

Montaigne

1477 Ramond Eyquem, a rich merchant in Bordeaux trading in wines and salt fish, purchases the estates of Montaigne.

1497 Birth of Pierre Eyquem (Montaigne's father) at the family estates.

1528 Pierre Eyquem marries Antoinette de Louppes, of a rich and politically influential family. The Louppes, a pious Christian family, were descended from Iberian Jews.

1533 February 28: birth of Michel Eyquem de Montaigne at the family estates. 1534 A brother, Thomas, is born.

1535 Montaigne's German tutor's aim is to make Latin his first language so young Montaigne is instructed to speak only Latin at all times. This continues his father's scheme from the outset. Another brother, Pierre, is born.

1539/ 40 Montaigne enters the Collège de Guyenne at Bordeaux, where the tutors include Mathurin Cordier, Buchanan (the humanist playwright and future Scottish Reformer) and Elie Vinet. He stays there for six years. His understanding tutors encouraged his delight in Latin poetry. He acquired some Greek, but Latin was his literary language.

1546 Montaigne probably studies philosophy in the Faculty of Arts at Bordeaux.

1548 Civil disobedience and riots in Bordeaux, fiercely suppressed. Mayors now to be elected for periods of two years only. The Huguenots become established and numerous in the City and its environs. Southern France will be extremely strong Protestant area with Navarre nearby a Protestant state. (Jeanne d'Albret, Henry of Navarre)

1554 Michel follows his father and becomes counsellor at the Cour des Aides at Périgueux. This Cour is suppressed three years later and the counsellors join the Parlement of Bordeaux. His father becomes Mayor of Bordeaux.

1559 Montaigne visits Paris, and follows King François II to Bar-le-Duc. Amyot's translation of Plutarch: it greatly influences Montaigne. (Ren in France!)

1562 Montaigne, still in Paris, makes a public profession of Roman Catholicism before the First President of the Parlement de Paris. In October he follows the Royal Army when Rouen is retaken from the Huguenots; Massacre of Huguenots at Wassy.

1564 October 16: Montaigne finishes reading the De Rerum Natura of Lucretius and notes at the end the date and 31 (his age). The flyleaves are all covered with dense Latin notes. Several topics in the Essays go back to that initial reading. This edition of Lucretius by Lambinus had been published 1563/1564. (Ren. in France)

1565 January: visit of Charles IX to Bordeaux. Marriage of Montaigne to Françoise de la Chassaigne, the daughter of a colleague in the Parlement de Bordeaux.

1568 Death of Montaigne's father, Pierre. Montaigne becomes Seigneur de Montaigne and inherits the domain. (Difficulties with his mother over the inheritance.)

1571 Montaigne returns to his estates, to consecrate his life to the Muses: to scholarship, philosophy and reflection. He receives the Ordre de Saint-Michel and is named Gentleman of the Chamber by Charles IX. Birth of Léonor (only one of his six daughters to live).

1572 August 24: massacre of Saint Bartholomew's Day. Uprisings at La Rochelle (a stronghold of the Reformed Church).

1572–4 During the civil wars Montaigne joins the royalist forces. Montaigne dispatched to Bordeaux to advise the Parlement to strengthen their defences.

1580–81 March 1: publication of the Essays (Simon Millanges, Bordeaux). Montaigne leaves on his travels. At Paris he offers his book to Henri III, who is delighted with it. On his travels (partly to take the waters) Montaigne visits Plombières, Mülhauser, Basle, Baden, Augsburg, Munich, Innsbruck, the Tyrol, Padua, Venice, Ferrara and Rome (which was reached on 30 November).

1583 Montaigne re-elected Mayor of Bordeaux for a further two years. 1582–5 During his Mayoralty Montaigne visits Paris and often stays on his estates. Henri de Navarre, now heir to the throne, visits Montaigne and stays in his château. Montaigne is concerned with high politics as well as local affairs. In 1585 the plague ravages Bordeaux. Montaigne, absent, does not return to the town: he and his family are forced to leave their home, Montaigne, and wander about in search of a safe lodging.

1587 October 24: the King of Navarre dines at Montaigne.

1588 10 July: Montaigne is arrested in Paris and sent to The Bastille, released on order of Catherine de' Medici.

1589 August 2: death of Henri III.

1590 June 18: Though ill, Montaigne writes to Henri de Navarre (now Henri IV), who replies to him (20 July) and invites him to come as (probably) his adviser.

1592 September 13: death of Montaigne during a Mass said in his bed-chamber.

1613 John Florio's translation of the Essays.