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Representation of space(s): cosmography and world history in Guillaume Postel's *De universitate liber* (1552)

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ABSTRACT

The French scholar Guillaume Postel (1510–1581) is widely known as a self-proclaimed prophet and visionary Christian Kabbalist. In this article, I provide a new account of his concept of *restitutio*, arguing that it is driven by a fundamentally political and Christian agenda rather than a purely conciliatory religious vision. I focus on the first part of his earliest published cosmographical work, *De universitate liber* (1552), which has hitherto been largely overlooked. First, I provide the historical and cultural context in which Postel's work was conceived. I then analyze the text, showing how Postel's representation of different spaces has a central role in his vision of a unified cosmos. The article shows how symmetries and correspondences between celestial, terrestrial, geographical, and political spaces are instrumental to Postel's idea of universal *restitutio*. This idea is ultimately conceived as the establishment of a perfect form of universal sovereign rulership, explicitly and necessarily Christian, grounded in the structure of the heavens and inscribed in humanity's ancient history. Against this background, the paper also reevaluates a variety of disciplines and sources, including mystical and prophetic material, that Postel combined to support his political program.

KEYWORDS

Guillaume Postel; *restitutio*; cosmography; Japhet; universal sovereignty; pontifex

1. Introduction¹

During his turbulent life, which ended in Paris in 1581, the French scholar Guillaume Postel, born in Normandy in 1510, published more than fifty books and wrote a series of never-published manuscripts.² However vast his intellectual production might seem, all his works reiterate and revisit the same central concept without ambiguity or hesitation: that of *restitutio* (“restoration”). As has recently been pointed out, Postel's notion of *restitutio* is not a perfect synonym for the idea of Christian *reformatio* in the sense of any Church's institutional return to its alleged Christian authenticity. Nor is it identical to the notion of *instauratio*, understood as the reestablishment of ancient

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Christianity and premised on a linear conception of time. Nonetheless, both concepts, together with the call for the renewal of society, reverberate in Postel's idea.³

Over the years, scholarship has done much to explain Postel's concept of *restitutio*, historically situating it within the circulation of the fifteenth- and sixteenth-century prophetic Christian tradition. Postel's *restitutio* has been interpreted as a re-elaboration of an eschatological word shared by Reformation circles and heterodox millenarian movements emerging within the Roman Church, particularly among the mendicant religious order of the Franciscans.⁴ Scholars have also questioned the role of the Jewish Kabbalistic tradition, along with Postel's personal mystical experiences, in shaping his original idea of *restitutio*.⁵

Against this background, Postel's use of *restitutio* has generally been understood to refer to "humanity's return to its divine original nature"⁶ and "a necessary prelude to the establishment of the universal monarchy."⁷ The latter has been interpreted "as an *Ecclesia mundana*, a theocracy in which the supreme authority is God" and "the functions of king and priest are interdependent."⁸ Even where scholarship has acknowledged the role Postel attributed to the French king in "restituting" religious concord worldwide, the scholar has primarily been identified as a Christian mystic, a Kabbalist, a visionary philologist, or, as Olivier Millet puts it, "a theologian of the Renaissance in its most spiritual meaning."⁹

Yet, as early as 1957, William J. Bouwsma suggested that "Postel would not have considered himself primarily a speculative thinker."¹⁰ More recently, Yvonne Petry has maintained that, although "one important component of Postel's thought is the fusion of religious and political ideologies," in many cases "his religious views were subordinated to a definite political agenda."¹¹ Taking up this perspective, I argue that the *restitutio* Postel envisioned for humanity is the ultimate and supreme purpose of a *dominus mundi*, i.e. a single, universal sovereign. Even when Postel proclaims himself as the promised Angelic Pope, envisioning a fourth age in world history inaugurated by the coming of a new Eve and second Messiah (a woman called Mother Joanna, whom Postel recognizes as his mystical mother and the feminine principle of the cosmos), he indisputably expects the sovereign to ensure humanity's future return to its glorious and harmonious past.¹² Postel thus envisions the reestablishment of a universal yet Christian monarchy, a *res publica Christiana* that does not merely coincide with European Christendom but aims to bring all Christianized realms of the world under the authority of a single Christian sovereign. Such a universal kingdom, in Postel's view, corresponds to the divine order, as he explicitly states in the third book of his *De orbis terrae concordia* (1544):

Let us therefore grant that, throughout the whole world, if possible, there be a single prince. For it [i.e. the government of a single prince] closely resembles that of the one God, upon whom the order of nature depends and by whom it is eternally sustained, as has been preserved in Homer's saying: 'οὐκ ἀγαθὸν πολυκοιρανίη, εἷς κοίρανος ἔστω' [i.e. 'no good thing is a multitude of lords; let there be one lord'].¹³

Postel's cosmography, which, like much contemporary cosmographical writing, "converged around a growing apprehension of terrestrial, celestial, and representational space,"¹⁴ provides an especially productive vantage point from which to grasp his claims regarding the unitary cohesion of all the cosmos, from the heavens to the Earth, and thus the natural correspondence between the cosmic and the political order.

Perhaps surprisingly, Postel's activity as a cosmographer has received only fragmentary scholarly attention compared to his other works, despite some crucial studies on

the subject.¹⁵ Even less is known about Postel's first ever published cosmographical treatise, *De universitate liber in quo astronomiae doctrinaeque coelestis compendium terrae aptatum* (hereafter *De universitate liber*; 1552).¹⁶ I will first explore the historical and cultural context in which this work was written, offering essential insights into the political implications of Postel's approach to cosmography. In the subsequent four sections, I will analyze the first treatise of *De universitate liber* and trace how Postel, combining multiple disciplines and sources, shapes his image of cosmic unity and articulates continuities and, at times, symmetries between the celestial and terrestrial order and between the heavenly and political order.

In doing so, I show how the representation and making of different orders of space (celestial, terrestrial, geographical, and political space) are ultimately decisive for how Postel conceptualizes sovereignty, particularly the figure of a Christian and Gallic king positioned at the apex of the universe. Within this framework, Postel's *restitutio* eventually emerges as a project through which cosmic order is translated into political order. His idea of universal restoration is ultimately conceived as the perfect form of universal sovereign rulership. This rulership is explicitly and necessarily Christian, grounded in the structure of the heavens, and inscribed in humanity's ancient history, which is itself understood as an echo of divine election and celestial order.

2. Mathematics and politics: the historical context of *De universitate liber*

Published in 1552, Postel's *De universitate liber* consists of a twenty-page booklet on cosmography, whose short title is *De universitate seu de cosmographia compendium* (hereafter simply *De universitate*), three other short geographical treatises, and a series of seven woodblocks. The first two works following *De universitate* are the *Syriae descriptionis compendium*, published already in 1540 as *Syriae descriptio*, and *De Gallia, sive Gomeria*, which is shorter than the former. These two works lie at the intersection of chorography, biblical geography, and pseudo-history. A summary of Ptolemy's *Geography*, the *Universi orbis secundum Ptolemaeum expositio, et ad rationes coelestes applicatio*, closes the volume before the charts.

Recently, Isabelle Pantin has suggested that the intention behind the publication of *De universitate liber* was Postel's aspiration to be appointed as a lecturer in mathematics at the Collège royal, which is today's Collège de France.¹⁷ While Postel may have been seeking a royal lectureship, around 1552 he was likely already teaching mathematics and presumably cosmography at the Collège des Lombards, even though he did not hold an appointment as a royal lecturer.¹⁸ This idea is supported by a letter Postel wrote in 1563, after his return to Paris following five years of imprisonment in Rome, in which he informed his friend Andreas Maes (1514–1573) that he had “resumed the lessons I started in the past, and I have attracted more students in Paris, to listen to my study of cosmography ... than any other professors ... who envy and discredit me.”¹⁹ This “study of cosmography” might allude to his *De universitate liber*, which he republished in 1563, suggesting a certain continuity between his teaching and publishing activities in this field over the years.²⁰ It is even reasonable to assume that Postel had already taught mathematics during his years as a royal lecturer at the Collège royal, between approximately 1538 and 1541 or 1542, holding his lessons at the Collège des Lombards.²¹ This circumstance likely explains Postel's use of the appellation “royal

lecturer in mathematics” in his treatise on Syria, first published in 1540 and later included in his *De universitate liber*, further suggesting a link between his writings and teachings.²²

That Postel may have taught cosmography under the broader rubric of mathematics should not come as a surprise. In the sixteenth century, mathematics constituted a vast field with blurry epistemological boundaries. Cosmography, in particular, was commonly regarded as a part of the mathematical sciences, while remaining subordinated to the quadrivium (i.e. arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy), since it dealt not only with the heavens but also with the mutable sublunary world.²³ As Oronce Fine puts it in his *Epistre exhortative touchant la perfection et commodité des arts liberaulx mathematiques* (1531), cosmography was one of “the good cousins” of the quadrivium, “as much blossoming, enjoyable, and useful.”²⁴

Notably, Postel firmly believed that some men at the court of King Henri II (r. 1547–1559) persecuted him for the lessons he gave in 1551–1552. In a letter he addressed to Emperor Ferdinand I (r. 1556–1564) in October 1560, Postel claims that in those years, “since the new [French] courtiers [i.e. the court of Henri II] were terrified by the tumults of the German States, ... they decreed to restrain me from lecturing,” and “fearing that ... I would start to teach again, they [also] decreed to restrain me [from doing it again] in the future.”²⁵ According to Postel, he was persecuted because “in ... certainly the most famous city of the world [i.e. Paris]” he “gave public lectures on the rights of the Gallic monarchy” that “were attended by a great number of people.”²⁶

Despite the absence, thus far, of any formal record forbidding Postel to teach at the time, one can cautiously assume that the lessons that Postel describes here as dealing with the rights of the Gallic monarchy coincided with those in which he referred to the pope as the Antichrist. More specifically, in this letter to Emperor Ferdinand I, Postel may be alluding to the accusations brought against him by two theology professors at the Sorbonne, Florent Parmentier and Nicolas Coulombel, before the notaries at the Châtelet of Paris, based on claims made by theology student Joseph de la Tour. According to his testimony, Postel, in a seemingly clear anti-Roman Gallican spirit, referred to the pope as the Antichrist during some lessons he delivered at the Collège des Lombards in 1551 or 1552, as we read in the deposition dated 27 July 1555.²⁷

Whether the lessons on the Gallic monarchy overlapped, in turn, with the lectures on cosmography he recalls in his correspondence with Andreas Masius in 1563, which he claims to have delivered in presumably those same years (1551–1552), remains an open question. A possible way to answer this question is to analyze *De universitate liber*, in particular its first treatise (*De universitate*), in which Postel, as we shall see in the following four sections, mobilizes cosmographical topics and methods to justify a universal *res publica Christiana* ruled by a sole prince, tracing a perfect correspondence between the celestial and the political order. From this perspective, it would not be surprising if questions of sovereignty, such as the rights of the Gallic monarchy or even fiercely anti-papal positions, were addressed in his cosmographical teachings as well. This hypothesis gains further support from the fact that *De universitate liber* seems to have been published in close temporal proximity to periods of teaching activity: first with the *Syriae descriptio* alone in 1540, and subsequently with the complete volume of *De universitate liber* in 1552 and again in 1563.

3. Imagining celestial space

The first section of *De universitate*, titled *De coeli origine, eiusque influxu et partibus*, opens with a short but exhaustive explanation of the creation. The issue might appear distant from a proper cosmographical focus, but it is actually consonant with the cosmographical tradition of the time, which lasted from Sebastian Münster's (1488–1552) *Cosmographia universalis* (1544) to, at least, Gerhard Mercator's (1512–1594) *Atlas sive cosmographicae meditationes de fabrica mundi et fabricati figura* (1585–1595).²⁸ Postel's cosmogonic and cosmological account should be understood as instrumental to the geographical and political understanding of Earth, because both celestial and terrestrial spaces are conceptualized as speculative images. As a consequence, they are seen as inseparable parts of a unitary system of knowledge that was expected to echo a unitary cosmos.²⁹

Specifically, Postel merges biblical exegesis (Gen. 1–2 and Prov. 8:22–31) with cosmological conceits drawn from a Neoplatonic interpretation of Plato's *Timaeus*. In addressing the issue of the *creatio ex nihilo*, he combines a Christianized Neoplatonic explanation of the universe's origins with Aristotelian notions (i.e. the agent and potential intellects), hypostasizing them. Eventually, Postel suggests that God infused preexisting ideas into both the agent and the potential intellect, and as such created the world through a semi-demiurgic Wisdom, in which the contemplation of God coincides with worldmaking. He writes:

Once God infused the world with his ideas (those [he] imprinted, before anything else, on the agent and potential intellect) ... the world came to coexist with God in the created Wisdom, and the matter of the world emerged gradually from the prime matter.³⁰

In this passage of *De universitate*, there is also an inner analogy between the Aristotelian quasi-hypostasized entities (agent/potential intellect) and, on one hand, the distinction between the double contemplative and generative nature of the Mind and the World Soul typified by the sixteenth-century Neoplatonic Italian tradition, and, on the other, the Kabbalistic notions of the Upper (Uncreated) and Lower (Created) Wisdom.³¹ This is also a recurrent topic in his commentary on the *Sefer ha-yetzirah*, an anonymous Kabbalistic work traditionally attributed to Abraham, which Postel mentions in the introduction to *De universitate*.³² He published his commentary in Paris in 1552, in the same year as *De universitate liber*, with the title *Abrahami patriarchae liber Iezirah, sive formationis mundi*. However, Postel likely also drew on the image of a double Wisdom from the *Sefer ha-zohar*, a commentary on the Torah, whose translation he drafted between the end of the 1540s and 1554.³³

Notably, in Postel's cosmological framework, the Neoplatonic hierarchical cosmos, imbued with Kabbalistic elements and placed at the opening of the treatise, does not compete with the Aristotelian geocentric system. Instead, Postel's cosmogonic narrative functions as a transition to the Aristotelian doctrine of the elements, which he introduces shortly after discussing prime matter. This doctrine, in turn, prepares the reader for Postel's explanation of the nature and shape of the ten celestial spheres and the sublunary region.³⁴

In this respect, the Aristotelian section of the first chapter of *De universitate* should be read in parallel to the explanatory woodblocks at the end of the entire

volume. A contemporary reader would likely have recognized that three of the seven charts at the end of *De universitate liber* reproduce diagrams taken from Heinrich Glarean's (1488–1563) *De geographia liber unus* (1527). Glarean's treatise enjoyed wide circulation and popularity, and Postel appears to have owned a copy. This is suggested by a case brought by the Inquisition in Venice in 1570 against a librarian named Vilius, during which a confiscation revealed several hidden books, including some forbidden volumes belonging to Postel.³⁵ More specifically, in *De universitate liber*, Postel employs the same woodcut from the 1542 Paris edition of Glarean's *De geographia*, printed by Jean Loys (fl. c. 1535–1547) and Guillaume Richard (fl. c. 1541–1545), for his diagram of the Aristotelian cosmos (Figure 1). The same is true of Postel's diagram of the Aristotelian five climatic zones (Figure 2) and of the chart of longitudes and latitudes (Figure 3), both reproducing Glarean's woodblocks.³⁶

As Postel proceeds in the first chapter of *De universitate*, he attempts to anchor his cosmological representation of the heavens to the configuration of terrestrial space, overlapping the order of the latter with the hierarchy of the former from three different perspectives: astrology, spherical astronomy, and mystical theology. First, Postel alludes to celestial intelligences reminiscent of Aristotle to explain the planets' influence on the globe. Admittedly, he neatly draws a cause-and-effect relationship between the geographical subdivision of the sublunary terrestrial space and the higher cosmological



Figure 1. Comparison between the diagrams of the Aristotelian cosmos in Heinrich Glarean, *De geographia* (Paris, 1542), 4v (left), and Guillaume Postel, *De universitate liber* (Paris, 1552), Pr (right). Source: Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département Réserve des livres rares, G-3493 and D2-1556. Reproduced with the permission of the Bibliothèque nationale de France.

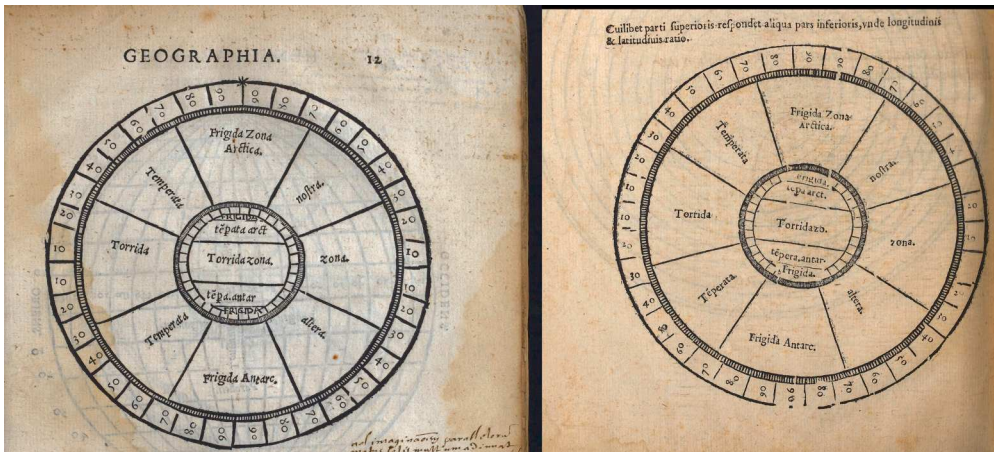


Figure 2. Comparison between the diagrams of Aristotelian five climatic zones in Heinrich Glarean, *De geographia* (Paris, 1542), 12r (left; detail), and Guillaume Postel, *De universitate liber* (Paris, 1552), Pv (right; detail). Source: Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département Réserve des livres rares, G-3493 and D2-1556. Reproduced with the permission of the Bibliothèque nationale de France.

order: “depending on the dominion of the celestial intelligences, the heavens exert unequal influences [over the earth]. Thus, there are differences among regions of the world at the same latitude.”³⁷ Then, he deploys a simple system of spherical astronomy to establish a mathematical correspondence between the upper and lower spaces of the cosmos, the heavens and the Earth:

First, the Primum Mobile and, consequently, all the other nine inferior spheres are divided into five parallel circles, one oblique [circle] and two transversal [circles] that always intersect at equal angles. Among the parallels, the first is the equator, dividing the sphere into two equal areas, whose poles are the world’s poles.³⁸

Finally, to further articulate the central argument of *De universitate*, that is, the perfect and natural correspondence between cosmos and Earth, between divine and human order, Postel explicitly combines his earlier mathematical investigation of the relationship between the celestial spheres and the terrestrial globe with a series of mystical riddles. In calculating celestial distances through spherical astronomy, Postel introduces the twelve Houses of the Zodiac and the corresponding number of months, which also constitutes a central subject in the second section of *De universitate* (*De temporis et dierum ratione*). He then ascribes sacred value to the number twelve, based on the extended name of God, the Tetragrammaton, thereby repurposing practices and meanings from the Kabbalistic tradition of the *Yetzirah* for his worldmaking narrative. In his own idiosyncratic way, Postel suggests a connection between the sacrality of the number of Zodiac signs and the number of celestial influences on Earth (seventy-two), premised on the intersection and transferability of meaning between different understandings of the divine name as either a twelve- or a seventy-two-letter name: “In this way, seventy-two different [heavenly] influxes spring out, as long as each sign is divided into thirty degrees.”³⁹

In hindsight, we can distinguish the anonymous *Sefer ha-bahir* as a main source here, another anonymous Kabbalistic work whose translation Postel finished while he was

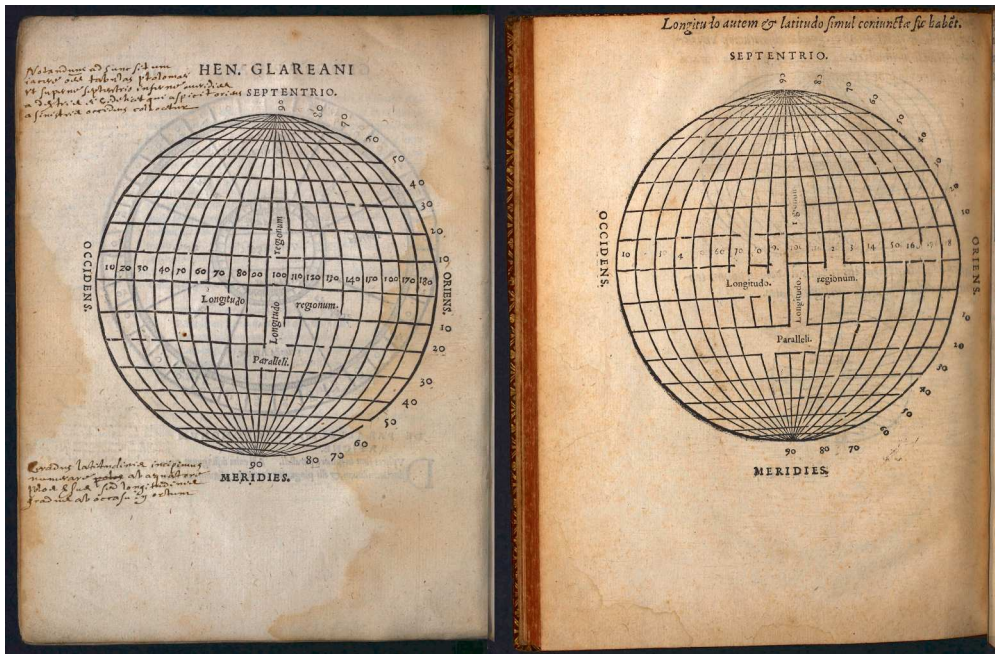


Figure 3. Comparison between the diagrams of longitudes and latitudes in Heinrich Glarean, *De geographia* (Paris, 1542), 12v (left), and Guillaume Postel, *De universitate liber* (Paris, 1552), Piiv (right). Source: Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département Réserve des livres rares, G-3493 and D2-1556. Reproduced with the permission of the Bibliothèque nationale de France.

writing *De universitate liber*.⁴⁰ The numerological interpretation of God's name has a kind of magical transformative utility for translating the nature and the essence of the divine, first into the structure of the cosmos and then into that of the material, earthly world:

Seventy-two are therefore the nations after the Flood, as seventy-two are the souls entering Egypt that then have been restored in Moses's seventy-two elders. Seventy-two are Christ's disciples, as many as [the disciples] of the world's future concord. For this has been established in the heavens.⁴¹

While it is evident that the section is profoundly permeated by esoteric topoi taken from a range of Jewish Kabbalistic sources, which are essential for a complete understanding of Postel's thought, I contend that these sources served to endow Postel's idea of a perfect correspondence between heavens and Earth with a quasi-divine meaning and highly symbolic force, alongside more strictly astrological and astronomical arguments. Having first established fundamental correspondences between the heavenly and terrestrial realms, the opening chapter of *De universitate* prepares the ground for an explanation of the composition and structure of the Earth, based on both Aristotelian cosmology and a system of geometrical projection, as I will discuss in the next section. This enables Postel to project the hierarchical order of the heavens onto the geographical and, ultimately, political organization of the world. As Ayesha Ramachandran has suggested in describing the scope of cartographer Gerard Mercator's *Atlas*, this first chapter of *De universitate* "might best be described as" a part of "a world-systems

theory, a comprehensive exposition of a vision of world order ... that moves systematically from a macrocosmic, celestial, and planetary plane to a microcosmic, socio-political, and individual plane.”⁴²

4. Imagining terrestrial space

The third section of *De universitate* is the first that is entirely devoted to the description of the Earth. Postel describes it as a terraqueous globe (*De terrae et aquae globo, et de mutuo elementorum nexu*), which “from the pair of water and earth is made into a sole thing.”⁴³ Notably, Postel places his worldview here within a long-lasting cosmographic debate. One of the main concerns in this debate was the dissonance between the nonproportional but continuous distribution of water and earth over the convex surface of the globe and a partially misinterpreted, though rather traditional, Aristotelian cosmological model that places the four elements’ spheres at the center of an eight- or ten-sphere cosmos, while establishing an inverted proportion between each element’s density and its volume. Given the concentric arrangement of the four elements, from the absolute heaviest to the absolute lightest, with no space in-between, and the coincidence of their centers with the center of the universe, the question of how the element earth, with its density, could emerge from the lighter element water remained subject to discussion when it came to the representation of the terrestrial inhabited space.

Alternative solutions were proposed over the centuries, negotiating between theoretical models and empirical experience. Then, the rediscovery of Ptolemy’s geographical science and its entry into fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Latin cosmographical culture further problematized the Aristotelian world image, offering the geographical imagination a new form of spatial understanding and representation of the Earth: that of the terraqueous globe.⁴⁴

In the third section of *De universitate*, Postel – building on his earlier statements about the nature of the heavenly spheres – repeats earlier scholarly arguments to maintain the Aristotelian doctrine of a concentric structure of the universe. He thus holds that the spheres of earth and water share a common center: “Water and earth have the same center, or one very close to each other.”⁴⁵ Then, he posits cosmography at the junction between theology and Aristotle’s qualitative physics to explain why the element earth emerges from water. The terraqueous globe, which confirms the sphericity of the water sphere and, consequently, of the globe as a whole, is presented as a divine exception to natural law. As Postel ultimately argues, “if the natural order was not broken, humanity would not exist, or we would be fish.”⁴⁶

For Postel, a confirmation that element water and earth share the same center also derived from the fact that “the longitude of earth and water is the same from east to west, according to the equator, the parallels, and the climates, which, based on authority, are nineteen.”⁴⁷ The discussion of element water and earth thus acts as an introduction to the image of terrestrial space structured as a graticule of latitudes and longitudes, mathematically unified and proportionate to the heavens, as Postel has already explained in the treatise’s first chapter through spherical astronomy.

“However,” Postel argues, closing the third section, “the globe is not usually divided in this way,”⁴⁸ thereby opening the discussion to a more explicitly geographical representation of the Earth. Sections 4 (*Divisio terrae*) and 5 (*De coelo figendo, aut sistendo in*

terra) thus move away from a natural and mathematical representation of the globe to conceptualize terrestrial space geographically, organizing it into continents. The sixth and final section (*Provinciarum orbis ratio ex coelo constituta*) goes a step further by conceptualizing geographical space in explicitly political terms. By intertwining cosmography with pseudo-history, these sections present the geographical and political arrangement of the globe as a reflection of divine and celestial order, proposing a unitary image of the cosmos in which all its elements point to the necessity of a *restitutio* conceived as the restoration of an ancient political Christian order.

5. Imagining geographical spaces

In Section 4 of *De universitate*, Postel offers his readers a geographical description of the globe, in which it is divided into four continents: Africa, Asia, Europe, and the Americas. He draws on a wide range of geographical sources, some of which are more clearly displayed in the more extensive description of the globe in the summary of Ptolemy's *Geography* that concludes *De universitate liber*. While briefly commenting on Ptolemy's tables 8, 9, and 10, Postel refers to Venetian Marco Polo and Armenian Hayton of Corycus, whose travel accounts are included in the second volume of Giovanni Battista Ramusio's (1485–1557) *Delle navigationi et viaggi* (1550–1559), published posthumously in 1559.⁴⁹ At some point in 1551, after his second journey to Istanbul, Postel stopped in Venice, where Ramusio was working on the second book of his *Navigazioni*. It was presumably during this period, before the publication of the second volume of the *Navigazioni*, that Postel became familiar with Ramusio's geographical project. This connection is further proved by Ramusio's use, in the introduction to his edition of Marco Polo's *Dei viaggi*, of an Arabic geographical treatise: the *Taqwīm al-buldān* (731/1321) by Abū al-Fidā' (672/1273–732/1331). This work was preserved in a manuscript first brought to Europe by Postel after his second journey to the Ottoman Empire.⁵⁰ Postel owned the manuscript until 1555.⁵¹

Significantly, the Arabic geography that Ramusio employed for his edition of Polo's travel account is among the very few sources that Postel explicitly cites in his *De universitate*. In Section 5 of *De universitate*, when Postel discusses the coordinate reference system and the astrological determination of the prime meridian on Earth, he accords the author of the Arabic geography, whom he calls Abilfedea, the same level of authority as Ptolemy.⁵² Although Postel does not draw on specific data from the *Taqwīm al-buldān*, there is little doubt that he is referring to Abū al-Fidā' and that he was somewhat familiar with the work.

Nevertheless, Postel's geographical description of the globe in Section 4 of *De universitate* is far from neutral. The political nature of geographical space emerges as soon as Postel imagines the world as divided into four continents subordinated to the *imperium* of a sovereign. The first explicit link between geographical space and power appears at the beginning of the fourth section, where Postel assigns universal rulership over Africa, Asia, and the Americas to Europe. Notably, Postel renames the continents of Asia, Africa, and Europe as Semia, Chamias (or Chamesia), and Japetia, respectively. He then places “at the antipodes a new world, of which Plato speaks as Atlantis, but which is called by another name after Japhet,”⁵³ i.e. the Americas. These geographical denominations derive from the names of the biblical patriarch Noah's sons, Sem,

Ham, and Japhet. According to Gen. 10:1–32, Noah’s sons inhabited different regions of the world after the Flood and populated them with their offspring. According to Postel, who interweaves (pseudo-)history and geography, Europe legitimately retained dominion over the New World because Postel sees the latter as an extension bulging from Japhet himself. Postel then states that Africa was subjugated through the enslavement of Ham by his brother Japhet, and that “Asia, the wife of Japhet, to whom universal rulership was granted when Cham was made his slave,”⁵⁴ was vanquished through marriage.

At least two points should be emphasized here. First, Postel was not conversant with either technical or sophisticated juridical and political vocabulary. The word he employs most is “ius,” in the meaning of right and jurisdiction, and, by extension, rulership and law. Nor does he use specific terminology dealing with political spatiality, except for the word “provincia” in Section 6, meaning a territorialized space over which authority is exerted. Second, Sections 4 and 6 are testimony to the long-lasting legacy of Dominican friar Annius of Viterbo (1437–1502), whose work *Commentaria super opera diversorum auctorum de antiquitatibus loquentium* (1498), better known as *Antiquitates*, undoubtedly inspired the names of Postel’s continents and his Noahic account.⁵⁵

Annius of Viterbo was an astute theologian and a well-read philologist, deeply familiar with pre-Christian chronology.⁵⁶ He proved remarkably adept at forging and reshaping medieval and late antique materials, from Josephus to Eusebius, to glorify his native city of Viterbo through the fabricated authority of the Chaldean Berosus. Relying on his pseudo-Berosus, Annius secured a sacred Chaldean origin for his region, Tuscia, in opposition to what he denounced as mendacious Greek historiography, which traced Viterbo’s foundation to Troy and, thus, to the Greeks.⁵⁷ In doing so, however, he also inserted his city into a universal history structured around the postdiluvian colonization of the continents by Noah’s sons, thereby bridging local and world history.

Although Annius was already considered a mythmaker at the beginning of the sixteenth century, the forged texts he assembled circulated widely, were deeply absorbed by the essentially antiquarian culture of the sixteenth century, and were repurposed in chronologies, chronicles, and historical writings, not only among Christian European authors.⁵⁸ Annius’s postdiluvian genealogies offered a historiographic model that was easily adaptable to multiple contexts and made it possible to align multiple histories along a single temporal axis, unified under the appearance of textual authority.

This adaptability is evident, for example, in Konrad Peutinger’s (1465–1547) use of Annius to reconstruct the ancient history of Germany in his *Sermones convivales de mirandis Germaniae antiquitatibus* (1506), as well as in Johann Boehme’s (c. 1485–1535) *Omnium gentium mores, leges et ritus* (1520), where Annius’s material is employed to explain the origins of African peoples. It is also visible in the work of Spanish historians such as Florián de Ocampo (c. 1499–1558), who drew on Annius’s genealogical framework in his *Crónica general de España* (1543–1553) to account for the Noahic origins of the Spanish people, as well as among Franciscan missionaries, such as Toribio de Benavente (c. 1490–1569), known as Motolinía. Motolinía was among the first to adapt Noahic narratives to recount the ancient history of the Indigenous peoples of New Spain, notably in his *Historia de los indios de la Nueva España* (c. 1536–1541). Likewise, Italian scholars such as Giovan Battista Gelli (1498–1563) and Pier Francesco Giambullari (1495–1555) employed Annius’s forgeries to exalt Florence’s ancient pseudo-history and its language, respectively.⁵⁹

Against this background, Postel's translation of Annius's Noahic mytho-historical narrative into geographical space did not occur in a vacuum, nor did his conflation of geography and (pseudo-)history. By explicitly drawing on Annius's genealogies, Postel sought to endow his geographical account with an antiquarian and sacred foundation, while simultaneously positioning Europe as the globe's universal ruler.

6. Imagining political space

In Section 6, Postel eventually argues that the division of continents outlined thus far in Section 4, together with the rulership of Japheth, is not merely mirrored in the structure of the heavens but constitutes their terrestrial counterpart. In this unitary vision of the cosmos, the arrangements of political dominions on Earth reflect the hierarchical order of the heavens, so that earthly power is justified and legitimized by divine will and celestial order:

Since the entire aim of this well-ordered work is to show that God takes care of human affairs, I must therefore proceed to demonstrate the establishment, duration, success, and overthrow of dominions in this world according to God's election and the influence of heaven ... Ptolemy, in the second [book] of [his] *Opus quadripartitum*, described for us those regions that are subordinated to the primary twelve divisions of the heavens. Although astronomy may nowhere seem to agree with Sacred Scripture, the wondrous providence of God ensures that these disciplines, however distant their authorities may be, demonstrate the same principle of eternal order [in the dominions of the globe]. The first people of the world descending from the sacred lineage of Japhet (to whom was fully granted the right to universal rulership) are the Italics, the Gauls, and the Germans, and those who descend first from the Gauls. [These are] the Scythians, the Medes, the Ionians, the Hispanics, the Muscovites, and the Thracians.⁶⁰

In this section, however, a dichotomy between religious and political rulership emerges. After the provinces and peoples of Europe descended from Japheth, Postel reserves a significant space for the sacred authority of Sem in the province of Syria. Interestingly, Postel identifies Sem with the biblical figure of "Melchizedek and the supreme pontiff of the world,"⁶¹ genealogically associating his priesthood with Jesus Christ, who is said to be both "the supreme pontiff and emperor of the entire universe."⁶² Furthermore, Postel imagines a golden age of Syria, when the divine laws were seamlessly established by two providential magistrates who embodied temporal and spiritual authority:

Since the providence established the world to be governed by two magistrates, a sacred or priestly one and a temporal or civil one, ... it [i.e. the providence] also wanted that the first laws of the world, assigned to these magistrates, should conform to divine order and celestial influence. In this way, this [form of government] might appear to be most strongly constituted by divine law, celestial influence, and human reason.⁶³

Nonetheless, the pseudo-historical example discussed here should not suggest that Postel envisioned a political, and thus territorial and military, dimension to the religious authority granted to Sem and his successors.⁶⁴ In fact, he states, in the same section, that "whatever [Sem] possessed ... was placed under Japheth's jurisdiction,"⁶⁵ avoiding any ambiguities surrounding the universal and territorial nature of Japheth's rulership. In other words, according to Postel, it was necessary to reestablish a universal temporal sovereignty in which empire and the Christian religion coincide perfectly, as imperial and spiritual power coincide in Jesus Christ, "to whom the supreme

pontificate of the world and the supreme monarchy of the world could have been entrusted.”⁶⁶ At the apex of the world can stand only a single individual, a descendant of Japhet, capable of reconquering and reunifying the globe under a Christian banner to protect Christianity and ensure that divine and human order coincide, as they did at the time of humanity’s progenitors, Japhet, Sem, and Ham.⁶⁷ This is Postel’s program of *restitutio*, which he explicitly enunciates in his treatise on Syria, following *De universitate*:

Thus, to realize [Christ’s] power on Earth as in heaven, it is necessary to divinely revive the authority of the temporal monarchy, filling it with [heavenly] spirit. In this way, the [temporal monarchy] may be compared to the Kingdom of the Gospel [i.e. heaven] and the Gospel of the Kingdom [i.e. the age of redemption, of *restitutio*], [serving as] the eternal defender of the supreme pontiff [i.e. Christ], eternal defender of his Kingdom. Therefore, the aim of this treatise is that the most Christian king gathers soldiers and bodily forces into his monarchy, so that he may be the author, defender, and preserver of the best peace in the *Ecclesia*.⁶⁸

In practical terms, Japhet’s jurisdiction over Sem first implies the subordination of the Roman pope to a true Christian king, for the latter is “the vassal and vicar of God”⁶⁹ on Earth, as Postel writes in *Les très merveilleuses victoires du nouveau monde* (1553). This hierarchy, according to Postel, was historically reaffirmed by Charlemagne, as we read in his treatise on Syria. Second, Japhet’s authority over Sem justifies the *restitutio* of Syria – corresponding roughly to the Holy Land, which Postel represents in five maps in 1552 – as the proper pontificate seat under the control of Japhet’s successors, meaning the Christian imperial and military conquest of an Ottoman Muslim land⁷⁰:

Therefore, to restitute the inner order to the Christian world, and above all to my own motherland and its primogeniture, I have tried to explain in various works that the first office of the world has been bestowed upon the Gauls. In this way, the Gauls can bring into actual effect the right granted to them through Charlemagne concerning the election of the supreme seat of the pontificate, by restoring all things in Syria. For this reason, above all else, we must ensure the supreme seat is there.⁷¹

In the concluding remarks of his later *La tierce partie des orientales histoires* (1560), devoted to the history of the Ottoman Empire, Postel reiterates his conviction that there must be a single political order mirroring the unity of heaven itself, or, in other words, a universal Christian monarchy on Earth, charged with reconquering Syria, where the religious center of Christianity ought to be restituted:

Knowing that Christianity ... must be the sole and legitimate princess of the world, both in the spiritual and in temporal realm (since to Jesus Christ has been given all power of the world, both on Earth and in heaven), [and] knowing that throughout the whole world under Jesus there must be one single shepherd and one single flock, or [one single] political government in this world, and not only in heaven, it is therefore necessary that Ishmael be first expelled and driven out from the holy house and domain of truth, that is, from the hereditary house of the Church.⁷²

It is apparently clear to whom, among Japhet’s descendants, the right to claim a universal rulership is granted: the French. The structure of the entire volume, with the treatises on Syria first and Gallia after, mirrors the internal organization of *De universitate*. Postel certainly engages here with the heritage of what we might call medieval

Gallicanism, which was profoundly inspired by prophetism and the vision of the king of France as a universal sovereign.⁷³ Before Postel, the works of poets such as Jean Lemaire de Belges (c. 1475–1525) or the anonymous compilation of the *Mirabilis liber* (1522) – in which the ideal of a universal sovereign is tied in with the model of an angelic papacy – had already politically reformulated medieval, especially Joachimite, prophetic visions of history that widely circulated in France.⁷⁴ In the burgeoning apocalyptic expectations, such speculations symbolically incorporated new political elements into a long Frankish prophetic tradition of a God-ordained emperor of the world. This tradition emerged from eschatological accounts of Roman universalism and projected conquest and violence onto a Christian and Christianizing ideal of harmony.⁷⁵ Among others, the territorial redefinition of Europe and the Mediterranean following Charles V's (r. 1519–1556) ascent to the throne and the expansionism of the Ottoman Empire and, apparently, Islam entered the debate. The same image of the coming of the fourth era of *restitutio*, which functioned as a potent symbol in Postel's reformist narratives, aptly reveals Postel's awareness of the scheme of empires' succession and Daniel's fourth and last kingdom, which the Franks first appropriated from the Christian eschatological tradition.

Intriguingly, *De universitate*, however, sets the stage for different rulership options, as we read:

The first people of the world descending from the sacred lineage of Japhet ... are the Italics, the Gauls, and the Germans, and those who descend first from the Gauls. [These are] the Scythians, the Medes, the Ionians, the Hispanics, the Muscovites, and the Thracians.

The urgency to identify a legitimate (pseudo-)Gallic sovereign, where “Gallic” does not strictly signify French identity but rather the primordial descendants of Japheth, and thus a Christian ruler, is best understood not only against the background of the perceived threat posed by Ottoman power and Islamic expansion in Europe but also in light of Postel's growing estrangement from the French Crown, as emerges clearly from his letter to Emperor Ferdinand I that we have mentioned before. For instance, Postel reformulated his political program of Christian *restitutio* in a second cosmographical treatise, his *Cosmographicae disciplinae compendium* (1561), addressed to the Habsburg emperor, to whom Postel explicitly refers as “the principal minister of the Kingdom of Christ”:⁷⁶

Since nearly nine hundred years before the title of King of the Romans came into being under the authority of Christ, it was divinely revealed to the blessed martyr Methodius that the King of the Romans should bring back the Kingdom of Christ from west to east, and, once restored the crown to him [i.e. Jesus Christ] on Mount Calvary, should promote it [i.e. the Kingdom of Christ] everywhere.⁷⁷

7. Conclusion

This article has argued that Guillaume Postel's idea of *restitutio* is a concrete project of political reordering rather than an abstract return to humanity's lost spiritual origin. In Postel's worldview, the *restitutio* ultimately points to the reestablishment of a universal and explicitly Christian sovereign rulership, which mirrors the unity and hierarchy of the cosmos and is entrusted with the worldwide expansion of Christianity, above all in

Syria, where Postel envisioned the restoration of the proper pontifical seat. Against this background, the article has shown that Postel understood the Christian political *imperium* of Japheth's offspring as neither contingent nor merely historical. Inscribed in the fabric of the creation and in the cosmic order, the universal Christian monarch is viewed, from Postel's cosmographic perspective, as the terrestrial counterpart of the celestial perfect realms and the outcome of divine will.

By focusing on *De universitate liber*, and in particular on its first treatise, this article has shown how Postel constructs a systematic continuity and correspondence between celestial, terrestrial, geographical, and political orders. The internal architecture of *De universitate*, and of *De universitate liber* as a whole, was deliberately designed to echo the structure of the cosmos and guide the reader toward an understanding of the political motivations of Postel's *restitutio*. Moving from the space of creation to the heavens, from the natural composition of the globe to the geographical division of the Earth and finally to the political organization of peoples and territories, the paper has shown how Postel intertwines sources and disciplines within a cosmographical framework shaped by explicitly Christian and European perspectives.

Notes

1. All English translations of Latin and French texts are mine. Unless otherwise specified, words or brief phrases enclosed in square brackets in the English translations have been added to clarify the English text. Unless otherwise specified, in the transcriptions of Latin texts, I have silently expanded all abbreviations, standardized punctuation, and regularized spellings u/v and i/j according to modern usage.
2. For Postel's life and works, see Bouwsma, *Concordia Mundi*, 1–29; Kuntz, *Guillaume Postel; Weill, Vie et caractère*. For Postel's published and unpublished works, see Secret, *Bibliographie des manuscrits; Postel, Les écrits*, esp. 1:88–91.
3. Millet, “La notion de *restitutio*”, 15–30, expanded in Millet, *Le discours de la Renaissance*, 185–227. Also, Kuntz, “Journey as *Restitutio*”, 315–29.
4. For an overview, see Millet, *Le discours de la Renaissance*, 192–5. On millenarism, see esp. Secret, “Guillaume Postel et les courants prophétiques”, 375–95; Secret, “De quelques courants prophétiques”, 1–32; Secret, “Aspects oubliés des courants prophétiques”, 173–201. For some similarities between Postel and Francesco Zorzi, see Secret, “Note sur Guillaume Postel (1960)”, 385–9, and between Postel and Pietro Galatino, see Vasoli, “Postel, Galatino e l'*Apocalypsis nova*”, 97–108. For the influence of the Reformed milieu, see Rotondò, *Studi e ricerche*, 1:117–59. A missing piece in the puzzle is the influence of the Islamic millenarism on Postel's idea of *restitutio*: Fleisher, “A Mediterranean Apocalypse”, 23–6.
5. For an overview, see Weiss, משיח נוצרי-קבלי ברנסנס [A *Kabbalistic Christian Messiah in the Renaissance*]; Wilkinson, *Orientalism, Aramaic and Kabbalah*, 95–135; Petry, *Gender, Kabbalah and the Reformation*, esp. 71–116; Secret, *Les kabbalistes chrétiens*, 171–86.
6. Millet, *Le discours de la Renaissance*, 204: “un retour de l'humanité à sa vocation divine originaire”.
7. Kuntz, “Guillaume Postel and the World State”, 299. See also Kuntz, “Storia, progresso e l'utopia”, 157–73; Millet, *Le discours de la Renaissance*, 185–227.
8. Kuntz, “Ruoli profetici”, 429: “come una *Ecclesia mundana*, una teocrazia la cui autorità suprema è rappresentata da Dio” and “Le funzioni di re e sacerdote sono interdipendenti”.
9. Millet, “La notion de *restitutio*”, 29: “un théologien de la renaissance au sens spirituel du term”. For Postel's ideas on the French monarchy, see esp., Dubois, *La mythologie des origines*.

10. Bouwsma, *Concordia Mundi*, 213. Nevertheless, Bouwsma suggests that Postel believed in the subordination of the Crown to a (renovated) Church, equating *de facto* divine reason – from which the royal power derives – with religious authority. *Ibid.*, 182–5.
11. Petry, *Gender, Kabbalah and the Reformation*, 2, 51–69.
12. On Mother Joanna, see Kuntz, *Guillaume Postel*, 73–93, 99–108; Vasoli, *Filosofia e religione*, 323–60; Brach, “Dieu fait femme”, 41–61; Petry, *Gender, Kabbalah and the Reformation*, 95–116; Brach, “Illicit Christianity”, 3–15.
13. Postel, *De orbis terrae concordia*, 312–13: “Demus toto in orbe, si posset fieri, principem unum. Nam id est maxime ad instar divinitatis unius, ex qua naturae ordo pendet, aeternumque durat, ut Homeri sententia servetur, ‘οὐκ ἀγαθὸν πολυκοιρανίη, εἷς κοίρανος ἔστω’”. The Greek sentence is from Homer, *Iliad*, 2.204. The English translation is from Homer, *The Iliad*, 65.
14. Cosgrove, “Images of Renaissance Cosmography”, 55.
15. I refer here to the important contributions of Destombes, “Guillaume Postel cartographe”, 361–71; Lestringant, “Cosmographie pour une restitution”, 227–59; Grendi Milanesi, “Guillaume Postel cosmografo”, 2:45–54; Masse, “L’Atlantide aquilonaire”, 199–247; Masse, “Les îles”, 323–39. François Secret has also published some extracts from Postel’s cosmographical works. See Secret, “Notes sur Guillaume Postel (1961)”, 360–2, 367–74.
16. Exceptions include: Poulle, “L’astronomie de Postel”, 337–48; Lestringant, “Cosmographie pour une restitution”, 228–30; Pantin, “Postel lecteur royal”, 95–109. Anthony Grafton has analyzed passages related to chronology, which I do not explore in this article: Grafton, *Defenders of the Text*, 112–13.
17. Pantin, “Postel lecteur royal”, 105–7. On the history of mathematical teaching at the Collège royal, see Pantin, “Teaching Mathematics”, 189–207. Royal lectureships were institutionally distinct from university chairs in the sixteenth century, as scholars were appointed and paid directly by the king to deliver extraordinary classes. See Compère, *Les collèges français*, 407–13.
18. On Postel’s teaching at the Collège des Lombards, see Compère, *Les collèges français*, 219; Manno Tolu, *Scolari italiani*, 47.
19. Secret, “Notes sur Guillaume Postel: la correspondance”, 535: “rursus mea repetivi praelectionum instituta, et ad *Cosmographicae* meae tractationis auditorium ... auditores plures Parisiis habui hactenus, quam quivis aliorum mihi invidentium et detrahensium professorum”. This passage of the letter can also be read in BnF, MS Lat. 3402, 89r.
20. Postel, *De universitate liber ... Secunda aeditio*.
21. The Collège royal did not have a proper building up to the seventeenth century. See Guyard and Lichon, “Le collège de Cambrai”, 2–3.
22. Postel, *Syriae descriptio*, verso leaf of the title page: “Mathematum regus interpretis”. Postel uses the same academic appellation in an Arabic manuscript he owned and signed. See UL, MS Oriental 2073, 228v. Likewise, Giovan Battista Amico employs the same title when referring to Postel in his astrological work *De motibus corporum coelestium* published in 1540. See Amico, *De motibus*, verso leaf of the title page. See also Pantin, “Postel lecteur royal”, 99–101.
23. Axworthy, *Le Mathématicien renaissant*, 301–53.
24. The French text has been transcribed in *ibid.*, 378: “leurs bonnes cousins / Tant florissans, tant douces, tant benignes”.
25. Kvačala, *Postelliana*, 49: “quum aulici recenti Germanicarum rerum motu perterriti, ... censuerent, ut mihi silentium imponerentur”; “Sed timentes ne ... rursus inciperem docere, censuerunt cohibendum”. This passage of the letter can also be read in MS Sloane 1413, 90v.
26. Kvačala, *Postelliana*, 49: “publice ... in urbe forsans orbis celeberrima, exposui Gallicae Monarchiae iura ... non sine popularium frequentia factus est”.
27. See AN, MC, 100/55, Deposition of Florent Parmentier and Nicolas Coulombel, July 27, 1555. See also Amalou, “Les disputes académiques”, 197–8. For an overview of sixteenth-century Gallicanism, see Tallon, *Conscience nationale et sentiment religieux*.
28. For an overview, see Cosgrove, “Images of Renaissance Cosmography”, 55–98.

29. Postel explains this idea, using the word “cosmopoeia”, in the preface: Postel, *De universitate liber*, 2r–v.
30. *Ibid.*, 3r: “Condito in suis ideis ante omnia intellectui agenti et possibili impactis, mundo, ita ut ... mundus sit in sapientia creata contemporaneus Deo, sensim ex prima materia assur-rexit mundi moles”.
31. On Postel’s Wisdoms, see Weiss, “Structure amid the Chaos”, 361–82.
32. See Postel, *De universitate liber*, 2v.
33. See Postel, *Abrahami patriarchae liber Iezirah*, Cviv–Cviir, Diiiv, Dviiiv. For Postel’s trans-lation of the *Zohar*, see Weiss, “The Quality of Guillaume Postel’s *Zohar*”, 63–82; Meroz and Weiss, “The Source of Guillaume Postel”, 247–60; Weiss, “BL MS Sloane 1410”, 135–46.
34. See Postel, *De universitate liber*, 3v.
35. In the inventory of forbidden books belonging to Postel (“inventarium infrascriptum librorum prohibitorum Postelli”), the name “Henrico Glanriano” is listed. See ASV, Savi all’eresia, Busta 159, *Contra Vilium librarium*, August 28, 1570, 95r. Glarean was listed in the Pauline Index of 1559, which was enforced in Venice, although a year later Pope Pius IV promised to remove his name from the Index: see De Bujanda, *Index de Rome*, 276, 51–2.
36. The diagrams of the Aristotelian five climatic zones and of the chart of longitudes and lati-tudes in the 1542 edition of Glarean’s *De geographia* are identical to those in earlier editions.
37. Postel, *De universitate liber*, 3r: “quarum arbitrio inaequalis sit singulorum coelorum influxus, unde regionum mundi in eodem parallelo diversitas”. “Quarum” refers back to “singulas intelligentias motrices” mentioned in the immediately preceding line.
38. *Ibid.*, 3v: “Dividitur autem primum mobile, et per consequens novem inferiores sphaerae, in quinque circulos parallelos, unum obliquum, et duos sibi semper ita transversos, ut ad aequales angulo sese mutuo semper intersecent. Ex parallelis primus est aequator dividens sferam in duo aequalia, cuius poli sunt poli mundi”.
39. *Ibid.*, 4v: “ut resultant 72 varii influxus particulares, dum singula signa dividuntur in ter-denos gradus”.
40. Postel, *Traduction du Sefer ha-bahir*, 65–6.
41. Postel, *De universitate liber*, 4v: “Propterea sunt 72 populi post diluvium, 72 animae intrantes Aegyptum, instauratae in 72 senibus Mosis alumnis, 72 discipuli Christi, et totidem futurae concordiae orbis. Sic statutum enim est in coelo”.
42. Ramachandran, *The Worldmakers*, 27.
43. Postel, *De universitate liber*, 6v: “ex duobus aquae et terrae videlicet factum est unum”.
44. For an overview, see Randles, *De la Terre plate au globe terrestre*; Randles, “Classical Models of World Geography”, 1:5–76; Grant, *Planet, Stars, and Orbs*, 630–7. Jean Buridan was the first to use the concept of a globe made by water and earth, though only to refute it. The notion effectively entered the scene thanks to Johannes de Sacrobosco’s *Tractatus de sphaera*. The adjective “terraqeous” was first coined and used in the seventeenth century.
45. Postel, *De universitate liber*, 7r: “Terrae itaque et aquae aut commune centrum est, aut omnino proximum”.
46. *Ibid.*, 6v: “nisi hic fuisset ordo naturae violatus, aut nunquam fuisset, aut piscis esset homo”.
47. *Ibid.*, 7r: “Longitudo terrae et aquae una est ab ortu in occasum secundum aequatorem et parallelos, atque climata, quae ex autoritate sunt 19”.
48. *Ibid.*, 7v: “Sed non solet sic dividi orbis”.
49. See *ibid.*, 53r–54r. These pages are part of Postel’s *Universi orbis secundum Ptolemaeum exposition*.
50. The treatise is today in BAV, Vat. Ar. 266, 1r–125v. For Ramusio’s use of the Arabic geogra-phy, see Ramusio, *I viaggi di Messer Marco Polo*, 3:58–9, 72. For a comparison between Ramusio’s text and the Arabic geography and the history of the manuscript, see Comacchi, “Arabic Geography”, 115–27.
51. See Comacchi, “Arabic Geography”, 120–5; Comacchi, “Antiquarianism or *Tahqiq*?”, 342–3.
52. See Postel, *De universitate liber*, 9r.
53. *Ibid.*, 7v: “apud antipodes novus orbis quae est Athlantis a Platone memorata, sed de altero Iapeti nomine vocata”.

54. Ibid.: “Asia uxore Iapeti, cui Iapeto fuit universi ius concessum, quum Chamus fuerit constitutus servus eius”. For an overview of the curse of Ham in sixteenth-century Europe, see Whitford, *The Curse of Ham*.
55. See Grafton, *Defenders of the Text*, 93–5, 112–13; Rothstein, “The Reception of Anniius of Viterbo’s Forgeries”, 598–602; Biondi, “Annio da Viterbo”, 49–67.
56. The literature on Anniius of Viterbo is quite vast. It is suffice to mention here: Tigerstedt, “Ioannes Anniius and *Graecia Mendax*”, 2:293–311; Grafton, “Invention of Traditions”, 8–38; Stephens, “When Pope Noah Ruled the Etruscans”, 201–23.
57. Stephens, “From Berossos to Berosus Chaldaeus”, 277–89.
58. Recent studies have explored the reception of Anniius across multiple religious and intellectual traditions. It is suffice to mention, for an overview of his reception among Jewish scholars, Weinberg, “Azariah de’ Rossi”, 252–79; Comacchi, “Questioning Traditions”, 131–66. On early and later criticism of Anniius, see Mori, *Historical Truth*, 195–209. For an extensive discussion of the antiquarian nature of humanist scholarship and on the role of forgeries, in addition to the already mentioned work of Giuliano Mori, see Grafton, *Forgers and Critics*.
59. For an overview of the Christian literati who used and even defended Anniius’s *Antiquitates*, see Mori, *Historical Truth*, 189–94. For the Atlantic context, see Marcocci, *The Globe on Paper*, esp. 17–48.
60. Postel, *De universitate liber*, 10r–v: “Quum scopus totius scripturae bene ordinatae sit, ut ostendatur Deus habere rerum humanarum curam, satagendum mihi est, ut secundum electionem Dei et coeli ... influxum demonstretur institutio, duratio, successus, eversio possessionum huius mundi ... Ptolemaeus itaque quadripartiti secundo nobis eas regiones exposuit, quae primariis duodecim coeli partibus sunt suppositae. Sed mira Dei providentia fecit, ut licet nusquam visa sit concordare cum Sacra Scriptura astronomia, tamen quantumvis dissitae authoribus disciplinae demonstrant eandem rationem aeternae dispositionis. Primi itaque populi mundi secundum sacra in Iapeti (cui solidum monarchiae mundi ius a Noacho concessum est) prosapia sunt Itali, Galli, Germani, et qui a Gallis primo processere. Demum Scythae, Medi, Iones, Hispani, Moscovii, Thraces”.
61. Ibid., 10v: “Melchisedec et summus naturae pontifex”.
62. Ibid., 15v: “universi summus pontifex et imperator Christus”. The passage is from Postel’s *Syriae descriptionis compendium*.
63. Ibid., 11r: “Quum autem Providentia mundum regi a magistratu duplici instituerit, sacro sive sacerdotali videlicet et temporali sive civili, ... voluit etiam, ut prima iura mundi his magistratibus assignata et divini ordinis et coelestis influxus rationem ita tenerent, ut iure divino, coelesti influxu, et humana ratione firmissime illud constitutum videatur”. For comparison, see also ibid., 16v–17v, 37r–v.
64. For a project envisioning the Roman Church’s universal political dimension, see “Worldwide Vigilance and Pastoral Care: A Genealogy of the Concept of ‘Propaganda’” of Alberto Fabris in this cluster.
65. Postel, *De universitate liber*, 10v: “quicquid erat in illius possessione ... erat positum in Iapeti iurisdictione”. “Illius” here refers to Sem mentioned two lines earlier. This subordination is also articulated in Kabbalistic terms in Postel, *Le thresor*, 244. Petry has reconstructed the Kabbalistic argument underpinning Postel’s political position. See Petry, *Gender, Kabbalah and the Reformation*, 60–2.
66. Postel, *De universitate liber*, 16r: “summus pontificatus mundi, et summa monarchia mundi in eum committere potuerunt”. The passage is from Postel’s *Syriae descriptionis compendium*. “Eum” refers to “universi summus pontifex et imperator Christus” (ibid., 15v).
67. For the Christian transformation of Roman and Greek universal imperial claims into a politico-religious universality in the early modern period, see Padgen, *Lords of All the World*, 29–62.
68. Postel, *De universitate liber*, 16r: “unde ad eius potestatem in terra sicut in coelo monstrandam, necesse est divinitus eius spiritu plenam, suscitari potentiam monarchiae temporalis videlicet, quae omnino ad Regnum Evangelii et Evangelium Regni sit comparata, et summo pontifici assiduo vindici eiusdem Regni sit assidua vindex. Quare scopus huius

tractationis in hoc est, ut sicut militem et vires corporeas in suam monarchiam comparat rex Christianissimus, ut sit optatissimae pacis Ecclesiae autor, assertor, et conservator”. The passage is from Postel’s *Syriae descriptionis compendium*. “Eius” at the beginning points back to “universi summus pontifex imperator Christus” (ibid., 15v).

69. Guillaume Postel, *Les très merveilles victoires des femmes*, 86: “qui est le Fief et Vicar de Dieu”. In the text, the word “qui” refers to “la couronne” in the same line.
70. For Postel’s maps of Syria, see Postel, *Description et charte de la terre sainte*. The historical region of Syria had been part of the Ottoman Empire since 1516.
71. Postel, *De universitate liber*, 17r–v: “Ut itaque rationem interiore restitueret orbi Christiano, et ante omnes patriae meae et primogeniturae in variis operibus explicare satagi, sic primi officii mundi rationem esse Gallis collatam ad hoc, ut ius sibi concessum in Carolo Magno de sede summo pontificatui eligenda de potentia in actum omnia in Syria restituendo deducant. Nam hoc est ante omnia curandum, ut ibi sit summa sedes”. The passage is from Postel’s *Syriae descriptionis compendium*.
72. Postel, *La tierce partie*, 89: “Et connoissant la ditte Chrestienté qui doit estre seule et legitime princesse du monde, tant en spirituel comme en temporel (parce qu’à Iesus Christ a esté donnée toute la puissance du monde, tant en terre comme au ciel) ... il faut qu’en tout le monde sous Iesus se face un seul pasteur et une seule bergerie, ou estat politique en ce monde, et non seulement au ciel, il faut necessairement que de la sainte maison et domaine de verité, soit le dit Ismael en premier lieu chassé, et debouté de la maison hereditaire de l’Eglise”.
73. On the medieval concept of the French sovereign, see Kantorowicz, “The Problem of Medieval World Unity”, 31–7; Kantorowicz, *The King’s Two Bodies*. For an overview of Gallicanism and its various forms across the centuries, see Hildesheimer, *Rendez à César*.
74. Parsons, *The Church in the Republic*, 25–33. For the *Mirabilis liber*, see Britnel and Stubbs, “The *Mirabilis liber*”, 126–49.
75. On the relation between the Frankish narrative and Roman universalism, see Latowsky, *Emperor of the World*, 1–18; Arnold, “Eschatological Imagination”, 271–88. On the legacy of Roman vocabulary and the meanings of imperial discourses in the early modern political universalisms, see Padgen, *Lords of All the World*, 11–28.
76. Postel, *Cosmographicae disciplinae compendium*, A5v: “primario Regni Christi ministro”.
77. Ibid., A4v: “tum eo quod nongentis ferme annis antequam Regis Romanorum titulus sub Christi auctoritate nasceretur, divinitus a B. Methodio martyre fuit in hanc rem revelatus, ut Rex Romanorum Christi regnum ex occidente in orientem reducat, et super Calvariae montem coronam illi redditurus ubique promoveat”.

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