

Introduction

For it is owing to their wonder that men both now begin and at first began to philosophize; they wondered originally at the obvious difficulties, then advanced little by little and stated difficulties about the greater matters, for example about the phenomena of the moon and those of the sun and the stars, and about the genesis of the universe. And a man who is puzzled and wonders thinks himself ignorant (whence even the lover of myth is in a sense a lover of wisdom, for myth is composed of wonders); therefore since they philosophized in order to escape from ignorance, evidently they were pursuing science in order to know, and not for any utilitarian end.¹

This famous passage comes near the start of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. If it makes explicit a connection between knowledge and wonder, it leaves implicit the connection with the third element of the trio examined by the present volume: texts (oral and written) were among the tools with which the philosophers described by Aristotle tried to turn wonder into philosophy.

Aristotle's first sentence in particular was endlessly quoted and paraphrased in the early modern period. However, if the passage opens a window onto that period's preoccupation with wonder, it is not a wide enough one. It leaves out as much as it reveals. Wonders and the marvellous, having of course been prominent in medieval literature and thought, progressively exceeded (especially from the sixteenth century) the Aristotelian framework which, however flexibly, had long dominated high-culture thinking about the natural world. Wonder and wonders were increasingly associated with the preternatural irregularities, opacities, deformities, extremes, tricks, games, variations, and hidden qualities that God and nature produced, alongside nature's regularities.² The period in Western Europe between the heyday of late medieval scholasticism and the eventual dominance (via the 'Scientific Revolution') of Newtonianism was one in which no single paradigm commanded near-universal consensus as an explanation of the natural world. Wonder raised the question of causal explanation, which it sometimes stimulated (as in the Aristotle locus), but sometimes held in suspense.

Wonder permeated countless texts, not just in practices such as natural history, medicine, collecting, and travel,³ but in many other genres of 'literature' (in the broad period sense of *litteratura* or *bonnes lettres* that ranges from systematic treatises to what we would today call literature). Despite their vast differences, the ending of Shakespeare's *Winter's Tale*, the theatre of Pierre Corneille, and a collection of monstrous and prodigious events such as Pierre Boaistuau's *Histoires prodigieuses* (first printed in 1560) have in common a primary appeal to wonder and awe. In Boaistuau's best-seller, that appeal partly took the form of visual illustrations. Visual wonder was also fundamental to the exercise of power, for example in the festivals and rituals with which the Valois and Bourbon monarchies sought to dazzle both their subjects and other countries' dignitaries. Indeed, although the above Aristotle passage is known especially for its assertion that philosophy begins in wonder, it also connects wonder to the main visual language that such festivals used: that of ancient myth. The less widely quoted second half of the passage argues that myth and the natural

¹ Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 982^b, in *The Complete Works of Aristotle: The Revised Oxford Translation*, ed. by Jonathan Barnes, 2 vols (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), II, p. 1554.

² Classic accounts include Jean Céard, *La Nature et les prodiges: l'insolite au XVI^e siècle, en France* (Geneva: Droz, 1977); Lorraine Daston and Katharine Park, *Wonders and the Order of Nature 1150–1750* (New York: Zone Books, 1998).

³ See for example Stephen Greenblatt, *Marvelous Possessions: The Wonder of the New World* (Chicago and London: Chicago University Press, 1991).

world both elicit the same reaction of wonder. Myth is ‘composed of wonders’, by which one might understand metamorphoses, surprises, and extreme or baffling actions.

Without being ubiquitous in early modern high culture, this nexus of text, knowledge, and wonder permeated much of it. The present volume shows how the nexus took many forms, often with two of the three elements outweighing the third. The nexus has been studied in this flexible way for several decades by the person whom this volume honours. Stephen Bamforth has long made crucial contributions to our understanding of the interactions between text, knowledge, and wonder in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century France. He has done pioneering research on figures who were fascinated by wonder, knowledge, nature (regular and irregular, human and non-human), and by the textual means of exploring them. If Stephen has often returned to two figures, Pierre Boaistuau⁴ and François Béroalde de Verville,⁵ he has illuminated numerous others too, such as Jacques

⁴ See Stephen Bamforth’s two critical editions of the *Histoires prodigieuses*, one of an important presentation manuscript and the other of the first printed edition: Pierre Boaistuau, *Histoires prodigieuses: ms. 136 Wellcome Library*, ed. by Stephen Bamforth (Milan: Franco Maria Ricci, 2000) (Italian- and Spanish-language versions were published in the same year by the same publisher); Pierre Boaistuau, *Histoires prodigieuses (édition de 1561)*, ed. by Stephen Bamforth and Jean Céard (Geneva: Droz, 2010). Stephen Bamforth’s other studies of Boaistuau are: ‘Corps, monstre et prodige à la Renaissance: l’exemple de Pierre Boaistuau’, in *Le Corps*, ed. by Emmanuel Jacquart (Strasbourg: University of Strasbourg, 2000), pp. 31–50; ‘Littérature et religion au seizième siècle: note sur Pierre Boaistuau’, *Religion et littérature à la Renaissance: mélanges en l’honneur de Franco Giacomone*, ed. by François Roudaut (Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2012), pp. 473–99; ‘Les Anomalies de l’ordre à travers les *Histoires prodigieuses* de Pierre Boaistuau (1560)’, in *Anomalie dell’ordine: l’altro, lo straordinario, l’eccezionale nella modernità*, ed. by Luisa Simonutti, Enrico Nuzzo, and Manuela Sanna (Rome: Aracne editrice, 2013), pp. 187–210; ‘Boaistuau, ses *Histoires tragiques* et l’Angleterre’, *Les Histoires tragiques du XVI^e siècle: Boaistuau et ses émules*, ed. by Jean-Claude Arnould (Paris: Garnier, forthcoming). Several studies by Stephen Bamforth are on wonders and monsters more generally: ‘On Gesner, Marvels and Unicorns’, in *Nouveaux Départs: Studies in Honour of Michel Jeanneret*, special issue of *Nottingham French Studies* (2010), 110–45; ‘Merveilles et merveilleux au XVI^e siècle’, in *Un nouveau monde: naissance de la Lorraine moderne*, ed. by Olivier Christin (Paris: Somogy éditions d’art, 2013), pp. 156–67; ‘Monstre, mer et merveille à la Renaissance’, in *Textes au corps: promenades et musardises sur les terres de Marie-Madeleine Fontaine*, ed. by Didier Kahn, Elsa Kammerer, Anne-Hélène Klinger-Dollé, Marine Molins, and Anne-Pascale Pouey-Mounou (Geneva: Droz, 2015), pp. 305–26; ‘Des *Amadis* aux prodiges: l’illustration du livre populaire à la Renaissance’, in *Le Roman de chevalerie à la Renaissance: littérature et histoire du livre*, ed. by Jean-Eudes Girot (Paris: Michel Aubry, forthcoming).

⁵ Stephen Bamforth has devoted the following studies to Verville: ‘Béroalde de Verville and the Question of Scientific Poetry’, *Renaissance and Modern Studies*, 23 (1979), 104–27; ‘Scientific and Religious Aspects of the Poetry of Béroalde de Verville’, PhD thesis (University of Durham, 1979) (which contains much that is not available elsewhere); ‘Anatomie et psychologie chez trois poètes de la création au XVI^e siècle: Scève, du Bartas, Béroalde de Verville’, in *Du Bartas poète encyclopédique du XVI^e siècle: colloque international, Faculté des Lettres et Sciences Humaines de Pau et des pays de l’Adour, 7, 8, et 9 mars 1986*, ed. by James Dauphiné (Lyon: La Manufacture, 1988), pp. 41–51; ‘Béroalde de Verville and *Les Apprehensions spirituelles*’, *Bibliothèque d’Humanisme et Renaissance*, 56 (1994), 89–97; ‘Béroalde de Verville poète de la connaissance’, *Nouvelle Revue du Seizième Siècle*, 14 (1996), 43–55; ‘Autour du manuscrit 516 du Wellcome Institute de Londres: quelques réflexions sur Béroalde de Verville, médecin et alchimiste’, in *Béroalde de Verville 1555–1626* (Paris: Presses de l’École Normale Supérieure, 1996), 41–56; ‘Grivoiserie et science chez Béroalde de Verville: autour de l’absténie de Confolens’, in *Rire à la Renaissance: colloque international de Lille, Université Charles-de-Gaulle-Lille III, 6–8 novembre 2003*, ed. by Marie Madeleine Fontaine (Geneva: Droz, 2010), pp. 301–24; ‘Béroalde de Verville—de l’alchimie au libertinage (érudit?)’, in *La Verve, la plume et l’échoppe: études renaissantes à la mémoire de Michel Simonin*, ed. by Chiara Lastraioli and Toshinori Uetani (Turnhout: Brepols, forthcoming).

Peletier du Mans,⁶ Du Bartas,⁷ Claude Duret,⁸ Isaac Habert,⁹ or Nicolas Abraham de la Framboisière.¹⁰ He has shed light on the wide range of connected disciplines that some of these figures practised, including alchemy, medicine, and astronomy.¹¹ He has consistently demonstrated the fundamental role played in the process by literary genres, notably scientific poetry, developing in new directions the field inaugurated by Albert-Marie Schmidt.¹² On the other hand, as for Aristotle, so for Bamforth: the erudite culture of wonder provides a link to the other, apparently distinct, but in fact connected area in which Stephen has done groundbreaking research: that of textual representations of mythology-laden courtly festivals, in particular the 1518 Bastille ceremony marking the betrothal of Princess Mary of England to the Dauphin of France and the more famous 1520 Field of the Cloth of Gold at which François I^{er} met Henry VIII in the English-controlled Pale of Calais.¹³ Related to this work have been other studies of the connection between literary culture and politics in the reign of François I^{er}.¹⁴

Stephen's work is marked by a distinctive combination of qualities: a balance of passionate empathy and critical detachment when seeking to understand what are for us some of the stranger pathways taken by Renaissance literature, thought, and culture; remarkable erudition; an enviable ability to master technical and scientific disciplines; formidable

⁶ Stephen Bamforth, 'Peletier du Mans and "scientific eloquence"', *Renaissance Studies*, 3.2 (1989), 202–11; Jacques Peletier du Mans, *Oeuvres complètes*, vol. X: *Euvres poetiques intitulez louanges avec quelques autres escrits*, ed. by Sophie Arnaud, Stephen Bamforth, and Jan Miernowski (Paris: Champion, 2005).

⁷ Stephen Bamforth, 'Du Bartas et le merveilleux', in *'La Sepmaine' de Du Bartas: ses lecteurs et la science de son temps* (Geneva: Droz, 2015), pp. 29–44.

⁸ Stephen Bamforth, 'Le Thème de Babel dans l'oeuvre de Claude Duret', in *Babel à la Renaissance: actes du XI^e colloque international de la Société Française d'Étude du XVI^e siècle*, ed. by James Dauphiné and Myriam Jacquemier (Toulon: Mars, 1997), pp. 227–40.

⁹ Stephen Bamforth, 'Un poète scientifique méconnu: Isaac Habert (1560–vers 1625) et son *Poème du soleil*', *Nouvelle Revue du XVI^e siècle*, 3 (1985), 65–89.

¹⁰ Stephen Bamforth, 'Médecine et philosophie dans l'oeuvre de Nicolas Abraham de la Framboisière', in *Esculape et Dionysos: Mélanges en l'honneur de Jean Céard*, ed. by Jean Dupèbe, Franco Giacone, Emmanuel Naya, and Anne-Pascale Pouey-Mounou (Geneva: Droz, 2008), pp. 177–202; Stephen Bamforth, 'La Carrière de Nicolas Abraham de la Framboisière, conseiller et médecin du roi (1560–1636)', in *Écoles et université à Reims IX^e–XVIII^e siècles* (Reims: Presses de l'Université de Reims, 2010), pp. 65–80; Stephen Bamforth, 'Nicolas Abraham de la Framboisière, conseiller et médecin du roi: note biographique sur un médecin méconnu', in *Mélanges à l'honneur de Monique Gosselin*, ed. by Yves Baudelle (Lille: Presses Universitaires de Lille, forthcoming).

¹¹ See also Stephen Bamforth, 'Paracelsisme et médecine chimique à la cour de Louis XIII', in *Paracelsus und seine Internationale Rezeption in der Frühen Neuzeit: Beiträge zur Geschichte des Paracelsismus*, ed. Ilana Zinguer and Heinz Schott (Leiden: Brill, 1998), pp. 222–37; Jean Dupèbe and Stephen Bamforth, 'Médecins', in Stephen Bamforth et al., *Prosateurs latins en France au XVI^e siècle* (Paris: Presses de l'Université de Paris Sorbonne, 1987), pp. 571–65.

¹² Albert-Marie Schmidt, *La Poésie scientifique en France au seizième siècle* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1938).

¹³ Stephen Bamforth, 'Architecture and Sculpture at the Field of the Cloth of Gold (1520) and the Bastille Festival (1518)', in *Secular Sculpture 1300–1550*, ed. by Phillip Lindley and Thomas Frangenberg (Stamford: Shaun Tyas, 2000), pp. 219–36; Stephen Bamforth and Jean Dupèbe, 'Un poème de Sylvius sur l'entrevue du Camp du Drap d'Or', *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance*, 52 (1990), 635–42; Jean Dupèbe and Stephen Bamforth, 'The *Silva* of Bernardino Rincio (1518)', *Renaissance Studies*, 8 (1995), 256–315; Jacobus Sylvius (Jacques Dubois), *Francisci Francorum regis et Henrici Anglorum colloquium* (Paris, Josse Badius, 1520), ed. and transl. by Stephen Bamforth and Jean Dupèbe (special issue of *Renaissance Studies*, 5.1–2 (1991), 1–237).

¹⁴ Stephen Bamforth, 'A Forgotten Humanist Tribute to François I^{er}: The *Geographica* of Paolo Pietrasanta', in *Humanism and Lettrés in the Age of François I^{er}*, ed. by Philip Ford and Gillian Jondorf (Cambridge: Cambridge French Colloquia, 1996), pp. 17–40; Stephen Bamforth, 'Clément Marot, François I^{er} et les muses', in *Clément Marot, 'Prince des poètes français', 1496–1996: actes du colloque international de Cahors en Quercy 21–25 mai 1996*, ed. by Gérard Defaux and Michel Simonin (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1997), pp. 225–35; Stephen Bamforth, 'Clément Marot et le projet de paix universelle de 1518: poésie et propagande', in *La Génération Marot: poètes français et néo-latins (1515–1550). Actes du colloque international de Baltimore, 5–7 décembre 1996*, ed. by Gérard Defaux (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1997), 113–29.

philological and scholarly-editing skills; the instincts of a scholarly sleuth that have led to major discoveries;¹⁵ and a collegial outlook that has led to fruitful collaborations such as those with Jean Céard and Jean Dupèbe (both contributors to this volume). Stephen's deeply interdisciplinary outlook has made him follow his objects of study into whatever field they lead him. It is in other words a holistic outlook; it pays as much attention to the body and to material culture as to the mind. Attention to the physical characterizes his interest not just in festivals but also in Montaigne, in dance, and in the festive materiality of drama.¹⁶ (The interest apparently overspilled into his directing, and performing in, several memorable productions of Departmental French plays at the University of Nottingham.)

The present volume begins with a group of three essays that focus on the textual and literary communication of wondrous and other knowledge, from the sixteenth to the mid-seventeenth century. First, Jean Céard examines multiple textual embeddings of three related plant-marvels—the mandrake, the Baara root, and ginseng. Boaistuau appears here, not in isolation, but as one of many compilers of horticultural and other wonders. Secondly, Marie Madeleine Fontaine focuses more squarely on Boaistuau to show how his interest in monsters and prodigies was just one dimension of a broader moral and pedagogical impulse reflected in his other works too, such as the *Histoire sur l'institution des princes chrestiens* (1556). In reality an adaptation of a work by Josse van Clichtove (*De regis officio opusculum*), the *Histoire* was however presented by Boaistuau as a translation of a work by one (non-existent) Chelidonium Tigrinus. Fontaine examines the modes of transmission of knowledge that led from Boaistuau's text to a manuscript work that an apothecary (Nicolas Houel) composed for Catherine de' Medici. Thirdly, Didier Kahn shows how the unprecedented fusion of alchemy and prose romance that originated in the mid-sixteenth century still flourished as late as the mid-seventeenth with Claude-Barthélemy Morisot's *Peruviana*, a remarkable allegorical narrative written in Latin, in which the political events at the French court in the preceding decades were recast as the stages of an alchemical operation.

Next come three essays that assess the textual transmission of knowledge in the context of *other* forms of transmission, such as oral, institutional, or familial. First, Jean Dupèbe shows how Nostradamus, later famous for his prophecies, acquired pharmaceutical knowledge not only from texts but from empirical sources (which supplied medicinal wonders such as whale-sperm) and from the extra-institutional teaching given by one physician in particular, the great humanist Julius Caesar Scaliger. Secondly, Neil Kenny asks what was transmitted to Bérolde de Verville by his scholar-father, both textually and extra-textually. As in the case of Nostradamus, this gamut of transmission runs from formal,

¹⁵ Especially Stephen's discoveries of (i) the illuminated manuscript version of the *Histoires prodigieuses* that Pierre Boaistuau presented to Queen Elizabeth of England, (ii) Sylvius's account of the Field of the Cloth of Gold.

¹⁶ See the following studies by Stephen Bamforth: 'Jacques Lassalle et sa mise en scène de *Dom Juan*', in *Molière mis en scène* (Tübingen: Gunter Narr, 1997, *Oeuvres et critiques*, 22), pp. 164–79; 'Rabelais et la fête', in *Rabelais—Dionysos, vin, carnaval, ivresse: actes d'un colloque de Montpellier, 26-28 mai 1994*, ed. by Michel Bideaux (Marseille: Jeanne Laffitte, 1997), pp. 81–95; 'Molière et Rabelais', in *Molière et la fête: actes du colloque international de Pézenas 7-8 juin 2001*, ed. by Jean Emelina (Pézenas: Ville de Pézenas, 2003), pp. 51–79; 'Aspects théâtraux du *Cymbalum mundi*', in *Le Cymbalum mundi: actes du colloque de Rome (3–6 novembre 2000)* (Geneva: Droz, 2003), pp. 363–76; 'Dancing Your Way out of a Tight Corner: Reflections on Dance in Sixteenth-Century France', in *Sur quel pied danser? Danse et littérature: actes du colloque organisé par Hélène Stafford, Michael Freeman et Edward Nye en avril 2003 à Lincoln College, Oxford*, ed. by Edward Nye (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2005), pp. 31–49; 'Montaigne and Catullus', *Montaigne Studies*, 17.1–2 (2005), 35–52; 'Melons and Wine: Montaigne and joie de vivre in Renaissance France', in *Joie de vivre in French Literature and Culture: Essays in Honour of Michael Freeman* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2009), pp. 99–128. Also on theatre, see Stephen Bamforth (ed.), *Molière*, special issue of *Nottingham French Studies*, 33.1 (1994), including an essay by Bamforth, 'Molière and Propaganda', pp. 20–27; Stephen Bamforth, 'A Second Missing Scene in Racine's *Phèdre*', *Seventeenth-Century French Studies*, 16 (1994), 161–66.

systematic kinds of knowledge to the hands-on ones more associated with the world of practitioners such as surgeons and alchemists. This group of essays, like the first, then ends later in the seventeenth century: Richard Maber assesses the interpersonal and institutional dynamics that underpinned the short-lived Académie de physique of Caen, founded in 1662, which he sees as a symptom of a shift in some quarters away from a multidisciplinary approach to knowledge towards a focus on the natural world.

Finally, the volume explores, through two essays, how the nexus of text, knowledge, and wonder permeated other areas of culture: festival and poetry. First, Richard Cooper shows how textual sources (especially diplomatic reports) transmitted knowledge of—and can now be used to reconstruct—the extraordinary Carnival festivities that took place at the newly enlarged Château of Cognac in 1520, replete with the iconography of ancient myth. As well as affirming the Angoulême branch of the Valois in the very château where François I^{er} had been born, the festivities represented another phase in Anglo-French relations that was sandwiched chronologically between the two festivals studied by Bamforth. The volume then ends by opening up a further avenue for exploring the nexus of text, knowledge, and wonder, one that leads from the poet Maurice Scève in the sixteenth century to Stéphane Mallarmé in the nineteenth. James Helgeson analyses deictics (words like ‘here’, ‘this’, ‘I’) in poetry. While arguing that poetic deixis is on a continuum with everyday language, he presents it as deliberately troubling. The methodological hinterland of this essay perhaps includes both the longstanding tradition of aesthetic wonder and also the twentieth-century one of literature-as-defamiliarizing (Roman Jakobson), although neither is explicitly evoked by Helgeson, who prefers a continuum between the literary and the non-literary, drawing on the more recent framework of cognitive pragmatics. The essay points to further ways, beyond the language of wonder, of thinking about literature’s capacity to both enrich and unsettle our knowledge—in this case our knowledge of the referential worlds to which poems seem to point.

The range of contributors reflects the deep admiration and affection for Stephen that exists on both sides of the Channel. The four French contributors (Jean Céard, Jean Dupèbe, Marie Madeleine Fontaine, and Didier Kahn)—pioneers of the study of the relation of literature to the body, marvels, medicine, alchemy, and much else—have all collaborated with Stephen in one way or another. The UK-based contributors include two Richards (Cooper and Maber) whose friendship with Stephen goes back decades, and one (Maber) who was the University of Durham internal examiner of Stephen’s 1979 doctoral thesis, supervised by the late Dudley Wilson. Another, James Helgeson, represents the Nottingham team—Stephen’s colleagues in the Department of French and Francophone Studies, which he joined in 1973 and where he is Emeritus Professor. I myself first encountered Stephen in the 1980s through our shared interest in Béroalde de Verville.

For help in bringing this volume to fruition, warm thanks are due to Gillian Pink, Katherine Shingler, and James Helgeson. The volume is offered both in homage to Stephen and with gratitude for his being an inspiring, generous, and genial researcher, colleague, and friend.