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### Résumé de l'article

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# Scandal in Rabelais's *Tiers Livre*: Divination, Interpretation, and Edification

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*Cet article explore les liens entre la divination, l'interprétation et le scandale, en se penchant sur le Tiers Livre de Rabelais, et en empruntant à la théologie du scandale d'après les épîtres de Paul. L'auteur développe d'abord les raisons pour lesquelles la divination a pu apparaître comme scandaleuse au XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle. L'auteur retrace ensuite la notion de scandale de Rabelais dans son Tiers Livre, en examinant en détail le personnage ambigu de Panurge et sa capacité à la fois de se scandaliser et de scandaliser. On se penche ensuite sur l'alternative qu'offre Rabelais au scandale, en particulier, à la prophétie dans le sens paulinien de l'édification. Cet article montre enfin que l'œuvre de Rabelais est elle-même un scandale de la même façon que l'évangile en est un dans la première épître de Paul aux Corinthiens : un objet étrange et paradoxal qui prouve la foi de quelqu'un, ou son absence.*

In Rabelais's 1546 *Tiers Livre*, from among the consultations with sibyls, dying poets, and books of Virgil, Pantagruel condemns categorically the form of divination that Panurge proposes: dice.

Ce seroit (dist Panurge) plus tost fait et expédié à troys beaulx dez. Non, respondit Pantagruel. Ce sort est abusif, illicite, et grandement scandaleux. Jamais ne vous y fiez. Le maudict livre du *passetemps des dez* feut long temps a inventé par le calumniateur ennemy en Achaïe près Boure: et davant la statue de Hercules Bouraque y faisoit jadis, de præsenter en plusieurs lieux fait, maintes simples ames errer, et en ses lacz tomber. [...] Ce sont hamessons par les quelz le calumniateur tire les simples ames à perdition eternelle.

"This," said Panurge, "would be sooner done and dispatched with three fine dice."

“No,” said Pantagruel, “that kind of divination is deceitful, illicit, and extremely scandalous. Don’t ever trust it. That accursed *Book of Games of Chance* was invented long ago by our enemy the infernal calumniator; near Boura in Achaea and in front of the statue of Bouraic Hercules he once used to lead, and at present in many places leads, many a simple soul to fall into his snares. [...] They’re the bait with which the Calumniator draws simple souls to eternal perdition.”<sup>1</sup>

Pantagruel objects strongly to divination by dice as “abusif, illicite, et grandement scandaleux.” As Edwin Duval has pointed out, this triple condemnation had an evangelical tone: divination by dice was sinful (“abusif”), explicitly forbidden by God (“illicite”), and a scandal stone or stumbling block in the way of salvation (“grandement scandaleux”).<sup>2</sup> It was explicitly diabolical: invented by the devil (the statue of Hercules in Bura on the gulf of Corinth was an oracle consulted through the throwing of dice), it diverted the faithful from the path of righteousness to the path of seduction and error, even (given the pagan statue) idolatry. In this article, I take my cue from Pantagruel’s third condemnatory epithet and explore the connections between scandal and divination in the sixteenth century. Years ago, M. A. Screech designated *scandale* a “terme fondamental dans la pensée de Rabelais,” and this article elaborates that claim, tracing Rabelais’s deployments of the term and their resonance, paying particular attention to the character who most embodies the spirit of scandal—that champion of the dice, Panurge—and to one of the most important texts both for the theology of scandal and for Rabelais’s own religious views, Paul’s first letter to the Corinthians.<sup>3</sup> Pantagruel’s powerful condemnation of divination by dice suggests a number of questions that will be addressed here: questions of interpretation, ethics, governance of self and others, and what Rabelais’s book offers as an alternative.

### The scandal of divination

Rabelais published the *Tiers Livre* in 1546, when the humanist revival of the debate on divination, and in particular on judicial or divinatory astrology, was well under way.<sup>4</sup> Both artificial divination and inspired prophecy were at once fascinating and suspect; most commentators agreed that, while prodigies, prophecies, and forebodings were ways God might choose to communicate

with humanity, they could also be infiltrated or even inspired by the devil, and so could not be unequivocally accepted. In France, attacks on judicial astrology were particularly vociferous, and found a focus in the mid-sixteenth century in the notorious and remarkably successful court astrologer Nostradamus, who was accused of both diabolical malice and melancholic madness; far from being divinely inspired, his critics claimed, his prophecies betrayed a more somatic frenzy. French attacks on Nostradamus in particular and judicial astrology in general tended to echo Pantagruel's condemnation of certain forms of divination as "grandement scandaleux." The anonymous *Pronostication pour l'an 1556* justified itself in precisely those terms: "Pource que par cy devant plusieurs se sont trouvez scandalisez et incornifistiblez des supputations faites par ceulx qui se donnent tiltre d'astrologues"<sup>5</sup> [Because before now many have been scandalized and beaten about the brains by prognostications made by self-styled astrologers]. When the Avignon mathematician and astrologer Laurent Videl attacked his competitor Nostradamus for his incompetent and unreliable methods, what struck him as most likely to "escandalise[r]" were the hubris and delusion of the false prophet in attributing to himself the gift of prophecy.<sup>6</sup> Antoine Couillard, also author of his own satirical *Propheties* (1566), launched an attack on the astrologers Nostradamus and Richard Roussat (who was also a canon and a doctor) that was particularly eloquent with regard to scandal. Nostradamus's prognostications were for Couillard false and empty, but also scandalous: "un tas de propheties prononcees de si vollage inconstance qu'elles sont par la commune sentence de tous bons esprits jugees non moins vaines & advantageuses, que ridicules, umbrageuses & scandaleuses"<sup>7</sup> [a pile of prophecies uttered with such flighty inconstancy that they are judged by the common judgment of all sound minds not only vain and arbitrary but ridiculous, obscure, and scandalous]. In Couillard's condemnation, Nostradamus's prophecies were incoherent, ridiculous, and dependent on chance, rejected by all sensible people, but nevertheless dangerous because of their enigmatic quality ("umbrageux") which, in his view as in Pantagruel's, led the uneducated majority astray. "[J]'ay congueu la sotte multitude, ou bien l'opinion vulgaire y vouloir adherer & delaisser la vraye lumiere pour tumber es tenebres d'erreur"<sup>8</sup> [I knew that the foolish majority, or vulgar opinion would want to adhere to them and leave the true light to fall into the darkness of error]. The path of false prophecy led surely to idolatry: "les nouvelles, faulses & abusives propheties de Nostradamus, & autres astrologues qui se vouldroyent efforcer faire [...]"

idolatrer nombre infini de paouvres creatures ignorantes”<sup>9</sup> [the new, false and deceitful prophecies of Nostradamus and other astrologers who want to force an infinite number of poor ignorant creatures into idolatry]. In this condemnation, resonant with Rabelais’s, Couillard follows Aquinas, who defined the diviner as a usurer, since knowledge of the future belongs only to God.<sup>10</sup>

Certain forms of divination were thus routinely condemned as scandalous, in the etymological and biblical sense of a stumbling block that offered an occasion of sin or loss of faith. References to scandal in the sixteenth century retained a strong sense of its theological origins alongside the vernacular meaning of outrage and dishonour; both senses also had an affective meaning: namely, to become angry or offended. Sixteenth-century scandal was, then, a rather capacious and hybrid term that covered theological and vernacular actions, reactions, and upheavals.<sup>11</sup> In Pantagruel’s speech against dice, Rabelais alluded clearly to the potential loss of faith, and to the Greek etymology of scandal as the bait-stick in a trap, in the reference to falling into diabolical snares (“en ses lacz tomber”). In some ways, the reasons divination was a scandal in this sense seem obvious. As far as it represented, as Rabelais affirmed in the *Almanach pour l’an 1533*, an illegitimate attempt to spy on the “secrets du conseil estroit du Roy eternel” (OC p. 936) [“secrets of the privy council of the Eternal King,” CW p. 756], divination seemed to offer illicit knowledge and encouraged hubris, and in this sense was unequivocally condemned by Rabelais in his prognostications and almanacs. The danger of diabolical influence on all artificial divination, where prophetic signs were solicited or assembled by man and not given by nature, was well documented.<sup>12</sup> In this way, divination was a scandal because it seduced believers into the sin of hubristic curiosity and laid them open to further diabolical influence. The recurrent connection we have seen between divination and idolatry was also in the register of scandal: in the Old Testament, the *scandalum*, the stumbling stone, is most frequently idolatry, and Paul seems to be condemning astrological curiosity for dates as a kind of retrograde idolatry in his letter to the Galatians: “But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years” (Gal. 4:9–10).<sup>13</sup> For many commentators, moreover, the belief in divinatory astrology entailed a belief that the stars had a dominant influence over human actions, and could thus incite sin, making astral influence itself properly scandalous. Antoine Couillard rejected this

possibility in a chapter entitled “Que les signes celestes manifestent les grandes œuvres de Dieu: & ne peuvent les estoilles & planettes induire à peché” [That celestial signs manifest the great works of God: and that the stars and planets cannot induce to sin], explaining that “Dieu ne condamneroit jamais l’homme à mort s’il ne trouvoit qu’il eust peché de son franc arbitre & sans contraincte aucune”<sup>14</sup> [God would never condemn any man to death if it were not the case that he had sinned of his own free will and without any constraint].

Seductive, transgressive, and uncharitable, scandal caused both individuals and communities to stray from the proper path. These scandalous qualities abound in Rabelais’s meditation on divination, its abuses and consequences in the *Tiers Livre*.

### Scandal and interpretation in the *Tiers Livre*

In Rabelais’s work, scandal is most clearly linked to interpretation and the unpredictable, potentially violent reactions his books might provoke, and this concern has theological precedent. His prologues in particular strive to neutralize and contain any offence they might cause, co-opting his readers into the merry band of “Bonnes gens, Beuveurs tresillustres, et vous Goutteux tresprecieux” (*TL* Prologue, p. 345) [“Good folk, most illustrious toppers, and you, most precious poxies,” *CW* p. 253], establishing what André Tournon has described as “l’invective cordiale [...] la loi non écrite de la fraternité pantagruélique” [cordial invective: the non-written law of the Pantagrueline fraternity], where a reader’s reaction to the text determines group inclusion or exclusion.<sup>15</sup> The epigram that addresses *Gargantua*’s readers makes the connection between reading and scandal in affective terms, as Antónia Szabari has observed, asking for measured and dispassionate readers who will not take offence at either the book or its satirical targets: “Amis lecteurs qui ce livre lisez, / Despouillez vous de toute affection, / Et le lisant ne vous scandalisez” [“You friends and readers of this book, take heed: / Pray put all perturbation far behind, / And do not be scandalized as you read”].<sup>16</sup> This quality becomes, of course, in the *Tiers Livre*, the very essence of Pantagruelism, where Pantagruel is described as a model of equanimity and measure, who always leans towards the charitable interpretation, never becoming provoked or offended: “Toutes choses prenoit en bonne partie, tout acte interpretoit à bien. Jamais ne se tourmentoit, jamais ne se scandalizoit” (*TL* 2, p. 357) [“All things he took in good part, all

actions he interpreted for the good; never did he torment himself, never was he scandalized,” *CW* p. 264]. Reasons for his disarming pre-emptive strategy had become clear by the time Rabelais published his third book, with the first two instalments on the Sorbonne’s lists of condemned books of 1542 and August 1544; the *Tiers Livre* itself was to figure on the list of December 1546, royal privilege notwithstanding.<sup>17</sup> The *Tiers Livre*’s revised privilege of 1550 laid the blame firmly at the door of Rabelais’s unauthorized printers, who had (in terms reminiscent of Rabelais’s own prologues) corrupted and disfigured his books beyond all recognition: “[L]es Imprimeurs auroient iceulx livres corrompuz, depravez, et pervertiz en plusieurs endroictz. Auroient d’avantaige imprimez plusieurs autres livres scandaleux, [au] nom dudict suppliant, à son grand desplaisir, prejudice, et ignominie par luy totalement desadvouez comme faulx et supposez” (*TL* p. 343) [“[T]he said printers had perverted, corrupted, and depraved [these books] in many places. Furthermore they had printed many other, scandalous books, in the name of the said suppliant, to his great displeasure, prejudice, and ignominy, [books] totally disavowed by him as false and supposititious,” *CW* p. 251.] Here, the scandal of Rabelais’s books belongs to the vernacular register, causing displeasure and dishonour; but we are also reminded that *scandaleux* was a term of censorship, denoting the heretical or unorthodox proposition that was “offensive to pious ears” (and thus a potential occasion for another’s fall) used by the Sorbonne in their condemnations and joyously twisted by Rabelais in *Gargantua*.<sup>18</sup>

In the narrative of the *Tiers Livre*, scandal is associated most frequently with the ambiguous figure of Panurge, who appears almost a doctrinal expert on what he describes as the scandal of fasting, after his prophetic dream (for which he ate lightly) has left him irritable and perplexed (“persone faschée et indignée,” *TL* 14 p. 395): symptoms of the scandalized. (Indeed, perceived Catholic perplexity at the diverse interpretations of Scripture was around this time being re-described by Calvin as a deliberate hunt for scandal, as Stéphane Geonget has shown.)<sup>19</sup> As the master of dilation, Panurge is the embodiment of deferral and deviation, driving the narrative forward with his stubborn desire to hear a favourable prophecy. This might make him a diabolical figure, swerving away from the straight road, if the linguistic delight his digressions afford did not offer a peculiar Rabelaisian pleasure. Where he comes closer to the spirit of scandal is in his insistent contradictions, associating him with scandalous paradox; but this too carries an ambiguous charge, and does not unequivocally

condemn Panurge. “Au rebours (dist Panurge)” (p. 304); “Non” (*TL* 12, p. 385); “Le contraire est veritable” (*TL* 18, p. 405) [“Conversely,” “No,” “The opposite is the case,” *CW* pp. 291, 290, 308]: Panurge’s customary responses lead Gérard Defaux to call him “l’esprit de contradiction incarné.”<sup>20</sup>

The sense of scandal as paradox—that which goes against the doxa, or common opinion, represented for Myriam Marrache-Gouraud by Pantagruel—abounded in theological discussions of the term, and originated in Paul’s first letter to the Corinthians, where he insisted that the shameful nature of Jesus’s death would disturb both Jewish and Greek common sense: “We preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks a foolishness” (1 Cor. 1:23).<sup>21</sup> In the sixteenth century, the gospel’s offence to common sense was particularly a theme in reformed polemic. The German reformer Sebastian Franck’s 1534 collection of *Paradoxa* described the world as too ready to be scandalized at the gospel’s radical message: “a perverse world takes offence with God, Christ, the light and the truth.” In this sense, the gospel itself was a paradox, and the world’s incomprehension called out for meditations that demolished its certainties such as Franck’s.<sup>22</sup> Calvin echoed this idea that the gospel message was destined to go unheard, misunderstood, or calumniated in the fallen world. *Des Scandales* began with a definition in which “il y a beaucoup de choses en la doctrine de l’Evangile et profession d’icelle contraires au sens humain”<sup>23</sup> [there are many things in the Gospel’s teaching and profession that are contrary to human sense]. Since the radical message of the gospel was at odds with human wisdom, Calvin argued that it was the Christian’s duty to offend that common sense, addressing his co-religionists who shrank from the scandal of schism: “[C]’est une maxime toute certaine, que si nous voulons fuir tous scandales, il nous convient renoncer Jesus Christ, lequel ne seroit pas le Sauveur du monde, le fondement de l’Eglise, ny le vray Christ, s’il n’estoit pierre de scandale”<sup>24</sup> [It’s an absolutely certain maxim, that if we want to avoid all scandal, we must renounce Jesus Christ, who would not be the Saviour of the world, the foundation of the Church, nor the true Christ, if he were not a scandal stone]. In this insistence on the scandalous and offensive force of Christian doctrine, which will inevitably trip some up, Calvin followed Martin Luther, who had emphasized a duty to offend those who upheld false teaching, the greatest scandal of all.<sup>25</sup> Since Panurge is, in Defaux’s formula, “celui qui pense toujours ‘au rebours’ des autres,” this makes him the paradoxical spirit of scandal—shocking contemporary mores, *épatant la bourgeoisie*, going against common opinion. But from a Pauline point



of view (and one that was emphasized particularly in Protestant writings), the paradoxical scandal that Panurge often represents was also that of the gospel. If this argument makes Panurge a representative of the radical message of the gospel, an embodiment perhaps of the holy fool who confounds the world's wisdom, this highlights the ambiguous nature of the character whose messages are multiple and difficult to read.<sup>26</sup>

For Panurge is clearly not an unequivocal bearer of the gospel message. In his search for a definitive answer to his question, critics such as Edwin Duval and David Quint have argued convincingly that Panurge represents what Erasmus saw as the "Judaicizing" tendency of the unreformed Catholic church and its return to a restrictive law of superstitions, empty ceremonies, and rituals. In the *Praise of Folly*, just before one of the many points where her mask slips to reveal her "friend Erasmus," Folly ventriloquizes Jesus who describes monks as "this new race of Jews." The restrictive and elaborate rules of monastic life are also satirized by Folly in the register of scandal: like Paul's first-century Corinthians, they are preoccupied with their differences from each other more than their resemblance to Christ: "Consequently, a great deal of their happiness depends on their name [...] as if it weren't enough to be called Christians."<sup>27</sup> Panurge's desire for a definitive answer is revealed in his request to consult the dice so that the question can be "plus tost fait et expédié," and meets Pantagruel's powerful refusal that such a method was "inventé par le calumniateur ennemy" (TL 11, p. 383). The book Pantagruel refers to at this point, Lorenzo Spiriti's *Libro delle sorti*, was first translated into French in 1532, and printed by Rabelais's printer, François Juste. A kind of parlour game, "fait que par jeu" [done in jest], as the translator insists, it consists of a set of questions whose answers are determined by a roll of three dice.<sup>28</sup> M. A. Screech expresses some surprise at Pantagruel's uncompromising attack on a book that was clearly a frivolous game and may even have been a parody of divination by dice, as Edwin Duval has suggested; Screech identifies its threat as the potential "explosive and divisive force" if its prophecies were taken seriously—prophecies such as the one Panurge's throw of 5–6–5 in chapter 11 would have given him, "Si tu prens femme somme toute, / Coupault [coqu] seras sans nulle doubte" (fol. 44") [If you take a wife all told / Without a doubt you'll be a cuckold].<sup>29</sup> Other prophetic answers promoted suspicion, repudiation, and vengeance—scandalous incitement, perhaps, to the peremptory reader.

Critics have discussed Pantagruel's opposition to divination by dice in terms of an ethics of interpretation. For Jean Céard, Pantagruel condemns dice so categorically because the method illegitimately restricts the prophetic answer to a fixed set of responses; Edwin Duval, similarly, interprets Pantagruel's rejection of dice as a condemnation of the definite and unambiguous answer that dispenses with human responsibility.<sup>30</sup> But Panurge's desire for an unambiguous sign can also be read as an affinity with scandal, and with Christianity's misreading of the Judaic relationship with the Law. In the famous scandal passage in the first letter to the Corinthians, Paul explained why Jesus would prove a stumbling block to the faith of many: "For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom. But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks a foolishness" (1 Cor. 1:22–3). In his paraphrase, Erasmus emphasized the necessity of going beyond first appearances, or the obvious sense, in order to grasp the message of the gospel. Jews and Greeks both encountered difficulties on this point, though for different reasons: "We preach a message that looks at first sight to be foolish and lowly, namely, Christ crucified, whose lowliness offered the Jews a cause for falling [...]. To the Greeks [...] it seems foolish [...] that life has been restored by death."<sup>31</sup> Erasmus's paraphrase and the biblical verse suggest that both Jews and Greeks err because they seek definitive answers, and are thus blocked by the literal, "proper" meaning of the Christian message: the infringement of the law, for the Jews, and the shameful nature of crucifixion, for the Greeks. In this sense, the scandal of the crucifixion expresses the change in emphasis from letter to spirit of the law that Paul identified ("the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life," 2 Cor. 3:6). Calvin echoed Erasmus in rejecting first appearances in his commentary on these verses: "mais nous, nous preschons Christ crucifie: auquel, de prime face n'apparoist rien qu'imbecillite & folie"<sup>32</sup> [but as for us, we preach Christ crucified: which at first sight appeared nothing but imbecility and folly]. For both Erasmus and Calvin, only a conscious humiliation of human pride could reverse this misreading and reveal the true sense of the crucifixion.<sup>33</sup> Pantagruel also offers this message of humility to Panurge when he is first consulted on the question of marriage: "Il se y convient mettre à l'aventure, les œilz bandez, baissant la teste, baisant la terre, et se recommandant à Dieu au demourant" (*TL* 10, p. 380) ["You have to go into it at a venture, eyes blindfolded, bowing your head, kissing the ground, and recommending yourself to God," *CW*, p. 284]. Throughout the various divinatory consultations, the

choice between literal and allegorical interpretations will be played out again and again by Pantagruel and Panurge, although neither represents one method consistently: they frequently change interpretative roles.<sup>34</sup> The malleable nature of interpretation, and the slippage of proper and metaphorical sense that it enacts might, as Peter Frei has argued, itself constitute the “scandal” of Rabelais’s books, rather than their perceived obscenity—part of the Renaissance “*crise des signes*” that Michel Jeanneret has explored and that continues to fascinate.<sup>35</sup>

In the visit to Raminagrobis, the dying poet, Panurge takes the allegorical route, but this time exemplifying the spirit of scandal as contrary to good Pantagruelism. This episode is an important one from the perspective of scandal, since it includes three declarations of offence (two from Panurge and one from Epistemon). As Rowan Tomlinson has observed, the episode begins with Pantagruel explicitly countering the notion of the scandal stone or stumbling block with the promise that they leave no stone unturned in helping Panurge answer his question: “Pour toutesfoys vostre doubte esclaircir, suys d’advis que mouvons toute pierre” (*TL* 21, p. 415) [“to clear up your doubt, my notion is that we should leave no stone unturned,” *CW*, p. 317], an expression that arrived in the *Tiers Livre* via Erasmus’s *Adages*, and which originated in an enigmatic utterance of Apollo’s oracle at Delphi.<sup>36</sup> In response to Raminagrobis’s complaint that his dying hours have been plagued by “un tas de villaines, immondes, et pestilentes bestes” (*TL* 21, p. 417) [“a bunch of ugly, filthy, pestilential creatures,” *CW*, p. 319], Panurge declares himself scandalized by what he interprets as a veiled allusion to the mendicant orders, and the evidence that the dying poet has condemned himself to hell: “Il mesdict des bons peres mendians [...]. J’en suys fort scandalisé” (*TL* 22, p. 418) [“He speaks ill of the good mendicant Franciscan and Jacobin friars [...]. I’m extremely scandalized by it.” *CW* p. 319–20] As if to demonstrate his uncontainable disquiet, he repeats the accusation, once again declaring himself scandalized to an intolerable degree: “Je en suys grandement scandalisé, je vous affie, et ne me en peuz taire” (p. 419) [“I’m greatly scandalized by it, I swear, and I can’t keep quiet about it,” *CW* p. 320]. And he doesn’t stop speaking, riffing on his theme with virtuoso copiousness, inventing neologisms from a vast range of references including classical and medieval literature, the technical vocabulary of poetics, and abstruse theological terminology. If scandal is figured here as an affective reaction of outrage that compels the scandalized to speak out and on about the scandalous matter, thus prolonging its power to offend, Epistemon demonstrates further the contagious

nature of scandal: "Je ne vous entends point (respondist Epistemon). Et me scandalisez vous mesme grandement, interpretant perversement" ["I don't understand you [...], and you yourself scandalize *me* greatly, perversely interpreting"]. According to Epistemon, Panurge's error lies in his improper, perverse, and uncharitable interpretation, his metaphorical reading (a "sophisticque et phantasticque allegorie") of Raminogrobis's complaint. Epistemon favours a literal understanding: "Il parle absolument et proprement des pusses, punaises, cirons, mousches, culices, et aultres telles bestes" ["He was speaking absolutely and literally of the fleas, bedbugs, gnats, flies, mosquitoes, and other such creatures"].

While Epistemon's literal interpretation of Raminogrobis's last words seems suspect to any reader familiar with Rabelais's anti-monasticism, or the model he uses in this death-bed scene, Erasmus's *Funus*, which fulminates against the unseemly greed and corruption of the mendicant orders, it does echo and emphasize the general rule of Pantagruelism when judging one's neighbour (*TL* 2, p. 357).<sup>37</sup> But Epistemon's outrage at Panurge's misinterpretation demonstrates the problem with a contagious, self-perpetuating scandal that Rabelais seeks to warn against in his prologues and other preliminary material. Epistemon takes Panurge too seriously, and his earnest outrage simply perpetuates the offence taken by Panurge.<sup>38</sup> Because of its public nature, a scandal, in both religious and secular senses, inevitably spread. For Paul, offence was contagious because the members of Christ's church were like members of the same body: "Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is offended, and I burn not?" (2 Cor. 11:29); a text which Calvin put on the title page of *Des Scandales*: "*Qui est scandalize, que je n'en soye brusle?*"<sup>39</sup> As we have seen, the capacity of scandal to spread and foster fractures in a divided community was a concern for Paul as well as for Rabelais, and the apostle begins his attack on scandal in the first letter to the Corinthians with a countering call for harmony in speech ("that ye all speak the same thing") and thought ("that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgement," 1 Cor. 1:10). This seems to be a call for interpretative harmony: a call not to stumble at the difficulties of Christian doctrine, and also not to cleave to factionalism that breaks up the body of the church. The divisive nature of scandal makes it a political as well as a religious and ethical theme, and Rabelais also addresses the politics of scandal in the *Tiers Livre*.

### Scandal and edification

The *Tiers Livre* is, as Edwin Duval has observed, a book about domestic economy (Panurge's marital problem) that is framed by questions of political governance, particularly that of how to retain newly conquered states.<sup>40</sup> It is in this context that the book first mentions scandal. Elaborating the anti-Machiavellian idea that a prince should strive to be loved by his people, the narrator observes that the second Roman king Numa Pompilius forbade any live sacrifice to Terminus, the god of frontiers and boundaries, on his feast day: "[L]es termes, frontieres, et annexes des royaumes convient en paix, amitié, debonnaireté garder et regir, sans ses mains souiller de sang et pillerie. Qui autrement faict, non seulement perdra l'acquis, mais aussi partira ce scandale et opprobre" (*TL* 1, p. 356) ["it is fitting to guard and control the bounds, frontiers, in peace, friendliness, and geniality, without soiling our hands with blood and pillage. Anyone who acts otherwise will not only lose his gain but will suffer scandal and opprobrium," *CW*, p. 263]. The "scandale et opprobre" is transferrable, passing to the usurper's inheritors if he dies before being discovered. Scandal here appears as a matter of public justice: those who fail to respect frontiers and limits, who demonstrate excessive ambition and covetousness, renounce all right to a good name, much as Anarche and Picrochole do in Rabelais's earlier books.

Building a community on concord and harmony is a recurrent refrain in the *Tiers Livre*, and indeed throughout Rabelais's books. As an alternative to the scandal of usurpation, the prologue and first chapter of the *Tiers Livre* offer a vision of edification, in which, as Diane Desrobiers-Bonin has observed, the act of writing is assimilated to the construction of walls and the concomitant edification of men.<sup>41</sup> Taking the model of Diogenes from Lucian's *How to Write History*, raucously rolling his barrel while his fellow Corinthians fortify their walls, the *Tiers Livre*'s narrator claims in the prologue that his composition is also a contribution to those building up the security of France ("je serviray les massons," *TL*, p. 350). Unlike many readers of this prologue, Desrobiers-Bonin gives a positive, and not ironic, value to Diogenes's imitation of the Corinthians' activity, and to the narrator's subsequent identification with him.<sup>42</sup> But perhaps we are not required to adjudicate. It is possible that Rabelais offers the story as both a parody and a model. Diogenes's mock-earnest defensive activity is brilliantly ridiculous, but the narrator's serious desire to entertain and edify remains: "[M]a deliberation est servir et es uns et es autres: tant s'en

fault que je reste cessateur et inutile" (*TL*, p. 349) ["my intention is to be so little idle and unprofitable, that I will set myself to serve," *CW*, p. 257]. But the prologue also expresses an anxiety that the work will be rejected, that the book, written to serve, will instead scandalize: "en lieu de les servir, je les fasche: en lieu de les esbaudir, je les offense" (*TL*, p. 351) ["instead of serving them, I offend them, instead of pleasing I displease," *CW*, p. 258]. *Fascher* and *offenser* were close associates of *scandaliser*, representing the typical reaction of the scandalized; Rabelais hoped that he could rely on his readers' Pantagruelism, defined as we have seen in opposing terms of scandal and charity, terms that he echoes in the prologue: "Je recognois en eulx tous une forme specificque [...] Pantagruelisme, moienant laquelle jamais en mauulvaise partie ne prendront choses quelconques" (p. 351) ["I recognize in them all a specific form [...] called Pantagruelism, on condition of which they never take things in bad part," *CW*, p. 258]. Fourteen years after the *Gargantua* prologue, Rabelais was still worrying the same problems of reception and offence, in the opposing biblical terms of charity and scandal.

Edification or building-up intersects with the biblical theme of scandal in the metaphor of the stone. New Testament writers identified the scandal-stone of the Old Testament with the person of Jesus, the embodiment of offence to the old law. 1 Peter combines two texts from Isaiah, transforming the promise of one with the threat of the other. "Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, and a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence."<sup>43</sup> In 1 Corinthians, Paul offers edification as an antidote to the scandalous divisions that were forming in the church, apparently plagued by power struggles and self-aggrandizing practices. For Anthony Thiselton, Paul's first letter to the Corinthians is shot through with the metaphor of building, or edification, as he strives to isolate practices that merely "build up" the individual from those that build up the whole church, referring to the Christians as the very fabric of the church: "ye are God's building."<sup>44</sup> Calvin's reference to this passage in *Des Scandales* incorporates an earlier verse, in which the cornerstone is a "pierre vive" or living stone, the foundation of the church which the faithful build up.<sup>45</sup> Edification in the first letter to the Corinthians is a consequence of a very particular type of prophecy, which Paul contrasts to another spiritual

gift, speaking in tongues. Here, as Erasmus, Calvin, and subsequent commentators have argued, prophecy does not mean foretelling but rather preaching and teaching; it therefore benefits the whole church, whereas speaking in tongues, a gift no one can understand without an interpreter, only benefits the individual: “He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth the church” (1 Cor. 14:4).<sup>46</sup> Calvin elaborated Paul’s suggestion that speaking in tongues was rather self-promoting and selfish in terms of the obstacle that is scandal: “Chassons donc loin toute ceste ambition perverse, laquelle est cause que l’utilite de tout le peuple est empeschee”<sup>47</sup> [“Let us banish this perverse ambition that causes the utility of all the people to be blocked.”]

Prophecy, then, in its larger sense of teaching and encouragement, can be an antidote to scandal when it is uttered in the right spirit: one that builds up the church community. The decade before he published the *Tiers Livre*, Rabelais offered a similar conclusion to his *Almanach de 1535*, which countered the inauspicious conjunction of Saturn and Mars (“si bon temps avons, ce sera outre la promesse des Astres”; “If we have good weather, that will be beyond the promise of the stars”) with this prediction: “Je dis quant est de moy, que si les Roys, Princes, et communitiez Christianes ont en reverence la divine parole de Dieu, et selon icelle gouvernent soy et leurs sujets, nous ne veismes de nostre aage année plus salubre és corps, plus paisible és ames, plus fertile en biens, que sera cette-cy” (OC pp. 939–40) [“For my part, I say that if the Christian kings, princes, and communities hold in reverence the divine Word of God and according to that govern themselves and their subjects, then never in our time did we see a year more salubrious for bodies, more peaceful for souls than this one will be,” CW, p. 761]. At a time when people, in Montaigne’s words, “estonnez de leur fortune se vont rejeissant comme à toute superstition, à rechercher au ciel les causes et menaces anciennes de leur malheur” [“stunned by their fate will throw themselves back, as on any superstition, on seeking in the heavens the ancient causes and threats of their misfortune”], Rabelais suggests that adoption of a properly Christian politics will provide both spiritual and physical benefits, edifying a community broken apart by factions and war.<sup>48</sup>

In the *Tiers Livre* it is (unexpectedly perhaps) Panurge who is associated with the living cornerstone of edifying faith, as he appropriates 1 Peter’s metaphor of living stones for the children he will have with his wife. “Je ne bastis que pierres vives, ce sont homes” (TL 6, p. 370) [“I build only with live stones:

that is men," CW, p. 275].<sup>49</sup> What we are to make of Panurge's use of Scripture is left unresolved. In his bawdy appropriation, Panurge concentrates more on his own sexual satisfaction than in "building up" the community. But equally, the love between children and fathers is cited as a proper and pleasurable reason for marriage (*TL* 9, p. 379). Thus, throughout the *Tiers Livre* Panurge appears as an ambiguous figure. This is perhaps no surprise for the most contentious character in Rabelais's contentious work, where criticism is often couched in the register of scandal. Ariane Bayle, for example, talks of the notion of obscenity as a critical "pierre d'achoppement" [stumbling stone]; André Tournon refers to the vexed issue of interpretation, calling the *Gargantua* prologue the "pierre angulaire ou pierre d'achoppement" [cornerstone or stumbling stone] for Rabelais criticism.<sup>50</sup> In the *Tiers Livre*, Panurge is clearly identified with the scandal stone: quick to take offence, to slander others, he pursues an illegitimate desire for knowledge of future contingents with an obstinacy that is an obstacle to action. And yet he also offers an alternative to the scandalous promises of the prognosticators, in the sheer creative invention of his ceaseless talk, and in the affirming present of good companionship as he proposes a voyage of discovery to the Dive Bouteille, about which Pantagruel is, finally, happy to prognosticate: "Mon pronostic est (dist Pantagruel) que par le chemin nous ne engendrons melancholie" (*TL* 47, p. 495) ["'My prognosis,' said Pantagruel, 'is that along the way we won't breed melancholy,'" CW, p. 397]. Panurge is for Pantagruel and for his readers both a potential cause of stumbling and a delightful companion: he is a test, a touchstone for those of the Pantagrueline fraternity, and a scandal stone for the rest. Thus Rabelais's book itself emerges from this analysis as a particularly biblical kind of scandal. If Pantagruelism, at least in 1546, was still capable of transforming potential offence into edifying good cheer, it was also, like Panurge or the scandalous gospel, a provocative challenge to the reader that seemed to invite both recognition and offence.

### Notes

1. *Œuvres complètes*, ed. Mireille Huchon and François Moreau (Paris: Gallimard, 1994), *Tiers Livre* ch. 11, p. 383; hereafter cited in the text as *TL*, with chapter and page number, if referring to the *Tiers Livre*, or as *OC* for other works. *The Complete Works of François Rabelais*, trans. Donald M. Frame (Berkeley: University of



California Press, 1991), p. 288. Hereafter cited in the text as CW; translations are sometimes adapted. Unless an edition is cited, all other translations are my own. Many thanks are due to Thomas Dixon, who read early versions of this article, and to the two anonymous readers, whose suggestions were extremely pertinent and helpful.

2. Edwin Duval, *The Design of Rabelais's "Tiers Livre de Pantagruel"* (Geneva: Droz, 1997), p. 69.
3. M. A. Screech, *Rabelais* (London: Duckworth, 1979), p. 197.
4. See Jean Céard, *La Nature et les prodiges: L'Insolite au XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Geneva: Droz, 1996), pp. 106–58. For an overview of the fortunes of prophecy, see Georges Minois, *Histoire de l'avenir: Des prophètes à la prospective* (Paris: Fayard, 1996); on astrology, see D. P. Walker, *Spiritual and Demonic Magic from Ficino to Campanella* (Stroud: Sutton, 2000 [1958]), and for a survey of English attitudes that emphasizes the progress of scepticism, Keith Thomas, *Religion and Decline of Magic: Studies in Popular Beliefs in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century England* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1997 [1971]), pp. 283–385.
5. *Prognostication trescertaine veritable et infailible pour l'an mil cinq cents cinquante six [...] par brave, venerable et discrete personne maistre Eutrapel Mysozithe* (Rouen: Raulin Boulent, n.d.), quoted in Jelle Koopmans, "Rabelais et la tradition des pronostications," in *Editer et traduire Rabelais à travers les âges*, ed. Paul J. Smith (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1997), pp. 35–65 (p. 55).
6. [Laurent Vidal], *Declaration des abus ignorances et seditions de Michel Nostradamus, de Salon de Craux en Provence œuvre tresutile & profitable à un chacun. Nouvellement traduit de latin en Francoys* (Avignon: Pierre Roux, 1558), fol. D4<sup>r</sup>.
7. [Antoine Couillard], *Les Contredicts du Seigneur du Pavillon, lez Lorriz en Gastinois, aux faulses & abbusives propheties de Nostradamus, & autres astrologues* (Paris: Charles l'Angelier, 1560), fol. [1]<sup>v</sup>.
8. [Couillard], fol. [1]<sup>v</sup>.
9. [Couillard], fol. [†vi]<sup>r</sup>.
10. Divination is treated in the *Summa Theologiæ*, 61 vols. (London: Blackfriars, 1964–1981), IIa IIæ, question 95, vol. 40, trans. Thomas Franklin O'Meara and Michael John Duffy (1968), pp. 37–69 (usurpation, pp. 38–39).
11. For "scandalizer," Randle Cotgrave gives a range of translations that cover both religious and vernacular offence: "To scandalize, or offend; to discontent, or give occasion of dislike unto; also, to slander, defame, or lay an imputation on," in

*A Dictionarie of the French and English Tongues* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1950 [1611]). On the etymology of “scandal,” see William Barclay, *New Testament Words* (London: SCM Press, 1964), pp. 255–58; A. Ernout and A. Meillet, *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue latine: histoire des mots* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1985); Gerhard Friedrich, ed., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley, 10 vols. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964–1974). For a more elaborate word history of the French *scandale*, see Emily Butterworth and Rowan Tomlinson, “Scandal,” in *Renaissance Keywords*, ed. Ita MacCarthy (Oxford: Legenda, forthcoming 2012). On sixteenth-century scandal and its social and political effects, see Antónia Szabari, *Less Rightly Said: Scandals and Readers in Sixteenth-Century France* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010).

12. See Cérard: “Plus ces procédés [of divination] sont complexes et bizarres, et mieux ils révèlent leur origine diabolique” (p. 116). For the distinction between artificial and natural divination, see Cicero, *De Divinatione*, 1.6.11, in *De Senectute, De Amicitia, De Divinatione*, trans. William Armistead Falconer (London: Heinemann, 1922), pp. 213–539 (pp. 234–35).
13. On the Old Testament scandal of idolatry, and for an important modern commentary on the notion of scandal, see René Girard, *Des Choses cachées depuis la fondation du monde: Recherches avec J.-M. Oughourlian et Guy Lefort* (Paris: Grasset, 1978), pp. 442–46.
14. [Couillard], bk 3, ch. 12 (fols. 64<sup>v</sup> and 65<sup>r-v</sup>). For a similar rejection of astral determinism, see Augustine, *Confessions* IV, 3, trans. William Watts, 2 vols. (London: Heinemann, 1912), vol. 1, pp. 152–53. This was a particularly crucial point for Protestants: see Jean Calvin, *Advertissement contre l’astrologie judiciaire*, ed. Olivier Millet (Geneva: Droz, 1985), p. 72.
15. André Tournon, *En sens agile: les acrobaties de l’esprit selon Rabelais* (Paris: Champion, 1995), p. 11.
16. *Gargantua*, “Aux lecteurs,” in *OC*, p. 3; *CW*, p. 2; Szabari, *Less Rightly Said*, p. 63.
17. See “Notice,” *OC*, p. 1342; for the text of the Sorbonne’s lists, see Francis Higman, *Censorship and the Sorbonne: A Bibliographical Study of Books in French Censured by the Faculty of Theology in Paris, 1520–1551* (Geneva: Droz, 1979).
18. The Sorbonne formula, “...conclusionem esse scandalosam, offensivam piarum aurium, haeresim sapientem,” was quoted by Erasmus in the *Adages* and parodied by Rabelais on the question of Gargamelle nursing Gargantua: “Et a esté la proposition declairée mammellement scandaleuse, des pitoyables aureilles

- offensive: et sentent de loing heresie" (G 7, p. 23). Erasmus, *Opera Omnia*, vol. II-3, ed. M. Szymański (Amsterdam: Elsevier, 2005), p. 476. See M. A. Screech and Ruth Calder's edition of *Gargantua* (Geneva: Droz, 1970), ch. 6, p. 54n.
19. Stéphane Geonget, *La Notion de perplexité à la Renaissance* (Geneva: Droz, 2006), pp. 371–74. On Panurge's perplexity, see especially pp. 425–30.
  20. Gérard Defaux, *Pantagruel et les sophistes: Contribution à l'histoire de l'humanisme chrétien au XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle* (La Haye: Martinus Nijhoff, 1973), p. 204 n. 19. "Il est celui qui pense toujours 'au rebours' des autres" (p. 204). For Defaux, this subversion makes Panurge's use of language "immoral et satanique." For an exploration of Panurge as antithesis to the *doxa*, see Myriam Marrache-Gouraud, "Cornes et cornemuses. Panurge architecte et maître du sens," in *Rabelais et la question du sens*, ed. Jean Céard and Marie-Luce Demonet (Geneva: Droz, 2011), pp. 145–60.
  21. Marrache-Gouraud, "Cornes et cornemuses," p. 147. "[N]os autem praedicamus Christum crucifixum Iudaeis quidem scandalum gentibus autem stultitiam" (Vulgate); "mais nous preschons Christ crucifié, qui est scandale aux Juifz, & follié aux gentilz" (*La Sainte Bible nouvellement translätée de Latin en François*, Louvain: Bartholomy de Grave, Anthoine Marie Bergagne, Jehan de Waen, 1550, fol. 58<sup>r</sup>). On this passage, see Anthony C. Thiselton, *First Corinthians: A Shorter Exegetical and Pastoral Commentary* (Grand Rapids and Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2006), pp. 42–45. Montaigne seems to be playing with this idea of scandal as paradox in "Sur des vers de Virgile": "J'ayme la modestie; et n'est par jugement que j'ay choisi cette sorte de parler scandaleux: c'est Nature qui l'a choisi pour moy. Je ne le loue, non plus que toutes formes contraires à l'usage reçu; mais je l'excuse et par particulieres et generales circonstances en allege l'accusation," in *Essais*, ed. Pierre Villey and V.-L. Saulnier (Paris: PUF, 2004), III, 5, p. 889. On the Renaissance genre of paradox, see Rosalie Colie, *Paradoxia epidemica: The Renaissance Tradition of Paradox* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966), and Agnieszka Steczowicz, "'Doctrine moult paradoxe et nouvelle': Linguistic and Medical Innovation in Rabelais's *Tiers Livre*," *French Studies* 61 (2007), pp. 423–33.
  22. Sebastian Franck, *280 Paradoxes or Wondrous Sayings*, trans. E. J. Furcha (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen, 1986 [German 1534]), no. 236, pp. 399–400. Franck's term for "offence" is "Ärgernis," the word Luther used to designate scandal; on which see Antónia Szabari, "The Scandal of Religion: Luther and Public Speech in the Reformation," in *Political Theologies: Public Religions in a Post-Secular World*, ed. Hent de Vries and Lawrence E. Sullivan (New York: Fordham University Press,

- 2006), pp. 122–36 (p. 133). See also Sebastian Franck, *Paradoxa*, ed. Siegfried Wollgast (Berlin: Akademie, 1995), p. 356.
23. Jean Calvin, *Des Scandales qui empeschent aujourd'hui beaucoup de gens de venir à la pure doctrine de l'Evangile, & en desbauchent d'autres*, ed. Olivier Fatio (Geneva: Droz, 1984 [1550]), p. 53.
24. Calvin, *Des Scandales*, p. 58.
25. See Szabari, "The Scandal of Religion," p. 130.
26. For an examination of Panurge as an ambiguous "pomme de discorde pour les rabelaisants," see Myriam Marrache-Gouraud, "Hors toute intimidation": *Panurge ou la parole singulière*, *Etudes rabelaisiennes* 41 (Geneva: Droz, 2003), p. 10.
27. Erasmus, *Praise of Folly*, trans. Betty Radice, *Collected Works* vol. 27 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986), pp. 77–153 (pp. 140, 132, and 131). See Duval, pp. 155–85; and David Quint, *Origin and Originality in Renaissance Literature: Versions of the Source* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), p. 190. For divisions in the fledgling church, see 1 Cor. 1:12–13: "Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?"
28. *Le Passetemps de la fortune des dez. Ingenieusement compilé par maistre Laurens l'Esprit, pour responses de vingt questions par plusieurs coustumeement faictes, & desirées scavoir* (Paris: Guillaume le Noir, 1559), fol. [1]'. On the *Passetemps*, and what Panurge would have found if he had consulted it, see M. A. Screech, "Lorenzo Spiritu's *Du passetemps des dez* and the *Tiers livre de Pantagruel*," *Etudes Rabelaisiennes* 13 (1976), pp. 65–67.
29. Screech, "Lorenzo Spiritu," p. 65; Duval, p. 69 n. 15.
30. Céard, p. 137; Duval, p. 73.
31. Erasmus, *Paraphrase on the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, trans. Edward A. Phillips Jr, in *Collected Works of Erasmus*, vol. 43 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), pp. 1–197 (p. 39).
32. *Commentaires de M. Jehan Calvin sur toutes les Epistres de l'Apostre S. Paul* ([Geneva]: Conrad Badius, 1556), p. 185.
33. "No doubt [...] God rejects the proud and gives himself to the humble and meek," Erasmus, *Paraphrase on Romans*, trans. John B. Payne, Albert Rabil Jr, Warren S. Smith Jr, in *Collected Works of Erasmus*, vol. 42 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984, pp. 1–90), p. 58 (on Romans 9:31–33). "[M]oyennant qu'on se rende docile, on ne trouvera nul empeschement, mais à ceux qui sont sages à

- leur fantaisie, leur arrogance leur est pour scandale.” Calvin, *Des Scandales*, p. 69. In *Des Scandales*, Calvin took the rhetorical opportunity offered by this biblical rejection of common, human sense to attack Catholic literalness in particular, the reason why the Protestant doctrine of the mass was a cause for such scandal: “quand nous remonstrons qu’il ne fault point attacher Jesus Christ au pain comme s’il estoit là enclos; [...] tous ceulx qui sont scandalisez de telle doctrine se viennent heurter à leur escient contre Jesus Christ” (pp. 174–75).
34. Both Richard Berrong and Edwin Duval have pointed out the instability of Pantagruel’s and Panurge’s hermeneutic roles: Richard M. Berrong, *Every Man for Himself: Social Order and its Dissolution in Rabelais*, Stanford French and Italian Studies 38 (Saratoga: Anma, 1985), pp. 28–50; Duval, pp. 187–221.
  35. Peter Frei, “Le Scandale de Rabelais: Une Renaissance contre-nature,” in *Obscénités renaissantes*, ed. Hugh Roberts, Guillaume Peureux and Lise Wajman (Geneva: Droz, 2011), pp. 349–61. Michel Jeanneret, *Le Défi des signes: Rabelais et la crise de l’interprétation à la Renaissance* (Orléans: Paradigme, 2000). See also Marie-Luce Demonet, “Le sens littéral dans l’œuvre de Rabelais,” in *Rabelais et la question du sens*, pp. 211–36.
  36. See Butterworth and Tomlinson, “Scandal”; Erasmus, “omnem movere lapidem,” *Adages I i 1 to I v 100*, trans. Margaret Mann Phillips, *Collected Works of Erasmus* vol. 31 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982), 1.4.30 (pp. 340–41).
  37. See “The Funeral / Funus” (1526), *Colloquies*, trans. Craig R. Thompson, in *Collected Works of Erasmus*, vols. 39–40, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), vol. 40, pp. 763–95.
  38. Duval reads Epistemon here as a plodding, literalistic imitator of Pantagruel’s attack on divination (pp. 119–20).
  39. For René Girard, this is a defining characteristic of scandal: the violent contagion that he calls *mimétisme*, the paradoxical obstacle that both repels and attracts, and is almost impossible to avoid. See *Je vois Satan tomber comme l’éclair* (Paris: Grasset, 1999), pp. 23–39.
  40. Duval, pp. 29–41.
  41. Diane Desrobiers-Bonin, *Rabelais et l’humanisme civil, Études Rabelaisiennes* 27 (Geneva: Droz, 1992), where the task of the narrator “consiste à collaborer à l’édification de la vertu des hommes, cette muraille inexpugnable” (p. 218).
  42. Desrobiers-Bonin, p. 125. Duval, for example, sees the Diogenes episode as a “degraded parody of his tedious tubrolling” (p. 84). Dorothy Coleman argues that Rabelais’s narrator rejects an explicitly political purpose by identifying himself

with Diogenes, "whose contempt for public affairs and refusal to involve himself must have been well known to him," in *Rabelais: A Critical Study in Prose Fiction* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1971), p. 39.

43. 1 Peter 2:6–8; the "stone of stumbling" is of course the scandal-stone, in the Vulgate "lapis offensionis et petra scandali." See also Romans 9:33, which combines the same texts, namely, Isaiah 28:16: "Therefore thus saith the Lord God: Behold I will lay a stone in the foundations of Sion, a tried stone, a corner stone, a precious stone, founded in the foundation," and Isaiah 8:14: "And he shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem." See also Luke 20:17–18 for this analogy. On the identification of Jesus as both the corner stone and the stone of stumbling in the early church, see C. E. B. Cranfield, *The International Critical Commentary: Romans*, 2 vols. (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1979), vol. 2, pp. 510–12 (on Romans 9:33). On the metaphors of the way and the stone, and the latter's relation to idolatry, see *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, pp. 745–58 (article προσκόπτω, "to strike, dash against, stumble").
44. 1 Cor. 3:9; Thiselton, p. 65.
45. Calvin, *Des Scandales*, p. 56; 1 Peter 2:5: "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house."
46. On the extension of prophecy to teaching, and not just foretelling, see Erasmus's annotations on 1 Corinthians, in *Paraphrase on First Corinthians*, p. 162 n. 1; Calvin, *Commentaires*, pp. 273 and 298; and Thiselton, p. 237.
47. Calvin, *Commentaires*, p. 298.
48. "Des Prognostications," *Essais* I, 11, pp. 41–44 (p. 44); Montaigne, *The Complete Works*, trans. Donald M. Frame (London: Everyman, 2003), p. 35.
49. On the classical and biblical associations of Panurge's quip, see V.-L. Saulnier, "Hommes pétrifiés et pierres vives (autour d'une formule de Panurge)," *Bibliothèque d'humanisme et Renaissance* 22 (1960), pp. 393–402.
50. Ariane Bayle, "Six questions sur la notion d'obscénité dans la critique rabelaisienne," in *Obscénités renaissantes*, pp. 379–92 (p. 379); Tournon, p. 8.