EARLY MODERN LITERARY STUDIES

Richard Field's English reception of the Truce of Plessis-lez-Tours (1589)

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According to the Stationers' Register, it was on 26 May 1589 (old style)[1] that Richard Field, one of London's most prominent stationers, entered two volumes dealing with French affairs.[2] They were two collections of declarations made by the Kings of France and Navarre about a truce they had formalised a few weeks earlier. This agreement was meant to put an end to the long period of intermittent war between Henry of France and his cousin of Navarre. The two Henrys met at Plessis-lez-Tours, by the Loire River, in late April 1589. The meeting was observed and celebrated by many people in the kingdom. Combined, the royal troops and those of Navarre could win against the Leaguers and the Spanish. Besides, on a longer term, if the reconciliation lasted, there could be a new consistent royal party, true to dynastic right, with king and heir fighting together. This double promise accounts for the tone of Pierre de L'Estoile's narrative:

> Sur ceste resolution donc, aussitost qu'il eust esté mandé du Roy, il s'y acchemina, avec bien petite trouppe, et passa la riviere, le dimanche dernier avril, pour venir trouver Sa Majesté au Plessis les Tours, […] Enfin, s'estans joints, ils s'entrebrasserent tres amoureusement, mesmes avec larmes, principalement le Roy de Navarre, des yeux duquel on les voioit tumber grosses comme poix, de grande joie qu'il avoit de voir le Roy; qui fust telle que, se retirant le soir, il dit ces mots:

[1] The discrepancy between the Julian and the Gregorian calendar implies that six weeks elapsed between the speeches and the registering of the volumes in the Stationers' Register. They were registered on 26 May (o.s.) while in the same calendar the truce was agreed upon on 14 April, 1589.

[2] *The declarations as vvell of the French King, as of the King of Nauarre. Concerning the truce agreed vpon betwene their Maiesties: and touching the passage of the riuer of Loire* (London: R. Field, 1589), STC 13098.8; *Declarations tant du Roy de France, que du roy de Nauarre, sur la trefue, accordée entre leurs majestez, & touchant le passage de la riuiere de Loire* (London: R. Field, 1589), STC 16098.7.

> *Je mourrai content des aujourd'hui de quelque mort que ce soit, puisque Dieu m'a fait la grace de voir la face de mon Roy.*[3]

Pierre de L'Estoile's enthusiasm here is significantly higher than in many parts of his diary – even if one may doubt Navarre's tears, the sense of relief of the two sides may be felt in the excerpt. Both must have been aware of the political and symbolic weight of the encounter.

Immediately, the moment was broadcast in three separate declarations that were printed and circulated throughout the kingdom. The first two were legal texts by each king detailing the provisions of the truce and the last one was a declaration by Navarre about the wars of religion and the changes brought by the truce. Jamet Mettayer, the king's printer in Tours, published a *Declaration du Roy sur la trefve accordee par Sa Majeste au Roy de Navarre. Contenant les causes & preignantes raisons, qui l'ont meu à ce faire*, with privilege, in 1589.[4] Simultaneously, Navarre's reply was published in Montauban, a Protestant stronghold: *Déclaration du Roy de Navarre, sur le traicté de la trefve, faite entre le Roy et ledit Roy de Navarre*.[5] The printer, Denis Haultin, acted as king's printer in the Protestant academy of Montauban.[6] Just as in the case of Jamet Mettayer, his intervention means that the circulation of the declaration was closely monitored by Navarre's entourage. A third piece, another declaration by the King of Navarre, was circulated at the same time: *Déclaration du roy de Navarre, au passage de la rivière de Loire, pour le service de Sa Majesté*.[7] The three declarations can be traced back, since they are listed, to the *Mémoires de la Ligue*, the collection of pamphlets organized by Simon Goulart and reprinted in 1758. The three texts may be found, but separate. The second declaration by Navarre is isolated from the other two and appears about 50 pages

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[3] Pierre de L'Estoile, *Registre Journal du règne de Henri III*, ed. Madeleine Lazrad & Gilbert Schrenck (Geneva: Droz, 1973), Vol. VI, p. 173. 'Once the decision was made and after he was summoned by the King, he proceeded, with a small group, and crossed the river, on the last Sunday of April to come and find his Majesty at Plessis-les-Tours… At last, coming close, they hugged each other with much love, with tears even, mostly the King of Navarre, whose eyes cried with joy at seeing the king; that joy was such that, when he withdrew at night, he spoke thus: *I would happily die today, since God in His grace has allowed me to see my true King's face*'. (translation mine).

[4] *Declaration du Roy sur la trefve accordee par Sa Majeste au Roy de Navarre. Contenant les causes & preignantes raisons, qui l'ont meu à ce faire* (Tours: Jamet Mettayer, 1589).

[5] *Déclaration du Roy de Navarre, sur le traicté de la trefve, faite entre le Roy et ledit Roy de Navarre* (Montauban: Denis Haultin, 1589).

[6] https://data.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cb16241115q, consulted 12/07/2020.

[7] *Déclaration du roy de Navarre, au passage de la rivière de Loire, pour le service de Sa Majesté. Faict à Saumur le 21. Avril 1589* (s.n., 1589).

before them. The sequence was thus divided in three moments, whose accounts circulated along political and confessional lines: the King of France's speech in royal towns, Navarre's declarations in Huguenot bastions.

In England, the official reconciliation of the two kings was nearly as meaningful. Queen Elizabeth's diplomacy had become more complicated after the falling out of Henry III and Navarre. After 1585, Henry III's alignment with the Leaguers made it more difficult for Elizabeth to maintain good relations with him, while Navarre's military confrontation with his rightful king might be assimilated with rebellion. The two Henrys' wish to fight together meant that Elizabeth's position regarding French affairs simplified – she could now support the two kings' efforts to fight the Leaguers and oust the Spanish from France.[8] For all these reasons, the truce was observed with keen attention in England. Probably, news of the truce first circulated through rumours and hearsay, but soon prints made it more official. The circulation of 'French' texts in England is a well-known element of the period.[9] The English had a keen interest in what was happening in France and contacts between French printers and their English counterparts ensured that French volumes crossed the Channel. Once in England, they were sometimes translated or sometimes published in their original version. Soon after the publication of the French texts, Richard Field registered two volumes – one in French and one in English. The title page of the French one specified that it had been made according to copies printed in Tours and La Rochelle.[10] Jamet Mettayer was a well-known source for French texts published in England, and La Rochelle, a Protestant stronghold, had kept close bonds with England. English readers interested in French news would have been reassured by these details – the narrative would look more credible.

Another element of trust would have been Richard Field's name on the imprint. Richard Field himself was a major printer at the time. Even if his first master had been George Bishop, the major part of his apprenticeship was spent under the authority of Thomas Vautrollier. Vautrollier was a key player in the London book trade. He was born in France and had settled in London in the early years of Queen Elizabeth's reign. Vautrollier's

[8] Wallace T. MacCaffrey, *Queen Elizabeth and the Making of Policy, 1572-1588* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981); Wallace T. MacCaffrey, *Elizabeth I: War and Politics, 1588-1603* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992).

[9] Lisa Parmelee, 'Printers, Patrons, Readers and Spies: Importation of French Propaganda into Elizabethan England', *Sixteenth Century Journal* 25 (1994), 853-72.

[10] The French copy that remains in the Bibliothèque nationale de France was made in Montauban. Field's title-page specifies that the copy was made in La Rochelle – several copies may have circulated at the same time, or Field changed La Rochelle for Montauban because La Rochelle was a better-known Huguenot refuge (Montauban was also a Huguenot stronghold).

publications included many books of French origins, including poetry, political tracts as well as Protestant works. After the printer's death in 1587, Field, who had finished his apprenticeship a few months earlier, married Vautrollier's widow and took over the business. It is more than likely that Field made the most of his former master's networks. During his career, he printed many books dealing with the situation of France and more generally about foreign affairs. His name would have been identified as yet another proof of the authenticity of the texts.

Contrary to what happened in France, in Field's books (the French one and its translation), the three declarations were printed in succession. The only major difference in the French volume was the addition of a verse item, relating the meeting of the two kings. This piece was not integrated in the English translation. Both volumes bore the title of the initial declaration by Henry III. As far as layout and composition were concerned, Field made little effort – the Roman font of the French *octavo* was changed for blackletter in the English *quarto*. It was a usual transformation for French texts published in England. Keeping the *octavo* format of the French print may have been used as a way to authenticate the origin of the book – a book coming from France, in a French format. Logically, the smaller French version is a few pages longer than its English counterpart– 32 pages for the print in French, 24 for the English one. The ornaments used (the frieze and the initial) are common ones. The pages are numbered. Field seems to have respected both the layout and the format of his source. The two volumes looked alike, in particular through the use in both cases of the same printer's device of 'anchora spei'.[11] The French text boasts its French origins ('sur les copies imprimées à Tours et à La Rochelle').

However, the simplicity of these books as material objects is misleading. The three aforementioned declarations are of particular interest. Indeed, as publisher Richard Field did not act simply as a courier, conveying news and ideas from one side of the Channel to the other – he may be considered as a co-author of the volumes he printed. Therefore, the two volumes may be seen as genuine creations, books that no French reader in France ever read.

[11] See Ronald B. McKerrow, *Printers' & publishers' devices in England & Scotland 1485-1640* (London: Printed for the Bibliographical Society at the Chiswick Press, 1913). See also Anja Wolkenhauer, and Bernhard F. Scholz (eds), *Typographorum Emblemata, The Printer's Mark in the Context of Early Modern Culture*, Schriftmedien – Kommunikations- und buchwissenschaftliche Perspektiven, 4 (Berlin: De Gruyter Saur, 2018) and especially Luuk Houwen, 'Beastly Devices: Early printers' Marks and their Medieval Origins', pp. 49-76.

This is the starting point for a study of these two volumes as English constructions of a political message that was not addressed by the kings to their original audience (the French) but by the printer to a specific readership (the English). This article intends to show how Field, in combining the three declarations, created a theatrical and political space on which truce was staged and in which Henry, king of Navarre and would-be king of France, stood out as the only king of peace. In so doing, Field wanted the texts to be read as celebrations of a long-awaited truce but a truce that was only a stepping-stone for Navarre to become king of France.

A text to *produce* truce

When the truce was agreed upon, the eighth of the French Wars of Religion (ending August 1589), also known as the 'War of the Three Henrys', had been going on since March 1585. In June 1584, the death of François-Hercules Duke of Alençon and Anjou, had shortened the Valois lineage. Since he was the King's last and youngest brother, his death meant that the king of Navarre, Henry of Bourbon, became heir presumptive to the French throne. Without a son to Henry III, the crown of France would go to a Huguenot. In January 1585, Henry Duke of Guise and leader of the ultra-Catholic faction signed the Treaty of Joinville with King Philip II of Spain, which provided for the succession of the Cardinal of Bourbon to the French throne in the event of Henry III's death. In March of the same year, a 'Holy League' was proclaimed, bringing together the staunch Catholics refusing Navarre's succession to the throne – it was meant to defend the 'true faith' against the heretics. War ensued, and Henry III had to accept an agreement with the Duke of Guise through the Treaty of Nemours in July 1585. Among other things, the treaty excluded Navarre from the succession, a provision confirmed by a papal bull in September 1585. The war started again, opposing Navarre's Huguenots to the royal forces combined with the Leaguers. On both sides exactions multiplied. In October 1587, the King's close friend Anne de Joyeuse was killed at the Battle of Coutras. The Huguenot victory was celebrated in a few accounts, some of which circulated in England.

Fifteen years after the Saint Bartholomew's Day massacre (1572), Parisian hostility to the Protestants slowly extended to the King, whose actions against heresy were deemed insufficient. The creation of a popular league, called the Sixteen (based on the sixteen quarters of the city), demonstrated their support of Guise. Their favour was so obvious that Henry III forbade the Duke to enter Paris, a prohibition the Duke breached in May 1588. The Day of the Barricades (12 May 1588) was a popular insurrection of the Parisians, led by the Sixteen, in favour of the Duke of Guise against the King. Henry III had to flee from the rebellious city. The King was forced to accept the Edict of Union and

summon the Estates General at Blois in October 1588. The elections of the delegates had been dominated by the Leaguers so that the pressure increased on the King. On 23 December, Henry III called the Duke of Guise and had him murdered by the Forty-Five, his personal guard. The Cardinal of Guise, the Duke's brother, was assassinated the following day. Paris, along with a majority of the kingdom's cities, rebelled on hearing the news. Important authorities like the Sorbonne predicted rebellion against the monarch and encouraged the people to follow Charles Duke of Mayenne, the youngest of the Guise siblings.

Royal power had been under an intense pressure, with the King of Spain helping the Guises against their own overlord. Religious hatred had blended with political calculations and damaged royal imagery. Henry III had failed to be a king of war, as the Battle of Coutras had demonstrated. He had been no man of honour in dispatching the Duke of Guise at Blois and thus could not act as king of justice either. It must have been clear to most observers, on both sides of the Channel, that it was only because he had no other option that Henry III had settled an agreement with Navarre. Navarre's military support gave the King of France a better chance of defeating the Leaguers and the Spanish, while the truce meant that Henry of Navarre's rights to the throne were more likely to be upheld. The previous year had shown that suspension of fighting may not last long and that yesterday's enemies, despite their promises, were not necessarily tomorrow's friends. Therefore, there was a political need to celebrate the truce as a pledge for brighter days.

Field's books are collections of the three declarations. In the volume in English, the readers were given the kings' words without analysis or comment. The descriptive titles, as well as the very bluntness of the quotation mode, contributed to the seriousness of the information given. Just as today's news agencies use quotes rather than comments for the news to look trustworthy, here the declarations, deprived of narrative or exegetic setting, are meant to be trusted. It is as if comment would lead to distortion. The only exception to this is the insertion of a poem in the volume in French. The poet is unknown. It is made of seven alexandrine cinquains. It has a choric function, commenting upon the declarations.[12] It celebrates the truce, in a lyrical tone that gives a cosmological dimension to the historic moment. It epitomises the whole print, enhancing the truce as a turning point and ending on an optimistic note: 'let our fears die, and let our desires live' ('Faisons mourir nos peurs, & vivre nos desirs', 14). The poem stands out clearly thanks to

[12] A parallel can be drawn with the French tradition of poetic recount of peace treaties and truces by poet-diplomats such as Du Bellay or Marot, see Hampton's article in this issue.

typography (rhymed verse, italics), which gives a visible dimension to the difference in nature between the texts.

However, even if the succession of declarations lacks a narrative introduction, when starting to read the texts the readers must have had a clear vision before their eyes. For instance, neither of the kings are described, but the reader could imagine them meeting in the symbolic setting of the river – the Loire River being often seen as a limit between Northern and Southern France. Plessis-lez-Tours, where the encounter took place, in-between the rivers Loire and Cher, is in itself an isolated piece of land. Both the title page of the volume and the title of Navarre's second declaration insist on the exact location where the speeches were delivered. Navarre spoke 'at the passage of the river of Loire' (15), that is, 'on' the river and not 'by' the river. Here, contrary to what happens in other literary instances of the period, the river does not entail a 'powerful fantasy of circulation' in Andrew McRae's words, but is a meeting space.[13] The river allows the connection between the King of France and the King of Navarre – it turns out to be a bond more than a border. Water would also have been construed in the Christian perspective of baptism and rebirth. In a way, the story of the two kings meeting on the river was a good picture. Such a staging testifies to a keen understanding of political communication through images and shows that the episode had a strong potential for propaganda.

When the readers started to peruse the declarations, they were ready for a historic moment. Each king speaks, by order of precedence – the King of France first, followed by the King of Navarre. The apparent dryness of the volumes is enhanced by the similarity of the first two texts, which are commonplace in many aspects. Each begins with the usual address and greetings:

> Henry by the grace of God, king of France and Poland. To our trustie and welbeloved, the Officers of our courts of Parlement, governors and lieutenants general of our Provinces, Bailiffes, Seneschalles, Provostes, or their Lieutenants, and to all other our officers & subjects, to whom it may appertaine, Greeting. (3)[14]

The solemnity of the tone indicates that the speech is an official declaration and gives weight to what is to follow. In a similar fashion, Navarre's address also begins with greetings:

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[13] Andrew McRae, 'Fluvial Nation: Rivers, Mobility and Poetry in Early Modern England', *English Literary Renaissance* 38.3 (2008), 506-534 (p. 508).

[14] Unless specified otherwise, the references will be to the volume in English (STC 13098.8). Spelling has been respected, but for the sake of clarity, 'u' and 'i' have been changed to 'v' and 'j' when consonants.

> Henrie by the grace of God, King of Navarre, first Prince of the bloud, chiefe Peere, and protector of the reformed churches of Fraunce, &c. To all Governors of Provinces, Captains of townes & cities, fortresses and castles, Chieftaines and leaders of men of warre, Maiors, Consuls, and sworne men of townes, Justices and officers, as well of our soveraigne Lord the king, as to all others to whom it may appertaine, & that are under our authoritie and protection, Greeting. (11)

The length of Navarre's address is unexpected, especially since his declaration as a whole is significantly shorter than that of Henry III. It underlines his role as both military and religious leader and refers to Huguenot France: territories where civil, military and religious powers were held by Protestants.

As I explained earlier on, the encounter and the truce occurred at a crucial moment for both sides – with the assassination of Guise, the War of the Three Henrys could come to an end. However, France had been torn by religious strife more or less continuously since the 1560s: the sons had taken up the wars of their fathers. The previous year had demonstrated that alliances could change quickly, and that oaths could be broken. This defiance, present on both sides, may account for a careful rewriting of history present in the two declarations. Henry III and Navarre are at pains to explain why they opposed each other for so long. The King of France's rhetorical strategy relies on a complete reversal of perspective. While Huguenots had been portrayed as enemies from within, striving to divide the kingdom along confessional lines, the King here shifts the blame to the Leaguers:

> They have displayed against our person & authoritie, the secrets of their damnable driftes: First, by backbiting and misreporting our actions, to bring them into hatred with our people, and to drawe their affections to themselves under a plausible hope which they joyned with the pretence of religion. (4)

Indeed, the manipulation of public opinion had been an important ingredient in the Leaguers' success, particularly in major cities like Paris.[15] The King exposes the lies of his enemies, who tried to shirk their own responsibilities 'to ease them of their charges, which the troubles of the time had brought upon them' (4). According to Henry's revision of history, the Leaguers have torn the community apart, a devilish because divisive enterprise. This led to open rebellion: 'they tooke and levied armes openly againt us, the

[15] See Denis Pallier, *Recherches sur l'imprimerie à Paris pendant la Ligue: 1585-1594* (Geneva: Droz, 1975).

fruite whereof should principally turne to their particular profit, in respect of such advantages & conditions as they would have wrested from us' (4). Without ever mentioning the Guise family, the King tries to justify his own weakness when he abode by the conditions of the Treaty of Nemours, or the Edict of Union.

The King of Navarre finds himself in a similar situation. The truce made it necessary for the justification of past behaviours, as the beginning of Navarre's declaration shows:

> Whereas it is wel knowen to all men that we never tooke or retayned armes in this miserable warre, but so farre as necessitie enforced us: Also, that we have by our actions sufficiently testified our extreame sorow, seeing our selves entangled, and bound thereto through the malice of the enemies of this Realme. (11)

He protests that he has repeatedly tried to help the King of France 'yet such was the mischiefe, that our good meaning was by sundrie sleights disguised' (11). Yet Navarre's analysis goes one step further, and he finally concludes:

> And it is most evident that this warre begun under colour of religion, is even at once found to be meere warre of estate: That those of the League are not gone to seek or assaile those of the religion which we professe, but have abused both the weapons and authoritie which were to that end delivered unto them, to get such townes of this realme as were farthest of and least suspected for religion. (12)

The shift is noteworthy, because in so proceeding Navarre manages to change the terms of the debate. The question is no longer one of Catholics v. Protestants, but one of respect for the rightful authority of the King. The Leaguers are not crusaders but usurpers of royal authority. Henry of Bourbon's analysis fits the pattern of Elizabethan diplomacy – when she had refused to fight against the King of France, the Queen of England had privileged matters of state over matters of faith.

When one reads the beginnings of these two declarations, one understands that there was no need for a mediating voice to introduce the topic or to comment upon it. The two Kings' speeches are self-sufficient analyses of the previous years. It was crucial for Henry III and Navarre to revisit recent history, in order to clear the slate and move forward. Yet they also needed to get into the reality of the truce because these texts had a very important pragmatic role – securing the daily characteristics of the truce.

The two kings then proceed to detail the practicalities of the truce to their supporters. In that respect the declarations were pragmatic texts, orders addressed to those who were

going to implement and experience the truce in their territories. In the King of France's declaration, this is expressed through a clear prohibition to the Huguenots:

> with this charge and condition besides promised by the said King of Navarre, who hath undertaken for all his partakers, that he shall not during the said Truce employ his power or armies in any place either within or without this Realme without our commaundement or consent: That he shall not enterprise or suffer to be enterprised or attempted any thing in such place & places of the countreys where our authoritie is acknowledged. (8)

Navarre's declaration also addresses peacekeeping, but gives precise orders as to the respect of Catholic premises:

> & so consequently we doo forbid all persons of whatsoever estate or calling, not to attempt or enterprise against those places where his Majestie's authoritie is acknowledged, neither against the said state or Countie of Venise, or in any other place or places where we shall enter, passe by, or sojourne, expressly commanding that there be nothing enterprized against his good and loyal subjects, no not against the Clergie. (13)

The King of Navarre then concludes: 'our meaning is there shall be no alteration in the service or other matter belonging to the said Catholike Romane religion, according as more at large have by us been concluded with our sovereign Lord the King' (13). Just as the King of France had in his own declaration, the King of Navarre specifies that the truce will last 'for one whole yeare, to begin the third day of Aprill, and to end upon the like day, as well the one as the other therein concluded' (13).

Once the practical details of the truce, as well as the reasons for it, have been given out, the final step is to ensure that the declarations are going to be circulated and respected. Henry III wants his officers 'to procure these presentes to be read, published and enrolled, according as need shall require, to the end no man pretend any cause of ignoraunce' (9). Navarre closes his declaration in a similar way:

> Moreover we commaund you & every of you so farre as to him appartaineth, to cause these presents to be read, published, inrolled, kept and observed in every point according to their forme and tenure, ceasing and causing to cease al troubles and impeachments to the contrarie. (14)

These two declarations aimed at several goals. First, they enabled the two kings to justify a change in their strategy while shifting the blame for civil disorder onto the Leaguers. Second, they made the reality of the truce emerge, and third they ensured that the truce was going to become a reality for Frenchmen. These declarations had a strong prescriptive dimension–the truce was going to happen, because they wanted it. The material object thus participated in the chain of command. Such an instance demonstrates the connection between printing, publishing and publicizing.

Translating the truce

In Richard Field's volumes, the first two texts deal with the practical aspects of the truce – the respect owed to members of the Catholic and of the Protestant Churches, to the inhabitants of the towns that have been taken, etc. The 'truce' is both the main theme and the *raison d'être* of the two declarations. Therefore, one interesting dimension of these texts lies in the way the truce is referred to. What is remarkable here is the variety of terms used to describe the cessation of war.

Neither Henry III nor the King of Navarre use the word 'truce' on its own very often. Usually, another word complements it: 'Truce and abstinence from armes' (Henry III, 7, 8), 'truce or abstinence of warre with all hostilitie' (Navarre, 13), 'Truce or abstinence general from armes' (Navarre, 13), 'Truce and abstinence of warre and of all hostilitie' (Henry III, 7). The word 'truce' alone appears only three times: 'so long as the said Truce shall continue' (Henry III, 8), 'the said Truce' (Henry III, 9) and 'this present truce' (Navarre, 14). The word is not capitalized systematically, and there does not seem to be a clear reason for the use of the two-word rather than the one-word phrase. Henry III and Navarre use a variety of terms, without a clear preference. The integration of 'truce' into a larger phrase seems to insist on the instant (the truce) and its effect (the cessation of hostilities). Other phrases are also used, like 'surcease of hostility' (7) or 'release from warres' (7). The diversity of terms is greater in the English translation than in the original French text: the French 'surceance d'armes' (9) is translated as 'abstinence of warre' or 'abstinence from armes' (7). Even if the truce is the main topic of these texts, the unknown translator seems to have struggled with the concept. This inaccuracy may surprise us, since the truce is the very topic of the volume and since it had a clear legal dimension. The translator's search for the right phrase may be a token of the sheer ambiguity of the truce. As Nir Eisikovits showed, 'When we do think about truces, we consider them as

"mere truces" – temporary pauses in the transition beyond themselves, to something better and more durable: a permanent peace'.[16]

All these two-word phrases are negative definitions: a truce is not war, it is a suspension from conflict. Repeatedly, in the two declarations, the kings recall what war has been like – they describe the past rather than imagine what the truce might be. In Eiskovits's words, truce thinking 'deemphasises the future'.[17] Henry III, for instance, relates the previous years in these terms: 'trouble and universall civill warre, seditions, contempt of magistrates, bloud, pillage, ransomings, sacke of goods both sacred and profane, forcing of women and maidens, and infinite other kinds of inhumanities and disorders' (5). English readers were used to such apocalyptic visions, that French pamphlets circulating in England broadcast regularly.[18] The King of France insists on the civil disorders that are the consequences of war and points at the Leaguers' direct responsibility in that situation. Addressing his own subjects, he refers to their personal experience of civil war. By doing so, he justifies his own reversal of alliances, and closes the gap with Navarre, paving the way for reconciliation.

Navarre's strategy is different. He also mentions what has happened, but he resorts to examples of a different nature:

> As litle also have they employed their preachers in the conversion of those whom they did pretend to be hereticks, but contrariwise they have used them in all townes to the subversion of this realme, as firebrandes to kindle the estate, to suborne the subjects against their prince, to make them reject all obedience to their magistrates, to frame them to seditions and alterations, without any respect to confound all things both divine and humaine. (12)

Navarre levels himself above the personal experience highlighted by the King of France, and considers civil disorder in an almost abstract way. He focuses on the social roles of the people, who are not seen as individuals but as social positions – magistrates, subjects, prince, etc. Interestingly, Navarre aims at the civic responsibilities rather than at the religious beliefs of the majority of Henry III's subjects. He stands clear from the core

[16] Nir Eisikovits, 'Truces. What They Mean, How They Work', *Theoria* 145 62.4 (2015), 60-81 (p. 60).

[17] Ibid, 61.

[18] There are many instances of this, but remarkable examples of this occurred two years later, during the siege of Paris. See for instance *The miserable estate of the citie of Paris at this present. With a true report of sundrie straunge visions, lately seene in the ayre vpon the coast of Britanie, both by sea and lande* (London: [J. Wolfe] for T. Nelson, 1590), STC 19197.

divisions that have torn the community for several years. The real issue is no longer the fact that the other side was seen as heretical, but the fact that subjects had forgotten that they were cogs in the realm's machinery. The consequences of this reversal of values are also considered in a theoretical way:

> such a confusion in sundry townes and provinces that the pretended shadow of piety and justice hath quite extinguished the body, the feare of God, the reverence of his true image, and the lawfull and soveraigne Magistrate by him instituted in these extremities. (12)

By showing a world upside-down, Navarre aggravates the picture drawn by the King of France. It is a way for him to increase the Leaguers' culpability and to demonstrate his kingly vision of France. He strikes the pose of the would-be king.

Both declarations thus hinge upon a dialogue between truce and war. War is described at length, in its daily dimension by the King of France, in its conceptual dimension by the King of Navarre. The truce is not defined clearly, and most of the time, it is qualified by a negative addition, 'cessation of warres', 'abstinence from arms', as if the notion of truce was too vague to be used on its own. Even more unexpected is the absence of another word: peace. In the two declarations, neither the King of France nor the King of Navarre seem to dare use the word. Indeed, the truce was defined as a suspension of war, but one that was likely to be temporary. One may recall Eisikovits's ambiguous statement that 'the truce thinker wants to buy time'. When they concluded the truce in April 1589, perhaps no side really meant to uphold it and make it a lasting peace. By opposition to the truce, peace was a permanent state – or at least it was meant to be one. Perhaps the absence of the word 'peace' came from the cautiousness of the protagonists, aware that for the past thirty years no peace had ever lasted more than a few months. Peace might only be a hypothetical – and lucky – outcome of the truce. This may come down to the idea that truce thinking has an efficiency that comes directly from the fact that 'it aims low in order to strike high. It seeks to generate a measurable, visible reduction of war'.[19] English readers perusing Richard Field's volume would have had to wait for the third text to see the notion of peace emerge.

Navarre as a king of peace

[19] Eisikovits, 'Truces', 61, 62.

The volume printed by Richard Field is made of three texts: the declaration from the King of France, that of Navarre and another declaration by the same Navarre on the same topic. The first one is entitled 'A declaration of the King of Navarre, upon the treatise of the truce made between the French king, and the said Lord king of Navarre' (11); the second one 'The King of Navarres declaration at the passage of the river of Loire for the service of his Majesty the 18 of April 1589' (15). In the title of the volume, the third text is mentioned specifically through 'And touching the passage of the River of Loire'.

Judging from their titles, the reader might have been surprised at their addition – they seem to be identical. Yet these texts are different, and the second declaration by Navarre (the last speech of the volume) may seem to be the climax of the collection. The first two texts of the volume are mirror images: they describe a close reality, give symmetrical orders to their followers for the observation of the truce. The third one stands out: it is longer than the other one (ten pages), which brings it closer to that of Henry III. A reader opening the volume would have read the King of France's declaration first: it came first because of precedence (Henry of Bourbon was only the King of France's heir presumptive) and France's declaration was also longer than Navarre's. The addition of a third text changes this hierarchy. Suddenly the power balance is upset by the added text by Navarre. What could be read as a rather dire succession of speeches has in fact another, higher purpose which is to transmogrify the King of Navarre into a Christian Prince, reminiscent of Melchizedek in the Epistle to the Hebrews. That declaration partakes of a shift in the strategy of Navarre's entourage, willing to enlarge Henry of Bourbon's figure and make it truly regal. The soldier steps back, and the wise man comes forth.[20]

This is made clear in the content of Navarre's declaration. Whereas the first two texts focused on the practical realities of war and truce, here Navarre's speech is a long dissertation over the past wars, their effect, the peace to come and its consequences. Indeed, while the first two dealt with the truce, the last speech makes the promise of peace, and a peace that is described in many details. The heir presumptive to the throne of France draws the picture of disorder after years of civil war – 'the confusion of all things both devine and humane, the extinguishing of all order and pollicie and justice, and the utter ruine of each one in particular and of all the good subjects of this Realme in generall' (15). Compared to his first declaration, the King of Navarre here dwells on the past with precise details and vivid images. Accusing the 'enemies to the Realme', Navarre concludes:

[20] See Denis Crouzet, *Dieu en ses royaumes. Une histoire des guerres de religion* (Paris: Champ Vallon, 2008), pp. 446-60.

> so confounding all things that wheresoever their power taketh place there resteth nothing but sacke, bloud, furie and insolencie, desolation among the people, carcases in the townes, mourning and lamentation in all families, and combustion and universal horror among all sortes. (16)

Even if all the words used here are commonplace, the hyperbolic tone differs from the abstract considerations of his first declaration. Navarre also dwells on the endlessness of the wars, a feeling that must have been experienced by many Frenchmen:

> Betweene an ambitious desire and the accomplishment thereof, betweene your hasty cholers, and your revenges so far of, how many daies workes and battels? What plenty of bloud, sacke and misery? The ages of the world will not suffice to decide this quarrell: the sonne will take the fathers place, and the brother the brothers: you shall make a perpetuall confusion to the posteritie which shall curse the memory of your madnesse. (22)

Besides, the King of Navarre does not limit himself to commiseration for his would-be subjects. He is also concerned with the economic impact of war on activities in the kingdom:

> let them [the people] looke whether they be eased of their taxes & subsidies, whether they be discharged of men of warre, whether their shoppes in the townes, or their farmes in the countrey be in better case, whether the treasury be better husbanded then aforetime. (19)

Navarre looks at the situation with commoners' eyes. He insists on the fact that peace is good for business, and encourages 'the Third Estate' (19) to focus on their daily survival. Like other European monarchs at the same period, he hopes to limit the negative impact of armed conflicts on the kingdom's economy. Gradually, the scope enlarges from private life to the public good – in Navarre's words, the people's happiness makes the state's order possible.

His declaration is of a different nature from that of Henry III. While the King of France's declaration was limited to the practical details of the truce, Navarre's speech is an appeal for a pacified kingdom. Indeed, Henry of Bourbon plunges into the reasons that have made civil disorder possible. Among those, the subversion of social hierarchies appears as a major factor. Navarre goes very far when he conjures the ghosts of civil war. He blames the people for unreasonable expectations: 'to their costes they shall see what it is to wrest the scepter from the soveraigne, and the sword from the Magistrate therewith to

arme and authorise the licentiousnesse of the people' (*20sq.*). The respect of social order is a key element in the preservation of civil peace: 'A King cannot abide to be disgraded by his subjectes: Rigour must be set against rigour, and force against force: The licentiousnesse, excesse and disorders of these perturbers will draw on others' (20). The assertion is a general statement, but it may also be construed as a disparaging comment on Henry III's governing method – he was the monarch who accepted to submit to the Leaguers. However, Navarre is careful not to trespass unto disrespect, and uses these general rules of good government to shift to more specific accusations against the commons: 'Marke their imaginations, after they have plucked the king out of his throne, they have left the place empty: aske then whom in conscience they will place therein: the Duke of Mayenne?' (21). After the Blois assassination, Charles, Duke of Mayenne, had taken over the leadership over the Guise faction.[21] He lacked his late elder brother's qualities and the mention of his name as would-be king must have been sarcastic. The overall levity of the quote is surprising. The phase 'pluck the king out of his throne' is surprisingly offhanded. Mentioning the King's potential demise could be a serious offense, akin to high treason. As heir presumptive, Navarre is moving towards touchy matters. Yet he immediately and adroitly shifts the blame onto the Guises. Here again, Henry of Bourbon differs from the King of France, who had never mentioned his chief aristocratic opponents – his reproaches focused on the popular League. Navarre does even name the Duke of Guise, as if, even now, dead as he was, he still had a responsibility in what happened in the kingdom: 'Again if they [the people] thinke the crowne due to the deserts, to the labours & to the vertues, that is to say, to the late Duke of Guises Monopoles, how can they frustrate his heyre?' (21*sq.*). The irony of Navarre's comment cannot have been lost to English readers and must have operated as an element that made the declaration truly personal.

By shifting the blame to individuals rather than groups, Navarre narrows the scope and brings the discussion down to a more personal level. In doing so, he draws attention to his own personal interest in taking up the lead in the phase that is about to start: 'How many princes of the house of Bourbon must they pierce before they come there? Princes I say armed with right, with courage and with credite against this imaginative Chimere of usurpation' (21). Navarre probably refers to his cousin Henry of Bourbon, who had died in strange circumstances a few weeks earlier – oblivious to the disagreements between his cousin and himself, he now presents his family as a victim to the Guises' thirst for power. What is understood as a personal hatred between the House of Lorraine and that of Bourbon becomes an additional justification for Navarre's position. He strikes the pose of the true Frenchman, prince of the blood, in opposition to a foreign family, aiming at

[21] See Jean-Marie Constant, *Les Guise* (Paris: Hachette, 1984), p. 228.

the crown. He praises the courage and common sense of the French aristocrats to resist temptation: 'That they are borne French and have persevered in their birth, what a hart breaking will it be such to stoupe under so weak a yooke? To see their lives and honours at the discretion of these upstarts?' (21). Navarre settles the accounts with the Guises, while levelling himself above court factions. At every step, he acts as a would-be king.

For that reason, and more clearly than Henry III had in his own declaration, Navarre lays the foundations for a lasting peace. In doing so, he first demonstrates his capacity for leniency, detailing how French people may have been engulfed in the war against their own will:

> Neverthelesse in as much as we are not ignorant, but that many may have bene entangled in these enormities, some being transported by furie, others overcome by a just feare, and the most part rather suborned by subtletie, then lead by their owne mallice: as also we cannot thinck that Fraunce is so degenerated as maliciously of set purpose to renounce her fidelitie or loyaltie to her naturall Prince, that is to say, to the inheritance and patrimonie of her fathers. (17)

Logically, he then reaches out to the French people:

> We, upon a desire to separate, so farre as lieth in us, the innocent from the guiltie, and with all discretion to use the just word that God hath put into our hand for the service of our soveraigne Lord the King, & the preservation of his subjects, doe signifie to all Provinces, townes, communalties, clergie men, nobilitie, and men of law, captains of men of warre, citizens, burgesses, and all other persons of whatsoever condition, estate, or calling, that with all speede they retire from all communication and felowship with the said enemies, disturbers of this estate, and reunite themselves under his Majesties obedience, giving him assurance of their fidelitie and service. (17)

The appeal is both commonplace and unexpected. In Navarre's position, such a call was expected – now that the truce had been settled and for it to last, the leaders had to call to unity. What is more surprising, however, is the fact that Navarre's appeal should be addressed to all French subjects, and not just to the Huguenots. In his previous declaration, he called out to his followers in the field; here he speaks as the king of France would. Of course, he is careful to specify that all these people should muster behind Henry III, yet there is an ambiguity as to the position from which he is speaking.

The widening of scope in Navarre's declaration enables him to see further than Henry III had in his own speech. Beyond the truce, he can see the peace to come, and brandish it as a reachable goal:

> And how much more convenient for you were it to abridge so many calamities with a peace? a peace which out of the darke Chaos wherein you have plunged your selves, might reduce you into the light, which might restore you to your selves, to your nature & your sences, which might deliver you out of these disquietnesses wherein you are, from this labyrinth wherinto you are entered, which you do wel deeme you can not get out of, & wherefore in the meane while you see not the end: a peace which might replant every one in that he loveth: might restore to the husbandman his plough, to the artificer his shop, to the merchant his traffick, to the countrie assurance, to the townes government, & to all men indifferently upright justice: a peace that might returne you the kings fatherly love, to him the obedience & fidelitie that you owe him: to be briefe, a peace that might render to this estate both soule and body. (22*sq.*)

The tone of this long paragraph has a lyrical dimension that makes it stand out from the rest of the text. The perspective it opens gives momentum to what may appear as Navarre's prospects for the kingdom. What he has to offer to his subjects is a return to normal days, with all the members of the commonwealth coming back to their duties. In that respect the peace he offers is not 'just' a cessation of hostilities but a true resurrection. As a speaker he summons this vision before the readers' eyes – doing so, he stands alone, kingly. He is now vested with regal authority.

This is also remarkable because the assassination of Henry III only a few months later would bring Navarre to the French throne earlier than expected. No one knew that the heir presumptive would so soon become the new King of France, but the truce of Plessis-lez-Tours tremendously helped the succession in August 1589. In retrospect, Navarre's declaration seems highly ironic. Therefore, the composition of the volume with these three successive speeches, leads to a shift in meaning. While the reader might think that this was all about making the truce happen, celebrating it, the volume also turns out to be a way to stage the would-be monarch. This shift occurs largely to the detriment of the current king, Henry III. In the end, Navarre stands out as the only king of peace.

This understanding of the text might also give a clue as to the reason why Field had decided to print two volumes, one in French and in English, at the same time. Richard Field may have added the third text to shape up the figure of Navarre as king of peace. This would make sense in the context of Protestant England, more than it would for a

Catholic printer, and a Catholic king's printer too, like Jamet Mettayer. In this perspective, printing the French texts with all the supposed proofs of their origins would have been a way for Field to give weight to the transformation of Navarre's character from rebellious soldier to king of peace. Field printed a fair number of texts in direct connection with what was happening in France, and his production points at a support of the Huguenots in France, as well as a bias in favour of the King of Navarre. From 1594 onwards, the number of tracts and pamphlets dealing with France decreased significantly, as if the news of Henry IV's abjuration had displeased the London printer. In that respect, Field's attitude mirrored that of the English queen and her subjects, who were deeply disappointed by the king's conversion. Until then, however, there was a hope in England that this Huguenot would one day ascend the Catholic throne of France.

Of course, no one knew what was to come, and that the prophecy of Navarre as king would soon turn into reality. That Navarre would become a king of peace was yet another problem, and it took the new king over four years to more or less appease the conflicts in his kingdom. Worse still, neither his conversion in 1593, which horrified the English, nor the celebrated Edict of Nantes, could lead to a lasting peace, deep as the antagonisms were between the different factions. Perhaps that long awaited peace would still have to wait.