

DOCTORAT / SOCIÉTÉS
BRETAGNE / TEMPS
LOIRE / TERRITOIRES

UNIVERSITY

Université d'Angers

RESEARCH UNIT

TEMOS (temps, mondes, sociétés)

UMR 9016 CNRS

Director: Mr. Yves Denéchère

THESIS TOPIC

Instruire et édifier les fidèles. Le catéchisme dans les Églises réformées de France aux XVI ^e et XVII ^e siècles (années 1550 – années 1680)
To instruct and edify the faithful. The Catechism in the Reformed Churches of France in the 16th and 17th Centuries (1550s – 1680s)

Mots clés Calvin – Calvinisme – Catéchisme - Controverses – Églises réformées de France - Enseignement – Pasteurs – Publications – XVI ^e siècle – XVII ^e siècle
Key words Calvin – Calvinism – Catechism - Controversies – Reformed Churches of France - Teaching – Pastors – Publications – 16th century – 17th century

Discipline	History
Speciality	History

SUPERVISOR

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Number of theses	0

SCIENTIFIC ARGUMENT

<p>Problem:</p> <p>The catechism appears to be an essential element put in place by the Reformers of the 16th century to develop and consolidate the new confessions resulting from the Protestant schism. This is particularly the case of Luther but also of Calvin who published his <i>Catechism</i> in 1537. The thesis will analyze the place of the catechism in the Reformed Churches of France from the spread of Calvinism in the 1550s until the Revocation of the edict of Nantes in 1685. It will be a question of taking an interest in the place of the catechism in the reformed worship and the life of the Huguenots, in the works of catechism published during this period, through for example the influence of the catechism of Calvin, distribution of these books and their authors.</p> <p>It will also be necessary to consider how the institutions of the consistorial-synodal system (national synods, provincial synods, colloquia and consistories) relate to the question of the catechism with respect for the Confession of Faith and Ecclesiastical Discipline, but also how and when is the catechism taught, by whom, and to what faithful is it intended. What is the place of the catechism in the reformed educational system, from the small schools to the academies passing through the colleges? How is the catechism perceived by children and adults?</p> <p>We can also wonder about the possible particularities of the catechism in the Reformed Churches of France compared to other Calvinist Churches (Geneva, United Provinces, Scotland, Palatinate and the Churches of Refuge for example). The catechism is also an element of denominational controversy between Reformed and Catholics. In addition to theological differences, can we observe opposition on teaching methods, practices or target audiences?</p> <p>Contextualization of the thesis project:</p> <p>This thesis is part of different currents of cultural history and religious history: the history of sacraments and reformed rituals (C. Grosse & alii, C. Grosse, M. Dieleman, R. Mentzer), the history of books and confessional controversy (H. Bost, Y. Sordet, M. Walsby), but also the history of education (J. Boisset), of the pastors (J. Léonard) and of reformed institutions. The</p>

thesis will thus have to cross the methods of history, historical anthropology and socio-history.

Proposed methodology:

The thesis will be based on a combination of printed sources and manuscript sources, whether catechism books, acts of synods or colloquia, consistory registers, sermons of pastors, their correspondence, diaries and memoirs. It will also involve comparing preserved manuscripts of catechism authors with published works. A lexicometric analysis of catechism works should make it possible to analyze the objectives aimed at by the authors and thus to differentiate this literature.

Faced with the importance of certain sources such as the acts of the provincial synods and the registers of the consistories, it will be a question of selecting Churches and provinces according to their representativeness in Huguenot France of the 16th and 17th centuries.

INSERTION OF THE SUBJECT IN THE AXES OF THE LABORATORY

Insertion of the subject in the axes of the laboratory; possible research programs

This thesis project is part of two of the three axes of the TEMOS laboratory.

Axis 1 “Childhood, gender and traces of the self: individualities and subjectivities in movement”:

The catechism participates fully in the construction of collective identities within the Reformed communities of the 16th and 17th centuries, and thus raises the question of the individuality of the believer faced with the rules of the confessional community in a context that is both a minority fact for the Reformed churches of France and royal policy towards this religious minority by alternating between tolerance and repression.

Age is thus an essential input for a history of catechism in the Reformed Churches of France. If children appear as a priority public of this desire to educate the foundations of Calvinism both within the framework of the school network set up with difficulty and within the family framework, adults are not neglected by pastors and ecclesiastical institutions. This should make it possible to distinguish several types of catechism according to age, both by the works published and by their organization within communities which may not be concerned about them in the same way.

One may wonder if gender is a relevant entry for a history of adult catechism. The works in their conception of the catechism, the pastors and the churches in its organization are addressed in the same way to men and women. The same question can also be asked with regard to the social categories composing the communities.

Axis 3 “Communities and plurality: authorities, violence and coexistence”

This axis questions in particular the dialectical relationship between theory, practice and space. The catechism appears as an object of study making it possible to underline these relations between the norms put in place in Geneva then in France, the way in which they are applied or not by the Churches, whether on several scales in a local or regional context. Can

we thus observe differences between the communities? between rural churches and urban churches? between provinces of the Reformed Crescent where the Churches are denser, and those of the other provinces in which they are scattered? Can we make a connection with the literacy rate of these communities?

If the question of crises is at the heart of this axis, the catechism seems an interesting field to study this aspect: crises with power and the majority confession, how the catechism is taught in this period in times of war and/or clandestinity, in times of repression; internal crises in the Reformed Churches because of the different theological “schools”, is the catechism then affected?

Indicative bibliography:

Boisset Jean (éd.), *La Réforme et l'éducation*, Actes du III^e colloque Jean Boisset, Toulouse, Privat, 1974.

Bost Hubert, « Les catéchismes réformés du XVII^e siècle », *Ces messieurs de la RPR*, Paris, Champion, 2001, p. 83-98.

Christin Olivier et Krumenacker Yves, *Les protestants à l'époque moderne. Une approche anthropologique*, Rennes, PUR, 2017.

Dieleman Margreet, *Le baptême dans les Églises réformées de France (vers 1555-1685) : un enjeu confessionnel*, thèse de doctorat d'Histoire, Université d'Angers, 2018.

Grosse Christian, *Les rituels de la Cène. Le culte eucharistique à Genève (XVI^e-XVII^e siècle)*, Genève, Droz, 2008.

Grosse C., Chevalier F., Mentzer R., Roussel B., « Anthropologie historique : les rituels réformés (XVI^e-XVII^e siècles) », *Bulletin de la Société de l'Histoire du Protestantisme Français*, 4/148, 2002, p. 979-1009.

Léonard Julien, *Être pasteur au XVII^e siècle*, Rennes, PUR, 2015.

Mentzer Raymond, « Fasting, piety and political anxiety among french reformed protestants », *Church History*, 76 (2007), p. 330-362.

Sordet Yann, *Histoire du livre et de l'édition*, Paris, Albin Michel, 2021.

Walsby Malcom, *Booksellers and Printers in Provincial France, 1470-1600*, Leyde, Brill, 2020.

REQUIRED KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

Expected profile

University course in history, master's degree in modern history

Knowledge of the history of Protestantism, history of the book

An interest in theology will be appreciated

Professional integration or career continuation envisaged

After the thesis, the doctoral student. will be able to highlight their knowledge and skills for a professional career in the book trades

An excellent thesis could lead to a career as a researcher or teacher-researcher.