁵⁰ Grenier’s list of Church fathers was in alphabetical order, while de Brès listed the doctors and other authors of his catalogue in chronological order. This might be interpreted as a choice of little relevance in the case of Grenier’s *Le bouclier*: on the other hand, it is possible that de Brès crafted his list in chronological order on purpose, in an effort to undermine—albeit implicitly—Roman Catholic claims of relative antiquity of their church as opposed to the perceived counterfeit nature of the Reformed religion, considered by Roman Catholics as a church dripping with “novelty and religious charlatany.”⁵¹ Indeed, first-generation Reformed martyrologists such as Jean Crespin and John Foxe (contemporary to de Brès) used the abovementioned rhetoric of martyrdom as a powerful argument against the classic Catholic defense of apostolic succession, countering it with an assertion of purity of doctrine as preserved by the Reformed church since ancient times, notwithstanding the corruption and errors advanced by the papists.⁵² In this light, the history of the ‘true Church’

49 E. Huguet, *Dictionnaire de la langue française du seizième siècle*, 7 vols. (Paris, 1925–1966), 2:123: “Elle [Radégonde] merita finalement destre escrite au livre de vie et incorporee au catalogue des Saintes ames couronnees, au ciel.” Ironically, the tomb of Saint Radegund in Poitiers was subjected by the Huguenots to an act of iconoclasm in 1562.

50 *The Staffe* (1577), fol. B5v. This English edition of *Le baston* also offered brief biographies of the “Doctors,” not included in the 1555 and 1565 French editions.

51 S.J. Barnett, “Where Was Your Church Before Luther? Claims for the Antiquity of Protestantism Explained,” *Church History* 68 (1999), 14–41, here 15.

52 On this issue, see among others E. Cameron, “Medieval Heretics as Protestant Martyrs,” in

of God was claimed as a monopoly by Reformed believers: this included the incorporation of patristic literature and, although to a lesser extent, conciliar history, for apologetical and polemical aims. After all, the very frontispiece of *Le baston* stated that the work's purpose was "for to knowe the antiquitie of our holy fayth, and of the true Church."

As we can see from the synoptical table below, de Brès was no stranger to this widespread use of what he called the "Doctors," and the Reformed emphasis on the continuity of pure doctrine with some of the persecuted martyrs of the Middle Ages could also help explain why he ventured well beyond the seventh century—where Grenier brought his list of Church fathers to its conclusion—in his catalogue of doctors and other authors upon whose works he based the theological arguments of *Le baston*:

<i>Le bouclier de la foy</i> (1547)	Both	<i>Le baston de la foy</i> (1555/1565)
Martial (40)	Dionysius the Areopagite (96) Clement, bishop of Rome (103) ⁵³ Ignatius of Antioch (111)	
Alexander, pope (119)	Irenaeus of Lyon (175) Tertullian (200) Origen of Alexandria (261) Cyprian of Carthage (249) Epiphanius of Salamis (320) Lactantius (320) Eusebius of Caesarea (320) Hilary of Poitiers (371) Athanasius of Alexandria (379) Basil of Caesarea (380) Gregory of Nyssa (380) Ambrose of Milan (380)	
John of Damascus (390)		
Theophilus of Alexandria (390)	John Chrysostom (411)	
Maximus, bishop of Turin (420)		
Paulinus of Nola (420)	Jerome of Stridon (422) Augustine of Hippo (430)	

Martyrs and Martyrologies: Papers Read in the 1992 Summer Meeting and the 1993 Winter Meeting of the Ecclesiastical History Society, ed. Diana Wood (Oxford, 1993), 185–207.

53 While Grenier listed Clement as "Clement Pape et martyr," de Brès listed him as "Clement Evesque et Martir."

(cont.)

<i>Le bouclier de la foy</i> (1547)	Both	<i>Le baston de la foy</i> (1555/1565)
Vincent of Lérins (430)	Cyril of Alexandria (432)	Primasius of Hadrumeta (437)
Peter Chrysologus (450)		Fulgentius of Ruspe (456) Prosper of Aquitaine (456) Gelasius, bishop of Rome (456)
Leo I, pope (461)	Cassiodorus (575) Gregory, bishop of Rome (605) ⁵⁴ Theophylact of Ohrid (608)	Emperor Justinian (540)
Isidore of Seville (630)		Bede the Venerable (732) Christian of Stavelot (800) Bernard of Clairvaux (1140) Sixtus I, pope Innocent III, pope Pliny the Younger Bartolomeo Sacchi ('il Platina') Marcantonio Cocci Sabellico ⁵⁵ Benno II, bishop of Osnabrück Jacopo Sannazaro Burchard of Ursperg St Ulrich, bishop of Augsburg Jean Lemaire de Belges Thomas Aquinas Master Jean Gerson Nicolaus de Tudeschis (Panormitanus)

A fourth and final point of discussion can be raised on de Brès' choice of councils, which are paramount in *Le catalogue* as they are separate from the list of doctors and other authors—the list of councils is placed after the latter—and, unlike the doctors, are not listed in perfect chronological order. De Brès' choice to expand on the “Conciles” seems at odds with Grenier's, who men-

54 As happened with Clement, Grenier listed Gregory as “Gregoire premier pape doct. latin,” while de Brès as “Gregoire pape de Rome.”

55 De Brès' reference to “Antoine Sabellique” almost certainly corresponds to Marcantonio Cocci Sabellico (c. 1436–1506), historian and keeper of the great collection of manuscripts held in the Ducal Palace in Venice.

tioned only the “seventh council,” i.e. the Second Council of Nicaea (787) in the list of *Le bouclier*: however, he had made extensive use of conciliar tradition and its canons in his *L'espee de la foy* (mentioned above), and this could hint at de Brès' knowledge of this other work by Grenier.

Although *Le catholique* seemed to bear the promise to go into greater detail in the body of the text by providing a rich list of councils to draw examples and arguments from, de Brès' use of such theological and canonical weaponry should not be overestimated: indeed, quite disappointingly, he used it extraordinarily sparingly in *Le baston*. De Brès' quotations of conciliar canons and decisions are quite sporadic in *Le baston's* marginalia and in the body of the text, where—perhaps not surprisingly—the Holy Scriptures and, to a lesser extent, Augustine among the doctors and other authors take the lion's share.⁵⁶ Moreover, de Brès' use of the conciliar and canonical tradition is not devoid of ambiguities: while in some instances de Brès used a council and/or a canon as a source to corroborate an individual point he was discussing, in other cases he simply juxtaposed different councils and their decisions in an effort to show that they were not as authoritative as Scripture, and that they could err (for example, a sub-section of *Le baston* was eloquently titled “Que les conciles peuvent errer”). Thus, rather than standing as testimony to de Brès' erudite use of the conciliar tradition and of its theological and ecclesiological treasures—which, after all, he could still not possibly master at the time of the publication of the first edition of *Le baston*—the list of councils, very much like the list of doctors, provided an occasion for de Brès to try to convince both his adversaries and his readers that he was able to debate with Roman Catholic theologians on an equal intellectual footing.

List of councils in <i>Le baston</i> (1555), fol. 3v	Corresponding councils
Le Concile de Nicene fut celebré l'an 326, par 318 Evesques.	Council of Nicaea (325)
Le Concile d'Arimine.	Council of Seleucia-Rimini (359)
Le Concile de Cartage.	Council of Carthage (397?)
Le Concile d'Ephese.	Council of Ephesus (449)
Le Concile Aurelian.	Council of Orléans (551)
Le Concile Elibertin.	Council of Elvira (c. 306)

⁵⁶ Most are quoted only once throughout the body of the text.

(cont.)

List of councils in <i>Le baston</i> (1555), fol. 3v	Corresponding councils
Le Concile de Constantinoble.	Council of Constantinople “in Trullo” (692)
Le Concile Arausicq.	Council of Orange (529)
Le Concile de Tolette.	Council of Toledo (589?)
Le Concile d’Anchyrye.	Council of Ancyra (314)
Le Concile de Gangres.	Council of Gangra (4th century)
Le Concile d’Anticire.	Council of Ancyra (314) (<i>repetition?</i>)
Le Concile bracarense deuxiesme.	Council of Braga (561)
Le Concile de Worme.	Council of Worms (1076)

By way of conclusion, it can be argued that de Brès’ understanding and use of the patristic, conciliar, and canonical traditions did not differ very much from Calvin’s: as much as they could be considered as reputable sources of knowledge in matters pertaining to the Christian faith, they were far from being authoritative: instead, they were useful only to the degree that they were able to lay bare the truth of the Holy Scriptures to the understanding of non-specialists. This was the main reason why de Brès felt comfortable to add some authors to *Le cathalogue* who were not widely recognised as doctors of the Church. Certainly, both de Brès and Calvin’s thoughts had no place for any notions of the power of the Church or the authority of tradition which could be ascribed as being on the same level of the Holy Scriptures: however, both the conciliar and the patristic traditions could be useful as they were simultaneously the closest to the times of Jesus and to his Word, and the farthest from the chain of corruption and perversion with which the papacy wreaked havoc on the ‘true Church’. De Brès’ oblique use of the Church fathers and councils, alongside his boldness as a polemicist, were particularly useful to silence skilled preachers, rhetoricians, and polemicists such as Nicole Grenier, and they certainly added to the popularity—at least in the Western European Reformed milieus—of his early theological and apologetical endeavours, perfectly encapsulated by *Le baston de la foy*.