



David van der Linden, *Experiencing Exile: Huguenot Refugees in the Dutch Republic 1680-1700* (PhD Utrecht University 2013; Politics and Culture in Europe, 1650-1750; Farnham: Ashgate, 2015, xx + 289 pp., ISBN 978 14 7242 927 8).

Van der Linden has done an impressive job in producing this monograph which ably fills an important gap in our knowledge of the Huguenot experience in the Netherlands in the pivotal period of their mass exodus from France, 1680-1700. The book goes beyond straightforward chronological narrative to encompass a consideration of the evolving nature of Dutch Huguenot memory. We are thus taken on a journey that combines narratives of escape and exile mixed in with a mature consideration of the subsequent cultural landscape created among exile communities. Though focussed in-depth on the Netherlands in a twenty-year period, Van der Linden is suitably aware of the richly textured international nature of the Huguenot community in this period of flux and wide-ranging movement. Nomadism characterised the experience of many (arguably most) refugees, promoting an internationalist outlook and agenda that is suitably considered in this book. Soldiers naturally feature in the story and it is a testament to the quality of Van der Linden's research and analysis that he has been able to integrate the experiences of Huguenots at all levels of society, encompassing both elite and ordinary refugees (168).

The book makes a valuable contribution to the wide-ranging diaspora historiography of recent times. Understandably, the Huguenots have features prominently in debates on this topic and as an area of study themselves. Van der Linden's work contributes to these debates in terms of its conclusion on cultural evolution within the Dutch Huguenot community. Interestingly, he reiterates the idea that the Netherlands was the most important Huguenot refuge; something that has been contested by leading Huguenot researchers in favour of England, including Robin Gwynn (*Huguenot Heritage: The History and Contribution of the Huguenots in Britain* (Brighton 2001) 132) and David J.B. Trim (*The Huguenots: History and Memory in Transnational Context: Essays in Honour and Memory of Walter C. Utt*, D.J.B. Trim (ed.) (Leiden 2011) 142). Van der Linden is, however, acutely aware of the rapid and wide-ranging movement of Huguenots between countries. This was especially the case for Calvinist ministers attempting to secure places for themselves and minister disparate flocks (68). Throughout the book he provides one of the clearest investigations I have seen of the effects of abjuration, reminding that all refugees remained intimately connected to family members back home in France who had

accepted conversion to Roman Catholicism. Building on this, Van der Linden engages ably with the complexity of exile, including its psychology, motivation and consequences, via an insightful and nuanced reading of the sources.

By the late-1690s, it was clear to most Huguenots that they must forever live beyond the borders of France if they hoped to persist in the practice of their faith free from persecution. They, and their powerful patrons, had internationally failed to alter their fate. Thus they were compromised into considering a rapprochement with their host nations. This is context in which the exiles in the Netherlands (as elsewhere) started to deal with the complex realities of living as guest-strangers in foreign countries. Part of this involved the construction of a new identity in which religion and escape narratives comforted them in exile and justified their retention of foreign habits, beliefs and even language at variance to the local population. In this sense, Van der Linden's nuanced use of well-known evidence adds profitably to our appreciation of the psychology of the refugees, including the 'ordinary' exile as much as the well-known (e.g. Pierre Bayle and the Basnage brothers).

The book consists of three sections: 'The Economy of Exile', focussing on a narrative of exile from France to the Netherlands, 'Faith in Exile', a study themed around issues including faith and identity and 'Memories in Exile', a critical consideration of sources. The appendix contains useful statistical data extrapolated from the wide-ranging reading of source material.

The book's thesis is that the experience of Huguenot exile was far more complicated on a psychological level than has often been credited. Historiographically, the French refugees have been viewed as either religious heroes or as harbingers of the Enlightenment, with little appreciation of the challenges of exile as a community. Even for such a large and (relatively) homogenous group – and the recipients of huge international sympathy and support – religious exile in early-modern Europe was complex and unsettling. Similar to refugees of all periods, they faced uncertain futures, were forced to reconstruct their lives, including careers and fortunes, and all without endangering the initial reason for their situation: the desire to worship in their chosen manner, uncompromised and free from interference of persecution.

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