

“The pyrrhonians' main forces” (La 131) and their appropriation by Huet

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ABSTRACT

This paper has two sections. In the first one I examine Pascal's appropriation in La 131 of the Cartesian argument of the deceiver God. Pascal develops a skeptical reading of the argument in order to use it as a premise for his apologetic argument of true religion. In the second section I examine Huet's appropriation of this same Cartesian argument in his *Philosophical Treatise on the Weakness of Human Understanding*. Based on this work of Huet's and on his margin notes on Pascal's *Thoughts*, I show that his skeptical reading of the argument is derived from Pascal's, although Huet's and Pascal's goals are distinct: while the latter intends to provide an argument for the Fall of Man, the former intends to show the weakness of reason unassisted by supernatural faith.

Keywords: Deceiver God; Skepticism; Descartes; Pascal; Huet

La 131 is a long fragment from Pascal's *Thoughts* among others. It is included in the 'contraries' folio, and develops true religion argument (La 149) or proof by doctrine (La 402), whose objective is to point out the rational value of the Christian doctrine, so that intellectual resistance is broken¹, and thus have the reader better prepared for the written proofs.² The argument aims at showing that only the Christian supernatural revelation, fundamentally the doctrine of the fall, is capable of explaining and solving the epistemological

1 “Men despise religion; they hate it and fear it is true. To remedy this, we must begin by showing that religion is not contrary to reason; that it is venerable, to inspire respect for it. (...) Venerable, because it has perfect knowledge of man.” (La 12)

2 See the summary of the Port-Royal lecture in Étienne Périer's preface, Port-Royal edition, 1670.

and moral human contraries, which are only partially pointed out by pagan philosophies deprived of revelation.

Pascal makes use of the philosophies and philosophers' distinction carried out by the pyrrhonian skeptics: dogmatists (who claim to know the truth), new academics (who deny that truth may be known) and the skeptics themselves or pyrrhonians (who suspend judgement).³ In order to establish the contraries of pagan philosophies, Pascal reduces Sextus' three groups to two, associating academics and pyrrhonians, opposing them to dogmatists.⁴ Each group describes a true aspect of the epistemic condition of man, but disregards the opposite aspect that is equally true. The pyrrhonians show well that it is impossible for reason to lay a foundation for knowledge, but they are mistaken when they think we can suspend judgement on everything. Dogmatists show well that we can not universally suspend judgement, that some beliefs impose themselves, but they are mistaken when assume that these beliefs can be justified. The doctrine of the fall, with its implicit double nature of man, explains and reconciles this contrary: knowledge was possible in the state of innocence, but not any more in the state of the fall, though some pre-lapsarian traces are left, which, in the final analysis, explain the impossibility of *epochè*. Pagan philosophy destroys itself in the insoluble opposition, on the grounds of sheer reason, between dogmatism and “pyrrhonism” (in Pascal's sense), whose insufficiency gives intellectual credibility to Christian doctrine.

This argument places Pascal in the long tradition of using ancient skepticism apologetically. Such use begins with Saint Augustine and the founding fathers, but it enlarges itself considerably from the Renaissance on, when, due to the availability of Sextus Empiricus' texts, pyrrhonism with its rich source of anti-dogmatic arguments, is used together with the arguments from academic skepticism, which were the only ones known by Christianity until XVIth century.⁵ However, the use Pascal made of skepticism is more complex than both the Renaissance use and the one from the beginning of XVIIth century, which may be seen as fideist.⁶ The fideist uses skepticism as a kind of negative *preambulo fidei*, removing false dogmatic doctrines which hinder the only legitimate access to faith, a necessarily non-rational one, that may or may not be supernatural. In Pascal, skepticism is not the philosophical starting point - in a sense, it is anti-philosophical – that prepares the acceptance of the supernatural truth of the Christian revelation. Pascal's way is the

3 Sextus Empiricus opens his *Outlines of Pyrrhonism* with this tripartite distinction. See SEXTUS EMPIRICUS, *Outlines of Pyrrhonism*, PH I.1-3.

4 The Lafuma edition, which has in italics the parts crossed out by Pascal, indicates this: “*One can not be pyrrhonic nor academic (...)*”; “*Nature confutes the sceptics (and the academics)*”; “*You cannot avoid one (three) of these sects (...)*.”

5 The few medieval manuscripts of Sextus' works did not have any noticeable impact in Scholastic philosophy or theology.

6 The term is anachronic but characterizes well the way these philosophers use skepticism. What I characterize as “fideist” is that connection between reason and faith, in which the first has the sole negative role of removing beliefs. As to the problem of the personal position of the philosopher, for or against religion, I use the term in a neutral sense.

opposite. A certain limited skepticism (epistemological, but not moral or psychological) is the result of the truth of Christian revelation. Therefore, it does not mean to take the interlocutor to skepticism to make his accepting of the Christian revelation easier, but to show the skeptic that both what is right and what is wrong in his position or defective are explained by the acceptance of the Christian revelation.

Therefore, a certain skepticism - as well as a certain dogmatism - is approved of by Christianity. On one hand, if the Pascalian appropriation of skepticism is more critical than the fideists', insofar as, contrary to these, skepticism is seen as an unsatisfactory and inconsistent position by Pascal;⁷ on the other, Pascal brings skepticism to the interior of Christianity. For example, in the Pascalian use of the tripartite division of philosophy by Sextus, Christianity takes the place of Pyrrhonism, which in Sextus was the genuinely non-dogmatic alternative to the opposition of dogmatism *versus* new academy (understood by Sextus as a negative dogmatism). In La 109, Pascal opposes dogmatists, who claim the total clarity of natural light, and the academics, who support total obscurity.⁸ This opposition, says Pascal, “[glorifies] the sceptical crown, which consists in this doubtful ambiguity and in a certain doubtful dimness from which our doubts cannot take away all the clearness, nor our own natural lights chase away all the darkness”. This mixture of clarity and obscurity is exactly the condition of truth, specially for the decayed man, the epistemic statute of the Christologic truth and the written truth.⁹

The higher complexity in the usage of skepticism by Pascal has two fundamental causes. The first one is its theological Augustinism, his conception of corrupted nature, which made him think skepticism as a symptom of this corruption. This theologically rooted anti-humanistic skepticism is absent in the most important philosophers and theologians who used ancient skepticism for apologetic ends.¹⁰ I have explored this tendency in another article.¹¹ Here I want to work on some aspects of the second cause: the influence of Descartes.

7 Contrarily to the fideist skeptics, skepticism is never adopted in Pascal, inasmuch as it can never be effectively adopted, for nature restrains the suspension of judgment.

8 Pascal's view on academic skepticism would until recently be seen as mistaken, considering the hegemony of the dialectic interpretation of this ancient school among scholars. Today, however, the interpretation that the academics had philosophical positions, though not dogmatic, has become stronger. The main position would be the assertion of the obscurity of things, agreeing with Pascal's reading. The scholar who defends this interpretation is A. M. Ioppolo, in *Opinione e Scienza. Il dibattito tra Stoici e Accademici nel III e nel II secolo a.c.* See also Roberto Bolzani Filho's thesis, *Acadêmicos versus Pirrônicos*. The crucial passage which corroborates this interpretation is in Cicero's *Academics* (*Academics*, Ac, . 34.)

9 Among other fragments we can cite La 236: “There is sufficient clearness to enlighten the elect, and sufficient obscurity to humble them. There is sufficient obscurity to blind the reprobate, and sufficient clearness to condemn them and make them inexcusable.”

10 For a different view on Montaigne's position, see: LIMBRICK. *Métamorphose d'un philosophe en théologien*, p. 229-246. In the case of Charron, see: Belin, *L'Oeuvre de Pierre Charron 1541-1603*. Littérature et théologie de Montaigne à Port-Royal.

11 See: MAIA NETO. *The Christianization of Pyrrhonism: Skepticism and Faith in Pascal, Kierkegaard and Shestov*.

The first point to be highlighted is that the very classification of pagan philosophies may have started not with Sextus, but with Descartes.¹² In the Preface Letter to the French translation of the *Principles of Philosophy*, Descartes draws a synthesis of the history of philosophy, opposing dogmatists (Aristotle and his peripatetic disciples) and skeptics. Descartes includes among these last ones: Plato, interpreted by Descartes as partially skeptic¹³, the new academic (Arcesilaus and disciples) and the pyrrhonians. We have found in Descartes this same synthesis of the philosophical positions of the history of philosophy in two contrary poles, one skeptical and the other dogmatic. Moreover, Descartes presents his philosophy as the one that reconciles these two contrary philosophies, preserving and correcting whatever is true in each one of them, and refusing whatever is false.¹⁴

We shall now go back to argument La 131 to point out other aspects of the Cartesian presence. Pascal's idea is that every philosophy could be reduced either to dogmatism or to “pyrrhonism”, whose positions are contrary to each other, both being equally internally inconsistent. Only thus can the argument give intellectual credibility to the Christian doctrine of the fall, which introduces man's two states responsible for whatever is true or false in each philosophy, and which are equally present and important.¹⁵ The problem is that Pascal develops the pyrrhonians' forces much more than the dogmatists', establishing a certain imbalance favourable to pyrrhonism. This situation led the Port-Royal publishers to introduce, in La 131, fragment 110, which criticizes the pyrrhonians explicitly. La 110 is introduced at the point of La 131 where Pascal says that, after giving details of the pyrrhonians' principal forces, the only dogmatists' strength is that the incapacity of reason to lay the foundations of some truths does not suppress our feeling that they are truths and, therefore, it can not lead to the suspension of judgement, but, on the contrary, it shows the impotence of skeptical reason. This support for the dogmatists would be justified by the publishers of Port-Royal, who point out the unfinished character of Pascal's works.¹⁶ However, this character does not explain the inferior elaboration of the “dogmatists' main force”. Firstly, because, in the *Entretien avec Sacy* – a supposedly complete text - , where the argument of true religion is the backbone of the readings of Montaigne and

12 If Pascal's source is Sextus, it is certainly not direct, for there is no evidence that he had read the works of Sextus, but only through Montaigne's, who reports the Sextus' tripartite division of philosophy in the “Apology”, in *Essays*, (v.II, 12, p. 254.)

13 Plato was interpreted as skeptic or partially skeptic by the new academics and other philosophers until at least the end of XVIIth century. This is the case of Simon Foucher. See: MAIA NETO. Fouchers Academic Cartesianism, p. 71-95.

14 Descartes. *Oeuvres*, AT IXB, 5-8. La 131 follows the argument displayed to Sacy in the *Entretien*. Vincent Carraud states that “Descartes s'avance masqué [dans *l'Entretien*]. Il y est clandestinement présent non seulement pour radicaliser le doute insuffisant de Montaigne, mais encore au point inouï de contaminer l'interprétation théologique de la philosophie par Pascal (et peut-être sa Christologie). Au moment où il avouait dériver insensiblement en théologie, Pascal, en réalité, ne faisait que de la philosophie”. (*Pascal et la Philosophie*, p. 136).

15 Although corruption is more visible in Pascal's *Thoughts* than in the reminiscences of the pre-lapsarian state, Pascal asserts the same weight of both states in several fragments besides La 131, and also in *Writings on Grace*.

16 This is the justification alleged, in the preface, by the publishers of Port-Royal, so that they could intervene in Pascal's text.

Epitetus presented by Pascal – which represent respectively the “pyrrhonian” and the “dogmatic” -, pyrrhonian Montaigne's forces are much more developed than those of dogmatic Epitetus. Secondly, even with the reinforcement of La 110 the opposition between “pyrrhonians” and dogmatists is not balanced, since the argument of La 110 against pyrrhonians applies itself equally to dogmatists, for the business in hand is to attack the principle of intellectual integrity supposedly adopted by both sides. Although Pascal aims specifically at the “pyrrhonians”, the dogmatists are reached likewise.¹⁷ If reason is incapable of laying the foundations of truth, though the latter imposes itself, the pyrrhonian prevails partially, and the dogmatic fails totally, for an assent that is not determined by reason is as contrary to the dogmatic philosopher's attitude as to the skeptic's. Finally, even when Pascal opposes dogmatism and “pyrrhonism”, alleging that one cannot stay in either philosophy, nor avoid one or another, again “pyrrhonism” prevails over dogmatism, insofar as an eventual neutrality would be, according to Pascal, who in this point follows Montaigne, a typical pyrrhonian position.¹⁸

We shall now quickly consider the two main pyrrhonian forces: the argument of the uncertainty of our origin and the dream argument. Both scenarios put in doubt the feeling of truth of the principles. As Pascal's publishers and interpreters have already indicated, it is a matter of Cartesian skeptical arguments and not exactly of pyrrhonian ones, nor Montaignian ones. The argument of the uncertainty of origin is absent in ancient and modern skeptics,¹⁹ and the dream argument has in them a distinct structure, in which the possibility that all our sensible experience is only oniric.²⁰ is not a question any more. What the arguments put in doubt is the reality of external world, the way it is understood by the new science, especially Cartesian

17 I argue in “Pascal's Christian *versus* Charron's Skeptical Wisdom” (unpublished) that this fragment is an attack to the Charronian skeptical-academic wisdom.

18 “They expose their propositions only to fight those they think we believe in. If we adopt theirs, they will just as easily adopt the opposite to defend them; everything is the same for them” (MONTAIGNE. *Essays* II, 12, p. 255-256).

19 Edwin Curley (in *Descartes against the Skeptics*, p. 68-69) points out a possible precedent in the academic argument quoted by Cicero in the *Academics* (Ac II. 49), but it concerns, however, an example of a *sorte* involving the much less radical deity than the hypothesis of a deceiver god. In Montaigne's *ARS*, Pascal's main source, there is nothing like the hypothesis of the evil demon or deceiver god. If there is a Descartes' source for this argument, it is, without any doubt, scholastic, elaborated in the context of the discussions on God's *potentia absoluta*. See: GREGORY. *Dieu trompeur et malin génie*, p. 293-347.

20 Among the pyrrhonians the idea is to oppose experiences had while awake to experiences had while dreaming, in order to show that ones do not prevail over the others. The possibility of distinguishing them is thus presumed in the argument (See PH I. 104). Among the Academics, the idea is to show the fallibility of cognitive impression and not doubt the possibility of distinguishing dream from wakefulness, as Cicero explains it in Ac II. 88. Curley (*Descartes against the Skeptics*, p. 69) indicates a similarity with the argument in Montaigne. In the latter, the argument, in fact, comes close to Descartes', but it is less about the impossibility of distinguishing than showing that the similarity between the experiments in dream and wakefulness introduces mistrust over the epistemic character of the second. The argument does not appear in Charron.

physics, for the principles that are put in doubt are the the ones from Descartes' natural philosophy: space, time, movement, number.²¹ These principles are doubted both in the First Meditation and La 131, with the dream argument and the deceiver god argument. The dream argument in the First Meditation has its peak in the “most simple and universal things” (rather than colours and sensitive forms): extension and its proprieties (quantity, magnitude, number, place and time), whose existence outside the mind is doubted by the dream argument. Pascal remarks that the very same space-time experiments of wakefulness happen in dream, being impossible to distinguish them. The argument of the uncertainty of our origin puts our feeling of the truth of the principles of nature under suspicion, resuming the three scenarios mentioned by Descartes: the ones of the good God, the deceiver God and atheism.²² And, again, as does Descartes, it is the argument of the uncertainty of our origin that Pascal takes as the principal force of the pyrrhonians, opposing them to the “only dogmatists' ” force indicated above.

Pascal uses a “pyrrhonism” that is not pyrrhonian but Cartesian, pursuing ends that are irrelevant to pyrrhonism, and so does Descartes. One could ask why Pascal calls such arguments pyrrhonian. Firstly, there is no evidence that Pascal had read the old skeptics' texts. Montaigne, whom he considers “a perfect pyrrhonian” in the *Entretien*, does not use these arguments as indicated. Pascal is not interested in presenting historical positions, but philosophical reconstructions, thus also following Descartes at this point. As a matter of fact, Descartes does not distinguish his pyrrhonian doubt in the texts Pascal could read. In the third part of the *Discourse on the Method*, Descartes differentiates his doubt from the skeptics' only in what concerns its purpose (AT VI 29). In his *Replies to the Second Objections*, Descartes says he had to retrieve, for his own purposes, the arguments of skeptics and academics (AT VII 130).²³ In the Replies to the Third Objections he says that he used the skeptical arguments regardless of any originality (AT VII 171-172), as if his arguments had the same nature as the ancient skeptics' (AT VIII-2 367). Finally, in the *Notae in Programa Quoddam*, Descartes refers to the ancient skeptics' “similar doubts”(AT VIII-2 367). Only in the *Interview with Burman*, a text published a long time after Pascal's death, does he say that he was not happy, in his doubt, with the skeptics' usual objections (AT V 147).

In most of these allusions to ancient skeptics, Descartes makes clear the instrumental use of the skeptical doubt he carries out. This instrumental use has basically two objectives: to prepare the distinction between soul and body, and to allow a total overcoming of the doubt, laying the foundations of a new philosophy on undoubted bases. The instrumental use of the skeptical doubt by Pascal has other purposes. The exposition of

21 The list of the principles aimed at by the skeptical arguments is given in La 110.

22 The atheist hypothesis in Descartes includes three alternatives: destiny, chance and a necessary causal chain. Pascal only mentions chance (AT VII 21).

23 Descartes distinguishes the two schools from ancient skepticism, but it is implicit that by “skepticals” he understands the pyrrhonians, which are equivalent names according to Sextus Empiricus (PH I.7) and Diogenes Laertius (*Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers*, IX.69).

the main forces of the pyrrhonians is meant not to establish a distinction between mind and body, or even less to lay a metaphysical foundation for knowledge, but to build a philosophical impasse that would show the limitations of natural light and the need for turning to the *Bible*. Thus, while in Descartes these stronger skeptical arguments (stronger than the ancient ones) serve to refuse skepticism itself, in La 131 skepticism remains epistemologically strengthened in the field of natural philosophy. Pascal returns Descartes' refutation of the dream argument in the *Sixth Meditation*, by saying that the memory's inability to connect dreams among themselves and these with the rest of our experience, would be a trustworthy criterion for the distinction, arguing for the possibility of the dreams agreeing among themselves, and of one dreaming in company.²⁴ Finally, as for the argument of the uncertainty of origin, while Descartes believes that it is possible to remove this doubt with the proofs of the existence of God, Pascal argues that it is only possible to remove it by appealing to faith and revelation. In Pascal, contrarily to Descartes, the skeptic can not be defeated in a merely epistemological field. He is defeated in the psychological and moral field, insofar as it is not possible to keep the suspension of judgement.

Although it was Pascal's position towards skepticism that prevailed in subsequent philosophy and not Descartes', from Hume to Russell, the Cartesian use of skepticism is historically more correct than the Pascalian. Against Popkin's reading, Descartes does not seem especially worried about refuting ancient skeptics.²⁵ An eventual refutation of skepticism would be a supplementary gain, derived from the success of his philosophical project. Doubt aims fundamentally at establishing the division mind / body, questioning sensible / corporeal things, and establishing the reality of intelligible things. Although the mind / body division is totally foreign to ancient skepticism, as well as to ancient philosophy in general, doubting sensible things is fully coherent with ancient skepticism. The establishing of intelligible things is certainly not coherent with pyrrhonism, but it could be with the new academy if credit were given to a supposedly esoteric Platonism cited by some sources.²⁶ Although this hypothesis of a supposed secret Platonism in the new academy is denied by most contemporary interpreters, it is taken seriously by Augustine and Simon Foucher at the end of XVIIth century.²⁷

As for the Pascalian use of skepticism, once Pascal's project goal is to refute or show the insufficiency of

²⁴ But one must notice that Descartes' answer is situated in the moral level, not in the metaphysical one, which was discarded with the non deceiver God argument.

²⁵ See POPKIN. *História do Ceticismo de Erasmo a Spinoza*, capítulo IX: "Descartes: Conquistador do Ceticismo". The opposite interpretation is supported by Thomas Lennon, who presented it in a course given at the Philosophy Department at UFMG, in 2002. Lennon's arguments will be presented to be in a book on Descartes, Huet and skepticism still to be published.

²⁶ SEXTUS EMPIRICUS, PH I. 234; and CICERO, Ac II. 60.

²⁷ That's how Foucher considers Descartes an academic, but up to a certain extent, namely, as long as he established purely intelligible truths, for according to Foucher Descartes falls into a dogmatism when he intends to have a sure knowledge of the material world. See MAIA NETO. Foucher's Academic Cartesianism, p. 71-95.

dogmatists and skeptics' positions, he should restrict himself to the skeptics' position, be it the ancient ones, or modern ones (Montaigne). However, Pascal only evokes “the main forces of the pyrrhonians”, that is, the arguments of Descartes' hyperbolic or metaphysical doubt, “not considering”, as he states in a crossed out part of the *Thoughts* manuscripts, “the less important [forces], such as the speeches against the impressions of habit, of education and of different countries' customs, and such things (...) that are brought down by pyrrhonians' lightest blow”. Thus, Pascal leaves aside the arguments of ancient skeptics (Sextus, etc.), Renaissancists (Montaigne, Charron) and their contemporaries (La Mothe Le Vayer), though if someone “[looked at their books (...) they would quickly [be persuaded] and maybe too much”. The flesh and bone pyrrhonians' arguments, though certainly less strong than Descartes' hyperbolic arguments, are for this very reason more plausible and practicable. Pascal seems to favour the pyrrhonians when he keeps only their main forces, but in fact he removes the dream argument and the deceiver god argument from their proper metaphysical context in Descartes and points out the fact that they are not practicable as evidence of the skeptical position's infeasibility. The result is the divorce between skepticism and practical life, skepticism becoming unbeatable in the merely epistemological field, but, contrary to skeptical intention, totally ineffective from the moral point of view.²⁸

When Pascal restores the arguments of the Cartesian doubt on the external world and refuses the Cartesian solution for this doubt, he contributes decisively to the configuration of “skeptical Descartes, in spite of himself”. This is what we find in Richard Popkin's chapter in the *History of Skepticism*, where he examines the skeptical reading that is being carried on – or derived from – Descartes, even before his death.²⁹ This skeptical-epistemological appropriation of an instrumental skepticism, carried on by Descartes, is remarkable in Hume, for example, who was largely influenced – positively and reactively – by Pascal.³⁰ The second part of this article establishes another route through which modern skepticism or Cartesianism was built: through Pierre-Daniel Huet. Although Huet has been cast aside to the margins of philosophy, he was quite influential at the end of XVIIth century and beginning of XVIII.³¹ Next, I will show that Pascal contributes significantly to the elaboration of Huet's skeptical Descartes.

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Pierre-Daniel Huet was probably the greatest French scholar in XVIIth century. He was also an experimental scientist, having established the first academy of sciences outside Paris (in Caen). Although he was, in the beginning, influenced by Descartes, he became the most eminent and influential critic of this philosopher at

28 See MAIA NETO. Charron's *epoché* and Descartes' *cogito*: the skeptical base of Descartes' refutation of skepticism, p. 81-113.

29 POPKIN. *História do Ceticismo de Erasmo a Spinoza*, p. 301-330.

30 See MAIA NETO. Pascal and Hume: Pyrrhonism *versus* Nature, p. 41-49.

31 Hume, for example, cites Hues in the *Dialogues on Natural Religion*.

the end of XVIIth century, reacting against the Cartesians of his time and, in particular, against the contempt they, especially Malebranche, showed towards erudition.³² The book Huet wrote against Descartes, *Censura Philosophiae Cartesianae* (Paris, 1689), was part of a larger work, which was divided due to the opposition against Huet's skepticism in the first part of the book, which, for this reason, was only published posthumously with the title *Traité Philosophique de la Faiblesse de l'Esprit Humain* (Amsterdam, 1723).³³

In its first part, the *Traité Philosophique* presents thirteen proofs of the weakness of human understanding, that is, of the impossibility for “reason to know the truth with full and perfect certainty”, as is stated in the title. The ninth proof, which comprises chapter 10 of book I, is the “reason for doubting everything proposed by Descartes, namely, that we ignore if God has not created us with such nature that we are always mistaken” (p.85). We can say that this argument is for Huet, as well as for Pascal, one of “the main forces of pyrrhonians”. In fact, Huet says that among all the mentioned proofs, it is “mainly this reason for doubting everything proposed by Descartes” (p. 87) that eliminates dogmatists' last resource, which they use to avoid the pyrrhonians' dilemma between a return to the infinity and a vicious circle, namely, the allegation of the self-evidence of principles or notions.³⁴

The manuscript of one of the first versions of the *Traité* that I found in the National Library in Paris, still standing as the first part of the aborted great work, allows us to establish the changes made by Huet in the text, many of which derived from the criticism of close friends to whom he showed the manuscript. Chapter 9, with the Cartesian doubt of the deceiver God, was one of those which suffered the most changes, having Huet done the following addition at the point when he states that such doubt is “worthy of a philosopher”: “When I say that it is worthy of a Philosopher, I do not mean a Christian Philosopher, who knows that *God enlightens all men who come to this world* (Job I.9). But Descartes spoke then as a Philosopher, and not as a Christian” (p. 85-86; the italics indicate the addition made by Huet in the manuscript).

32 For me this thesis seems to be quite plausible, and it is defended by Thomas Lennon as an explanation of Huet's anti-Cartesianism. See LENNON. Huet, Malebranche and the birth of skepticism, p. 149-165.

33 There is a facsimile version of this work, published by Olms in 1974. The quotations that follow are from this edition. In one of my working missions in Paris and Caen, in the context of the CAPES-COFECUB project, I found out what must be one of the first handwritten versions of the *Traité Philosophique*, preceded by a *syllabus* that detailed all the books and chapters of this great piece of work, in which the *Traité* stood as the first book. This piece of work, whose title was *Quaestiones Nathanael*, began then with a dissertation on the weakness of human understanding (book I), incapable of reaching an undoubted certainty, continued in book II, exemplifying this weakness with the exam of the Cartesian philosophy, then discoursed on the relations between reason and faith (book III), arguing in favour of the need for the first to subject to the latter, and concluded with an apology to Christianity, through a comparative erudite exegesis between the Christian and pagan rites (book IV), as well as between Christian and pagan morals (book V); in both cases it showed how pagan rites and ethics are copies of, or have their origin in Christian doctrine. Only these last books were published under the title *Quaestiones Alnetanae* in Caen, in 1690.

34 Huet refers here and in other chapters to the pyrrhonians' five modes. See SEXTUR EMPIRICUS, PH I. 164-177; and DIOGENES LAERTES, *Vidas* IX. 88-89.

Huet's surprising defence of Descartes, though of a skeptical Descartes, can be clarified thanks to the recent publication of two letters from two of those friends to whom Huet showed the manuscript and asking for criticisms: the jesuit Louis Le Valois and Jean-Baptiste du Hamel.³⁵ Le Valois is a strict anti-Cartesian, who published, under the pseudonym of Louis de La Ville, the book *Sentiments de M. Descartes touchant l'essence et les proprietéz du corps, opposez a la doctrine de l'Eglise, et conforme aux erreurs de Calvin, sur le sujet de l'Eucharistie* (Paris, 1680). Le Valois is straightforward concerning Huet's use of the Cartesian argument of the deceiver God: "The ninth argument, which is Descartes', seems to me to be shocking. My spirit cannot tame it."³⁶ Du Hamel, an ex-member of the Oratory, also critical but much more receptive than Le Valois to Descartes and Cartesianism,³⁷ equally rejects the argument. His criticism was probably what made Huet add Descartes' defence mentioned above. According to Du Hamel,

What Descartes says can not agree with the true idea of God, who is truth itself, and who cannot have created us in this need to deceive us. You add that this is a doubt worthy of a philosopher. I do not know whether it is worthy of a philosopher but I do not believe that a Christian can have this doubt, [namely] if God has not created us with the purpose of always deceiving us, and even in the things which seem to us to be the most evident. He [Descartes] should at least solve his doubts and then I would not like to approve of this fiction by Descartes.³⁸

Du Hamel begins his commentary quoting an unknown doctor's manuscript, who would have shown that "this principle bu Mr. Descartes, that says that it is necessary to doubt everything once in a lifetime, is dangerous, for it diverts our spirit from the vision of God, to occupy it with the investigation of creatures" (p. 173), that is, the opposite of what Descartes claims in the *Meditations'* dedication to the Sorbonne School of Theology. Huet's position, according to Du Hamel is even more dangerous than Descartes', "for what Descartes says, that for the exam of truth it is good to doubt everything once in a lifetime, the Skeptics,

35 Du Hamel, Huet's longtime friend, was one of the interlocutors in the *Quaestiones Alnetanea*, which was conceived as a dialogue. In his Memories, Huet says the following about Du Hamel: "Je ne vis jamais de plus excellent homme, d'âme plus candide, ni, après qu'il voulut bien être de mes amis, d'ami plus fidèle. Ce qu'il pensait de moi, il l'a bien fait voir dans ses écrits, qui sont nombreux et ont été fort utiles aux Lettres" [I have never seen greater man, with a more candid soul, or, after he became a friend of mine, more faithful. His writings – which are many and very useful to Literature – show well what he thought of me] (*Mémoires*, p. 85).

36 Le Valois says that his spirit does not *apprivoise* the Cartesian argument. In a literal translation: he can not tame it. See the letter from Le Valois to Huet with a commentary on the two first books of the original work planned by Huet, published by Elena Rapetti, *Percorsi Anticartesiani nella Lettere a Pierre-Daniel Huet*, p. 74. Rapetti dates this letter from December 1685 to January 1686.

37 Du Hamel tried to reconcile ancient philosophy (Plato, Aristotle and Epicurus) with the new one, especially Descartes'. See his books *De consensu veteris et novae philosophiae* (Paris, 1663) and *Philosophiae vetus et nova ad usum scholae accomodata* (Paris, 1678).

38 Du Hamel comments, in detail, the first three books of the aborted work, in a letter dated 24th July, 1689. The mentioned criticism is in RAPETTI, *Percorsi Anticartesiani nella Lettere a Pierre-Daniel Huet*, p. 180.

whom you defend, would like us to do all the time” (p. 173).³⁹ Du Hamel still states that Huet's medicine against reason's arrogance is excessive – it would be enough to limit it in order to have it reconciled with faith – and counter-productive, for such attack to reason also reaches faith itself.

Certainly, these reactions of Le Valois and especially of Du Hamel weighed quite enough in Huet's decision of not publishing the *Traité philosophique* when he was still alive, and motivated several changes he made in this work, for example, the above mentioned addition in chapter 10, and a similar one in chapter 15 of book III, where he answers the objections raised against the skeptical arguments in book I. As for the objection against the deceiver God argument, Huet adds to the original manuscript: “it would be up to Descartes to answer this Objection (that the hypothesis is heretical), for he is the argument's Author, that I only reported, without approving of it, once our holy Religion teaches us something else” (p. 269). However, Huet not only reports but also approves of the argument. He says that Descartes could reply, among other things, that God has left us a way to avoid all mistakes, even having created us naturally incapable of truth: the power of suspending judgement (p. 269-272). Huet presents a skeptical Descartes, developing exactly the skeptical alternative only alluded to by Descartes in the beginning of the *Second Meditation*,⁴⁰ and justifying the philosophical legitimacy of the Cartesian doubt even by a Christian.⁴¹ Thus Huet looks nearly like a Cartesian before these critics, but a skeptical Cartesian, who rejects the metaphysical constructive part of Descartes', keeping only the doubt and other Cartesian doctrines liable to possible skeptical developments.⁴²

This skeptical Descartes does not derive only from Huet's reading of the Cartesian *corpus*. Although he cites Descartes' main texts on the hyperbolic doubt,⁴³ it is from Pascal – especially from La 131 (the fragment on pyrrhonians' main forces) and La 110, this one against pyrrhonians, which the publishers of Port-royal inserted in La 131 when trying to balance the pyrrhonians and dogmatists forces – that Huet takes his skeptical appropriation of the Cartesian doubt. One can prove that textual coincidences between chapter 10 of book I of the *Traité philosophique* and the fragments La 131 and 110 from the *Pensées* come from the Huet's annotated reading in a copy of the 1670 edition of Port-Royal, reading he did just before or when he

39 Being an Augustinian, when Du Hamel talks about skepticism, he has the new academics in mind. See *Counter Academics* and other works, in which Augustine refers to the academics. However, this contrast between the Descartes' temporary doubt and the skeptics' definitive one probably started with Descartes in the *Discourse on the Method*. (AT VI 29).

40 “All that admits the least doubt I will leave aside as if it were completely false and go on this way until I find something certain, or, if nothing else, until at least I recognize as certain that there is nothing certain” (AT VII 24).

41 Two arguments that according to Huet Descartes “would not fail to provide to the objectors” are the following: First an argument *ad hominem*: the objector needs to recognize that we are sometimes mistaken, and as this does not make God a deceiver for the objector, therefore nor does it do it if we are always mistaken. Second, God does not oblige us to believe that we are capable of truth, therefore he is not a deceiver.

42 In particular the second one of Descartes' proofs, which uses physiology and sensible ideas in Descartes. See book I, chapters 3 and 9.

43 Huet quotes the articles 5 and 13 from the first part of the *Principles* and the First and Second Meditations.

worked on the composition of what came to be *Traité*.⁴⁴

As indicated above, Huet connects the argument of the uncertainty of our origin with the five modes of ancient pyrrhonism. The Cartesian argument would be the final blow that would hit the last trench in which the dogmatic takes refuge, when pressed by the pyrrhonian to justify his doctrine, when he tries to avoid both an infinite return (second mode) and a vicious circle (fifth mode). The only alternative to this dilemma, according to the pyrrhonian, is the allegation on the part of the dogmatic that the doctrine being examined needs to be accepted without further justification, to which the pyrrhonian answers with the hypothesis mode (fourth mode), claiming his equal right of stating, without justifying, the opposite doctrine, and thus re-establishing the equipollence.⁴⁵ The hypothesis mode is dealt with in ancient pyrrhonism only as an authority problem, without the pyrrhonian presenting an answer to the dogmatists' pretension that propositions, not justified by other propositions, are self-justified or evident principles. Huet makes use of the argument of uncertainty of origin to answer this allegation, justifying the pyrrhonian mode of hypothesis. Although Pascal does not make this connection, at least explicitly, between the argument of the uncertainty of origin and the five modes of pyrrhonism, he does not fail to prepare the terrain for Huet's reinforcement of the hypothesis mode. Firstly, when he indicates that what the argument tries to doubt is exactly the truth of the principles.⁴⁶ Secondly, when he makes the evidence of these principles depend on a feeling of a nature whose veracity depends on the determination of its origin. Finally and mainly, for here we have the skeptical innovation that Pascal introduces in the Cartesian argument, the conviction that the determination of the origin can not be made, as Huet says in the *Traité*, "if Reason does not make use of faith's help" (p. 87). Reason's incapacity to solve this doubt and the need to use Christian revelation corroborates Huet's fundamental thesis on the weakening of human understanding, and the need of faith for one to obtain a more than moral certainty, a metaphysical certainty. The *Traité philosophique*, which establishes the *faiblesse de l'esprit humain*, complements itself, in Huet, with the establishing of the force of faith, as it is stated in the title of an autographic manuscript of the *Traité* discovered by Popkin in Holland.⁴⁷

44 Huet worked on the draft of the *Traité* between 1680, when he starts living in Aunai, and 1685, when he sends the text to Louis Le Valois. Huet's notes on his copy of the *Traité* were for the first time published by Raymond Francis, *Les Pensées de Pascal en France de 1841 à 1942* (Paris: A.G. Nizet, 1959), p. 381-388. Francis indicates a reading later than 1675, the date of an edition of the *Trois Veritez* by Charron cited by Huet. For a commented study of these notes, including an analysis of the margin traces underlined by Huet in Pascal's *Thoughts*, see: MAIA NETO; POPKIN. Bishop Pierre-Daniel Huet's Remarks on Pascal, p. 147-160. See also, by Antony McKenna, "Pascal et Huet" p. 135-142; and *De Pascal à Voltaire. Le rôle des Pensées de Pascal dans l'histoire des idées entre 1670 et 1734*, v. I, p. 316-327.

45 See PH I. 164 - 174.

46 These principles are the principles of Cartesian physics (time, space, movement, number). Although the argument in the First Meditation opens these simple natures to doubt, the central focus is the mathematical truths which are not mentioned in this context neither by Pascal nor Huet, confirming the hypothesis that it is Pascal and not Descartes Huet's immediate source.

47 Popkin found an autographic manuscript of the *Traité* in Holland, whose title is "Traité philosophique de la faiblesse de l'esprit humain et de la force de la foi". For some reason "the force of faith" is not in the title of the posthumous publishing of the work in Holland, which certainly contributed to the scandal it caused. I recall that Huet's original

In the copy of *Pensées* annotated by Huet, we can verify that he points out all the occasions in which Pascal states the impossibility of determining our origin - and, therefore, the certainty of the principles - "hors la foi" ("outside faith").⁴⁸ It is in this sense that Huet is particularly interested in two passages of the La 110 fragment, which the publishers incorporated into La 131. Where Pascal says that "Nous savons que nous ne revons point, quelque impuissance où nous soyons de le prouver par la raison", Huet italicises the continuity of the passage: "*Cette impuissance ne conclut autre chose que la faiblesse de notre raison*" [*This impotence concludes nothing but the weakness of our reason*], without italicising the antipyrhonian conclusion of the paragraph: "mais non pas l'incertitude de toutes nos connaissances, comme ils [the pyrrhonians] le prétendent" [but not the uncertainty of all our knowledge, as they [the pyrrhonians] intend] (p. 161, Huet's italics). A little further, in Pascal's text, Huet remarks: "*Cette impuissance ne peut donc servir qu'à humilier la raison qui voudrait juger de tout*" [*This impotence can only therefore serve to humiliate reason which would like to judge everything*] (Huet's emphasis), without marking Pascal's sentence continuation: "mais non pas à combattre notre certitude, comme s'il n'y avait que la raison capable de nous instruire" [but not to fight our certainty, as if only reason were able to instruct us] (p. 162). In both cases, Huet marks Pascal's sentences on the weakness of reason, but not the ones that claim, against the pyrrhonians, the certainty of truths. If Pascal already makes a more skeptical use of the Cartesian doubt than Descartes, Huet makes an even more skeptical use of this same doubt by Pascal, especially more skeptical than the more dogmatic use made by Pascal of the Port-Royal edition.⁴⁹

Huet rejects the only force Pascal grants the dogmatists, namely, that although reason is incapable of rationally justifying principles, one cannot erase the feeling of truth and, thus, suspend judgement in good faith. For Pascal this is evidence of the weakness of reason, and at this point Huet is - like ancient skeptics -

plan was, in the first book (which became the *Traité*), to show this weakness of reason, in the second (which became the *Censure*), to exemplify it in the critical exam of Cartesianism, in the third to show the condition in which faith and reason can connect themselves, that is, by the subjecting of the second to the first one, and finally, in the fourth and fifth, to show the erudite historical Christian apology compatible with this connection between reason and faith.

48 I put in italics the passages underlined by Huet: "Les principales raisons des Pyrrhoniens sont que nous n'avons aucune certitude de la vérité des principes, *hors la foi et la révélation* sinon ..." [The pyrrhonians' main reasons are that we do not have any certainty of the truth of the principles, *outside faith and revelation* if not that ...]. "Or ce sentiment naturel n'est pas une preuve convaincante de leur vérité; puisque *n'y ayant point de certitude hors la foi, si l'homme est créé par un Dieu bon, ou par un démon méchant* (...)" [But this natural feeling is not a convincing proof of the truth [of the principles], for *there not being any certainty outside faith if man was created by a good God or by an evil demon* (...)]. "De plus, que *personne n'a assurance, hors la foi, s'il veille ou s'il dort* (...)" [Furthermore, *nobody is assured, outside faith, awake or asleep* (...)] (p. 159) "Et cependant, depuis un si grand nombre d'années, jamais personne *sans la foi* nest arrivé (to good)" [Nevertheless, after so many years, nobody *without faith* has reached the good] (p. 164).

49 The Port-Royal publishers substituted Pascal's "du coeur" [of the heart] knowledge by "de sentiment et d'intelligence" [of feeling and intelligence], in this case, euphemistically: "par sentiment et par une intelligence vive et lumineuse" [by feeling and by a lively and bright intelligence]. Such additions derive, probably, from the same intention that motivated the insertion of La 110 in La 131, namely, to reinforce the dogmatists' only force according to Pascal, and then to try to establish a certain balance between pyrrhonians and dogmatists, balance required by the very argument of true religion.

more rationalist than Pascal. Reason is weak to establish principles (as in Pascal), but it is strong enough to open them to doubt. One of the only side notes in this section (besides reference notes) is another surprising defence of Descartes, but, as in the case of the previous case, of a skeptical Descartes, more skeptical than Pascal himself. At the highest point of the opposition between the dogmatic and the "pyrrhonian", in which Pascal shows the weakness of the latter, incapable of practising a radical doubt. "Douterait-il de tout? Douterait-il s'il veille, si on le pince, si on le brûle? Douterait-il s'il doute? *Douterait-il s'il est? On n'en saurait venir là: et je mets en fait qu'il n'y a jamais eu de Pyrronien effectif et parfait*" [Does he doubt everything? Does he doubt that he is awake if we prick or burn him? Does he doubt whether he doubts? *Does he doubt whether he exists? One can not come to such an extreme.* There has never been an effective and perfect pyrrhonian] (p. 163). Huet marks the sentence in italics and writes down on the margin: "M. Descartes, tout dogmatique qu'il est, a senseigné qu'il fallait commencer par ce dou(te) philosoph(ique)" [Descartes, though dogmatic, taught that it was necessary to begin by this philosophical doubt] (p. 163). What? Descartes is seen as an effective and perfect pyrrhonian by Huet? Yes, the Descartes of the First Meditation. It was through Descartes that Huet became acquainted with the doubt (he got to know ancient skeptics long after).⁵⁰

Huet continued the philosophical way of the doubt initiated by Descartes (but as we have seen, with very different intentions from Descartes'), but pitifully, according to Huet, it was already abandoned in the Second Meditation.⁵¹ It is evident that Huet overlooks, intentionally or not, that the Cartesian doubt is hyperbolic, that Descartes knows well that such radical doubt cannot be sustained in practice. Pascal makes use exactly of this hyperbolic character of the Cartesian doubt to argue that the "pyrrhonians" cannot support themselves at their strongest point. The Huetian reading of the skeptical Descartes overlooks the purpose of

50 Huet became acquainted with the Cartesian philosophy when he was a brilliant student at the Jesuit School of Caen, at the moment of the publication of the *Principles*, in 1647. In his intellectual biography, he reports the impact he underwent. "Descartes publia dans ce temps-là les principes de sa secte et comme durant les trois années précédents j'avais fort cultivé la philosophie et m'étais pénétré de ses préceptes et ses dogmes, j'eus un violent désir de connaître ceux de Descartes et je n'eus pas de cesse que je ne me procurasse son livre et ne le parcourusse en diligence. Il me serait difficile de dire quel enthousiasme excitèrent en moi, jeune encore et ne sachant rien des anciennes sectes philosophiques, la nouveauté de cette méthode et ces merveilles éblouissantes issues des principes les plus simples et les plus clairs" [Descartes published at this time the principles of his sect. Since the three previous years I had dedicated quite a lot to philosophy and had let its precepts and dogmas take hold of me, I had a strong desire of knowing those of Descartes. I did not rest until I found his book and went through it attentively. It would be difficult to tell how much excitement, being still young and knowing nothing of ancient philosophical sects, Descartes' new method caused me, and the wonderful things withdrawn from such clear and simple principles] (Huet. *Mémoires*, p. 16).

51 In this same chapter 10 of the book of the *Traité*, where Huet mentions the Cartesian doubt, he states that "lors qu'il [Descartes] se porte pour nouvel inventeur de la Vérité, ayant commence le Systême de sa Philosophie par le doute, & ayant propose les raisons de ce doute; néanmoins incontinent après comme sile chemin de la Vérité lui avoit été montré du Ciel, il cesse si absolument de douter, qu'il ne se met pas seulement en peine de resoudre les arguments qui l'avoient obligé de douter" [when Descartes sees himself as the new inventor of Truth, having begun the System of his Philosophy by doubt, and having proposed the reasons of this doubt, however, soon after, as if the way of Truth had been revealed to himself by Heaven, he stops so absolutely doubting that he did not even worry about solving the arguments that had made him doubt] (p.86). See also, *Censura Philosophia Cartesiana* (Paris, 1689), chapter 1, paragraph 14.

the Cartesian doubt - to establish the real distinction between soul and body and produce a sure foundation for knowledge -, just as the Cartesian reading of the skeptical doubt overlooks the very purposes of this doubt. Pascal's purpose is different from both Descartes' and Huet's. His purpose is to establish the insufficiency of both dogmatism (destroyed by the Cartesian doubt) and pyrrhonism (destroyed by the practical impossibility of this doubt) in demonstrating the weakness and insufficiency of all philosophy, on one hand (the skeptical one included), the force and cognitive excellence of Christian revelation, on the other. Huet's purpose is very different from Pascal's. It is to show the weakness of human reason concerning the establishment of truths, including the truth of revealed doctrine itself. This is a fundamental point of disagreement between Huet and Pascal and certainly one of the reasons why he refuses any dogmatists' force and any skeptics's weakness.

Two reasons keep Huet from accepting Pascal's argument of true religion. The first one concerns the different ways through which Huet and Pascal conceive the relation between reason and faith. Although Pascal considers, like Huet, that Christianity cannot be proved by reason, though both keep a critical distance from natural theology, Pascal is not a fideist like Huet. The Pascalian arguments cannot be reduced to historical proofs based on prophecies and miracles. Pascal also develops the argument of true religion or proof by doctrine, which, though not demonstrating the truth of Christianity, gives it a rational explanatory power. Huet denies this assignment of explanatory power to revelation, considering – against Pascal's much more sophisticated view of the relation between reason and faith - that such assignment implies the submission of faith to reason.⁵² In his notes on the margins of the *Pensées*, Huet refuses Pascal's claim that Christianity, with its fall doctrine, is the only religion capable of explaining and reconciling human contradictions.⁵³ Huet refuses the argument of true religion, for he does not see anything original in the original sin doctrine, in the sense that it cannot be found in other religions or philosophies, though he sees originality in it, in the sense that it is the historical origin of all the others. But then, in this case, the

52 Huet writes the following commentary in section V of his copy of the Port-Royal edition of *Thoughts*: "Soumission et usage de la raison": "Il suppose que cette soumission même dépend de la raison: et il me semble au contraire que, de soumettre la raison à la foi, est plutôt l'ouvrage de la foi que de la raison; parce que la raison et la foi sont également impérieuses, et que, l'une ne consentira jamais d'être soumise à l'autre, et si elle l'est ce sera involontairement par violence, et par contrainte. Or, l'un des deux devant vaincre l'autre, il appartient à la foi de soumettre la raison, et non pas à la raison de soumettre la foi." [Submission and usage of reason: He supposes that this submission depends on reason. It seems to me, on the contrary, that the submission of reason to faith concerns much more faith's work than reason's, for reason and faith are equally imperative. One will never accept to submit itself to the other. If one submits itself, it will be involuntarily, through violence. Now, as one of the two must defeat the other, it is up to faith to submit reason and not reason to submit faith]. Huet misses Pascal's more refined view of reason and faith, to whom there is total submission of a pretentious philosophical reason, but this submission agrees with another reason, an experimental, not metaphysical, scientific reason.

53 Huet writes down on the margin of La 617, in which, among other fragments, Pascal claims the uniqueness of Christianity through its doctrine of the original sin; the only one, therefore, to give the diagnosis and the prophylaxis of man's moral problem. "Cela n'est pas vrai. La Morale des Grecs et des Romains, qui était fondée sur leur religion et qui en faisait une partie, ne défend rien si sévèrement. Voyez Platon et Aristote, et Cicéron dans ses *Offices*, et principalement Marc Aurèle." [This is not true. The Greeks and Romans' moral, which was grounded on their religion and to which it belonged, prohibited nothing so severely].

apologetic task is to prove this diffusion of the Old Testament by other religions and philosophies through a historical and scholarly work, even an archaeological one, of excavation of the Jewish original content behind pagan appearances. For Huet, Christianity is true not because it is the only true religion, but, on the contrary, because it reproduces itself - though imperfectly - in all other religions.

The second reason for Huet's refusal of the Pascalian argument of the religion, is in the fact that he does not conceive of skepticism as the epistemological aspect of human depravity due to the original sin,⁵⁴ both because he would see, in this view, an unsuitable intrusion of reason into the scope of faith, and because he does not agree with Jansenist anti-humanism.⁵⁵ Huet is a humanist, both in the sense of the scholar work he developed throughout his life, and in the sense of philosophical anthropology. In fact, Huet could have said about Pascal what he says about La Rochefoucault. "This search for the corrupted man's weak spots, which [La Rochefoucauld] conducted so keenly, is not done with enough equity. He is sometimes unfair with the man he condemns, and whom he makes appear as more corrupted than he really is (...) taking innocent tendencies and actions as evil ones."⁵⁶ This very humanism (in both senses of the term), together with Huet's inability to see Pascal's scientific and philosophical genius (understandable for someone from XVIIth century), would explain Huet's general evaluation of the *Thoughts*: "Dans tout cet ouvrage il n'y a presque rien de nouveau que l'expression, le tour, et la disposition." [In all this work there is almost nothing new, except expression, form and disposition]. It is an unfair evaluation if we consider that La 131, on the Pyrrhonians' main forces, is a crucial source for the skeptical reading of the Cartesian doubt, beginning with Huet's own reading.

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⁵⁴ Here, I go against Jean-Louis Quantin's interpretation, "La Raison, la Certitude, la Foi: quelques remarques sur les préliminaires de l'acte de foi selon Huet", p. 83-97.

⁵⁵ Huet opposed to Jansenism, but without the fervor showed by some of his Jesuit friends.

⁵⁶ HUET. *Huetiana* (Amsterdam, 1722), p. 250.

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