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David van der Linden, *Experiencing Exile. Huguenot Refugees in the Dutch Republic, 1680-1700*. Farnham: Ashgate, 2015. xviii + 289 pp. Maps, tables, figures, notes, bibliography, and index. \$134.95 (cl). ISBN 978-1-4724-2927-8.

Review by Christine Kooi, Louisiana State University.

In the 1680s and 1690s, tens of thousands of Huguenots fled France after Louis XIV's revocation of the Edict of Nantes and landed in the Dutch Republic. They have traditionally been portrayed, mostly by their own descendants, as heroic religious refugees, but in this monograph David van der Linden instead proposes to examine their experience of exile in all its cultural, social, and economic complexity. What emerges is less a portrait of devout refugees persecuted for their faith than a struggling ethnic minority trying to make sense out of their new lives in an alien land.

Van der Linden begins at the beginning, by tracing the difficulties of leaving France. The vast majority of Huguenots in fact stayed in their homeland and converted; only a minority, about 150,000 or so, opted to leave. And those who did depart into exile often did so for economic reasons as much as religious ones. Examining archival data from Normandy, Van der Linden concludes that it was those Huguenots with some means, skills, or contacts abroad who were more likely to emigrate. Religion was, to be sure, a precipitating factor, but many of the migrants were also practical enough to investigate beforehand whether they had any prospects in a foreign land. Norman cities such as Dieppe and Rouen had strong trading links with the Dutch port city of Rotterdam, so it was not surprising that migrants from those cities often chose the latter as their destination.

Once they were safely in the Dutch Republic and liberated from judicial persecution, Huguenot migrants still had to make a living. Van der Linden examines the Rotterdam refugee community in particular, where town magistrates offered a variety of financial and social incentives to lure Huguenot cloth entrepreneurs and artisans into their community. Huguenot booksellers and publishers also tried to make inroads into the Republic's highly competitive publishing market. Many of these book merchants carved a niche for themselves in the Francophone book market, publishing polemical and scholarly works that often found a market in France itself. Huguenot preachers also tried to make a living as ministers in the Reformed Republic, with mixed success. In all of these trades, as Van der Linden observes, refugees still often had difficulty making ends meet, since the economic miracle that had been the Dutch Golden Age was on the wane by the end of the seventeenth century. Exile in a religiously allied land still had its discontents.

The second section of Van der Linden's study deals with the religious dimensions of Huguenot exile in the Republic. Huguenots naturally turned to their faith to help them sort out the perils and promises of exile. Studying around twenty sermons by prominent Huguenot ministers in the Republic, he finds that they mostly comforted their listeners with the assurance that they were members of the true church of Christ. Yet, at the same time, the sermons challenged them to consider the Revocation as a sign of God's wrath. That is, preachers suggested that the Huguenots' own sins had brought the disasters of

persecution and exile upon them. Exile was therefore part of God's providential plan for his true followers. Analogies with the Israelites of the Old Testament were a commonplace in Reformed homiletics in the early modern period. What little evidence there is on audience response suggests that, perhaps not surprisingly, French Protestants much preferred to hear words of comfort and purpose rather than extended scriptural interpretation.

Huguenot ministers in the Republic were not just preaching to their own congregations but also, thanks to print, to a wider French audience of Huguenots "under the cross" in France itself. Much to the consternation of authorities, printed sermons from exiled Huguenot ministers circulated widely in France among those who had opted to reconvert, sincerely or not, to Catholicism. This literature, at least initially, exhorted these (crypto-)Protestants, or *nouveaux convertis*, in France to avoid insincerity about their faith and instead go into exile in order to worship God truthfully. But as the years under the Revocation progressed, this clearly became an impractical solution, and some in France responded that it was easy enough for ministers safely in exile to demand "true religion" from their compatriots back home. The tone changed, as preachers began to urge their co-religionists to remain faithful in place and organize clandestine gatherings for worship in discreet places in the countryside. It was clearly much easier for preachers to read their own audiences in the Republic than it was to gauge the sentiments of those left behind in France.

In their sermons Huguenot preachers also held out the hope that their co-religionists might one day be able to return to France as free Christians. Only about 1000 of the 35,000 Huguenots who fled to the Republic actually went back to their homeland, but the expectation in those early decades that exile was only a temporary state of affairs certainly ran deep within the refugee community. Van der Linden sketches in compelling detail how often Huguenot hopes for a return to France were raised by various political events in Europe: the Glorious Revolution in England, the Dutch war with France, the peace negotiations at Rijswijk in 1697. The peace treaty resulting from the latter, which made no provisions for Protestants in France, may well have been the final nail in the coffin of that particular cultural expectation. After that disappointment, refugee preachers exhorted the members of their congregations not to try to return to France, however dire their economic circumstances might be in exile. And some ministers, such as Jacques Basnage, even came around to the idea that perhaps Huguenots could remain in France as long as they secretly professed their faith in the true church. As political realities made Huguenot liberation less and less likely, refugee ministers were more willing to concede that Nicodemism might be the best way for Protestants in France to survive.

Still, their state of exile remained a thorny spiritual and emotional problem for many Huguenots in the Dutch Republic, and some of them took to writing about their experience in order to make sense of it. As the author notes, writing memoirs was also a way of establishing Huguenot identity outside of France. These memoirists generally concentrated more on their time in France than in exile. Van der Linden finds that two themes stand out in these accounts: heavy persecution and, paradoxically, cross-confessional amity. Despite official, judicial harassment, writers remembered that their Catholic neighbors often provided them with help and support. Such compassion contrasted drastically with official Catholicism's treatment of them. Van der Linden's findings conform to what other scholars of early modern religious culture have discovered. Despite the often shrill and brutal formal antagonisms between confessions, actual believers often treated each other differently (and sometimes better) than their churches dictated. At the same time, Huguenot memoirists were keen to demonstrate their bona fides, and they made it clear that they saw Catholics who helped them as friends first and Catholics second.

Beyond memoirs, Huguenot intellectuals in exile also began early on to write grander histories of the Huguenot experience, both within France and without. This effort to create a collective memory was part of a larger project to establish Huguenot religious identity and purpose. Several prominent exiled preachers, notably Pierre Jurieu and Elie Benoist, sought in their narratives to create "an unashamedly

heroic past” (p. 178). These authors mined memoirs and story-telling networks to fashion a story of persecution, exile, and faithfulness. The Huguenots, like so many other confessional groups in post-Reformation Europe, were made into martyrs.

Experiencing Exile is a compelling and persuasive account of the Huguenot exile experience in the Dutch Republic. Van der Linden thoroughly mines a formidable number of archives and printed primary sources to paint a vivid picture of how French Protestants understood their exile in the late seventeenth century. One is only left wondering how their experience in the Dutch Republic differed from other safe havens the Huguenots wound up in. Did Huguenots who landed in England, Switzerland, Germany or even the new world experience a different quality of exile? Were their sermons, writings, memoirs, and experiences similar to or different from their co-religionists in other lands? Is the Dutch case in any way exceptional? Some comparative speculations in the conclusion would have been helpful and illuminating. That quibble aside, however, this is an exemplary work of research and presentation that will be of great use to scholars of early modern religion, exile, and identity.

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