

Memory in Understanding Identity:
The role of Agrippa d'Aubigné's *The Confessions of the Duke of Sancy* in
forming seventeenth century Protestant identity.

A dissertation

By Aran Boyes



Portrait of Theodor Agrippa d'Aubigné, Source: J. Hebert, Bibliotheque Nationale Paris,
<http://abbayes.vendee.fr/var/storage/images/media/images/mailliezais/agrippa-d-aubigne/8866-1-fre-FR/Agrippa-d-Aubigne.jpg> [Accessed on 02/05/2016]

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An Introduction

In the introduction to his three-part re-evaluation of French history Pierre Nora states that far from being synonymous, memory and history are often in opposition to one another. Where constructions of history will always offer relative and incomplete vision of the past, constructs of memory are absolute and complete in that they are a phenomenon of the present.¹ In lieu of Nora's comment, the aim of this study is in no way to reconstruct an objective view of history. Rather, it will attempt to understand something of the inherently subjective popular memory of Protestants in the later decades of the seventeenth century. In turn it will then question the role of that specific version of memory in forging contemporary Protestant group identity.

The memory that this dissertation deals with is informed by the religious violence of the sixteenth century French Wars of Religion. The birth of Protestantism in traditionally Catholic France caused decades of confessional turmoil, both locally and nationally, as theologically neither religious group could condone the continued existence of the other, as has been illustrated by Mario Turchetti.² The institutional position of the French King as *Rex Christianissimus* and defender of the French Gallican church meant that state politics and religion could not be separated, hugely intensifying the nature of the conflict as monarchs sought to fulfil their duties as Kings. Serious violence towards French protestants started in

¹ Pierre Nora, *Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past, Volume One: Conflicts and Divisions*, (New York: Columbia Press, 1996), p.3

² Mario Turchetti, 'Religious Concord and Political Tolerance in Sixteenth and Seventeenth-Century France', *Sixteenth Century Journal*, 22 (1991), p.20

1562 with the Massacre of Vassy and the outbreak of the first war of religion in a way that would not be significantly stemmed until 1598 and the passing of the Edict of Nantes, although such conflict never completely ended. Although always a minority in France, at their peak Protestants had accounted for around 10% of the population. By the end of the French Wars of Religion this figure had been significantly reduced, due to death, abjuration of a belief and migration; numbers continued to dwindle into the seventeenth century.³ However, at the same time shared Protestant memory of the conflicts was becoming increasingly structured and defined. This was because of writings by reformed believers like martyrologist Jean Crespin, Simon Goulart and Agrippa d'Aubigné that relayed contemporary accounts of what had befallen French Protestants during the wars of religion. Such writing started to standardise Protestant narratives of memory.⁴

In 1899 Henri Hauser observed that historians of the French Wars of Religion before him had long confused such contemporary writings of history as being objective truths. This failure to read between the lines of partisan accounts of the conflicts, Hauser said, had meant the social nature of the reformation had been entirely neglected whilst historians overly focused on politics and the nobility as causal factors.⁵ However, when the works of men like Crespin, Goulart and d'Aubigné are understood not as accurate histories but as documents of memory they can have huge value in helping to illuminate the nature of contemporary social Protestant identity. Himself influenced by Hauser and his contemporaries, it was early twentieth century sociologist Maurice Halbwachs who pioneered thought on how collective memory was formed and the role it played on forming

³ Philip Benedict, *The Faith and Fortunes of Frances Huguenots, 1600-85*, (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001), p.3

⁴ Richard L. Regosin, *The Poetry of Inspiration: Agrippa d'Aubigné's Les Tragiques*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1970), p.14

⁵ Henri Hauser, 'The French Reformation and the French People', *The American historical review*, 4(2) (1899), p.220

group identity.⁶ According to Halbwachs collective memory is not fixed but constructed by groups within society so as to bind the group, give it identity and allow individuals to understand self.⁷ Whilst only an individual can engage in the act of remembering, without a society to provide symbols of commemoration and tradition one would not have the mechanisms to spark memory.⁸ To then consider, as Mack P. Holt has done, that contemporary religion was about engaging in a social 'body of believers' as much as following a set of theological ideas, it becomes quite reasonable to suggest that as a defined social group seventeenth century Protestants may have formed their identity in relation a perceived group memory of the past.⁹ Where normally such memory formation would require public acts of remembrance, as a minority group in a Catholic dominated society, Protestants substituted commemorative procession, ceremony and collective endorsing of memory symbols for written histories.¹⁰

Several historians of French history have argued that, in accordance with Halbwachs, collective memory has informed identity in France. In the mid-1990s both Pierre Nora and Robert Gildea in their larger assessments of French history pointed to the influence of collective memory on the state. Whilst Gildea highlighted the effect collective memory had had over time on French political cultures, criticising Nora for not focusing enough on individual processes of memory creation, neither study was specific enough to deal with its role in forging early modern Protestant identities in France.¹¹ It was Bruce Gordon who

⁶ Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, ed. and translated by Lewis A. Coser, (London: University of Chicago Press, 1992), p.7

⁷ Halbwachs, p.22

⁸ Halbwachs, p.24

⁹ Mack P. Holt, *The French Wars of Religion, 1562-1629*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p.2

¹⁰ Philip Benedict, 'Shaping the Memory of the French Wars of Religion: The first centuries', in *Memory Before Modernity: Practices of memory in early modern Europe*, ed. by Erika Kuijpers, Judith Pollmann, Johannes Müller and Jasper van der Steen, (Leiden: Brill, 2013), p.118

¹¹ Robert Gildea, *The Past in French History*, (London: Yale University Press, 1994), p.9-11

applied this approach to history to the context of France's early modern Protestant community in his two volume edited collection on European wide Protestant history and identity in the sixteenth century. Gordon argued that right from the start of the reformation Protestants across Europe had depended on historical narratives that legitimise the reformed religion as not something new, but a return to the lost truth of Christianity and a realigning of man and God.¹² This was a feature of Protestant culture that was not only important to the birth of the movement but also fundamental to its endurance, uniquely manifest locally across Europe.¹³ Building on this Philip Benedict has shown ways in which this enduring memory culture was realised among French protestants in the seventeenth century. He does this having studied calendars commemorating key events of the French Wars of religion and offering an analysis of book ownership in Metz showing that around 1 in 8 reformed households had a copy of the Crespin's martyrology.¹⁴ Benedict has shown how written histories were not uncommon among contemporary Protestant communities and asserts their role in group identity creation.¹⁵ The most recent attempt to expand academic understanding of the link between early modern French understanding of memory and identity came from David P. LaGuardia and Cathy Yandell's 2015 edited collection *Memory and Community in Sixteenth-Century France*, an assortment of essays that prove this general line of study to be fallow and ready for greater historical exploration. It is this baton that this study seeks to carry forward in light of Agrippa d'Aubigné's *The Confessions of the Duke of Sancy*.

¹² Bruce Gordon, *Protestant History and Identity in Sixteenth Century Europe*, (Brookfield, Scolar Press, 1996), p.1

¹³ Gordon, p.5-6

¹⁴ Philip Benedict, 'Divided Memoires? Historical Calendars, Commemorative Processions and the Recollection of the Wars of Religion during the Ancien Régime', *French History* 22.4 (2008), p.381-382

¹⁵ Benedict, *Shaping the Memory*, p.114

The Huguenot soldier turned poet, Agrippa d'Aubigné was a man whose life was framed by the French Wars of Religion. According to his own writing, d'Aubigné's first memory was seeing the severed heads of the martyred conspirators of Amboise, after which his father warned him 'you must not spare your own head after my own has been taken, to avenge these leaders full of honour'.¹⁶ This instilling of religious zeal would lead d'Aubigné to fight in several of the wars of religion, becoming a close confidant of the Protestant leader Henri of Navarre, placing him at the centre of Huguenot affairs during the second half of the sixteenth century. Imbrie Buffum has said that d'Aubigné's militant religiosity did not end with his retirement as a soldier or the Edict of Nantes, but that he continued to battle for the Protestant cause through his writings.¹⁷ His most major works were the poems *Histoire Universalle* and seven-part epic *Les Tragiques*, both of which, along with his autobiography *Sa Vie a Ses Enfants*, are concerned with telling d'Aubigné's perceived history of the Huguenots. D'Aubigné's other two writings, *Avantures du Baron de Faeneste* and *Confession Catholique du Sieur de Sancy*, took the form of satirical pamphlets that simultaneously mocked Catholic practice and vindicated the Protestant cause. Such was his presence as a contemporary actor, even beyond his death in 1630, that Charles Augustin Sainte-Beuve the nineteenth century French literary critic described him as an integral part of the nation's intellectual, religious and political consciousness in France¹⁸. And yet, the legacy and long term impact of d'Aubigné on French society still remains largely unexplored.

Despite his notable stature and not insignificant corpus of works Anglophone scholarship around the historical impact of Agrippa d'Aubigné's writings are severely limited. Although

¹⁶ *Sa Vie a Ses Enfants* quoted and translated in Kathleen P. Long, 'Fathers and Sons: Paternity, memory and community in Theodore Agrippa d'Aubigné's *Histoire Universalle*', in *Memory and Community in Sixteenth Century France*, ed. by David P. LaGuardia and Cathy Yandell, (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015), p.89

¹⁷ Imbrie Buffum, *Agrippa d'Aubigné's Les Tragiques: A study of the Baroque style poetry*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1951), p.3

¹⁸ Regosin, p.13

LaGuardia and Yandell's *Memory and Community* refreshingly included two essays relating to d'Aubigné, both seemingly dismiss the influence of his writing on Protestant readers. Kathleen P. Long's analysis of *Histoire Universelle* instead focuses on d'Aubigné's personal desire to record Protestant history for fear that it may be forgotten, as was the history of the Waldensians, opposed to the effect his history had.¹⁹ Meanwhile Andrea Frisch is dismissive of *Les Tragiques* as a mechanism for Protestant identity building in the same way as works of Crespin or Goulart, on account of it lacking a 'clear ethical orientation', focusing so much on the apocalyptic power of God and not on a clear message of human agency in attaining salvation.²⁰ Arguably today because he is known first as a poet and second as a historical agent, academic analysis of d'Aubigné is all too often literary and not historical. This was the case in Catherine Randall Coats's *Subverting the System: D'Aubigné and Calvinism*, a hybrid theological-literary study.²¹ Carlos M.N. Eire's criticism of Randall Coats was just this, that whilst she provided interesting insights into d'Aubigné's hugely subversive use of symbol to convey a pro-protestant message, her work failed to consider the social impact of his writings. Eire went on to call for a study of d'Aubigné that considered that legacy of his writings, a call that this study seeks to respond to.²²

If genuine historical study of d'Aubigné's poetic works are limited, those that deconstruct his less famous pamphlets from a historical perspective are even fewer. This dissertation will rectify this and through contextual analysis of *The Confessions of the Duke of Sancy*, show the way in which it served seventeenth century Protestant communities as a mechanism for

¹⁹ Long, p.94

²⁰ Andrea Frisch, 'Agrippa d'Aubigné's *Tragiques* as Testimony', in *Memory and Community in Sixteenth Century France*, ed. by David P. LaGuardia and Cathy Yandell, (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015), p.111

²¹ Carlos M.N. Eire, review of 'Subverting the System: D'Aubigné and Calvinism' by Catherin Randel Coats, *Church History*, 62(2) (1993), p.267

²² Eire, p.268

remembering the French Wars of Religion and thus helped form group identity.²³ Initially not published, *Confessions* was printed in French in 1660, 1662, 1666 and again in 1693 as part of a collection entitled *Recueil de Diverses Pieces Servant a L'Histoire d'Henri III.*²⁴ It was also translated into English and published in London in 1679 and 1686, the versions of the text that this dissertation is primarily concerned with. Although concrete readership figures of the pamphlet are impossible to attain, this is not an insignificant publication record and warrants a closer analysis into the potential social impact of the text.

In order to show the capacity of *Confessions* as a text through which Protestant communities from 1660 on could commemorate and remember a specific vision of the late sixteenth century and the subsequent effect the pamphlet could have on group identity formation, this dissertation will be broken down into four chapters. The initial three chapters will concern the elements of *Confessions* that prime the texts in its capacity to form Protestant identity in relation to the particular anti-Catholic narrative of French history it presents. The aim of this is to show the potency it could have in informing later generations of Protestants in their group memory and identity. To help with this analysis these chapters will draw on, Stephan Greenblatt's parameters for understanding early modern identity formation, in addition to Halbwachs's collective memory lenses. Greenblatt theorised that contemporaries formed their identity in relation to a sovereign authority and a demonic other.²⁵ Chapter one will offer an analysis of *Confessions* presentation of Catholicism as the demonic other against which Protestants could form their identity. Building on this idea chapter two assesses how the pamphlet depicts Catholic actor's key to

²³ From this point on *The Confessions of the Duke of Sancy* will be referred to as *Confessions*

²⁴ Kathleen A. Perry and K.E. Perry, 'A Re-evaluation of Agrippa d'Aybigne's 'Printemps': Youthful love or mature theology?', *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance*, (1989), p.107

²⁵ Stephan Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare*, (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2005), p.9

the final stage of the French Wars of Religion and the effect this potentially had on creating an anti-Catholic memory of the period in the minds of seventeenth century Protestants. The third chapter then discusses the second of Greenblatt's parameters for identity creation, focusing on the relationship between God as a sovereign authority and the Protestant as presented in *Confessions*. The result of this section is to show how memory was fundamental to Protestant understandings of self as God's elect people, a message that d'Aubigné's presented history her affirms. The fourth chapter will place the pamphlet in specific historical context and ask what role *Confessions* played in English translation. Here the two editions of the English text will be analysed in the light of contemporary England as a means of unpacking the pamphlets capacity as a commemorative mechanism that informed Protestant collective memory and subsequently shaped group identity. This chapter progression is intended to show first the potential *Confessions* has as a force for collective remembering and identity formation, before offering a case study example of these things practically were manifest. The conclusion of this study is that texts like *Confessions* actively informed Protestant identity as they aided group collective memory of the past.

Chapter One

To not be Catholic is to be Protestant

According to Stephan Greenblatt's perception of identity creation in Early Modern Europe, 'self' was understood in relation to two parameters. These were, firstly, as individuals and

groups related their existence to that of a sovereign, even divine, authority and secondly as they encountered an alien, demonic, 'other' by which they defined themselves in opposition to.²⁶ Agrippa d'Aubigné's *The Confessions of the Duke of Sancy* offers a clear example of a text that for its Protestant readership presents specific sixteenth century Catholic actors and Catholic practice as this demonic other. Therefore, *Confessions* can be considered to be a mechanism for Protestant identity creation. The fact that the Protestants that read *Confessions* did so not when it was written, just after the publishing of the edict of Nantes, but only in the second half of the seventeenth century extenuates the text's role as a mechanism for identity creation. It is in this context that *Confessions* can be understood as a tool in collective memory formation when applied to the writings of Maurice Halbwachs. This is because it acts as a source of commemoration for later generations of French Protestants at a time when the movement was far smaller in size and of limited socio-political strength. It allows readers to mythologise the Huguenot experience of the French Wars of Religion and feel their belief is legitimised, despite the ultimate failure of the French reformed movement. As an extension of this, *Confessions* allowed seventeenth century readers to maintain a sense of identity, perceiving Protestantism as the true religion in opposition to a Catholic religion that was seen as demonic in character. This was a fundamental pillar of reformed theological identity, but *Confessions* allowed later generations of Protestant believers to feel this confessional division more potently by presenting them with the memory of religious conflict from the century before.

²⁶ Greenblatt, p.9

The issue of confessional identity being formed directly in opposition to the other group of believers was a key driver for religious conflict in sixteenth century France for both Protestants and Catholics. Among others Mario Turchetti has shown that religious division was so innately part of the cultural and theological structure of both groups that to each the idea of religious tolerance was abhorrent.²⁷ Penny Roberts too in her study of peace rhetoric during the Wars of Religion demonstrates how whilst both confessional groups desired a kind of peace, neither group's vision of a prospective peace accounted for the continued existence of the other and thus the wars raged on.²⁸ The reasons for this can be understood further when Denis Crouzet's reading of society during the French Wars of Religion is considered. Crouzet was of the opinion that all of French society was gripped with apocalyptic fear, highlighting the concern felt by individuals regarding the possibility of their own salvation.²⁹ For Crouzet both confessional groups saw the other as a heretical blot on society, whose presence would anger God and invoke his wrath if not purged. A synthesis of these three conclusions, from Turchetti, Roberts and Crouzet show the fundamental concern that religious groups had with the 'other' and how they understood their own identity as God's elect, juxtaposed against those of the other faith. Despite this, historians such as Olivier Christin have claimed that high political reason and secular wisdom were ultimately able to overcome the religious conflict of the wars in the form of the Edict of Nantes.³⁰ To suggest however that Nantes could bring an end to decades of religious violence frankly seems to be a narrow perspective when we consider that the very fabric of

²⁷ Turchetti, p.20

²⁸ Penny Roberts, 'The Language of Peace During the French Religious Wars', *Cultural and Social History*, 4(3) (2007), p.302

²⁹ Mack P. Holt, 'Putting Religion Back into the Wars of Religion', *French Historical Studies*, 18 (1993), p.535

³⁰ Luc Racaut, 'The cultural obstacles to Religious Pluralism in the Polemic of the French Wars of Religion', in *The Adventure of Religious Pluralism in Early Modern France: Papers from the Exeter conference, April 1999*, ed. by Keith Cameron, Mark Greengrass, Penny Roberts, (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2000), p.115

these two belief systems pitted them against each other. This is precisely the point made by Luc Racaut against Christin.³¹ Racaut instead points to the role of the printing press in offering a different arena through which the severity of religious division is manifest, cross-confessional tensions continued to flourish and both groups accordingly formed their respective identities against the perceived 'other'.³² *Confessions* affirms Racaut's position, offering a rebuttal to Christin, as an example of how late on in the seventeenth century religious intolerance and division were endorsed by the printing press and in this instance Protestants were thus helped to form their identity in opposition to Agrippa d'Aubigné's presented image of French Catholicism.

Right from the off *Confessions* works to present Catholicism as the evil tool of the devil so its Protestant readership can understand themselves in direct opposition to this, as God's elect people. The pamphlet opens with a preface in the form of a dialogue between two figures, identified only as a Catholic and a Protestant and immediately makes confessional division a focus of the text.³³ The pair have a candid, even humorous discussion about the contents of the ensuing confession, designed to frame the rest of the text for the reader. In their first exchange the Catholic ask the Protestant if he has heard the news that 'The Devil having lately made public Confession, [had] receiv'd full absolution of his sins from his Holiness himself in *Rome*'.³⁴ Discussion of the nature of the Devil's conversion unfolds between the two figures, until the Protestant questions if this was Lucifer's confession why was it

³¹ Racaut, p.115

³² Racaut, p.116

³³ Agrippa d'Aubigné, *Hell illuminated, or, Sancy's Roman Catholic confession wherein are such lessons, which if studiously practis'd, 'tis much to be fear'd, the Devil himself will turn Jesuit* (London: L. Curtis, 1679) in *Early English Books Online* <<http://eebo.chadwyck.com/>> [accessed 12 February 2016], A2r

³⁴ d'Aubigné, *Hell illuminated*, A2r

accredited to the Duke of Sancy.³⁵ The Catholic's answer is that the Devil is using Sancy as a guise, he knows men respect him as a figure of learning and so through the Duke his demonic message may be more widely read for had he written it as himself 'not one in a Thousand would have believ'd the Father of lyes'.³⁶ This prelude sets up the text in such a way as to present Sancy's confession to be the confession of the devil, not one emphasising the validity of Catholic belief but rather the knowing deceit and demonic intent of that religious group. Clearly d'Aubigné is playing on what Crouzet observed to be Protestant fears of Catholicism as demonic and displeasing to God in the highest form, hinting that the Devil's presence on earth had already started the apocalypse. The implication of this would be to entrench in the minds of Protestants the truth of their belief, precisely by denouncing the Catholics.

This sense that Catholicism is at its heart demonic is also manifest in the prelude as the pair of figures discuss the Devil's relationship to the Catholic church. The Catholic explains earnestly that the devil was converted by Ignatius of Loyala, the founder of the Jesuit movement, and had joined the religious order.³⁷ He goes on to comment that too often man has a tendency to focus on the Devil's bad points and does not manage enough to see his good, going on to ask 'what it is that you *Huguenots* rail so much at the Devil for?'.³⁸

D'Aubigné's clear insinuation here is that the general Catholic population of France are sympathetic to the Devil, an accusation that must also see them as opposed to God. The Protestant, in his wisdom, tries to explain to his co-conversationalist that he had fallen into the trap of the Devil, whose very plan was to realise the writings of revolution and the

³⁵ d'Aubigné, *Hell illuminated*, A6v

³⁶ d'Aubigné, *Hell illuminated*, A6r

³⁷ d'Aubigné, *Hell illuminated*, A3v

³⁸ d'Aubigné, *Hell illuminated*, A5r

apocalypse by hiding 'his cloven feet with the Jesuit's Cassock, foreseeing, that successful pretence of Mankind, *Religion*, to be the only way for him to carry on his intended mischief'.³⁹ Whilst the Catholic speaks without rationality, the Protestant sees through the Devil's plan and with clarity expresses that he has hijacked the Catholic religion. This is significant because it relates to the fact that at some point the Catholic church has diverged from the practice of the early church, a key Protestant argument for why the reformation was so needed. Again this creates the perception that the Catholic way is the wrong way and therefore Protestant practice is legitimised as the right way. The Protestant's point again reinforces, as Crouzet pointed out, the notion that the continued practice of the Catholic religion was to further the work of the devil and displease God. Such presentations of Catholicism offer much opportunity for Protestant readers to define themselves and their identity against, as per Greenblatt's perimeters.

Throughout the pamphlet the message that Catholics do not worship the one true God of the Bible but some demonic force, is frequently repeated and comes in various forms so that readers may not avoid or forget this message after the prelude. The text particularly plays upon the idea that Catholics worship idols like pagans do, in a clear breach of the Ten Commandments. In one such slanderous incident the voice of Sancy confesses that it was the pagans who 'taught us to paint our Lady after the ancient Model of Vesta, holding little Jupiter in her lap'.⁴⁰ To infer that the two most central figures of worship to Catholics, the Virgin Mary and Jesus, bare direct links to the gods of ancient Rome not only reflects negatively on Catholic theology but also amounts to a kind of literary iconoclasm on the part of d'Aubigné. The Protestant author's attack does not stop there however, as he later refers

³⁹ d'Aubigné, *Hell illuminated*, A3r-A4v

⁴⁰ d'Aubigné, *Hell illuminated*, p.106

to attempts to create Catholic martyrs as being like sacrifices to Baal, the main figure of idol worship in the Old Testament.⁴¹ The infusion of specific Biblical narrative relating to idol worship and Sancy's confession of Catholic practice serves to intensify the negative depiction of Catholic practice as being contrary to the will of God. Whilst these may be brief moments in the text, they work as part of a larger trend formulated by d'Aubigné that has the effect of presenting Catholicism as being not a religion focused on the worship of the God of the Bible and therefore a religion with demonic tendencies. This is an image against which Protestant readers can understand their own religious identity and another example of how, in accordance with Luc Racaut, the printing press offered a new arena for religious division to flourish after the signing of the Edict of Nantes.

The device that makes *Confessions* almost unique for its time, is Agrippa d'Aubigné's choice to hijack the voice of Nicolas de Harlay, seigneur de Sancy, and write in an autobiographical style. This adds to the satire of the pamphlet, allowing d'Aubigné to be particularly subversive in his negative portrayal of the Catholic religion. The first of the two book text follows the style of the official confessions of faith that the Catholic Church required notable Huguenots who abjured their faith to publicly articulate as proof of their new found belief.⁴² Using Sancy's voice d'Aubigné manipulates this format so the 'confession' is one that, rather than validating Catholic belief, systematically exposes the religion as deceitful, ungodly and ultimately wrong. Naturally the power of this message is enhanced because it comes from the, albeit fictitious, voice of a Catholic. Each of the nine chapter headings in that first book deals with a different element of Catholic theology that Protestantism was averse to,

⁴¹ d'Aubigné, *Hell illuminated*, p.148

⁴² Mathilde Bernard, 'La Confession Catholique du Sieur de Sancy: The swan song of the zealous Protestant', in *The Turn of the Soul: Representations of religious conversion in early modern art and literature*, ed. by Lieke Stelling, Harald Hendrix and Todd Richardson, (Leiden: Brill, 2012), p.22

ranging from intercession of the saints to justification by works and transubstantiation. In each individual chapter, the voice of Sancy deconstructs the folly of that particular pillar of Catholic theology. For example, of transubstantiation the voice of Sancy's explains that this confessor forbade him to read or discuss anything of the process, so instead its defence he explains to readers they must 'therefore hear the arguments which I have pick'd out of my own invention.'⁴³ So too of the authority of church tradition, the voice explains that Biblical scripture holds little sway on Catholic religious practice, despite the fact it is through scripture one can reach eternity, rather Church edicts and tradition a fundamental.⁴⁴ This kind of comment is relentless in the text, d'Aubigné's clear attempt to mock what he sees as inconsistencies and hypocrisies within Catholic practice. The ultimate effect of this is for the Protestant readership of the text to once again understand Catholic practice as inherently and knowingly corrupt, against which they can define themselves.

The prelude of *Confessions* alone shows us that post the Edict of Nantes cultures of religious intolerance were still as high as they had been during the French Wars of Religion. Not only does this defy Chrisin's argument that the causes of that conflict could be resolved through political means but it also helps to show deeply, in keeping with Greenblatts' idea, that group identity was in part formed in opposition to group perceptions of the alien or demonic. Although the association of the Catholic religion and the Devil may represent a mechanism for identity creation, it would be fair to ask how it relates to memory. The answer to that question lies in the fact that *Confessions* does not place this theme of division in isolation but in the context of the Wars by focusing on specific contemporary

⁴³ d'Aubigné, *Hell illuminated*, p.80

⁴⁴ d'Aubigné, *Hell illuminated*, p.7

Catholic actors, demonstrated in the following chapter. As a result, for those reading *Confessions* when it was published after 1660, the ardent association in the text between demonic forces the Catholic religion would determine the way in which readers remembered those historical Catholic actors and the wars as a whole. In line with Maurice Halbwachs' writings on the nature of collective memory, *Confessions* acts as a tool of commemoration for seventeenth century Protestants, as a diminished social group, to remember and experience the violence of religious division during the French wars of religion in such a way as to affirm their self-prescribed identity as God's elect people in the context of a longer history.

Chapter Two

Remembering Catholic Actors

Agrippa d'Aubigné wrote *The Confessions of the Duke du Sancy* in the aftermath of the Parlement of Paris's ratifying of the Edict of Nantes and more broadly in the wake of the once Huguenot champion, Henri IV's conversion to Catholicism in 1593. The tensions and frustrations felt by zealous Protestants around 1599 are reflected in d'Aubigné's pamphlet, both in the text's ironic slighting of Catholicism and in its use and depiction of certain notable contemporary Catholic actors. The effect of this fusing of an overtly anti-Catholic irony that paints the religion as deceitful and demonic, as discussed in the previous chapter, with a narrative that is framed by specific Catholic figures who resided at court at the end of the sixteenth century is to accentuate *Confessions'* potential as a mechanism for Protestant

identity creation. Not only does d'Aubigné's negative portrayal of figures like the Duke du Sancy, Henri IV and Catherin de Medici further serve to depict Catholics as a 'bad other' against which Protestants may form their identity, in accordance with the ideas of Stephan Greenblatt, it also primes *Confessions* so that later it informs Protestant group memory of the period.⁴⁵ Philip Benedict has already shown how books and other written texts acted as commemorative mechanisms for seventeenth century French Protestants in their remembering of the French Wars of Religion; d'Aubigné's focus on contemporary Catholic actors in *Confessions* means that for those reading the pamphlet after it was first published in 1660, it too was capable of developing a pro-Protestant collective memory⁴⁶. *Confessions* must be seen as the kind of commemorative device that Maurice Halbwachs considered to prompt such collective memory and therefore also it must also be considered a tool for Protestant identity creation as the social group understood its self by reflected on its own perceived history.

The centrality of Nicolas de Harlay, Duke de Sancy, to *Confessions* is key to the pamphlet's capacity to act as a driving force in seventeenth century Protestant collective remembering of the late sixteenth century in France and therefore also on the group's identity development. The manipulation of Sancy's voice in defaming the Catholic religion and the inference of the prelude that Sancy himself may in fact be a guise for the devil have already been discussed. Similarly, it has been suggested that such demonic and anti-Catholic character portrayal can have significance in that Protestants might actively define their identity in negative contrast to this. What has not been addressed is why d'Aubigné elected

⁴⁵ Greenblatt, p.9

⁴⁶ Benedict, *Divided Memories*, p.381-382

Sancy particularly to attack so abrasively. Sancy the historical figure had been a prominent Protestant at the court of Henri IV, the King's superintendent of finances until 1599 and had played a role in the development of the Edict of Nantes.⁴⁷ Following the examples set by Henri, the poet Jean de Sponde in 1593 and the historian and writer Pierre-Victor Palma Cayet in 1595, all figures who had been long time servants of the Protestant cause, Sancy abjured his faith in May 1597.⁴⁸ Mathilde Bernard argues that d'Aubigné attacks the Catholic convert because he is jealous of Sancy's continued proximity to and favour with Henri, for whom d'Aubigné had once been the close friend and confidant until the moment of the King's conversion.⁴⁹ Through *Confessions* d'Aubigné clearly expresses his belief that Sancy elected to do this purely for political gain. This seems not to be an expression of d'Aubigné's resentment on account of his own weakened political prominence but rather his anger that Sancy has chosen to forget God and the Protestant cause.⁵⁰ It is this that makes Sancy such a useful figure for d'Aubigné to base his anti-Catholic pamphlet on, the text ending with the voice of Sancy lamenting that 'after my conversion, the King put no confidence in me'. Historical Sancy did in fact lose political favour despite his conversion, his office being succeeded by the Protestant Duke du Sully. For seventeenth century readers of *Confessions* Sancy's character represents a generation of Huguenots that abandoned their faith in the hope of temporal gain that d'Aubigné presents as ultimately futile. This is a memory that not only presents the Catholic religion as a political tool and a belief void of God, but serves as a warning to later generations of Protestants to remain assured of their religious identity.

⁴⁷ Catherin Randall Coats, 'Hysteria and History in Sixteenth Century France: Naming the place of the other in d'Aubigné's *La Confession du Sieur de Sancy*', *Neophilologus*, 78(2) (1994), p.209 and Bernard, p.21

⁴⁸ Bernard, p.24

⁴⁹ Bernard, p.36

⁵⁰ d'Aubigné, *Hell illuminated*, p.117, p.123 and p.140

The place of Henri IV within *Confessions* is also a significant force in anchoring the textual narrative firmly at the end of the sixteenth century and allowing later Protestant generations to shape their collective memory of that time and inform their group identity. The key point that Bernard's line of argument misses is in that other major function of the figure of Sancy framing the text is, where he is in several respects allegorical for Henri IV. Both men were unique in that they had twice abjured their Protestant faith, the first time for each of these two having been in the immediate wake of the St. Bartholomew's day massacre. Equally Jacques Davy du Perron, the famed Catholic converter, was seen to be instrumental in both their final conversions. Each man was seen to take a couple of years considering their religion before publicly converting in the hope of political legitimisation, abandoning their shared roots in the Huguenot movement. The implication of Sancy's character being allegorical for Henri is that all the negative character traits of the Duke are depicted such as his desire for power above his desire for God, his reneging on the cause of a Protestant minority and even his potential status as an agent of the demonic; all are transferred to the father of the Bourbon monarchic dynasty. The negative presentation of Henri IV is a common trait in d'Aubigné's writings, as demonstrated by Samuel Kinser, not least because for so long the two men fought side by side to further the Huguenot cause.⁵¹ This reflects the huge political and religious blow that Henri's conversion was to contemporary zealous French Protestants who now feared for their future in France.⁵² *Confessions* more explicitly comments negatively on Henri IV as well as the prelude inferring that often great men are the first to be fooled by the devil, it is a running theme that the voice of Sancy justifies his own conversion by his following of the King in moments when he

⁵¹ Samuel Kinser, 'Agrippa d'Aubigné and the Apostasy of Henri IV', *Renaissance Studies*, 11 (1964), p.245-246

⁵² Michael Wolfe, 'Protestant Reactions to the Conversion of Henry IV', in *Changing Identities in Early Modern France*, ed. by Michael Wolfe, (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997), p.371 and p.377

struggles to justify an element of Catholic practice.⁵³ For the seventeenth century reader *Confessions* therefore offers a particular vision of that past that captures the anger some Huguenots felt towards Henri after his conversion in such a way as to manipulate negative group remembering of that first Bourbon monarch.

Another Catholic actor who *Confession* fictionalises, further lodging the text firmly in the historical context of the end of the French Wars of Religion for seventeenth century Protestant readers, is Jacques Davy du Perron. As mentioned above du Perron was an infamous French Catholic Bishop, then Cardinal, credited with the conversion of Henri IV, Sancy, Palma Cayet and others.⁵⁴ Known as an effective orator, du Perron's infamy among Huguenots was even more because he himself had come from a reformed family and spent time studying Calvinism in Geneva, only to abjure his faith in the hope of joining the court of Henri III. Naturally d'Aubigné's portrayal of du Perron is overwhelmingly negative, suggesting his skill as a converter is nothing to do with religion but rather his social eloquence and position.⁵⁵ The second book of *Confessions* opens with a dialog in the same format as the prelude, but this is a conversation between the courtier Madam Mathurine and du Perron in which the portrayal of the Bishop is heavily sexualised. Upon seeing Mathurine he blushes 'and stroking his bald Pate, thus accosted her', so starts the couple's fictional encounter with clear as well as clandestine sexual imagery.⁵⁶ Discussion of the sexually illicit continues through the dialogue with the clergyman, whose office requires celibacy yet is repeatedly accused of engaging in illicit sexual acts including acts of

⁵³ d'Aubigné, *Hell illuminated*, A6r and some examples of this can be found on p.25, p.35, p.118, p.122 and p.16

⁵⁴ N.M. Sutherland, *Henry IV of France and the Politics of Religion, 1572-1596*, (Bristol: Elm Bank, 2002), p.185

⁵⁵ Bernard, p.25

⁵⁶ d'Aubigné, *Hell illuminated*, p.86

sodomy.⁵⁷ This depiction of such a prominent agent of the Catholic church naturally scandalised and discredits du Perron, and thus the practices of the Catholic religion, as later generations of Protestants read *Confessions*. Not only can du Perron's character offer an image of Catholics which such Protestants can form their identity in opposition to, but it also taints their group memory of the late sixteenth century as being a time of such Catholic driven debauchery. This type of remembering of that period has the potential to legitimise seventeenth century notions of Protestant identity as 'good' and Catholic identity as 'bad'.

The way in which certain Catholic women are presented in *Confessions* also acts to place the pamphlets anti-Catholic message as one with seventeenth century Protestant memory of the French Wars of Religion. In general, the pamphlet acts to smear the image of Catholic women by inferring their sexual immorality as with du Perron. Where du Perron is seen as lustful, Madam Mathurine is his obvious temptress. The reader is told she has been a soldier, 'having marched with the Regiment of *Picardy*' inferring she acted as a prostitute.⁵⁸

This sexualisation is reiterated through her character's voice when she says she hopes 'to debauch some of [du Perron's] bothers apostles' and du Perron describes her as a 'quaint slut'.⁵⁹ Whilst we most clearly see this in d'Aubigné's depiction of Madam Mathurine, such references are also made to Catherin de Medici. In one instance the voice of Sancy gives credence to the rumour that the late Queen mother had an 'unseemly familiarity' with the Cardinal of Lorrain, suggesting that she was indeed the radically Catholic Guise's lover.⁶⁰

Such claims as these make *Confessions* scandalous as well as humorous. For those Protestants reading *Confessions* after 1660 d'Aubigné's specific attacks on the characters

⁵⁷ d'Aubigné, *Hell illuminated*, p.93

⁵⁸ d'Aubigné, *Hell illuminated*, p.95

⁵⁹ d'Aubigné, *Hell illuminated*, p.96-97

⁶⁰ d'Aubigné, *Hell illuminated*, p.137

from the late 1590's makes the text a tool for collective remembering of that period in history through which identity formation could take place.

To conclude, the intertwining of the portrayal of Catholicism as demonic and the negative presentation of key Catholic actors from the end of the French Wars of Religion both act to prime *Confessions* as a mechanism via which later generations of Protestants could collectively remember the period, forming their identity in line with this anti-Catholic portrayal of history. Figures like Sancy, Henri IV, du Perron and Catherine de Medici are just some of the historical actors that Agrippa d'Aubigné has fictionalised in his writing of the pamphlet, and it is this fiction that could potentially be so potent in informing seventeenth century Protestant group memory of the late sixteenth century. In light of this *Confessions* not only seems to fulfil the parameter for identity creation laid out by Stephan Greenblatt and discussed in the previous chapter, where by Protestants may form their own identity in opposition to overtly negative portrayals of Catholicism, but it also has the potential to develop Protestant identity through its influence on collective memory. If indeed *Confessions* does represent such a commemorative mechanism for seventeenth century Protestants, in accord with the views of Maurice Halbwachs on collective memory, it must also be considered capable of developing that group's collective identity as they reflect on their perceived understanding of the past.

Chapter three

Protestants as God's Elect

The second feature of early modern identity creation identified by Stephan Greenblatt is that individuals and groups would conceive of themselves in relation to a sovereign, deified authority.⁶¹ For seventeenth century Protestants this was certainly the case as they understood themselves as God's elect people, created to serve and worship Him above all temporal things. This vision of self was paramount for contemporary Protestants because it ratified, in their own minds, their religion as the one true faith at a point in history when that status was highly contested between themselves and Catholic groups. Although written through the voice of a Catholic narrator, *The Confessions of the Duke du Sancy's* Protestant authorship is clear through the text's frequent portrayal of the Huguenots as God's true elect people. For the French Protestant community, whose size had significantly diminished by the time *Confessions* was first published in 1660, affirmation that their identity lay 'in Christ' as the text infers could act to strengthen the identity of the religious group. Fundamental to Protestant self-perception as God's elect people was collective memory. From the inception of the reformation, reformed believers were accused of having created a 'new' religion as they sought to move away from the doctrine and practice of the Catholic Church. To be seen as attempting to innovate religion was a damnable thing; the implication being that reformed theologians were trying to 'improve' the already perfectly holy word of God. The only way to avoid this image was for reformed theology to have a heavy emphasis on returning to the ways of the early church and original Holy Scripture, from which the Catholic Church had in their eyes strayed. Protestant identity lay heavily therefore in the association of the memory of Biblical narrative and contemporary group experience in such a way as to legitimise their religious belief. This is a phenomenon that occurs in *Confessions*,

⁶¹ Greenblatt, p.9

meaning the text has the potential to have acted as a mechanism for commemoration that had the capacity to inform Protestant collective memory and group identity.

Where in the first book of *Confessions* Agrippa d'Aubigné's focus was on mocking Catholic theology, the second book offers something of Sancy's commentary on issues pertaining to the Huguenots. The focus of the book's second chapter is on the difficulty of uniting the two religions, clearly presenting Catholicism as a modernising religion, whilst the Huguenots are steadfast in their reading of scripture. Although the text makes a number of comments to this effect, it specifically refers to the Council of Trent as having taken away the second commandment from Catholic doctrine.⁶² This is of course a slight at the fact that praying to images and figures of saints was common Catholic practice, an act that Protestants considered to represent idol worship and the systematic breaking of the second commandment. The voice of Sancy goes on to justify such Catholic innovation within the religion by arguing that in his letter to the Galatians St. Paul had implored those early Christians to be flexible in their faith so as to accommodate 'the humours and infirmities of the Jews'.⁶³ This is another moment of d'Aubigné's ironic satire, as Huguenot readers of the text would well know that in fact Paul writes to the Galatians to warn them that they must not conform to the ways of the Jews or other faux-Christian preachers, wary that 'there are some who trouble [them] and want to distort the gospel of Christ'.⁶⁴ Through this use of irony, Huguenot readers of the text align the experience of the early and venerable Galatian church with that of their own, equating sixteenth century Catholic doctrinal practice and discussion like at the council of Trent as attempts to corrupt the already perfect gospel of

⁶² d'Aubigné, *Hell illuminated*, p.105

⁶³ d'Aubigné, *Hell illuminated*, p.106

⁶⁴ Galatians 1.7

Christ. This in turn potentially would allow seventeenth century Protestants to look back to the previous century and understand the Huguenot experience during the French Wars of Religion as assurance of their belief that they are God's elect people. Thus *Confessions* certainly had the capacity to act as a mechanism for commemoration of a specific vision of Protestant memory, which subsequently could inform group identity.

Satirically misrepresenting biblical narrative through Sancy's Catholic voice is a technique d'Aubigné uses elsewhere in the pamphlet, in such a way as to encourage Huguenot assurance in their religious identity. The story of Daniel, the Israelite who was delivered from a den of lions after refusing to worship his King instead of his God was one biblical narrative well known to Huguenot groups. Jean Calvin had used this episode to explain when, biblically speaking, it may be acceptable to resist the will of a tyrannical king.

However, Sancy's fictional understanding of the story of Daniel is quite different. Instead of seeing Daniel's commitment to God above King, Sancy's voice focuses on the idea that 'when Daniel pray'd, [he] turn'd his face towards the rising Sun' seeking to peruse 'growing greatness; and to turn his tail upon them that are sinking into disgrace'.⁶⁵ By extension Sancy concludes that to be like Daniel he must follow the rising greatness of his own king, Henri IV above all else, in a ridiculous misreading of the story. Not only does this passage of *Confessions* mock what for Huguenots would be an obviously ridiculous Catholic doctrine, but as with its previous reference to Galatians it relates the messages of scripture to the memory of sixteenth century Protestant experience. Implicitly it presents Sancy's decision to follow his King and convert to Catholicism as un-biblical and as being in opposition to the true meaning of the story of Daniel. *Confessions* practically intertwines biblical narrative and a memory of the French Wars of Religion to not only legitimise Protestant belief as their

⁶⁵ d'Aubigné, *Hell illuminated*, p.112

group experience was brought in tandem with that of biblical actors, but also to serve as a warning against finding identity in ones' king above ones' God. This presented view of their own history again has weight as a means via which seventeenth century Huguenots could positively form an understanding of their own religious identity, even in a time when in France their social strength was severely diminished.

Although *Confessions* is written almost entirely through the voice of the Duke du Sancy, in the fifth chapter of the pamphlet's second book the voice recounts a meeting with a Huguenot. The retelling of this fictional interaction allows us to hear for the first time since the prelude a directly Protestant voice. The effect of this is to offer an example of a Huguenot who was steadfast in his faith, even after Henri IV's abjuration, because he knew that the eternal rewards of heaven were more important than temporal comforts and success in life. In both the fourth and fifth chapters of this book Sancy details the hardships faced by Huguenots at the time the Edict of Nantes was signed in 1598. He says that authorities actively attempted 'to undermine their two main pillars' by trying to control and manipulate religious practice whilst politically disenfranchising French Protestants, in the hope of diminishing their religious belief.⁶⁶ Sancy's voice goes on, in the chapter '*Of the Miseries of the Huguenots*', to explain that he lived in an age where a Huguenot may have nothing but poverty and has no way of advancing himself in society, mocking that they 'have only God to trust upon all occasions, in whom a man of my humour seldom puts more than a moderate confidence'.⁶⁷ Here d'Aubigné is clearly suggesting that Catholics lack conviction in their faith, whilst Protestants are fully dependent of God. This message is confirmed by the Huguenot voice who tells Sancy that he does not mind this maltreatment, quoting

⁶⁶ d'Aubigné, *Hell illuminated*, p.116-117

⁶⁷ d'Aubigné, *Hell illuminated*, p.123-125

scripture saying 'the blessed shall inherit the Earth' reiterating that through commitment to his faith God will reward him in heaven.⁶⁸ For the seventeenth century reader this passage offers not only a clear reminder of the eternal rewards of not abjuring Protestant belief, but also serves to give them an example to follow of humble Huguenots who in the sixteenth century refused to abandon their belief in exchange for temporal gain. Somehow the suffering of past believers has the capacity to act as an assurance to later believers that their mutually held faith is legitimate, affirming Protestant identity as God's elect people. This remembering potentially allows readers of *Confessions* to understand themselves as part of a longer historical tradition of believers who have faced targeted social persecution but remained resilient in their religion.

The idea that Huguenot theology and group identity is in some way supported by the memory of the sufferings of past believers again seems to hold weight when the commemoration of martyrdom is considered. One of the longest chapters in *Confessions* is dedicated to the topic of martyrdom, with the voice of Sancy quite frankly stating that 'I find none, next to the Bible to be so dangerous as the great Volume of Martyrs' in validating Protestant belief.⁶⁹ Whilst this comment holds a hint of satire, it also makes the serious point that the memory of the religious conviction of earlier believers was a serious tool for affirming Protestant identity as God's elect people. The Volume of Martyrs to which the text refers is Crespin's book of Martyrs, a text documenting numerous Protestant deaths from the mid sixteenth century onwards. Philip Benedict has shown how widely spread ownership of this text was among French Protestant communities during the seventeenth century, and itself is probably the most major mechanism for Huguenot memory

⁶⁸ d'Aubigné, *Hell illuminated*, p.124

⁶⁹ d'Aubigné, *Hell illuminated*, p.145

formation.⁷⁰ Sancy's acknowledgement of this leads him to the conclusion that the only way to subvert this most authentic Protestant expression of religion is to create a knowingly false history of Catholic martyrs. However, all the while he hypothesises as to how he might achieve this. He remembers the various Huguenot martyrdoms, evoking the memory of the Catholic slaughter of Protestants on Saint Bartholomew's day. The effect of this is to evoke the memory of those that died during the French Wars of Religion for their faith in such a way for seventeenth century readers as to affirm them in their Protestant identity whilst simultaneously hearing a Catholic voice confess that his religion lacks the same kind of legitimising historical suffering. Through this memory Protestant identity as God's elect people is further supported.

To conclude, depictions of sixteenth century Huguenots in *The Confessions of the Duke du Sancy* often present the religious group, either explicitly or implicitly, as God's elect people. This constant representation of Protestants during the French Wars of Religion fulfils Stephan Greenblatt's parameter for contemporary identity creation, that identity was formed in part as a group understood themselves in relation to a deified authority. For sixteenth century Huguenots *Confessions* would lead us to believe that being subordinate to God above all else was the key pillar of their identity, above duty to their King or the hope of worldly gain. This message had potential to hold a slightly different kind of potency for Protestants who read d'Aubigné's pamphlet, it not being published for at least sixty years after it was written. For seventeenth century Protestants *Confessions* had the capacity to act as a mechanism for remembering sixteenth century Protestant experience and

⁷⁰ Philip Benedict, *Shaping the Memory*, p.114

understanding it as conformation in the validity of their shared belief. This understanding was made stronger as d'Aubigné interwove Biblical narrative with his subverted understanding of contemporary affairs around 1598, in such a way as to present Protestant history as being directly linked to the Israelites and the early Church. It is these qualities that meant *Confessions* had the capacity to act as a commemorative mechanism for Protestants after 1660, in such a way as to shape, legitimise and encourage their socio-religious identity.

Chapter Four

Agrippa d'Aubigné in English Translation

To this point this dissertation has focused on the qualities that Agrippa d'Aubigné's *The Confessions of the Duke du Sancy* potentially had as a mechanism for seventeenth century Protestants reading the text in their forming of collective memory and group identity. This chapter will discuss these features of the text in direct relation to specific historical context, in support of that earlier analysis of *Confessions*. Although a French text, d'Aubigné's pamphlet was translated into English twice, first in the year 1679 and then again in 1686. Contemporary England was a place fraught with religious mistrust, with anti-Catholic feeling, and even genuine fear of the 'enemy within' that coursed through all social levels of the Protestant majority.⁷¹ The two moments at which *Confessions* was published in England, both times in a London that was a pressure cooker for such social religious tensions, were both points at which that anti-Catholic feeling came to a boiling point. In 1679 this was in

⁷¹ Barry Coward, *The Stuart Age, England 1603-1714*, (London: Longman, 1980), p.314

conjunction with the social hysteria that accompanied Protestant fear of the fictitious Popish Plot to kill Charles II, whilst the 1686 version was published in the wake of England's last Catholic monarch James II's ascension to the throne. *Confessions* was a text that had the capacity when read by English Protestants at these moments, to contribute to and justify anti-Catholic feeling. This seems to be a manifestation of Maurice Halbwachs' theory on collective memory, as seventeenth century English Protestants used the vision of sixteenth century French Protestant experience presented in *Confessions* in such a way as to affirm their own socio-religious identity and fuel angst across the channel nearly a decade later.

To understand the significance of seventeenth century translation culture helps to further reveal the significance of *Confessions* as a mechanism for collective remembering and therefore identity forming. Peter Burke has shown how translation was fundamental to the reformation as it allowed for the spread of ideas like those of Luther, Calvin and Zwingli across Europe⁷². The focus of reformed Christianity on the importance of scripture and these new written ideas meant that by the seventeenth century there had been a huge boom in the amount that people read in overwhelmingly Protestant England, with newspapers going from editions printed weekly to twice daily.⁷³ However, the translation of writings and ideas in general were rarely 'pure' according to Burke. Rather through the process of translation the meaning of a text would be re-contextualised so as to fit the cultural and political needs of the people group for whom the translation was intended.⁷⁴ Burke concludes that translation then is often used to support cultural stereotypes and

⁷² Peter Burke, 'Cultures of Translation in Early Modern Europe', in *Cultural Translation in Early Modern Europe*, ed. by Peter Burke and R. Po-Chia Hsia, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p.2

⁷³ Mark Kishlansky, *A Monarchy Transformed, Britain 1603-1714*, (London: Penguin Books, 1997), p.2

⁷⁴ Burke, p.38

prejudices of the group translating, as they reflect on the group about whom a text has been translated.⁷⁵ This is a trend that *Confessions* supports in facilitating negative popular English Protestant feeling towards both France and Catholics on mass. Nina Lamal, building on Burke's thought, has conducted a study into the way in which contemporary histories of Early Modern religious conflict were spread across Europe, however being doctored as they were translated so as to fit national sensibilities.⁷⁶ It is clear to Lamal that such translations were not simply about informing readers of foreign happenings, but that they were driven by both commercial and political imperatives.⁷⁷ These visions of seventeenth century translation culture fall neatly in tandem with Halbwachs' understanding of collective memory formation when we consider *Confessions*. This is so in that for Halbwachs group memory was formed as a perceived perspective on the past was being manipulated to suit a contemporary socio-political context and help form identity. This happens much in the way that Burke and Lamal suggest ideas and histories were shaped through the process of translation.⁷⁸ Therefore, both the 1679 and 1686 English language versions of *Confessions* must be seen as mechanisms for seventeenth century English Protestant memory and identity creation.

By 1679 England had already experienced an incredibly turbulent seventeenth century. The country had undergone bloody civil war, executed its King, replacing him with Oliver Cromwell as Lord Protector before the restoration of the monarchy and ascension of Charles II in 1660. Although the restoration itself was in fact fairly simple, Mark Kishlansky argues that the fault lines of the previous decades were far harder to remedy in any official

⁷⁵ Burke, p.20

⁷⁶ Nina Lamal, "*Translated and Often Printed in Most Languages of Europe': Movement and translations of Italian histories in the Dutch Revolt across Europe'*", [unpublished manuscript], p.14

⁷⁷ Lamal, p.24

⁷⁸ Halbwachs, p.22-24

restoration settlement.⁷⁹ One of the deepest fault lines in English society revolved around the issue of religious tolerance. Seventeenth century England was a place of some religious diversity with an Anglican mainstream, with more radical Protestant groups like the Quakers, Baptists and Presbyterians to one side and Catholics to the other.⁸⁰ From the restoration onwards laws tightened in an attempt to restrict the religious freedom of those who were not part of the Anglican Communion, The Act of Uniformity in 1662, the Conventical Acts of 1664 and 1670 and the Test Act of 1674 all worked to this end.⁸¹ This was not simply a political tension, but one that was deeply social. Robert Clifton has explained how by 1660 the English people had been subject to over a century of anti-Catholic Protestant propaganda, much like *Confessions*.⁸² Memory of the Gun Powder Plot, the Saint Bartholomew's day massacre and Fox's Book of Martyrs was strong, all serving to present Catholics as a menace to society.⁸³ Add to this the sensational claim that a group of Jesuits had hatched a secret plot to assassinate Charles and the King's lack of a legitimate heir, meaning on his death the Catholic duke of York would become King, and the context in which *Confessions* was first published in London can be understood.⁸⁴ *Confessions* would have acted to legitimise Protestant fears of Catholic conspiracy as, in accordance with Burke and Halbwachs, English readers comprehended d'Aubigné's presented vision of sixteenth century French Catholics as conformation of the fiendish qualities of contemporary Catholics.

The title of the 1679 edition of *Confessions* immediately shows how the text has been manipulated by its translator to serve the socio-political hysteria that enveloped London

⁷⁹ Kishlansky, p.216

⁸⁰ Kishlansky, p.5

⁸¹ Kishlansky, p.234-235

⁸² Coward, p.315

⁸³ Coward, p.316

⁸⁴ Kishlansky, p.248

during the Popish Plot. The title originally given to the French version of the pamphlet was *La Confession Catholique du Sieur de Sancy*, this edition however was called *HELL Illuminated. OR, SANCY'S ROMAN CATHOLIC Confession*, with the subtitle *WHEREIN Are such Lessons, which if studiously practis'd, 'tis much to be fear'd, the Devil himself will turn JESUIT*.⁸⁵ The text's translator is clearly playing upon contemporary anti-Catholic sentiment adding to the title so as to paint the Catholic religion as a demonic manifestation of evil. As the opening two chapters of this dissertation point out, this was an effective technique for aiding Protestant identity formation. This was especially true of the role of Jesuits as menacing Catholic agents being added to this title showing how the translator attempted to use this version of *Confessions* to support social angst towards Catholics. In the 1670's Jesuits were seen as the key force for the advancement of Popery in England for which they were both feared and disliked. Their zealous Catholic beliefs, the supposed conversion of the Duke of York in 1673 and their being painted as the concoctors of the Popish Plot all contributed to cementing popular perceptions of the Jesuits as agents of evil.⁸⁶ This depiction of the Jesuits, again as previously mentioned, continues throughout the text's Prelude with various assertions that the devil is a member of the religious order able to 'hide his cloven feet with the Jesuits Cassock'.⁸⁷ In fact around a third of the textual references in *Confessions* to Jesuits come in or before the Prelude, which incidentally is not a feature of the 1686 English edition of d'Aubigné's pamphlet. It would seem that the translator of this 1679 version of *Confessions* has intentionally given the text a greater focus on the specific evils of the Jesuit order, prescribing new meaning to the pamphlet so its message better suits a contemporary English social context and the prevalent contemporary

⁸⁵ d'Aubigné, *Hell illuminated*, A1r

⁸⁶ Kishlansky, p.252

⁸⁷ d'Aubigné, *Hell illuminated*, A3r

fears. *Confessions* offers therefore an example of what Burke saw as textual re-contextualising in the translation process, as well as what Halbwachs recognised as the re-proscribing of meaning to notions of history by a group like English Protestants to support what was in this case an anti-Catholic identity.

Placing the 1679 edition of *Confessions* contextually and socially in history, its potential subversion worked to legitimise popular anti-French Catholic feeling in London. This happens in a way that follows a trend of translation culture observed by Burke in which translated texts served to affirm stereotypes of the nation from which the work originally hailed, as held by the new people group reading the text.⁸⁸ By 1660 France was the premier European power. Not only were the tales of her staunch Catholicism told by Huguenot refugees to England but Louis XIV's drawing of England into multiple expensive wars meant that the Protestant English did not hold the French in a positive light.⁸⁹ Popular and Parliamentary unease at Charles II's consistently pro-French foreign policy boiled over in to fear of French imperialistic intensions during the Popish Plot when it was rumoured that Louis was complicit in the planned assassination and that in 1678 French and Spanish expeditionary raiders had landed on English shores.⁹⁰ In this climate of fear, the narrative of *Confessions* which was written by d'Aubigné as anti-Catholic was for the English reader, anti-French. In translation the pamphlet offers a supposed confirmation of an inherently negative history of French Catholicism, implicitly placing the conversion of Henri IV as a key moment from which this nature originated, acting to legitimise popular English negative feeling and fear towards France in 1679. In this translation of *Confessions* both the history and the message of the pamphlet have been given a new context so as to support anti-

⁸⁸ Burke, p.20

⁸⁹ Kishlansky, p.237

⁹⁰ Coward, p.327 and Kishlansky, p.247

French, and therefore anti-Catholic, popular sentiment offering another opposition against which English Protestants could understand their own identity.

More broadly the general themes of *Confessions* were also useful in the way they could speak into and add to contemporary fears in England around 1679. These were both the fear of Catholic converts and the potential for Charles II's conversion. As previously discussed, *Confessions* was simultaneously a pamphlet targeted at mocking the Duke of Sancy's abjuration of faith in the late 1590's whilst also offering an allegorical comment and critique of Henri IV's conversion to Catholicism. This was a historical narrative that acted to affirm popular fears in England around eighty years later of high profile, even Kingly conversion to Catholicism and the potential repercussions of that. In 1673 James Duke of York and heir to the throne of England very publicly converted to Catholicism.⁹¹ After his conversion James married Catholic Mary of Modena meaning he could produce a Catholic heir in an act that Charles could have prevented but chose not to.⁹² The combination of this with the fact that Charles II was married to a Catholic along with his overtly pro-French foreign policy all lead to the growth of fears that he too may be tempted to convert.⁹³ Incidentally, such social fear was not without basis. Charles had agreed with Louis XIV in a secret clause of the Treaty of Dover in 1670 that he would convert to Catholicism publicly at the proper moment, an event that took place on his death bed.⁹⁴ The publication of *Confessions* into this climate potentially would have acted to stoke popular fears of Kingly conversion to Catholicism and the consequences of James's abjuration of Protestant faith, both in offering a previous example of when such a thing had happened and making clear in

⁹¹ Kishlansky, p.243

⁹² Kishlansky, p.248

⁹³ Kishlansky, p.236

⁹⁴ Kishlansky, p.247

this scenario 'If ever any prince would reign so exactly... it behoves him to exterminate the Huguenots'.⁹⁵ This message when understood in the context of England in 1679 could act to stoke anti-Catholic hysteria as the memory of the French Wars of Religion presented in *Confessions* are given such new meaning.

The 1686 edition of *Confessions* was printed at a time when England's socio-political situation once again meant mistrust of Catholics was ignited amongst the nation's Anglican majority. As a result of this d'Aubigné's pamphlet again offered a historical narrative that in translation, when read in this context, could be given new meaning in the minds of contemporary English Protestants to aid their anti-Catholic feeling in that moment. Anti-French feeling was particularly high as Louis XIV had only the year before revoked the 87-year-old Edict of Nantes, as a result of which around 200,000 Huguenots fled France, many of whom arrived on English shores with tales of state enforced oppression which *Confessions* supported.⁹⁶ This influx of Protestant refugees coincided with the ascension of James II to the English throne, again making the negative narrative of Kingly conversion one with utility amongst English Protestants.⁹⁷ Despite Parliament's best attempts to avoid this, Charles II had remained resilient in the face of any kind of Exclusion Act and in 1685 England had a zealously Catholic monarch.⁹⁸ Where Protestant anti-Catholic hysteria and fear was a far less tangible social angst, with the role of Catholics almost mythologised, by 1686 and the publishing of the later edition of *Confessions* the place of James in society arguably meant Protestants had a more concrete target against whom they could express their dislike of Catholics. Arguably this meant that the mass social hysteria and fear set aflame in 1679

⁹⁵ d'Aubigné, *Hell illuminated*, p.136-137

⁹⁶ Elizabeth Labrousse, 'Calvinism in France, 1598-1685' in, *International Calvinism, 1541-1715*, ed. by Menna Prestwich (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), p.310

⁹⁷ Toby Barnard, 'Restoration or Initiation?', in *The Seventeenth Century: A short Oxford history of the British Isles*, ed. by Jenny Wormald, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p.141

⁹⁸ Kishlansky, p.265

by the Popish Plot was not replicated to the same extent in 1686 when anti-Catholic feeling and fear was more constrained and directed specifically at the monarchy. Although neither the 1679 or 1686 translations of *Confessions* are radically different in their content, elements of the latter's format seem to represent the shift from bubbling popular terror that emanated through English Protestant society in 1679 to a more functional and focused attempt to discredit specifically Catholic practice and Catholic converts, like James II.

The translation of *Confessions* published in 1686 arguably offers a more direct attack on James II where the earlier edition had generally contributed to a social mood of anti-Catholic hysteria. Although there are only subtle differences between the two editions of the pamphlet three features support this idea; the difference in title, the role of the prelude and the place of contents pages. Firstly, the later version of the text does not offer the same sensational style of title that the original translation did. Rather than claiming to contain 'Hell illuminated' or the close ties of the Devil to the Jesuit order, it has a far more functional title.⁹⁹ 'The Catholic Confession of Monsieur de Sancy, Declaring the CAUSES as well as STATE as RELIGION, which moved him to return into the bosom of the Roman Catholic Church' is a much more direct and clear representation of the texts content.¹⁰⁰ In place of the sensationalism of the 1679 title, the three words in the upper case make the religious and political commentary of the text obvious and plain. This political focus was one ignored by the 1679 translator and perhaps represents the fact that this later edition was intended not to create the same kind of anti-Catholic social hysteria as the first, but rather offer a more focused attack on the motives and validity of James II's conversion.

⁹⁹ d'Aubigné, *Hell illuminated*, A1r

¹⁰⁰ Agrippa d'Aubigné, *The Catholick confession of Monsieur de Sancy declaring the causes as well of state as religion which moved him to return into the bosom of the Roman Church*, (London: Job King, 1686) in *Early English Books Online* <<http://eebo.chadwyck.com/>> [accessed 12 February 2016], A1r

This point is supported by the 1686 version's lack of a prelude. The format of the prelude in the previous English translation of *Confessions* was laid out in the form of a dialog between a Catholic and a Protestant. This stylistic choice meant it was a section of the text that could easily be performed in front of an audience. Its humour and anti-Catholic message was tailored for larger scale public amusement and popular digestibility.¹⁰¹ Much like the text's title the prelude of the 1679 version of *Confessions*, as discussed previously, is sensationalist in aligning the Catholic religion and demonic forces but it lacks some of the political focus of the rest of the text.¹⁰² It is perhaps for this reason that the translator of the 1686 pamphlet elected to not include the prelude in their text, it not directly serving the political message they perhaps desired. Instead this later edition includes two sets of contents pages, one for each of the two books in the pamphlet.¹⁰³ This not only gives this version of the text a far more structured feel, but allows the reader more systematically to access specific points of satirical criticism of Catholic theology and why politically one might convert. It would appear that here the translator has made a conscious effort to aid the reader in understanding specifically the religious-political message of *Confessions* in a bid to discredit James II. Arguably in this sense the translator of the 1686 edition of *Confessions* has done less to subvert the purpose of the text than the 1679 translator had, however both clearly re-contextualise the narrative of d'Aubigné's text manipulating English Protestant memory of the sixteenth century Huguenot experience so as to suit contemporary socio-political aims.

To conclude, assessment of these two English translations of *The Confessions of the Duke du Sancy* shows how in translation the pamphlet's narratives of the late French Wars of

¹⁰¹ d'Aubigné, *Hell illuminated*, A2r-A7v

¹⁰² d'Aubigné, *Hell illuminated*, A4v

¹⁰³ d'Aubigné, *The Catholick confession*, A2r-B1v

Religion meant that English Protestant memory of both Catholic and Protestant experience during that time was given new meaning. This new meaning was not passive but related directly to contemporary socio-political circumstances. In 1679 and in 1686 the re-contextualising of this historical narrative acted to legitimise anti-Catholic feeling and affirm English Protestant identity in this, first contributing to popular fear and hysteria connected to the mythologised Catholic 'enemy within' and later in more direct relation to England's Catholic King James II. To understand *Confessions* as a mechanism for this kind of collective memory formation, one where historical narrative is repurposed to suit contemporary socio-political needs, falls in line with Mauric Halbwachs' understanding of memory cultures much as it does Peter Burks' reflections on the world of Early Modern translation.¹⁰⁴ In light of this it is fair to say that Agrippa d'Aubigné's pamphlet was more than just a work of comedy, but had the potential to inform elements of Protestant remembering in such a way to contribute to and legitimise group identity not just in France but across the channel in England too.

A Conclusion

To conclude *The Confessions of the Duke du Sancy* represents a work of writing that had the capacity to act as a commemorative mechanism for Protestant collective memory and identity formation. Written in the context of the late sixteenth century and encapsulating the anti-Catholic fervour felt by contemporary Protestants, including author Agrippa

¹⁰⁴ Halbwachs, p.22-24 and Burke, p.38

d'Aubigné, after over thirty years' worth of French confessional violence and the conversion of the Huguenot champion Henri IV to Catholicism. *Confessions* allowed its Protestant readership, after it was first published in 1660, to remember a period of intense religious intolerance that many of them had not directly experience but still remained connected to through the continued suffering of the French Protestant community.

This was a memory that affirmed Protestant identity in multiple ways. The presentation of the Catholic religion as well as key sixteenth century Catholic actors as having demonic, immoral or generally negative qualities throughout *Confessions* offers seventeenth century Protestants a memory against which they can define themselves in opposition. This facet of Protestant identity focuses on the inherent theological incompatibility of contemporary Catholic and Protestant groups toleration of one another. The consequence of these mutually incompatible theologies was for both groups to believe that whilst they were followers of the true religion, the other group must naturally be the agent of evil.

Confessions further supports the element of Protestant identity that sees them as the correct religion in the way it portrays the experiences of sixteenth century French Protestants as akin to certain biblical narratives. The effect of this is to create a memory of the French Wars of Religion that affirms the idea Protestants are God's elect people. This was potentially a powerful message and memory for seventeenth century French Protestants to understand as the size and stature of their community dwindled under the weight of increasing state oppression. The methods of identity creation mirror Stephan Greenblatt's parameters that say early modern identity was formed in relation to two things, when a group viewed themselves as subject to a divine authority and in opposition to a demonic 'other'. In *Confessions* Catholics are clearly presented as a demonic 'other'

while the presentation of Protestants as God's elect subjects throughout history fulfil Greenblatt's parameters.

When the publication and translation of *Confessions* is placed in a socio-political context, like that of England in 1679 and 1686, the utility of the history the pamphlet presents in affirming notions of Protestant identity become clear. Here the practical manifestation of Maurice Halbwachs' theories of collective memory are made apparent, *Confessions* being a societal mechanism for commemorating a time gone by. In accordance to Halbwachs', in these specific historical contexts the memory offered by *Confessions* of the end of the French Wars of Religion was used to fuel anti-Catholic popular hysteria and mistrust. In so doing the memory *Confessions* facilitated the continuation of was given a new and subverted meaning so as to fit the need of contemporary English Protestants and affirm their identity in those moments.

More broadly this study shows the role of the written word as commemorative force among early modern Protestant communities. Although the breadth of this particular dissertation is limited to the analysis of a single pamphlet and is hindered by a lack of access to French language sources, it still contributes to similar studies such as by Philip Benedict into seventeenth century memory culture.¹⁰⁵ This dissertation is also useful in that it offers a rare analysis of Agrippa d'Aubigné whose more minor works have been severely understudied in Anglophone academic texts more broadly and even less so from a historical perspective. As a figure who experienced much of the politics and fighting of the French Wars of Religion d'Aubigné's writings offer far more opportunities for historical investigation into the period than currently is represented in English writings. Equally the

¹⁰⁵ Benedict, *Divided Memories*, p.381-382

study of memory history is one that in general has huge potential for historian trying to understand concepts of social and group identity, especially amongst minority groups like seventeenth century French Protestants. Although perhaps not a conventional approach to historical study and often complex in nature, the growth of academic focus on issues related to memory will be both interesting and of intellectual importance.

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