Contents

Introductio	on	ç
Chapter 1.	The Philosopher La Mothe Le Vayer: Incurable Sceptic	15
1.1	The Philosopher La Mothe Le Vayer: Philosopher with an	
	Insatiable Appetite for Books	15
1.2	Supporter of Curiosity that Leads to Admiration	20
1.3	Adversary of Curiosity for the Causes behind the Show	
	Offered by the World	27
1.4	Fervent Admirer of Sextus Empiricus' "Decalogue"	37
1.5	The Contradictions: Instrument against Stubbornness	43
1.6	The Sceptic who Merges Pyrrhonism with the New Academy	50
1.7	Follower of Flexible Thought	57
Chapter 2.	La Mothe Le Vayer against Political Power and its Practices	62
2.1	Politicians: Ordinary Individuals who Rely on Ostentation for	
	Their Power	62
2.2	Deceit and Violence: Common Practices of Power	67
2.3	Political Science: Theory Deprived of Influence on Practice .	74
2.4	Political Science face-to-face with Scepticism	79
2.5	Politics: A Practice that Does not Seem to be Governed by	
	Science, but by Fortune	85
2.6	The Pyrrhonian Contradictions: Annihilating Instrument	
	against Political Science?	89
Chapter 3.	The Political Science Taught by La Mothe Le Vayer	96
3.1	Politics, a Fundamentally Practical Science	96
3.2	The Magical Arts, Pseudo-Sciences Unworthy of Study	101
3.3	The Relationship between Power and Altar: Halfway between	
	Indifference and Fanaticism	107
3.4	Power Facing the Religious Difference: Toleration Based on	
	the Separation of Church and State	110



8 Contents

3.5	The War against the Spanish and the Alliances with the
	Protestants: Pragmatism Based on Secular Considerations 116
3.6	The Reason of State or the "Politics of the Lesser Evil" 121
3.7	The Contents of Political Science: from the War against the
	Common Enemy to Economic Prosperity
Chapter 4. La	Mothe Le Vayer's Attitude towards Politics: Irreducible
Contradiction	?
4.1	Philosopher Away from the Political World 137
4.2	Philosopher who Considers Himself Duty Bound to Share the
	Fruits of his Wakefulness
4.3	At the Service of Power or at a Distance from it?
4.4	Intertextuality I: The Boundaries of Royal Omnipotence 158
4.5	Intertextuality II: The Foundations of Power 166
4.6	The Prudence of the Prince: Necessary, but Difficult 170
4.7	The Philosophers: Prudent Ministers and Counselors of the
	Prince
Conclusion	
Works cited .	