

The Memory of Plight

Huguenot Exiles in The Hague, 1670-1715



The Fleeing of the Huguenots from France,
etching by the Dutch engraver Jan Luyken (1696)

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Introduction

When Daniel de Bousanguet appeared before the consistory of the Walloon Church in The Hague on 5 March 1687, he made no attempt to hide his indignation. “As soon as he had entered, he firstly complained that our Company had suspended him from Holy Communion,” pastor Jean Carré reported, “and secondly complained about those people who had accused him of having renounced the Reformed Religion, against whom he demanded that our Company did him justice”.¹ De Bousanguet flatly denied to have converted to Catholicism, and was outraged that the church elders had rashly denied him access to the Lord’s Table on the basis of accusations, without giving him the opportunity to defend himself.

It had all started a few months before, when the consistory had received word from its sister community in Leeuwarden that De Bousanguet, a *gentilhomme* from the Languedoc region in the south of France, had travelled back to his native country, where “he had abandoned the Reformed Religion in order to embrace the papist faith”.² Scoffed at De Bousanguet’s apparent conversion to heresy, the elders and pastors also complained that since his arrival in The Hague he had never come forward to ask their permission to take Communion. When the nobleman finally showed up in March 1687, pastor Carré reminded him that Huguenot *arrivées* were expected to make a formal *reconnaissance*, appearing before the church elders to explain their reasons for leaving France, and present church attestations to demonstrate their sound Calvinist doctrine and moral uprightness, before they were received as members of the Walloon Church and allowed to sit at the Lord’s Table. Precisely because De Bousanguet had failed to present himself, he had raised their suspicion that rumours of his apostasy were true. The consistory had therefore decided to pre-emptively suspend him from Communion.³

¹ Consistory minutes, 5 March 1687, Municipal archives The Hague (Gemeentearchief Den Haag, hereafter GA DH), Archives of the Reformed Walloon Church (Waals-Hervormde Gemeente, hereafter WHG) 1, consistory minutes 1618-1708, f. 187: “Aussi tost qu’il fut entré se plaignit premierement de ce que nostre Compagnie l’avoit suspendu de la Sainte Cene (...), deuxiemement de ceux qui l’avoient accusé d’avoit renoncé à la Religion Reformé, contre lesquels il demandoit que nostre Compagnie voulut lui faire justice.”

² Ibid., f. 186: “Qu’il avoit abandonné la Religion Reformée pour embrasser le papisme.”

³ Ibid., f. 187-188. On the process of *reconnaissance*: Carolyn Lougee Chappell, “The Pains I Took to Save My/His Family”: Escape Accounts by a Huguenot Mother and Daughter after the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes’, *French Historical Studies*, 22:1 (1999), pp. 10-11.

To a *gentilhomme* like De Bousanguet, guilty until proven innocent clearly did not classify as a noble adage, but he still decided to play by the consistory rules: after the pastor had finished his huffy speech, Daniel triumphantly produced his church attestations, all testifying to his sound Protestant doctrine. The consistory swiftly made volte-face, “recognizing him as a man of honour, whom they had mistakenly considered a proselyte, believing him to be a true member of the Christian Church, whom they granted the liberty to participate with the faithful in the sacrament of the Holy Communion”.⁴ Although the church elders had rehabilitated De Bousanguet, they reminded him that if he had come forward straightaway, rumours of popery could have been defused more quickly – surely he understood that the consistory had a pastoral duty to ward off the threat of Catholicism among its Huguenot flock.

Protestant zeal had not abated in 1710, when a Normandy refugee called Cornélie de Borault appeared in the consistory room. She told the assembled elders that though born and raised a Protestant she had converted to Catholicism in her youth, but had come to regret her abjuration at a later age. As the beliefs of her youth were rekindled by a Huguenot pastor preaching illegally *sous la croix*, Cornélie had been confirmed in the Protestant Church, and had eventually decided to take refuge in the Dutch Republic, where she would not be prosecuted for her Protestant beliefs. The consistory in The Hague was more than happy to receive Cornélie as a member of the Huguenot community, and exhorted her to persevere in her devotion to the true Christian religion.⁵

The accounts of Daniel de Bousanguet and Cornélie de Borault demonstrate that religion was a serious affair in the minds of Huguenot refugees that had made their escape to the Dutch Republic. Serious enough, apparently, to leave behind their homes and jobs for the sake of a clear conscience. As Cornélie made clear in her *reconnaissance*, the religious policy of French monarch Louis XIV had presented Huguenots with a major problem: how to be Protestant in a nation that was officially Catholic. For the larger part of the seventeenth century French Protestants had given little thought to this dilemma, as they enjoyed limited freedom of religion under the Edict of Nantes, promulgated in 1598 by Henry IV to end religious conflict in his kingdom. It had granted Protestants freedom of conscience, and freedom of worship in towns under their control, located mostly in the Huguenot heartland of south-western France. Huguenots had also been allowed to build churches in these areas, had

⁴ Consistory minutes, 5 March 1687, GA DH, WHG 1, f. 188: “De le reconnoistre pour un homme d’honneur, à qui on avoit grand tort de le considerer et devier comme un apostat, qu’elle le tenoit pour un veritable membre de l’Eglise Chrestienne, à qui elle donnoit la liberté de communier avec les fideles au sacrement de la Sainte Cene.”

⁵ Consistory minutes, 19 May 1710, GA DH, WHG 2, consistory minutes 1709-1721, f. 18.

obtained the right to hold government offices, and could even maintain troops in a number of strongholds.⁶

However, religious coexistence that allowed for a Protestant ‘state within the state’ was never meant to be a permanent solution. The Edict of Nantes merely gave the French monarchy the necessary breathing space, putting an end to war so the king could quietly work to restore the religious unity of France under the principle of ‘one king, one law, one faith’.⁷ This was precisely the aim of Louis XIV when he in the 1670s started to curtail the Huguenots’ civil rights as laid down in the Edict of Nantes, and in the 1680s sanctioned the quartering of soldiers in only Protestant homes, allowing them to use violence, pillage and rape to force Huguenots to convert. In Louis’ eyes these *dragonnades* were highly successful, because in 1685 he triumphantly revoked the Edict of Nantes under the pretext that it had lost all relevance – by now France counted only loyal Catholic subjects, Louis claimed, so granting rights to non-existent Protestants was rather pointless.⁸

Of course this was wishful thinking, but it came awfully close to reality: faced with an erosion of their civil and religious liberties, as well as ongoing cruelties, the majority of Huguenots preferred to save life and limb over adherence to the Protestant faith, converting to Catholicism to avoid further persecution. Undoubtedly most of these *nouveaux Catholiques* were Nicodemites, who in public conformed to Catholic doctrine and went to mass on Sundays, but kept alive their Protestant belief in clandestine gatherings. Yet the more devout Huguenots abhorred such religious weakness in the knees, because they felt that their true faith in God should not be abandoned for popery, nor even dissimulated behind a façade of Catholic conformity. The only option left was exile: an estimated 200,000 Huguenots left France, most of them ending up in the Protestant nations of Switzerland, England, Brandenburg-Prussia, and the Dutch Republic.⁹

Daniel de Bosanguet and born-again Christian Cornélie de Borault were only two of those Huguenots who had left France for the sake of their religious conscience. Appearing before the church elders in The Hague, Cornélie assured them that after her spiritual rebirth in France, “she had done nothing contravening her conscience, but had searched for all possible means to go to a country of [religious] freedom, and God having conferred upon her this

⁶ Mack. P. Holt, *The French Wars of Religion, 1562-1629* (2nd. ed., Cambridge, 2005), pp. 166-169.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 170.

⁸ Elisabeth Labrousse, “*Une foi, une loi, un roi?*” *Essai sur la Révocation de l’Édit de Nantes* (Genève, 1985), pp. 113-195.

⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 196-207; Benjamin J. Kaplan, *Divided by Faith: Religious Conflict and the Practice of Toleration in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, MA and London, 2007), pp. 156-159.

grace, she demanded to be admitted anew into the peace of the Church”.¹⁰ To Daniel his religious convictions were equally important: when the consistory suspected him of being a proselyte, he hotly defended himself, clearly taking the charge of popery as a personal insult to his honour as nobleman and devout Protestant. Huguenot refugees, then, were the ‘hotter sort of Protestants’, those who felt so attached to their religious convictions they went into exile, and were prepared to abandon their homes, jobs, possessions, and even their relatives for the sake of religion.

The decision to go into exile was no mean feat, but settling abroad proved just as difficult. Cut loose from their familiar communities, Huguenots somehow had to define their identity to regain a sense of belonging. They arrived as strangers in the Dutch Republic, and had to find new jobs, a place to live, and build up a new social life. They moreover faced a question of loyalty: fleeing perhaps eased their religious conscience, as the Huguenot refugees could freely worship in the Dutch Republic, but they now had to decide if they should integrate and be loyal to foreign authorities, forsaking their French identity in favour of belonging to a Dutch town community, or whether they should remain attached to their brothers suffering under Catholic persecution, and still accept Louis XIV as their legitimate sovereign.¹¹

Given these difficulties, religion was a likely ingredient to fashion themselves an identity abroad. Since the strong attachment to their faith was the *raison d'être* for the Huguenots' flight abroad, correspondingly religion must have played an important role in exile, too, uniting them as a devout community and creating a sense of belonging. Indeed, the French exiles did not entirely have to build up their lives from scratch: one crucial framework already in place in the Dutch Republic was the network of French-speaking churches, heritage of yet another religious mass exodus. When in the late sixteenth century Spanish troops had regained control of the Southern Netherlands, around 150,000 Protestants had fled to the Northern provinces, where the French-speaking lot had established their own so-called Walloon churches, rather than join the Dutch Reformed Church.¹² In these familiar French-speaking churches, Huguenots could easily keep alive the Protestant zeal that had driven them into exile.

¹⁰ Consistory minutes, 19 May 1710, GA DH, WHG 2, f. 18: “Elle n’avoit rien fait contre les mouvemens de sa conscience, mais avoit cherché tous les moyens possibles pour se rendre dans un pays de liberté, que Dieu lui ayant fait cette grace, elle souhaittoit d’être admise de nouveau à la paix de l’Eglise.”

¹¹ Myriam Yardeni, *Le Refuge huguenot: Assimilation et culture* (Paris, 2002), pp. 39-43.

¹² G.H.M. Posthumus Meyjes, ‘Les rapports entre les Eglises Wallonnes des Pays-Bas et la France avant la Révocation’, in J.A.H. Bots and G.H.M. Posthumus Meyjes, eds., *La Révocation de l’Édit de Nantes et les Provinces-Unies 1685* (Amsterdam and Maarssen, 1986), pp. 1-15; Paul Dibon, ‘Le Refuge wallon précurseur du Refuge huguenot’, *XVIIe siècle*, 76 (1967), pp. 53-74.

In sum, this research will examine the importance of religion to Huguenot refugees in the Dutch Republic. To what extent did they seize upon religion to fashion their identity, and did faith provide them a new sense of belonging on unfamiliar territory? Religious attachment may have been self-evident – after all, persecuted for their beliefs they had been prepared to flee France for the sake of a clear conscience – but in exile their day-to-day struggle to survive may have pushed religious considerations into the background.

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Even more important is the question what sort of religious identity emerged. The accounts offered by Daniel de Bousanguet and Cornelia de Borault reveal that divergent attitudes towards religion could emerge within the Huguenot community. While the consistory tried to maintain church discipline and confessional rigor, making sure only pious Protestants were admitted as church members and allowed to take Communion, parishioner standards could be less clear-cut: despite her recent enlightenment Cornelia still had a record of Catholic devotion, while the consistory feared De Bousanguet had forever crossed the religious border separating the Protestant faith from Catholicism. Apparently a rift existed between the ideal of strictly demarcated religious identities, and the real possibility of people crossing these religious borders in both directions.

These different approaches to religion among the Huguenot community in The Hague are exemplary of the historiographical debate on religion in early modern Europe. On the one hand historians have emphasized that early modern society was scarred by religious conflict, as distinct confessional identities constantly clashed. The Reformation had shattered the religious unity of Christian Europe, over time giving rise to entrenched Protestant and Catholic confessions that were bent on eradicating their heretical opponent, they argue. Natalie Zemon Davis, Denis Crouzet and Mack Holt have shown that in France both Huguenots and Catholics tried to wipe out the other side, which they considered a threat to social order and a source of contamination in the society of true believers. Catholics persecuted Huguenots, burnt their houses, and drowned them in the Seine because they physically wanted to cleanse France of heresy, while Protestants tried to rid society of idolatry, superstition and immorality by attacking Catholic processions and cleansing churches in iconoclast frenzy.¹³ Such a portrayal of irreconcilable religious cultures taps into contemporary histori-

¹³ Natalie Zemon Davis, 'The Rites of Violence: Religious Riot in Sixteenth-Century France', reprinted in: Natalie Zemon Davis, ed., *Society and Culture in Early Modern France*, (London, 1975), pp. 152-187; Mack P.

ography, well known for its martyrologies: in the 1690s for example, refugee pastor Elie Benoist raked up confessional fire by publishing his multivolume *Histoire de l'Édit de Nantes*, which offered a staggering catalogue of atrocities and injustices Catholics had perpetrated against the Huguenots.¹⁴

More recently, however, historians have demonstrated that though from different creeds, people in early modern Europe were not constantly at odds with one another. Because never-ending religious violence was simply untenable, Benjamin Kaplan has argued, people ultimately chose the path of toleration to keep the peace in their religiously mixed communities. Granted, in this era toleration often meant nothing more than grudgingly putting up with the presence of despicable heretics in one's town or village, a pragmatic move stopping short of truly respecting their heterodoxy, yet the practice of toleration assured that villagers and citizens of different confessions could live side by side without sliding each other's throat whenever they ran into each other.¹⁵

Moreover, Elisabeth Labrousse has shown that Huguenots and Catholics shared more than Benoist would admit: on Sundays they visited different churches, but otherwise they met as neighbours, guild members, or merchants, and even went to each other's funerals, marriages, and baptisms.¹⁶ Similarly Margaret Jacob has detected a 'cosmopolitan outlook' in early modern society, as she argues that some people across Europe did have the ability to experience other religions with pleasure and interest, crossing the boundaries erected between confessional identities rather than just tolerate the de facto presence of other religions. In Avignon for example, interconfessional marriages, friendships and societies were common enough to unnerve church authorities guarding the confessional boundaries.¹⁷

Studying the Huguenot community in the Dutch Republic can offer new insights relevant to this debate. Of course we can easily grasp how Huguenot refugees would take the first path signposted with confessionalization and religious conflict, fashioning themselves a militant Protestant identity in stark opposition to Catholicism. Persecuted by their Catholic neighbours and the French monarchy, they had left behind everything dear to them because

Holt, *French Wars of Religion*; Denis Crouzet, *Les guerriers de Dieu: La violence au temps des troubles de religion, vers 1525-1610*, 2 vols. (Seysel, 1990).

¹⁴ Elie Benoist, *Histoire de l'Édit de Nantes: Contenant les choses les plus remarquables qui se sont passées en France avant & après sa publication, à l'occasion de la diversité des religions, et principalement les contraventions, inexécutions, chicanes, artifices, violences, & autres injustices, que les reformez le plaignent d'y avoir souffertes, jusques à l'Édit de Révocation, en octobre 1685, avec ce qui a suivi ce nouvel Édit jusques à présent*, 3 vols. (Delft, 1693-1695).

¹⁵ Kaplan, *Divided by Faith*, esp. pp. 1-12.

¹⁶ Labrousse, "Une foi, une loi, un roi?", pp. 77-89.

¹⁷ Margaret C. Jacob, *Strangers Nowhere in the World: The Rise of Cosmopolitanism in Early Modern Europe* (Philadelphia, 2006), pp. 1-40.

they refused to renounce their faith. The temptation to cast Catholics as diabolical papists could not have been greater than to these Huguenot exiles. Yet the second route leading towards grudging toleration, or even religious open-mindedness, was by no means excluded: the minutes of the consistory in The Hague suggest a real fear that some believers would betray their Protestant identity and cross the confessional border.

We should be cautious, however, to believe believers would only take one route. In practice Catholics and Protestants bore a Janus face: individual believers could be militant while also reaching out across the confessional divide. In seventeenth-century Utrecht, Calvinist elder Arnoldus Buchelius railed against godliness and popery in his town, yet he still befriended Catholics.¹⁸ Keith Luria has similarly nuanced confessional polarity, arguing that believers in France used divergent modes of religious behaviour all at the same time. On the one hand a negotiated demarcation between confessions helped to maintain one's identity: both groups went to their own church, were interred in separate parts of the cemetery, took care not to let public psalm-singing and processions interfere, and adhered to quota for civil offices and soldiers. On the other hand the line between confessions was blurred, as believers put religious differences aside for the sake of family alliances, business dealings and civic affairs. Meanwhile, both Huguenots and Catholics never abandoned their plans to lift the confessional boundary entirely, hoping to reunite all believers into a single church by means of conversion, or violent persecution.¹⁹ Our aim, then, is to uncover at what point believers switched to a different religious mode, and how they managed to reconcile such opposing modes of religious behaviour.

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To find out which religious directions Huguenot refugees in the Dutch Republic took, this study adopts a different research strategy than most histories of the Refuge. Its aim is not to give an intellectual account, charting the ideas Huguenot pastors and thinkers developed on the necessity of either religious intransigence, or peaceful toleration and open-mindedness. The ideas of these intellectuals have been amply researched already, but more importantly: it has often led historians to write a teleological story of 'enlightened values' triumphing over 'religious backwardness', as they argue that in the Dutch Republic eminent Huguenots such

¹⁸ Judith Pollmann, 'The Bond of Christian Piety: The Individual Practice of Tolerance in the Dutch Republic', in Ronnie Po-Chia Hsia and Henk van Nierop, eds., *Calvinism and Religious Toleration in the Dutch Golden Age* (Cambridge, 2002), pp. 53-71.

¹⁹ Keith P. Luria, *Sacred Boundaries: Religious Coexistence and Conflict in Early Modern France* (Washington, 2005), esp. pp. xxii-xxxii.

as Pierre Bayle and Jacques Basnage could feed the Republic of Letters with their radically ‘forward-looking’ ideas on toleration.²⁰ Implicit is the idea that early modern Europe was immersed in religious conflict, until in 1648 the Peace of Westphalia put an end to such irrational barbarities, marking the dawn of a new era in which secular considerations and *raison d’état* – in short, the reasonable politics of an enlightened mind – pushed religious conflict firmly into the background, giving way to a state policy of religious toleration.²¹

Refugee *philosophes* in the Dutch Republic, these historians have argued, were pioneers of enlightened values. Thanks to ineffective censorship, loose controls on publishing, and high literacy rates combined with printing expertise, the Dutch Republic was the ideal place for Huguenot émigrés wishing to publish their controversial ideas on religious toleration.²² Admittedly this argument has some merit, for Pierre Bayle and Jacques Basnage were both prolific writers, publishing learned journals such as the *Nouvelles de la République des Lettres* for an international audience, as well as treatises on toleration. They advocated the notion that Protestants could be loyal to both the French monarchy and their own faith, claiming these were not mutually exclusive categories: religious choice was a private matter of each individual, not a state-enforced dictum, while in turn citizens should be loyal to the authorities – only then would the state be rid of civil war.²³

Yet such a self-congratulatory history of modern values trumping religious fanaticism may do injustice to the late seventeenth century, because learned treatises tell us little about the religious mentality of the masses of Huguenot refugees, who may have held very different ideas. And even among the refugee élite, the enlightened solution of separation between church and state was not univocally accepted: religious militants such as the Rotterdam pastor Pierre Jurieu held a profoundly eschatological worldview, believing state and church should act in tandem to defeat Catholicism. He argued that Louis XIV was Antichrist incarnate, who could not be trusted since he had singlehandedly revoked the contract between Protestants and the monarchy, and continued to persecute his citizens for their religious beliefs. You did not

²⁰ See for example: Gerald Cerny, *Theology, politics, and letters at the crossroads of European civilization: Jacques Basnage and the Baylean Huguenot refugees in the Dutch Republic* (Dordrecht, Boston and Lancaster, 1987).

²¹ For historiographical critiques, see: Kaplan, *Divided by Faith*, pp. 1-6, 333-336; and Dorinda Outram, *The Enlightenment* (2nd ed., Cambridge, 2005), pp. 109-117.

²² G.C. Gibbs, ‘Some intellectual and political influences of the Huguenot emigrés in the United Provinces, c. 1680-1730’, *Bijdragen en mededelingen betreffende de geschiedenis der Nederlanden*, 90:2 (1975), pp. 255-287; G.C. Gibbs, ‘The role of the Dutch Republic as the intellectual entrepôt of Europe in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries’, *Bijdragen en mededelingen betreffende de geschiedenis der Nederlanden*, 86:3 (1971), pp. 323-349.

²³ Elisabeth Labrousse, *Conscience et conviction: Études sur le XVIIe siècle* (Oxford, 1996), pp. 159-207; Yardeni, *Refuge Huguenot*, pp. 43-49.

negotiate with the devil over freedom of conscience, Jurieu maintained; the only solution was to fight him.²⁴

Ideas about religious conflict thus did not simply die out after 1648, nor was religious conflict now a safely guarded relic from the past. On the contrary, the persecution of Huguenots in France and the ousting of a Catholic monarch from the English throne in 1688 both made it very clear that Europe was still divided by faith, and that religious conflict always lurked around the corner.²⁵ Among the masses of Huguenot refugees that had fled persecution, Jurieu's philippics against popery and a diabolical Louis XIV may have been a great deal more popular than Bayle's plea to love thy Catholic neighbour as an equal citizen.

Still, we should not assume that religious intransigence was the only option available. The accounts of Daniel de Bousanguet and Cornélie de Borault suggest that religious border-crossing was a serious alternative to be reckoned with. Not without reason the consistory always kept an eye out for those who did not take their devotion to the Protestant faith very strictly. To be sure, popular attitudes could result in the de facto practice of toleration and confessional amity much in the spirit of Bayle's philosophy, but the crucial point is that most Huguenot parishioners probably never gave intellectual ideals much thought. They need not have read Bayle's learned treatises to practice toleration and confessional border-crossing.

In sum, this research investigates the day-to-day behaviour of ordinary Huguenot refugees in the Dutch Republic, which will reveal more about their religious attitudes and identity than reading the concepts penned down by intellectuals. Rather than a clash between doctrines or ideas, religious militancy and its antipodes toleration and border-crossing were about finding ways to respond to people who came from a different religious background. If we are to determine how important religion really was to the masses of Huguenot exiles, concluding whether they stuck to confessional militancy, or whether at times they transgressed the religious boundaries, we need a cultural history of religious practices, of de facto mores, not simply of high ideals.²⁶

To trace religious identity, research will use a three-pronged approach. First, chapter 2 probes the consistory minutes of the Walloon church in The Hague to unearth the *religious behaviour* of its parishioners, as well as the attitude of the consistory itself. The records reveal that believers indeed transgressed moral and religious boundaries, though confessional border-traffickers could also act out of financial necessity rather than spiritual fervour. By

²⁴ F.R.J. Knetsch, *Pierre Jurieu: Theoloog en politikus der Refuge* (Kampen, 1967); Labrousse, *Conscience et conviction*, pp. 159-207.

²⁵ Kaplan, *Divided by faith*, pp. 336-343.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 344-358; Jacob, *Strangers Nowhere in the World*, pp. 1-11.

contrast, chapter 3 combines the consistory book with synod records to analyse the *religious vocabulary* of plight used by refugee pastors and Walloon consistory. The pastors and elders were on a tightrope: they had to maintain a church community that was at once untainted and harmonious, which required religious compromise, while at the same time they had to rally exiles and authorities under the banner of embattled Protestant faith to secure the hoped-for return to France.

Finally, chapter 4 will focus on the private stories and memories of Huguenot refugees, looking back on their life in France, their flight abroad, and their stay in the Dutch Republic. Interesting though the consistory minutes are, they only offer us a record of events as seen through the eyes of the opponent – the historian can never be sure the consistory has faithfully jotted down the parishioners' words, while other cases may have gone unrecorded, distorting our picture of Huguenot religiosity. Memoirs therefore give us valuable evidence of the refugees' own attachment to religion in exile, and can help us understand to what extent they used memories of persecution and plight to refashion their identity.²⁷ As it turns out, after 1700 it required a real effort to keep alive the memory of plight, as refugees left the past behind them and built up a new life abroad.

Rather than striving after completeness, which would require researching over 30 Huguenot communities in the Dutch Republic, this research offers an in-depth account of the Huguenot community in The Hague. Like no other method of historical investigation ever could, local case studies – or micro histories as they are called in the historians' trade – brilliantly illuminate the local interactions between people of different creeds, as well the arrangements they negotiated to live together peacefully. The Hague is the perfect laboratory to test Huguenot religiosity, because here the proximity of the stadtholder's court lets us glimpse the interaction between daily religious practice and abstract politics: Huguenot pastors regularly obtained an audience with William III, using militant rhetoric to remind the stadtholder of his promise to work for the Huguenots' return to France.

²⁷ For a limited survey on the relationship between memories of plight and Huguenot identity, see: Edwin van Meerkerk, 'Geweld, geloof, herinnering en identiteit: Hollandse hugenoten en het "trauma" van 1685', *Tijdschrift voor geschiedenis*, 118:3 (2005), pp. 386-399.

1.

One King, One Law, Two Faiths

To sixteenth-century French Catholics, having Huguenots living in their town and state was deeply upsetting. Conventional wisdom throughout early modern Europe had it that membership of the religious community had to be coterminous with membership of the political community – hence all French subjects were expected to be of sound Catholic faith, and conform to the centuries-old adage of ‘one faith, one law, one king’. By contrast, tolerating religious pluralism would tear the fabric of state and society apart: the Huguenots’ mere presence, their different religious ideas, and their militant program to reform religion and society all divided the once harmonious community of believers, while it also disrupted the body politic, since unwavering Protestant loyalty to a Catholic monarchy was questionable.

French rulers and Catholics thus faced a difficult decision: could they trust Huguenots to be loyal subjects, and should they put up with religious pluralism, or was the only option to root out heresy and restore confessional unity? Conversely, Huguenots asked themselves how to be Protestant in a state that was overwhelmingly Catholic. Should they take refuge abroad, fight their Catholic neighbours, or give up their struggle altogether and convert? For over a century the answer to these questions remained open, oscillating between religious conflict on the one hand and peaceful coexistence on the other. Yet ultimately Catholicism gained the upper hand: dragoons forced Huguenots to abjure their faith, and in 1685 the Edict of Fontainebleau triumphantly declared France to be once more an all-out Catholic nation.

The Bi-Confessional Experiment

Ever since Calvinism had made its first inroads in France during the 1530s, Huguenots were in a tight spot. The French monarchy was strongly wedded to Catholicism: kings were revered as god-given rulers, who during their inauguration made a solemn vow to protect the Church of France and root out all heresy in the kingdom. As stout defender of the Catholic faith, the French monarch had even earned himself the title of *rex christianissimus*, or ‘most Christian

king'.¹ The monarch's sacred duty to uphold Catholicism augured badly for the Huguenots, because their mere presence as people of different faith was enough to provoke royal persecution. Yet in practice dissenting views were often tolerated, as these were considered a spiritual sin that God would surely avenge at the gates of heaven; only the most militant of dissenters risked retribution on earth.²

Indeed, it was the way in which Huguenots sought to put their beliefs into practice that unnerved the French king and his Catholic subjects. Calvinists not only wanted to strip religion of unnecessary ceremonies and idolatry, but also believed they had a divine mission to create a godly society. Calvin preached a new moral élan, arguing that sins as drunkenness, adultery, and blasphemy could only be eradicated by the moral rectitude of pious believers, who would act as God's instruments on earth. Geneva was a theocracy *par excellence*, but French towns taken over by Huguenots in the 1560s were no less subjugated to a reformation of manners and faith: Catholic processions were mocked, church statues smashed, and Catholics driven out, while Protestant town councils worked in tandem with church consistories to instil discipline.³

Catholics were appalled at this militant program, not because they necessarily disagreed on a moral remaking of society – the Council of Trent had also acknowledged abuses within the Church and encouraged discipline – but because it turned the relationship between church and state upside-down. Whereas Calvin argued magistrates had a duty to enforce godly discipline, intervening in spiritual matters together with church elders to target those who refused to comply with God's laws, in France the church had always played a more subservient role, legitimizing the monarchy but never taking precedence over it to push for godliness. Calvinist theocracy thus undermined the monarch's power.⁴ Besides, Catholics worried about the making of a Protestant 'state within the state', for Huguenots throughout France established their own churches, who in turn delegated representatives to local and national synods. These fears were not entirely unfounded, because the parallel structure functioned admirably well in setting up militias that were used not simply to defend Huguenot communities, but also to ravage and take over Catholic churches, and next enforce discipline on town citizens.⁵

¹ Holt, *French Wars of Religion*, pp. 7-9.

² Kaplan, *Divided by Faith*, p. 161.

³ Philip Benedict, 'The Dynamics of Protestant Militancy: France, 1555-1563', in Philip Benedict et al., eds., *Reformation, Revolt and Civil War in France and the Netherlands 1555-1585* (Amsterdam, 1999), pp. 45-49; Davis, 'Rites of Violence', pp. 75-78.

⁴ Holt, *French Wars of Religion*, pp. 24-26.

⁵ Benedict, 'Dynamics of Protestant Militancy', pp. 39-44.

So how did French rulers deal with a nation increasingly divided by faith? Persecution was the most obvious answer. Keeping his promise to eradicate all heresy from the French kingdom, Henry II in 1551 issued the Edict of Châteaubriand, essentially a comprehensive legal ban on Protestantism. Huguenots were forbidden to circulate their ideas in print and hold clandestine meetings, they were barred from all government offices and teaching in academies or university, authorities were given full powers to search houses for heretics and arrest those who sheltered Huguenots, and informers were promised one-third of the confiscated property of anyone they turned in.⁶ Yet Protestant heresy proved difficult to root out, nor were Huguenots prepared to surrender without putting up a fight: decades of bloody religious conflict followed, known as the French Wars of Religion.⁷

As religious conflict dragged on without either side gaining the upper hand, it became obvious that restoring religious unity was unlikely in the foreseeable future. The situation in France stood in stark contrast to the Holy Roman Empire, where rulers had already hammered out an agreement on religious pluralism at the Peace of Augsburg in 1555. Their ingenious solution was to combine the principle of *cuius regio, eius religio* (whose the region, his the religion) with a *ius emigrandi*, the right to emigrate: a ruler's beliefs – either Catholic, Lutheran or Calvinist – dictated the sole confession within his territory, but subjects of different faith were allowed to leave for a neighbouring state that was in line with their religion. The arrangement proved highly successful in quelling religious violence, and was again confirmed at the 1648 peace treaties of Westphalia.⁸ Still, it stopped short of allowing religious pluralism within a single state, and only functioned because the Empire consisted of myriad territories – if you lived in a Catholic realm, the next Calvinist duchy was never far away. Leaving a vast state like France was infinitely more difficult, while French monarchs preferred to enforce religious unity over all citizens rather than let dissenters wander away.

By result, religious warfare in France continued until Henry IV issued the Edict of Nantes in 1598. The edict really consisted of four separate documents: 92 general articles, another set of 56 'secret articles', and two royal *brevets*.⁹ The Huguenots made significant gains, because the edict allowed them complete freedom of conscience (article 6), as well as freedom of worship in all towns under their control in 1597 and in the homes of Protestant

⁶ Holt, *French Wars of Religion*, pp. 29-30.

⁷ For an overview, see: *ibid.*, pp. 50-162.

⁸ Kaplan, *Divided by Faith*, pp. 150-161.

⁹ The articles and *brevets* are published in Roland Mousnier, *L'assassinat d'Henri IV: Le problème du tyrannicide et l'affermissement de la monarchie absolue* (Paris, 1964), pp. 294-334. For summaries of the edict, see: *ibid.*, pp. 127-134; Holt, *French Wars of Religion*, pp. 166-170; Elisabeth Labrousse, 'Calvinism in France, 1598-1685', in Menna Prestwich, ed., *International Calvinism 1541-1715* (Oxford, 1985), pp. 285-286; and Luria, *Sacred Boundaries*, pp. 3-7.

noblemen (articles 7-10). Huguenots moreover obtained the right to build new churches in areas they controlled (article 16), they could go to university, colleges and schools (article 22), and hold public offices (article 27). The edict also set up so-called *chambres mi-parties* with a fixed number of both Catholic and Huguenot judges to settle disputes over the edict's arrangements (articles 30-31). Finally, Huguenots were allowed to hold consistories and synods (secret article 34). The two sets of articles were officially registered in the *Parlements*, but Henry was well aware that some concessions he had made to the Protestant camp would meet with strong opposition of the judges. He therefore issued two royal brevets, intended as temporary favours, which granted Huguenots the right to maintain troops in about 200 towns, and promised Huguenot pastors an annual subsidy.

Yet the edict was by no means an all-out victory for the Huguenots, because Catholics walked away with even better results. Henry ordered that Catholicism was to be restored throughout France, especially in places where Huguenots had chased away their Catholic neighbours: the churches and possessions they had confiscated had to be returned, and priests should be allowed to hold masses again (article 3). Huguenots were also obliged to observe all Catholic holidays, and close their shops on these days (article 20), they had to follow Catholic law regarding marriage and contracts (article 23), and pay the ecclesiastical tithe (article 25). Although the edict benefited both confessions, Catholicism undoubtedly gained the upper hand: the articles severely restricted Protestant worship, while Catholicism was reinstated as the dominating religion, even in Huguenot heartland.

Historians have often hailed the Edict of Nantes as an enlightened solution to the problem of religious diversity, because its toleration of religious pluralism put an end to decades of confessional strife. They were not entirely wrong. The arrangement was 'forward-looking' in the sense that it offered the French a choice between two legally recognized churches. Whereas in most early modern states civil and religious identities had to overlap, following the accepted principle of *cuius regio, eius religio*, in France citizens could be either Catholic or Protestant and at the same time be considered loyal subjects. The edict thus created a *de jure* bi-confessional state, authorities both guaranteeing and policing religious difference.¹⁰ This was almost unprecedented in Europe: other states had carried out similar experiments, but quickly abandoned parity in favour of only one recognized church. The 1572 religious

¹⁰ Luria, *Sacred Boundaries*, 9-10.

peace proclaimed by the States of Holland for example, which allowed Catholics and Protestants to freely worship alongside each other, only lasted one year.¹¹

The bi-confessional state was never meant to be permanent solution, however. Henry IV understood better than any of his predecessors the need to negotiate a religious settlement that would appease both confessions and thus put an end to civil war, but still his ultimate aim was to restore religious unity. Although the edict was labelled ‘perpetual and irrevocable’, the preamble made it very clear that religious coexistence was simply a temporary arrangement until France had again attained a blissful state of unity:

But now that it has pleased God to give us a beginning of enjoying some Rest, we think we cannot employ it better, than to apply to that which may tend to the glory and service of his holy name, and to provide that he may be adored and prayed unto by all our Subjects: *and if it has not yet pleased him to permit it to be in one and the same form of Religion, that it may at the least be with one and the same intention*, and with such rules that may prevent amongst them all troubles and tumults.¹²

Indeed, religious toleration was not yet the litmus test for a modern society, as enlightened philosophy would have it in the eighteenth century. Rather, it was portrayed as the reluctant permission of heresy, dictated by circumstances: in 1694 the first edition of the dictionary published by the Académie Française defined tolerance as “condescension or indulgence for what one cannot prevent”. In other words, toleration meant nothing more than grudgingly putting up with the presence of despicable heretics in one’s town or state, a pragmatic move stopping short of truly respecting their heterodoxy.¹³

Erosion

Because Catholics and Huguenots had only reluctantly agreed to toleration, and neither side had given up its ideal of creating a Church of France embracing all believers, the Edict of Nantes risked constant collapse. Both groups merely used the deal to advance their own

¹¹ Joke Spaans, ‘Religious Policies in the Seventeenth-Century Dutch Republic’, in Ronnie Po-Chia Hsia and Henk van Nierop, eds., *Calvinism and Religious Toleration in the Dutch Golden Age* (Cambridge, 2002), p. 77.

¹² Quoted from the English translation in Roland Mousnier, *The Assassination of Henry IV: The Tyrannicide Problem and the Consolidation of the French Absolute Monarchy in the Early Seventeenth Century*, trans. Joan Spencer (London, 1973), p. 317. I have slightly modernized the spelling; emphasis added.

¹³ Labrousse, *Une foi, une loi, un roi*, p. 95 ; Philip Benedict, ‘Un roi, une loi, deux fois: parameters for the history of Catholic-Reformed co-existence in France, 1555-1685’, in Ole Peter Grell and Bob Scribner, eds., *Tolerance and Intolerance in the European Reformation* (Cambridge, 1996), p. 67; Jean Delumeau, ‘La difficile émergence de la tolérance’, in Roger Zuber and Laurent Theis, eds., *La Révocation de l’Édit de Nantes et le protestantisme français en 1685* (Paris, 1986), pp. 359-374.

interests. Catholics argued the edict allowed them to reintroduce the true faith into Huguenot communities and convert their erring brothers. Capuchin monks carried out missions into Huguenot heartland, where they organised processions and public masses to ‘resacralize’ the space lost to Protestantism.¹⁴ Huguenots on the other hand viewed the edict as a first step towards unrestricted freedom of worship, hoping they could persuade papists to abjure their errors. Meanwhile militants on both sides of the confessional divide rejected the edict altogether, unwilling to postpone religious unity for temporary toleration. In 1599 Huguenot leader Philippe Duplessis-Mornay railed against the popish mass, implicitly arguing the monarchy should not lure Protestants into an idolatrous and inimical Catholic fold. Catholic *dévots* similarly decried the wrongs they claimed to suffer at the hands of Huguenots, and petitioned the king to reverse his policy. In 1610 the devout Catholic François Ravallac took abhorrence of religious pluralism to the extreme, stabbing Henry IV to death.¹⁵

The monarch’s death was most unfortunate for Protestant France, because the protection of the Huguenot minority envisaged by the Edict of Nantes depended largely on royal goodwill. Only the monarch could renew the controversial *brevets* that allowed for Huguenot strongholds and ministers’ salaries, while the articles were no guarantee against future conflict unless the monarchy was committed to uphold them and steer a middle course. Henry IV had never left any doubts about his commitment to maintaining a religious balance, acting as arbiter in confessional disputes, but his successors were less even-handed: over time royal policy came to favour Catholicism, and aimed at a speedy return to religious unity by eroding the Huguenots’ rights laid down in the edict.¹⁶

The monarchy dealt its first major blow in 1629, when the fall of Huguenot stronghold La Rochelle ended the last War of Religion: at the subsequent Peace of Alès Louis XIII did confirm the Edict of Nantes, but fearful of Huguenot military power he did not renew the *brevet* allowing for Huguenot garrisons.¹⁷ Next, in 1659 cardinal Mazarin announced that the upcoming Protestant synod would be the last ever allowed in France, a ban that seriously hindered Huguenot decision-making on the national plan. It was the young monarch Louis XIV who made most haste with curtailing the Huguenots’ civil rights. Mazarin had already envisaged to appoint so-called *commissaires de l’Édit*, who had to tour the provinces to ensure no one overstepped the confessional boundaries, but when Louis ascended to the

¹⁴ Luria, *Sacred Boundaries*, pp. 47-102; Labrousse, *Une foi, une loi, un roi*, pp. 63-65.

¹⁵ Holt, *French Wars of Religion*, pp. 175-177; Labrousse, *Une foi, une loi, un roi*, p. 68-75; Mousnier, *L’assassinat d’Henri IV*, pp. 1-18, 94-142.

¹⁶ Benedict, ‘Un roi, une loi, deux fois’, pp. 81-82; Labrousse, *Une foi, une loi, un roi*, p. 116.

¹⁷ Holt, *French Wars of Religion*, pp. 178-194; Labrousse, ‘Calvinism in France’, pp. 301-302.

throne in 1661 he ordered their immediate creation. They were far from neutral; Catholics dominated the commissions and used their powers to make sure to curtail Protestant worship wherever they could. The edict had allowed Protestant churches in all places under Huguenot control, but in the 1660s commissaries were no longer happy to take the de facto presence of a church for granted: Huguenot communities that failed to provide written proof of their existence back in 1597 had their church closed down.¹⁸

Louis XIV continued his legal cold war against Protestantism by issuing a series of *arrets*. Huguenot synods and colloquies were officially forbidden, the number of Huguenots holding offices was bound to quota, and they were barred from guilds and professions such as teaching. The litany did not end: the age children were allowed to convert to Catholicism was lowered to seven, converted Huguenots were forbidden to relapse, and Protestant temples could be closed down if converts secretly attended services. Besides targeting Protestants as a *corps*, royal policy also singled out individual believers. Magistrates promised high-ranking Huguenots considerable pensions and career advancement if they abjured their faith. The monarchy also pumped extra money in the *caisse des économats*, a fund it had established in 1615 to support converted pastors, but now increasingly used to obtain Huguenot conversions by offering them a financial reward.¹⁹

Yet much to the dismay of Louis XIV and the Catholic Church most Huguenots did not abjure their faith, even though the string of *arrets* and closing down of churches made Protestant worship extremely difficult. Growing impatient with judicial measures to restore religious unity, authorities thus fell back on the tested remedy of persecution. In 1681 Marillac, royal *intendant* in the province of Poitou, billeted soldiers in Huguenot families until these converted to Catholicism. Because dragoons were a huge drain on household finances and were allowed to use violence, many Huguenots quickly abjured. Fear spread across the Poitou: the news of approaching dragoons made entire Huguenot communities sign their abjuration with the local priest even before troops had arrived in their village. From a Catholic viewpoint the *dragonnades* were highly successful, because within weeks more than 30,000 Huguenots had converted. Organized persecutions were equally effective in other provinces, and in 1685 Louis XIV triumphantly claimed that since France no longer counted any Protestants, the Edict of Nantes might just as well be revoked.²⁰ After nearly a century, the bi-confessional experiment had finally come to an end.

¹⁸ Labrousse, *Une foi, une loi, un roi*, pp. 125-129.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 156-172; Labrousse, 'Calvinism in France', pp. 305-307.

²⁰ Labrousse, *Une foi, une loi, un roi*, pp. 167-195; Labrousse, 'Calvinism in France', pp. 308-309.

Huguenot Answers

To Huguenots, Louis' religious policy and the ultimate overturning of religious pluralism revived the problem of how to be Protestant in a Catholic state. The Edict of Nantes had more or less put a moratorium on this dilemma, since it had recognized adherents of both faiths as loyal subjects of the French crown. Yet as the monarchy eroded the Huguenots' civil rights and stepped up persecution, it became clear that it was only a matter of time before their civil and religious identity would once more be forced to overlap, following the adage of 'one faith, one law, one king'. How did Huguenots respond?

The easiest solution was to become a Nicodemite. Most Huguenots only signed their abjuration to avoid further persecution, but behind a façade of Catholic devotion kept alive their Protestant beliefs. Magistrates and Catholic clergy were well aware that these so-called *nouveaux Catholiques* or *nouveaux convertis* often played a double game. To be sure, on Sundays the converts went to mass, but back home they would simply pray their own Lord, read their bible, sing psalms, and instruct their children in the Protestant faith. In their wills ex-Huguenots stubbornly left out the formula 'Catholic, Apostolic and Roman', and made no reference to the Virgin and the saints. Many even had the courage to defy Catholicism: converts 'forgot' to decorate their houses during Corpus Christi processions, they would deliberately eat meat on fast days, and Sunday mass was skipped under the pretext of illness or not having heard the church bells. Others refused the sacraments at their deathbed, and abjured Catholicism again.²¹

The more steadfast Huguenots refused Nicodemism altogether: they did not abjure but took to the woods, forming maroon communities often led by lay preachers, who organized clandestine services, baptized children, presided over the Lord's Supper, and received confessions of faith. Protestant congregations wandering *dans le désert* were especially popular with the younger generation, who during adolescence broke with their parents' Nicodemism. One of them explained that "the secret teaching that I received daily from my father and mother brought my aversion for idolatry and the errors of popery to such a pitch that having reached the years of my discretion, I practised no religion but that of the assemblies which met in the *déserts* and secret places".²²

²¹ Labrousse, *Une foi, une loi, un roi*, pp. 202-205; Philippe Joutard, 'The Revocation of the Edict of Nantes: End or Renewal of French Protestantism?', in Menna Prestwich, ed., *International Calvinism 1541-1715* (Oxford, 1985), pp. 358-360.

²² Joutard, 'End or Renewal?', pp. 361-362.

Rebellion was another option. Many of the clandestine assemblies did not hesitate to carry arms to defend themselves against attacks by soldiers, but in 1701 a genuine revolt broke out in the Cevennes region. Huguenot rebel bands attacked village priests and royal troops, and peace was not restored until 1704.²³ Rebellion was a much-disputed solution, however. When the French monarchy had started to crack down on Protestantism in the sixteenth century, Huguenots had already asked themselves whether they should take up arms. Theorists came up with ambivalent answers. Calvin himself had gone to great lengths in his *Institutes of the Christian Religion* to prove that Protestantism in no way threatened social order, as he followed Luther by arguing that citizens had a duty to obey their ruler, even if he persecuted them. Monarchs derived their authority directly from God, so to rise up against them was a rejection of the sacred, god-given order. Yet at the same time Calvin believed that kings were bound to rule according to God's laws: if they failed their duty and degenerated into tyrants persecuting their subjects, magistrates appointed by the nation could rightfully curb royal power.²⁴

After the brutal St. Bartholomew's massacres of 1572, many Huguenots believed the time had come to lend the Almighty and the magistrates a hand – preferably armed – in dethroning their monarch, but French theorists were still reluctant to call for popular resistance. In his work *Francogallia* (1573), François Hotman gave a bleak historical overview of kings gradually usurping the people's power. He argued that the Franks had once voluntarily elected a king to govern them as *primus inter pares*, and created a body of representatives to survey their ruler. The implications were clear: since a king derived his authority from the nation, the Estates-General functioning as its custodian was allowed to correct the monarch or even depose him if he turned against his subjects. Along similar lines, Philippe du Plessis-Mornay argued in *Defense of Liberty against Tyrants* (1579) that both the monarch and his subjects were by contract bound to God. The king had to assure godly rule, while the nation in turn owed him obedience; if the monarch broke this sacred bond by tyrannising his people, the magistrates could dethrone him.²⁵

Although theorists thus only sanctioned limited resistance by the magistrates, and never all-out popular rebellion, the following decades nevertheless witnessed the creation of Protestant militias and a civil war, earning earned Huguenots the reputation of violent

²³ *Ibid.*, pp. 362-366.

²⁴ Myriam Yardeni, 'French Calvinist Political Thought, 1534-1715', in Menna Prestwich, ed., *International Calvinism 1541-1715* (Oxford, 1985), pp. 315-319; Mousnier, *L'assassinat d'Henri IV*, 72-74; Quentin Skinner, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought, vol. II: The Age of Reformation* (Cambridge, 1978), 191-238.

²⁵ Yardeni, 'French Calvinist Political Thought', pp. 320-324; Skinner, *Foundations of Modern Political Thought, vol. II*, pp. 302-336; Mousnier, *L'assassinat d'Henri IV*, 75-79.

monarchomachs. Their calls for rebellion were muffled when Henry IV ascended to the throne and guaranteed Protestant rights in the Edict of Nantes, and after the king's death in 1610 Huguenots abandoned theories of resistance altogether: well aware that their toleration depended on royal willingness, they stressed their unwavering loyalty to the French crown. At midcentury the English Civil War only catalyzed the Huguenot's ultra-loyalty, because they wished to counteract Catholic pamphleteers who pointed across the Channel to argue that Protestantism legitimized violent resistance to the monarchy, and even regicide. Especially among high-ranking Huguenot officeholders and merchants in northern France, the understanding took root that only their unswerving loyalty to the monarchy could guarantee toleration of Protestant worship, whereas rebellion would worsen their predicament. Yet in the south many Huguenots clearly thought otherwise, and in 1701 revolt broke out.²⁶

For those who refused to hide their faith behind a Catholic façade or take up arms, the only solution was to go into exile. They took refuge in the Protestant states of England, Switzerland, Brandenburg-Prussia, and the Dutch Republic. Yet leaving France was a dangerous business, because Huguenots were forbidden to cross the borders without royal permission. Contrary to the Peace of Augsburg, the 1685 Edict of Fontainebleau did not grant Protestants an *ius emigrandi*. Only Huguenot pastors were given a fortnight to leave, but they could not take their children over seven years of age with them, and had to abandon all their possessions. After these two weeks all Huguenots trying to leave France ran the risk of being arrested, the men sentenced to the galleys, and the women put in prison or convents, while anyone assisting in their escape faced the death penalty.²⁷

But the steadfast were not to be discouraged. Exactly how many managed to escape, we still do not know. Protestant historians overdramatizing Huguenot plight have put the total at a million refugees, but as this number constituted the entire Huguenot population of France by 1685, it clearly is an exaggeration. Catholic historians by contrast have tried to exonerate the monarchy by claiming only 50,000 Huguenots left France. The true extent of the exodus was probably somewhere around 200,000 refugees. Especially Huguenots living in northern France made their escape: Île-de-France lost more than half its Protestant population, while only 20 percent of the Poitou Huguenots left. Their position on the social ladder played an important role, because elites, artisans and merchants had ready access to international networks that were the key to a successful escape, while they also had fewer difficulties in

²⁶ Yardeni, 'French Calvinist Political Thought', pp. 324-330; Elisabeth Labrousse, *Conscience et conviction: Études sur le XVIIe siècle* (Oxford, 1996), pp. 74-77, 81-93.

²⁷ Labrousse, *Une foi, une loi, un roi*, p. 196-198, 207.

transferring their property and starting a new business abroad than Huguenot peasants. This would explain why the poorer Huguenots of France's rural south stayed behind, and were more willing to risk their lives in a revolt against the monarchy. Still, in the end the decision to go into exile was made by the individual believer, as he or she could no longer reconcile his Protestant conscience with Catholic conformity.²⁸

The most popular exile destination was the Dutch Republic, where roughly between 35,000 and 50,000 of all Huguenot refugees ended up. After all, there already existed a structure of French-speaking churches, legacy of another Protestant exodus: when Spanish troops had re-conquered the Southern Netherlands in the late sixteenth century, taking the stronghold of Antwerp in 1585, many Protestants had migrated to the rebellious United Provinces to escape persecution. Yet rather than integrate into the Dutch Reformed Church, the French-speaking refugees had set up their own so-called Walloon Churches in towns such as Amsterdam, Haarlem, Leiden, Delft, Rotterdam and The Hague.²⁹

Fleeing undoubtedly eased the Huguenots' religious conscience, as they could freely worship the Lord in these Walloon churches, but exile did not mean religion suddenly took a back seat. On the contrary, both their stay abroad and their hope to ultimately return to France forced Huguenots to consider their religious identity. Was irreconcilable religious conflict the only way to stay true to Protestant beliefs, or was coexistence possible? To find out what answers Huguenot refugees came up with, we must now turn away from the legal history of edicts and the intellectual history of political thought, and write a social history of religious praxis, examining the Huguenots' religious behaviour and discourse in exile.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 213-215; Joutard, 'End or Renewal?', pp. 345-348. Nusteling on the other hand argues that the total number of refugees never exceeded 100,000: Nusteling, 'Netherlands and Huguenot émigrés', pp. 26-30.

²⁹ Nusteling, 'Netherlands and Huguenot émigrés', pp. 17-25; Posthumus Meyjes, 'Rapports entre les Eglises Wallonnes et la France', pp. 1-15; Dibon, 'Refuge wallon', pp. 53-74.

2.

Crossing Borders

Tucked away in a corner of the *Binnenhof* in The Hague once stood a humble court chapel, where on Sunday mornings the sound of French would reverberate between the walls. Since 1581 it had been home to a small Walloon community, but near the end of the seventeenth century the dwindling number of faithful was rapidly balanced out by the influx of Huguenots fleeing persecution in France. These were worrying times for the pastors and elders, who after service gathered in the adjacent consistory room to discuss their ever-expanding flock, jotting down their decisions in the consistory book. A source rich in stories, the book offers a glance into the moral and religious mentality of ordinary believers, hauled before the consistory to explain their actions, or pleading for church support to solve their financial and familial difficulties.

On 9 November 1711 for example, *monsieur* Carneli came to the consistory meeting on urgent business. For a long time he had sheltered his niece Susanne Rival, who had probably escaped France leaving the rest of her family behind or dispersed elsewhere in Europe. Yet looking after her had proved a real burden: Carneli explained that Susanne “had extremely chagrined him since a long time, and especially since she has been in The Hague, and that both her religious conduct and her manners were very bad”.¹ The consistory took the affair very serious, and immediately assigned pastor Jacques Basnage and elder Gabriel De la Faille to examine the allegations.

They must have found their worst fears confirmed, because a month later Suzanne was harshly reprimanded on suspicions of lapsed faith. Basnage unrelentingly told her “that she had to abstain from Christmas Communion, and that she should continue to instruct herself and to strengthen her knowledge of the true Religion” – only if the consistory was convinced

¹ Consistory minutes, 9 November 1711, GA DH, WHG 2, f. 77: “Lui a causé des chagrins extremes depuis long tems, et sur tout depuis qu’elle est à la Haye, et qu’elle à une tres mauvaise conduite tant par rapport à la religion que par rapport à ses mauvaises manieres.”

she was a pious and true Protestant, would she be readmitted at the Lord's Table.² Depriving Suzanne of Communion sobered her up indeed, for next February she asked permission to commune again. Basnage and his aide willingly agreed to examine her, and thereafter Suzanne left no more traces in the consistory book.³

In the eyes of pastors and elders, moral and religious policing went hand in hand. The consistory believed it had a pastoral duty to keep the community of faithful untainted, using church discipline to ensure believers stuck to the boundaries of permitted behaviour. Black sheep were suspended from the Lord's Table to safeguard the community, as well as to force offenders to reflect on their shameful transgression. Although the records do not precisely tell us what moral offense Susanne had committed, it had surely grieved both her uncle and the consistory deeply, while her lapsed faith may have raised suspicions she had Catholic sympathies – at any rate Susanne's loose morals and lacking piety warranted an exhortation to fully devote herself to Protestantism. Yet while the consistory and devout believers such as *monsieur* Carneli laboured to enforce communal discipline, Susanne and many others self-consciously crossed the moral and religious boundaries. Examining their behaviour and justifications before the consistory reveals much about the tension between pious ideals and daily practice.

The records demonstrate that besides religious devotion, joining the Walloon church could be a pragmatic move: church members were eligible for charity, a true godsend for destitute Huguenot refugees forced to leave behind their possessions in France. Ecclesiastical discipline also offered church members a way out in domestic disputes, as the consistory could mediate between embroiled family members. When the consistory suspended Susanne from the Lord's Table, it therefore decided that pastor Basnage would also persuade her uncle to show forgiveness – apparently without much success, because in 1712 church elders twice had to urge Carneli “to protect her and show her his affection”.⁴ Carneli was never suspended, but the repeated efforts to reconcile him with his niece show the elders' deep attachment to a harmonious community.

² Consistory minutes, 7 December 1711, GA DH, WHG 2, f. 82: “Qu'elle devoit se priver de la Communion pour le quartier de Noel et qu'elle continuera à s'instruire et à s'affermir dans la connoissance de la veritable Religion.”

³ Consistory minutes, 22 February 1712, GA DH, WHG 2, f. 90.

⁴ Consistory minutes, 7 December 1711, 22 February 1712 and 13 June 1712, GA DH, WHG 2, f. 82, f. 90 and f. 96: “De lui rendre sa protection et son affection.”

Policing Moral Borders

The primary aim of the consistory and most believers, then, was to make sure their congregation was untainted. Moral offenders polluted the *corpus christianum*, or communal body of devout followers of Christ, which was celebrated at the Lord's Supper. Protestant churches in the Dutch Republic drew a clear line between official church members (so-called *lidmaten*) and those simply coming to service (*liefhebbers*). This was largely due to historical circumstances: after the Reformation the Reformed Church had never succeeded in persuading an overwhelming majority of Dutch citizens to join the Calvinist ranks. As a result the Dutch Republic still had a sizeable Catholic population living among its borders, hosted Lutheran congregations as well as a spectre of dissenting Protestant sects, and was a welcome refuge to Jews. While elsewhere in Europe such religious diversity brew conflict, as state authorities unnerved by such a marketplace of confessions cracked down on perceived heretics to enforce a single creed, the politically decentralised Dutch Republic simply lacked a central authority that had the power to impose religious uniformity. Consequently the Dutch Reformed Church only was a public church, never a church of state: the Dutch were not obliged to become a *lidmaat*, and were at liberty to just attend services as *liefhebber*, simply stay at home, or worship the Lord in Lutheran churches and unobtrusive Catholic *schuilkerken*.⁵

This distinction between *lidmaat* and *liefhebber* was no different in the French-speaking congregations that had sprung up in the Dutch Republic at the end of the sixteenth century. After all, the Walloon churches were an integral part of the Dutch Reformed Church since the 1571 synod of Emden, where delegates had conferred with their Dutch brothers on an appropriate church organization and correct Calvinist doctrine. Together they had adopted the French confession of faith, and had decided on a structure of consistories, classes and synods to administer the Reformed Church. Although in 1578 Walloon delegates successfully petitioned the synod in Dordrecht to administer their churches separately, their semi-independent status did not push the French-speaking consistories to abandon Calvinist purity, nor were they so foolish to make church membership compulsory – despite the language barrier, believers would probably have gone to attend services in the Dutch Reformed Church.⁶

⁵ J.L. Price, *The Dutch Republic in the Seventeenth Century* (Basingstoke, 1998), pp. 86-100; A. Th. van Deursen, , *Bavianen en slijkgeuzen: Kerk en kerkvolk ten tijde van Maurits en Oldenbarnevelt* (Franeker, 1998), pp. 128-156.

⁶ Dibon, 'Le Refuge wallon' pp. 53-55; Posthumus Meyjes, 'Rapports entre les Eglises Wallonnes', pp. 1-4; Willem Frijhoff, 'Uncertain Brotherhood: The Huguenots in the Dutch Republic', in Bertrand van Ruymbeke

Even more important than historical contingency was the Calvinist version of utopia: Calvinism had perhaps done away with the idolatrous veneration of saints, but the Reformed Church still liked to present itself as a gathering of ‘visible saints’, devout believers whose zeal and moral steadfastness were a shining example for otherwise lax churchgoers. Only those believers who made a confession of faith in front of their minister, demonstrating their sound Calvinist doctrine, and who had moreover proved to be of incorruptible behaviour, were received as worthy members of Christ’s community of elect, and were allowed to celebrate Communion. The ideal of comprehension never died out, but deep down Calvinists believed that their moral standards should not be watered down by allowing in all believers. In the Walloon and Reformed churches of the Dutch Republic, the privilege of election translated into a clear line between *lidmaten* and *liefhebbers*, an arrangement which English puritans regarded with envy, because the Anglican Church was open to all believers, no matter their religiosity.⁷

Becoming a member also meant believers had to submit to ecclesiastical discipline. Because the elect were part of a *corpus christianium*, a sacred body of unblemished individuals, they were expected to always uphold a high moral standard. Conversely, those who transgressed the moral boundaries tainted the entire community; their sins had endangered the covenant between the faithful and God. Moral offenders were therefore hauled before the consistory, and suspended from Communion until they had repented. Initially the pastor would only read their offense from the pulpit, but when believers refused to repent their name was made public – naming and shaming could have a sobering effect. The consistory could even excommunicate stubborn sinners, although this draconic measure was seldom put into practice. Admittedly these were all humiliating measures, but rather than punish offenders as if they were criminals, the whole point of discipline was to protect the flock against black sheep. A suspension had to force offenders to repent, confessing their sins and praying the Church and God for forgiveness, after which the consistory would lift its censure and receive the transgressor back into the fold – ‘*reçu à la paix de l’Église*’ was the recurrent catchphrase.⁸

and Randy J. Sparks, eds., *Memory and Identity: The Huguenots in France and the Atlantic Diaspora* (Columbia, 2003), pp. 128-134.

⁷ Van Deursen, *Bavianen en slijkgeuzen*, pp. 193-200; John Spurr, *English Puritanism 1603-1689* (Basingstoke, 1998).

⁸ Van Deursen, *Bavianen en slijkgeuzen*, pp. 200-215; Herman Roodenburg, *Onder censuur: De kerkelijke tucht in de gereformeerde gemeente van Amsterdam, 1578-1700* (Hilversum, 1990), pp. 72-134; Heinz Schilling, ‘“History of Crime” or “History of Sin”? – Some Reflections on the Social History of Early Modern Church Discipline’, in E. I. Kouri and Tom Scott, eds., *Politics and Society in Reformation Europe* (Basingstoke, 1987), pp. 297-303.

Offenders often came to the elders' attention during visitations. Like in any Protestant community, elders and pastors of the Walloon Church in The Hague would visit their church members in the run-up to Communion, which took place at least twice a year around Easter and Christmas. Visiting all members took more than a month, because the consistory was seriously under-staffed to deal with the growing number of Huguenot refugees joining their congregation. In 1710 the elders split up The Hague in two districts, deciding to visit these in turn before Communion, while a year later some elders complained that visitation was even more difficult because the whereabouts of some families were unknown – a list of members' addresses was hurriedly drawn up to remedy this problem.⁹ House visits were serious business indeed. As the consistory put it in 1713, the aim was “to especially exhort the families to zealously observe the Sabbath by visiting the public assemblies that are held that day”.¹⁰ Visitations served to remind the faithful that only the regular, pious churchgoers would be allowed to sit at the Lord's Table, but it also gave church members an opportunity to confess any sins and repent before Communion, or to denounce other believers.

Visiting elders were especially interested in offenses that bore a public character or were already known outside the confines of the consistory room. Public knowledge of church members behaving immorally endangered the self-fashioned image of an untainted community of saints, not to mention the relationship between refugees and host society.¹¹ In 1679 for example, the consistory got wind of loose morals in the Nouville family when the elders visited other church members. Apparently *monsieur* Nouville and his wife had exploited a girl called Chardonnet, offering her as a prostitute to three young officers walking down the Voorhout, while *madame* herself had committed adultery with another captain in her own house, and had even beaten up her husband with a stick. Not bothering to hear their justifications, an appalled consistory immediately suspended the trio from Communion, “believing that their [the elders'] report backed up by *the common and general murmurs* of several honourable people in our Church was sufficient to pronounce the aforementioned censure against them, without hearing them shout for a long time, as these sort of people use to do on such occasions”.¹²

⁹ Consistory minutes, 23 June 1710 and 6 July 1711, GA DH, WHG 2, f. 22 and f. 64.

¹⁰ Consistory minutes, 13 March 1713, GA DH, WHG 2, f. 113: “Exhorteront sur tout les familles à observer religieusement le jour de Dimanche, en visitant les assemblées publiques qui se tiennent ce jour la.” On the practice of visiting church members, see Van Deursen, *Bavianen en slijkgeuzen*, pp. 198-198; Roodenburg, *Onder censuur*, pp. 117-119.

¹¹ Roodenburg, *Onder censuur*, pp. 131-134; Yardeni, *Refuge Huguenot*, pp. 65-68.

¹² Consistory minutes, 30 September 1679, GA DH, WHG 1, f. 164: “La Compagnie a crû que leur rapport appuyé du bruit commun et general de plusieurs gens d'honneur de l'Eglise suffisoit pour prononcer contr'eux

Precisely because of the Nouvilles' public transgressions, the entire community knew and gossiped about their scandalous behaviour, making it clear to everyone that the utopian gathering of saints was polluted. Only the swift application of church discipline could save the elect. Thus it comes as no surprise that a month later, pastor Carré flatly refused Nouvelle's demand to lift his suspension, telling him that people "were so scandalized by what they had seen and heard, because it was in their neighbourhood that these things had passed, that they had said to one of our pastors they were astonished that these sort of people were admitted at the Lord's Table".¹³

In 1683, reader and consoler of the sick Samuel Favon was similarly suspended from both his offices and Communion, because his conduct "was not just irregular but even scandalous *both inside and outside his house*, outside by drinking, inside by badly treating his wife."¹⁴ Again fears of a public scandal pushed the consistory to undertake rapid action: elders were expedited to examine the affair, reporting back that rumours were true, and Favon's neighbours 'most scandalized'. Favon had disgraced the sacred community of believers, and as a result he was denied access to Communion, because as the consistory argued, "its charge is to watch out for scandals, especially those implicating public persons serving in the Church of God".¹⁵ Favon eventually repented, but the wine bottle proved too much of a temptation, because in 1686 churchgoers again complained he had been drunk when reading from the Holy Scripture during service.¹⁶ It was Favon's public drunkenness that most worried the devout: their reader had desecrated the Word of God, so essential to Calvinists, scandalizing not just his listeners but God himself – unless Favon quickly repented, the community feared it would surely fall out of favour with the Almighty.

The Justice of Discipline

While suspending these black sheep from Communion first of all served to safeguard the pious vanguard, the second and ultimate goal was to restore peace. Suspension never was a permanent punishment, but only had to make offenders repent, reconciling them with the

laditte censure, sans les escouter criailler long temps, comme ces sortes de gens ont de coustume en telles occasions." Emphasis added.

¹³ Consistory minutes, 5 November 1679, GA DH, WHG 1, f. 165: "Estoient tellement scandalisés de ce qu'elles avoient vu et ouï, parce que c'est en leur voisinage que ces choses se passent, qu'elles avoient dit à un de nos pasteurs qu'elles s'estonnoient de ce que telles gens estoient admises à la table du Seigneur."

¹⁴ Consistory minutes, 2 October 1683, GA DH, WHG 1, f. 176: "La conduite de Samuel Favon (...) estoit non seulement irreguliere mais mesme scandaleuse dedans et dehors sa maison, dehors par la boisson, et dedans par le mauvais menage qu'il faisoit avec sa femme". Emphasis added.

¹⁵ Ibid: "La Compagnie qui sçait que sa charge est de veiller sur les scandales, et notamment sur ceux des personnes publiques et qui sont en charge dans l'Eglise de Dieu."

¹⁶ Consistory minutes, 6 July and 22 December 1686, GA DH, WHG 1, f. 183 and f. 186.

church community. Consistories argued that harmonious families and cordial relations between parishioners were at the basis of a peaceful church community, even society at large, and they would always try their best to resolve differences among their flock. In this sense the Protestant system of discipline provided believers with an opportunity to resolve conflicts outside court, and usually with a happier ending than hefty fines, incarceration, or other forms of corporal punishment. Church members asked the consistory to mediate in domestic disputes, because they hoped that suspension from Communion – or simply the threat of exclusion – would bring about a change of behaviour with their husband or wife, their mother-in-law, or their neighbours.¹⁷

This was no different in the Walloon Church of The Hague, where church members used ecclesiastical discipline to their own advantage. Especially women suffering from abusive and infidel husbands hoped consistorial censure would change their sorry ways. The wife of guardsman Pignerol for example complained that her husband had committed adultery, telling the assembled pastors and elders she had already demanded town magistrates for a divorce. Pignerol was consequently denied access to Holy Supper for four years, but in April 1680 he finally begged the consistory for forgiveness, promising to henceforth live an exemplary life.¹⁸

Three decades later Elizabeth le Gerout also went to a consistory meeting to complain that her husband had left her. Apparently her mother-in-law had caused her marriage with Paul Pezé to turn sour, for she was also summoned to appear before the consistory and stood to lose church benefits: the elders had decided “to strongly exhort ... husband and wife to reconcile themselves and to get back together”, and threatened Pezé to suspend him from Communion and cut down on his mother’s charity if he refused to get back to his wife.¹⁹ The records do not reveal if this had the desired effect, but a happy end was not always certain: when Françoise du Quesne told the consistory her husband Isaac Potier had left her, probably for another woman, the elders tried in vain to reunite the former couple. After several mediation efforts had failed to put an end to their differences, they could only suspend Potier from Communion and add his wife to the payroll of the deaconry.²⁰

¹⁷ Roodenburg, *Onder censuur*, 17-27; Van Deursen, *Bavianen en slijkgeuzen*, pp. 200-206. Consistories in France and Scotland likewise mediated in disputes: Margo Todd, *The Culture of Protestantism in Early Modern Scotland* (New Haven and London, 2002), pp. 227-314; Philippe Chareyre, “‘The Great Difficulties One Must Bear to Follow Jesus Christ’: Morality in Sixteenth-Century Nîmes”, in Raymond A. Mentzer, ed., *Sin and the Calvinists: Morals Control and the Consistory in the Reformed Tradition* (Kirkville, 1994), pp. 63-96.

¹⁸ Consistory minutes, 20 April 1680, GA DH, WHG 1, f. 168.

¹⁹ Consistory minutes, 15 and 22 September 1710, GA DH, WHG 2, f. 34-35: “Resolu d’exhorter fortement, comme elle à fait, le mari et la femme à se reconcilier et à retourner ensemble.”

²⁰ Consistory minutes, 3 and 24 November, 1 and 8 December 1710, GA DH, WHG 2, f. 43, 47-50.

Mothers-in-law could often be a source of tension in marriages, but in the eyes of Pierre Donat his wife's mother had transgressed all boundaries when she had hit and insulted her own daughter, who was pregnant with his child. The consistory summoned the mother-in-law to appear before their spiritual tribunal, but two weeks later only Pierre showed up: he told the surprised elders and pastors that as soon as they had summoned her, "she had sent him some messages asking for peace, thereby hoping to avoid the summoning".²¹ While Pierre was satisfied, the consistory wanted to make sure his mother-in-law sincerely regretted her behaviour. A week later she filed into the room alongside Pierre and his wife, and all were urged to live together as true Christians.²²

Women also used church discipline to uphold their reputation of virtue and chastity. In 1693, mademoiselle Roy claimed that Mr. De la Guere had dragged her name through the mire, sullyng her good reputation. De la Guere had probably called her a whore, for hauled before the consistory to repent, "he declared that he had never meant to offend her, and even less to injure her honour; that he had never seen anything in her that wasn't sage, and that he acknowledged her to be honourable girl, against whom one could not make a single complaint". This placated the consistory, which informed mademoiselle Roy that De la Guere's kowtowing should give her 'sufficient satisfaction'.²³

Yet not just women were looking for justice; sometimes men asked the consistory to let their wives bear the full brunt of church discipline. In 1690 Louis Martin told the consistory his wife Marie de Prez was causing him great trouble: she was having an affair with a certain Jean Marais, and although he had explicitly forbidden her, Marie continued to see her lover. In her defence Marie said Louis was abusive and an alcoholic, which had probably driven her – and not without reason – into the arms of a more loving partner, and now made her consider a divorce. Still, pastors and elders believed matrimonial duties came first, because they told Marie she must return to her husband. Predictably she flew into a rage and was suspended from Communion.²⁴ Only next year did she repent, the consistory noting down that it "was rejoiced to see this happy concord between them, and having regard for the marks of repentance of the said Marie de Prez, has lifted the suspension and has received her in the

²¹ Consistory minutes, 7 and 21 November 1712, GA DH, WHG 2, f. 104-105: "Elle lui à fait faire quelques messages tendant à la paix croyant par la s'exempter de la citation."

²² Consistory minutes, 5 December 1712, GA DH, WHG 2, f. 107.

²³ Consistory minutes, 8 October 1693, GA DH, WHG 1, f. 210: "Il declara n'avoir iamais en dessein de l'offenser, moins encore de donner atteinte a sa vertu, qu'il n'avait iamais veu en elle rien qui ne fut sage, et qu'il la reconnoissoit pour une fille d'honneur, et contre laquelle il n'y avoit point de reproche a faire."

²⁴ Consistory minutes, 17 and 21 December 1690, GA DH, WHG 1, f. 204.

peace of the Church”.²⁵ Like many other members of the Walloon Church, Louis Martin had successfully used ecclesiastical discipline to his own advantage, thus restoring moral order within his marriage, while simultaneously aiding the consistory in its mission to safeguard the devout against disunity and vice.

Confessional Border Traffic

The consistory took an interest in moral offenders, but kept an even closer eye on parishioners crossing the confessional boundary. On a very basic level, pastors and elders always made sure church members were of sound Calvinist doctrine; on no account would they tolerate heterodox beliefs. In 1677 the pastors complained “that they found so much ignorance with those coming to them to make a confession of faith, that it was most deplorable”. They proposed to recommence public catechizations after Sunday services in the run-up to Communion, “so that not just those wishing to be received at the Lord’s Table can show up to prove their worthiness, but that also all the children and all the poor supported by the Church, old and young, can be instructed in the graces of the celestial truth”.²⁶ Only a veritable religious offensive could remedy the ignorance among their flock.

Parishioners unfamiliar with Calvinist doctrine not only tainted the sacred body of believers communing at the Lord’s Table, but the consistory also feared that these ignorant were more easily wooed by dissenting Protestant sects spreading their heresies, not to mention the fear that Catholic preachers would tempt them into converting. The pastors were not suffering from paranoia at all, because in the seventeenth-century Dutch Republic continuous catechization was uncommon, and the danger to switch confessional allegiances always present. Children were instructed in the Calvinist faith at school and by their parents at home, while prospective church members were supposed to read up on Calvinist doctrine themselves, usually by learning the Emden confession of faith by heart and dutifully listening to Sunday sermons, although in the Walloon churches an elder or pastor could offer additional guidance. A final examination in the consistory room, or in private by their pastor, would confirm

²⁵ Consistory minutes, 6 August 1681, GA DH, WHG 1, f. 205: “A esté rejoie de voir cette bonne con corde entr’eux, et ayant regard aux marques de la repentance de la dite Marie de Prez elle a levé la suspension et la recue à la paix de l’Eglise.”

²⁶ Consistory minutes, 14 March 1677, GA DH, WHG 1, f. 159: “Qu’ils trouvoient tant d’ignorance en ceux qui venoient se presenter à eux pour rendre raison de leur foy, que c’estoit une chose deplorable. (...) Afin que non seulement ceux qui veulent estre receus à la table du Seigneur y puissent paroistre, pour y donner des preuves de leur capacité, mais aussi que tous les enfans, et tous les pauvres qui sont entretenus de l’Eglise vieux et jeunes y puissent estre instruits dans les secours de la verité celeste.”

parishioners as church member.²⁷ Apparently the pastors had realized this was a risky strategy, deciding public catechization *en masse* was the only solution to root out ignorance and dissuade possible border-crossers.

Yet whereas ignorance could still be remedied, tangible religious behaviour was much more difficult to counteract. Church members crossing the boundaries had always preoccupied the Walloon consistory, but when persecutions in France drove ever more Huguenots to The Hague, enforcing the confessional borders became of crucial importance. Religion bound the refugees together as brothers-in-plaint; it was the reason they had fled France, so to fraternize with the Catholic foe was to stab Huguenot identity in the back, and undermine their shared *raison d'être* abroad.

Interconfessional marriages were a first concern. In January 1680 the consistory received word that *mademoiselle* Aureale had engaged to the count De Noyelle, who happened to be a Catholic. A delegation was sent round to change her mind, “warning the said *mademoiselle* that she would not be admitted at the mysterious Table because of the scandal she caused to the Church by coupling herself with an infidel”.²⁸ She pushed through, however, because in April a just-married countess De Noyelle told pastor Desmarets she regretted the scandal, but assured him “that her conduct would hereafter be so edifying that she would even labour to get *monsieur* the count her husband to know the truth” – in other words, to convert her husband to Protestantism.²⁹ Convinced that despite her marriage to a Catholic the countess was still a root-and-branch Calvinist, Desmarets allowed her to commune again. That same month the consistory received word that another of its members, the captain D’Aubes, had married a ‘papist lady’. He was forbidden to sit at the Lord’s Table until he had undone his fault and repented, a tough censure the man humbly accepted, although the records do not tell us if he divorced his wife, perhaps managed to convert her, or simply abstained from Communion.³⁰

Why was the consistory so worried about mixed marriages? In general, marriage and the family were considered as the basic units of both a well-ordered church and society at large. Surely no household and community could be properly ordered if the Catholic-

²⁷ Van Deursen, *Bavianen en slijkgeuzen*, pp. 161-168.

²⁸ Consistory minutes, 7 January 1680, GA DH, WHG 1, f. 167: “Pour advertir la ditte damoiselle qu’elle ne seroit point admise à la table mystérieuse à cause du scandale qu’elle donnoit à l’Eglise en s’accouplant avec un infidèle.”

²⁹ Consistory minutes, 20 April 1680, GA DH, WHG 1, f. 167: “Qu’elle fairoit en sorte que sa conduite fust cy apres en telle edification qu’elle tascheroit mesme d’amener Monsr. le comte son mari, à la connaissance de la verité.”

³⁰ Consistory minutes, 14 April 1680, GA DH, WHG 1, f. 169.

Protestant boundary ran right through it.³¹ Moreover, religious intermarriage exposed each partner to the religious heresy of the other. Especially women were thought to be dangerously malleable in their faith, succumbing to the beliefs of their Catholic husband, while on the other hand it was feared that female religiosity could persuade an indifferent husband to convert – not without reason, for countess Noyelle indeed planned to persuade her husband. Children presented an even more complicated problem, because parents had to decide in which church they would baptize and raise their newborn. Yet the dangers of a mixed marriage were balanced by the possibility of proselytizing: the consistory made sure intermarrying parishioners at least adhered to their own church, but when countess Noyelle pledged to convert her husband they were hypocrite enough to accept the extra soul.³²

Intermarriage was uncommon, but after 1680 the consistory book tellingly mentions no mixed marriages, which suggests that parishioners were less willing to transgress confessional boundaries when the violent persecution of Huguenots took off in the 1680s. The consistory itself further tightened the confessional reins by no longer marrying Catholic couples. Just as in the Dutch Reformed Churches, Catholics had been allowed to marry in the Walloon church of The Hague, as consistories often made a calculated guess that marrying Catholics offered better chances of winning them over than letting the couple run off to a priest. The downside, however, was that Catholics made a solemn vow before a God they did not worship, and took a promise they could never keep, for how could papists be expected to live a good Protestant life? It all smacked of sacrilege, especially when both the spouses were Catholic.³³ In the summer of 1710, the consistory therefore instructed its delegates to the Walloon synod in Arnhem to explain

the embarrassment in which we are regarding the Papists who present themselves to be married in our Church, and they will ask the company [the synod] in case we cannot be exempted, if it wouldn't be convenient to make some changes to the marriage certificate, so as not to profane favourable presuppositions with the benedictions that are attached to it.³⁴

³¹ Luria, *Sacred Boundaries*, pp. 143-147.

³² Kaplan, *Divided by Faith*, pp. 276-289; Roodenburg, *Onder censuur*, pp. 152-160; Van Deursen, *Bavianen en slijkgeuzen*, pp. 152-156; Luria, *Sacred Boundaries*, pp. 143-232.

³³ Kaplan, *Divided by Faith*, pp. 279-281; consistory minutes, 28 July 1710, GA DH, WHG 2, f. 26-27.

³⁴ Consistory minutes, 25 August 1710, GA DH, WHG 2, f. 30: "L'embarras ou nous sommes à l'égard des Papistes qui se presentent pour estre mariés dans notre Eglise, et demanderont à la compagnie au cas que nous ne puissions nous en dispenser, s'il ne seroit pas à propos de faire quelque reformation au formulaire du mariage, pour ne pas prophaner des presuppositions favorables avec les benedictions qui y sont annexées."

The synod willingly obliged: henceforth the magistrate would marry Catholic couples during a civil ceremony.³⁵

Some parishioners were religious border-crossers in a very literal sense: after the Revocation, elders kept a watchful eye on church members travelling back to France to visit their families or do business, fearing they would succumb to Catholicism while abroad. As we saw before, in 1687 *gentilhomme* Daniel de Boussanguet was suspected of converting to Catholicism during his stay in France.³⁶ He was cleared of all charges, but in 1711 *monsieur* had to admit he had gone to mass³⁷, and lady Barthe after her return from France similarly repented for ‘the fault she had committed’.³⁸ Yet branding them as true converts was a misconception, because these travellers to France had simply adopted Nicodemism as a short-term arrangement, going to mass as good Catholics to avoid any suspicion from the local priest and authorities that a Huguenot lived in their midst. They could be arrested after all, while the relatives hosting them could be thrown into prison or even be put to death.³⁹ Still, the consistory at The Hague was much dismayed at the frequency and the ease its church members converted for the sake of appearances. By 1714 the continuous travelling back and forth across the boundaries warranted a formal warning, as the records inform us that “regarding persons who commune, subsequently go to France, and then return, the company has charged Mr. De Joncourt to explain to them the danger to which they are exposing themselves”.⁴⁰

Conversions

Indeed, after 1700 the consistory in The Hague became more concerned about the growing number of converts, who appeared in their meetings wishing to abjure their Catholic faith, and demanded to be received as church members. How could the pastors and elders be sure that these people crossing the religious boundary were truly devoted to Protestantism? The decision to admit converts seemed straightforward enough in most cases, because strictly taken these were not converts at all, but simply Huguenots who had proven less steadfast than

³⁵ Consistory minutes, 27 October 1710, GA DG, WHG 2, f. 41.

³⁶ See introduction, pp. 4-5; consistory minutes, 5 March 1687, GA DH, WHG 1, f. 186-188.

³⁷ Consistory minutes, 15 June 1711, GA DH, WHG 1, f. 62.

³⁸ Consistory minutes, 4 February and 4 March 1715, GA DH, WHG 2, f. 166-167.

³⁹ Yardeni, *Refuge Huguenot*, pp. 96-97. Dutch Reformed consistories equally feared conversions whenever their members travelled to the Southern Netherlands to visit relatives, who had stayed behind during the migration wave of the late sixteenth century: Roodenburg, *Onder censuur*, pp. 162-163.

⁴⁰ Consistory minutes, 8 July 1714, GA DH, WHG 2, f. 151: “Sur ce qu’on a represente, que quelques personnes s’approchent de la Communion, qui en suite s’en vont en France, et en reviennent, la compagnie a chargé Mr. de Joncourt de leur représenter le danger ou elles s’exposent.”

the first generation of refugees that had left France in the 1680s. Contrary to the minority of zealous Huguenots, most had abjured their faith when faced with persecution, because in their eyes staying true to Protestantism behind a façade of Catholic conformity was a compromise acceptable enough.

Some came to regret this abjuration at a later age, however; especially the children of such Nicodemite Huguenots questioned their parents' decisions to compromise over religion. In the 1680s French authorities were well aware that most *nouveaux Catholiques* were insincere converts, but they had nurtured hopes that once all Huguenot temples and ministers had disappeared from the kingdom, the second generation would embrace Catholicism. They were mistaken: in 1702 an army general campaigning in the Cevennes complained to Louis XIX that

all the children who were in their cradles at the time of the general conversions, even those who were 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, are now more Huguenot than their fathers and mothers ever were, and a great number of those who have mobilized against us never remember having seen a minister in their lives. (...) This is because their fathers and mothers have taken care to bring them up in these beliefs, while the majority go daily to mass and make the external observances of the good Catholic.⁴¹

Yet whereas many Huguenot parents had compromised over religion, still going to mass on Sunday mornings and only profess their religion in secret, Huguenot children were unwilling to dissimulate their beliefs behind a Catholic façade: they started visiting clandestine services of Huguenot ministers preaching illegally *sous la croix*, and would make a formal confession of faith. We already encountered Cornелиe de Borault, whose childhood faith was rekindled by a pastor clandestinely preaching in Normandy, but she certainly was not alone.⁴² Arriving in The Hague in 1711, Julie de Harbes and Anne Fulgent similarly begged forgiveness for their childhood abjuration, explaining to the consistory that “they had had the misfortune in their early youth to sign in France an abjuration of the truth contravening their conscience, but that they had subsequently recovered and had been confirmed in the Reformed religion by pastors who had gone to France”.⁴³

⁴¹ Cited in Joutard, ‘End or Renewal?’, pp. 360-361.

⁴² See introduction, pp. 5-7. For similar cases not discussed hereafter, see consistory minutes 19 May 1710, f. 18 (André Bourol); 18 December 1713, f. 136 (René Auguste Constantin); 24 December 1714, f. 160 (Marguerite Aubery de Volsart and Anne Chapelin); 8 July 1715, f. 175 (lady Saerslairs); 16 December 1715, f. 184 (Sarrau de la Vallés).

⁴³ Consistory minutes, 21 September 1711, GA DH, WHG 2, f. 70: “Qu’elles avoient eu le malheur dans leur premiere jeunesse de signer en france une abjuration de la verité contre les mouvemens de leur consciences, mais

At this point Nicodemism broke down entirely. The only way born-again Huguenots could ease their religious conscience was either to take up arms, or to follow in the footsteps of the first generation of refugees and take refuge abroad, where they could openly worship in Protestant fashion. *Monsieur* Marlet for example, a well-paid royal engineer and born into a Parisian family that had abjured Protestantism, had left the capital because he had delved more deeply into his parents' faith, and "having instructed himself in the truths of our sacred Religion he had decided to publicly confess it, and that for this reason he had quit his job in France".⁴⁴ Jean de Souant and Jeanne de Poncet also argued that the tension between their heart-felt Protestant identity on the one hand and Catholic conformity required of them on the other was impossible to resolve: the couple had left France "to provide themselves with the liberty of conscience for which they had yearned since a long time, since they had been born and raised in the Reformed religion, the free profession of which they had come to search in this country".⁴⁵

Yet the consistory was hesitant to admit born-again Huguenots just on the basis of moving accounts. After all, these were still religious border-crossers with a Catholic past. Rare are the cases like the duke De Vivans, who in the summer of 1715 was straightaway admitted, because the consistory "was edified by his tears and the marks of his repentance and even the efforts he had made to render his oppressed conscience the necessary liberty".⁴⁶ Usually prospective church members went through a careful reviewing process, as the consistory would assign a pastor to examine their Calvinist rectitude. If he found traces of ignorance or heresy, additional catechization could be necessary, as Marie Folon and Pierre Barbier discovered in 1710: pastor Chion was assigned to examine them, but a week later reported that "he had not found them sufficiently instructed in the truths of our religion," after which he was charged "to give them the necessary instructions, so that they abandon the errors of the Roman religion".⁴⁷

qu'ensuite elles se sont relevées et ont fait profession de la religion Reformée entre les mains des Pasteurs qui sont allés en France."

⁴⁴ Consistory minutes, 29 December 1710, GA DH, WHG 2, f. 53: "S'estant instruit des verités de Nostre Ste. Religion il avoit resolu d'en faire une profession ouverte et que pour cette raison il avoit quitté ses emplois en France."

⁴⁵ Consistory minutes, 6 October 1710, GA DH, WHG 2, f. 37: "Pour se procurer le liberté de leur conscience après laquelle ils ont long temps soupiré etant nés et ayant été élevés dans la religion Reformée dont ils sont venus chercher en ce pays la libre profession."

⁴⁶ Consistory minutes, 26 August 1715, GA DH, WHG 2, f. 178-179: "Elle a été edifiée de ses larmes et des marques de sa repentance et meme des efforts qu'il avoit faits pour rendre à sa conscience opprimées la liberté nécessaire."

⁴⁷ Consistory minutes, 7 and 14 July 1710, GA DH, WHG 2, f. 24: "Il ne les avoit pas trouvés suffisamment instruits des verités de nostre religion, sur quoy il a été chargé de leur donner les instructions nécessaires, pour qu'ils abandonnent les erreurs de la religion Romaine."

Producing an attestation signed by the consistory of their former church in France could considerably ease the procedure, because a testimony of sound doctrine and morals would defuse suspicions of popery, as Daniel de Bousanguet found in 1687.⁴⁸ Yet many Huguenots arrived without, and had to rely on relatives and acquaintances to vouch for them. Noele Jaquieres for example had already spent ten months in the Walloon Church of The Hague before she was finally admitted as church member in October 1710, thanks to “witnesses worthy of faith, who have known her in France”.⁴⁹ *Monsieur* Varin was lucky enough to find pastor Basnage in The Hague, who had served as pastor in Varin’s home town Rouen and could therefore vouch that his family was of godly repute.⁵⁰

The consistory was even more careful when it came to admitting Catholics as church members. For surprisingly enough the consistory books contain numerous examples of Catholics appearing before pastors and elders to abjure their faith, humbly asking to be accepted as church members.⁵¹ The consistory treated those demands with the utmost circumspection, however, especially in times of confessional polarization. Whereas born-again Huguenots were usually admitted after a short examination, pastors and elders dug much deeper in the past of Catholics: they wanted to make absolutely sure the conversion was sincere, and their moral conduct unblemished – no ‘papists in disguise’ should be given a chance to pollute the vanguard of church members.⁵²

Time was crucial, as the consistory believed that a longer period of reflection than the average seven days for born-again Huguenots would give it a better chance to detect insincere believers, while the time barrier as such could also deter aspirant converts – only true believers would survive the litmus test. When Angelique le Baux arrived in The Hague in 1715, explaining that though born and raised in a Catholic family, she had become aware of the errors of Catholicism and had left her relatives behind to embrace Protestantism, the consistory told her she should first spend more time in their community and attend church services before she would be examined.⁵³ In 1711 Marguerite Saugé asked for catechization

⁴⁸ See introduction, pp. 4-5.

⁴⁹ Consistory minutes, 6 October 1710, GA DH, WHG 2, f. 37: “Des temoins dignes de foy qui l’ont connuë en france.”

⁵⁰ Consistory minutes, 6 November 1713, GA DH, WHG 2, f. 133.

⁵¹ For cases not discussed hereafter, see consistory minutes 9 June 1701, f. 241 (Mr. Boulon); 6 October 1710, f. 37-38 (Marie Magdelaine le Francois); 6 November and 4 December 1713, f. 132 and f. 136 (baroness Bolsheim); 21 January and 4 February 1715, f. 164 and f. 166 (count Henry de Brandenburg).

⁵² Luria, *Sacred Boundaries*, pp. 256-272; Yardeni, *Refuge Huguenot*, pp. 98-100.

⁵³ Consistory minutes, 16 December 1715, GA DH, WHG 2, f. 183.

herself: elder Jacques Barbe was assigned to instruct her, but his first report was not expected for the next three months.⁵⁴

Some Catholics did have corpses to hide: Pierre Pigeon admitted he had been imprisoned in the Bastille before he came to the Dutch Republic, raising suspicions he only wanted to build up a new life. Pastor De Joncourt indeed found him ill-instructed in the Protestant faith, but a month later Pigeon was deemed sufficiently knowledgeable on Calvinist doctrine to admit him as church member – though not before he had formally signed “the book of those who abjure the errors of the Roman Church”, a register the consistory had drawn up to keep a better watch on its converts.⁵⁵ Sometimes the consistory found out the black sheep when it was too late: in August 1701, it received word from the Huguenot church in London that *monsieur* Bosnaud, a converted Catholic who had spent some time in The Hague, had conveniently failed to mention that both before and after his conversion he had led an indecent life.⁵⁶

Of all border-crossers, Catholic priests presented the thorniest of cases. In France clerical converts were often accused of debauchery, as Huguenots suspected them of simply wishing to circumvent the Catholic celibate, or feared that an ex-priest’s flawed understanding of Calvinism would result in teaching heresies to the Huguenot flock.⁵⁷ The Walloon consistory in The Hague also treaded with great care. In 1710 for example, *curé* Carton from Moulis, a small village near the Huguenot town of Sedan, showed up in the consistory room, claiming that “he had become aware of the errors of the Roman Church, and wishing to renounce these, he had come to this country to be able to profess our sacred Communion”.⁵⁸ Pastor Chion was ordered to examine him, but soon concluded that Carton had an imperfect grasp on Calvinist doctrine, “since he had not derived the principles of his faith from the Holy Scripture”. The consistory told Carton to read his bible more carefully, and attend services in several Walloon churches before he again applied for church membership.⁵⁹

Deciding what to do with Catholic clergymen was never easy. To be sure, in the war for souls the better-informed converts could serve as veritable propaganda machines, writing

⁵⁴ Consistory minutes, 2 February 1711, GA DH, WHG 2, f. 56.

⁵⁵ Consistory minutes, 23 October and 20 November 1713, GA DH, WHG 2, f. 131 and f. 135. Unfortunately the register itself has not survived; it is also referred to as the ‘livre des convertis’ in the consistory minutes of 22 February 1712, GA DH, WHG 2, f. 89-90 (D’Hallors).

⁵⁶ Consistory minutes, 4 August 1701, GA DH, WHG 2, f. 243-244.

⁵⁷ Luria, *Sacred Boundaries*, p. 272.

⁵⁸ Consistory minutes, 21 July 1710, GA DG, WHG 2, f. 25: “Il s’estoit appercu des erreurs de l’Eglise Romaine, et que souhaitant d’y renoncer il s’estoit rendu dans ce pays, pour pouvoir professer nostre Ste. Communion.”

⁵⁹ Consistory minutes, 28 July 1710, GA DH, WHG 2, f. 27: “Puis qu’il n’avoit pas puisé les principes de sa foy dans l’Ecriture Sainte.”

pamphlets and holding sermons to persuade other Catholics to join the Huguenot ranks, or simply be paraded around as living proof that Protestant faith was the only true religion.⁶⁰ Yet Huguenot exiles in The Hague did not wage a conscious campaign to convert Catholics: although the consistory did admit former Catholic clergy, it never tried to cash in on their propaganda value.⁶¹ The memory of forced abjurations and persecutions in France had only raised animosity towards Catholics – rather than welcoming clerical converts to demonstrate Calvinist supremacy, the consistory always treaded with great care.

It should come as no surprise then, that in 1701 a deputation from the Dutch Reformed Church bewildered the Walloon elders and pastors, as minister Van der Vliet told them that a French priest named Auguste Gabillon had presented himself at the Reformed synod lately held in Gouda, asking the assembled clerics to examine him so he could be called as minister to a Dutch-speaking church. Before they proceeded, Van der Vliet had come to ask the Walloon consistory whether it had any objections.⁶² The astonished elders and pastors had indeed, for how could a French-speaking Catholic priest ever serve as a credible pastor in the Reformed Church? “It seems to us rather remarkable that a French proselyte, who has preached in French in the Roman [Catholic] community for about fifteen or twenty years, shall be admitted to the exam to become a candidate among brothers that are strangers to his own language”, they told Van der Vliet.⁶³ Despite their scepticism, however, the consistory had no reason to think ill of Gabillon, and finally gave its consent.⁶⁴

True Zeal

Born-again Huguenots and Catholic proselytes raised suspicion whenever they applied for church membership, but the decision to welcome parishioners into the pious vanguard was no less thorny in other cases. Each time the consistory somehow had to determine how serious prospective members took their religion. In other words, did they show true zeal? To some extent this was an absurd question to ask, as Huguenot refugees were precisely ‘the hotter sort of Protestants’ who had left France for the sake of a clear religious conscience, while for any Catholic living in a post-Revocation era it must have required real courage and devotion to

⁶⁰ Kaplan, *Divided by Faith*, pp. 268-272; Luria, *Sacred Boundaries*, pp. 246-307.

⁶¹ For examples of admitted clergy, see consistory minutes 5 December 1712, f. 106-107 (François Masson); 6 January 1713, f. 110 (Charles Brabant); 11 June 1714, f. 149 (Pierre François Feré).

⁶² Consistory minutes, 1 September 1701, GA DH, WHG 1, f. 243-250.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, f. 249: “Il nous paroissoit bien extraordinaire qu’un françois proselyte et qui a presché en françois dans la communion Romaine pendant quinze ou vingt ans, fust admis à l’examen pour devenir candidat parmi des freres estrangers de son langage.”

⁶⁴ Consistory minutes, 4 September 1701, GA DH, WHG 1, f. 251-252.

adopt Protestantism. Parishioners in The Hague indeed demonstrated they deeply cared about their faith. The young lady Amceint for example, struck by convulsions and unable to sit through a church service, asked the consistory to send a pastor to her home, so she could nonetheless celebrate Communion. After they had made sure she was indeed confined to her sickbed, the elders duly granted her request.⁶⁵

Church members suspended from Communion took religion even more serious, as they went to extreme lengths to sit again at the Lord's Table. To be sure, repentance could lift their censure, but some parishioners opted for a shortcut instead: *madame* Noyer simply went to Communion despite her suspension, and when summoned before the consistory, she never appeared.⁶⁶ In 1710 the consistory equally reprimanded proselyte Blanesou, who had abjured Catholicism in Switzerland, but had never been granted the formal right to commune in the Walloon Church. Still, Blanesou "had not refrained from presenting himself at the Lord's Table in our Church three months ago, without either the opinion or the permission of the Company, which has been explained to him, was against the order".⁶⁷

Illegal communicants may strike us as surprising, for why had the pastor not barred Noyer and Blanesou from Communion the moment they had tried to slip at the table? Yet church discipline lacked secular power, and could therefore not impose any sanction when suspended members communed. Nor did the consistory wish to meet out severe punishment. Suspension only aimed at making offenders repent, so if they stubbornly refused to beg forgiveness, and even communed despite their censure, only God could manifest to them that they were going down hellfire lane.⁶⁸

Ex-priest Auguste Gabillon took this argument one step further: when the consistory refused this Catholic convert to commune, under the pretence that he already went to Communion in the Dutch Reformed Church, Gabillon argued that the consistory held no spiritual jurisdiction over its parishioners. The decision to commune was made by the believer himself, who after serious self-examination only had to justify his sitting at the Lord's Table to God:

He showed much anger against the Company, and against specific members, arguing that he did not recognize us as his judges, that the Synod had given him the liberty to commune with-

⁶⁵ Consistory minutes, 9 October 1698, GA DH, WHG 1, f. 221.

⁶⁶ Consistory minutes, 4 April, 27 June and 11 July 1712, GD DH, WHG 2, f. 93, f. 97-98.

⁶⁷ Consistory minutes, 3 July 1700, GA DH, WHG 1, f. 236: "Il n'a pas laissé de se presenter à la table de la Sainte Cene, il y a trois mois dans nostre Eglise, sans l'avis, ni l'aveu de notre Compagnie, ce qui luy ayant été remontré etre contre l'ordre."

⁶⁸ Van Deursen, *Bavianen en slijkgeuzen*, p. 200.

out asking the consistories, and that St. Paul authorized this by saying *that each should approve himself.*⁶⁹

Although his reasoning tied in with Calvinist teaching, which stressed the importance of personal self-examination, the elders were furious that Gabillon rejected their mediating role altogether. Perhaps the national Walloon synod had granted Gabillon the right to commune, but he still needed their approval. When in September the next synod held was in Arnhem, the consistory even instructed its delegates to ensure that Gabillon would be barred from Communion in all communities.⁷⁰

Clearly these parishioners were deeply religious people, who exhausted all possible means to commune and be part of the pious vanguard. Yet upholding one's good reputation was just as important as religious devotion. Suspension exposed church members as fallen angels to the entire community, a moral odium they desperately tried to lift, especially if believers felt they had been wrongfully suspended. Church discipline could be unfair, for contrary to secular courts of justice the consistory could pronounce censure without even hearing the accused, while church members had no lawyer to defend them, and were often not allowed to hear the evidence against them.⁷¹ Some church members did not shy away from criticizing the consistory for its unfair censure, and even threatened to petition the synod.⁷² Samuel Favon for example was suspended for public drunkenness, but although he confessed his sin, he still found the courage to plead with the consistory "not to attach credence to all the accusations that could be levelled against him, but to carefully examine these before pronouncing sentence".⁷³

Monsieur Brusset, a Catholic convert, even wrote the consistory an angry letter. In April 1710 pastor Basnage had received word from the Huguenot community in Leeuwarden that some refugees were gossiping about Brusset's scandalous behaviour in Bern, where he had stopped over after leaving France en route to the Dutch Republic. The consistory in The Hague immediately summoned Brusset, who promised to get a second attestation testifying to

⁶⁹ Consistory minutes, 16 June 1710, GA DH, WHG 2, f. 21: "Il à temoigné beaucoup d'emportement contre la compagnie, et contre des membres particuliers, temoignant qu'il ne nous reconnoissoit pas pour ses juges, que le Synode lui avoit donné la liberté de communier sans le demander au consistoires, et que St. Paul l'authorisoit à le faire par ces paroles, que chacun s'approuve soy meme." Emphasis added.

⁷⁰ Consistory minutes, 25 August 1710, GA DH, WHG, f. 33.

⁷¹ Roodenburg, *Onder censuur*, pp. 119-124; Van Deursen, *Bavianen en slijkgeuzen*, pp. 208-209.

⁷² For examples not discussed hereafter, see consistory minutes 5 November 1679 and 7 January 1680, f. 165 and f. 167 (De Nouville); 5 March 1687, f. 187 (Daniel de Bousanguet); 4 February 1693, f. 207 (Jean Marais).

⁷³ Consistory minutes, 19 December 1683, GA DH, WHG 1, f. 178: "De ne vouloir pas adjouster foi à toutes les accusations qui pourroient estre portées contre lui, mais de les bien examiner avant que de mettre la sentence en execution."

his moral rectitude.⁷⁴ Yet by December the mood had turned sour: Brusset had asked the Walloon synod to examine him so he could be called as pastor, but rumours of his immorality had each time put a spanner in his wheel. In an angry letter he therefore demanded that the consistory revealed who had made these allegations, and what exactly he was accused of, because these anonymous charges “are but arrows shot off in secret to defame me in public, and to anger me bitterly by adding to the weight of my other disgraces”.⁷⁵

Filling Empty Pockets

In sum, heart-felt religiosity motivated both Huguenot refugees and Catholic converts to become church members, an elect status they would defend whenever they were wrongfully suspended, or which they even flouted by communing illegally. Yet religion was not always on their minds. Not without reason the consistory referred to the latest wave of Huguenots as ‘poor refugees’ in more than one sense: Huguenots were not only pitiful because persecuted for their religion, they were often destitute as well. Since 1669 royal policy stipulated that Huguenots trying to escape France would have their possessions confiscated by the state, but refugees had to leave most behind anyway: selling property such as houses and land was almost impossible, because it would only alert authorities to their imminent escape.⁷⁶

Nor was it easy to make a decent living once abroad. Admittedly, many town councils in the Dutch Republic had in the early 1680s advertised with tax exemptions and free guild entrance for Huguenots, and had even extended credit to entrepreneurs, hoping these privileges would attract skilled workers and tradesmen that could boost the local economy. Most refugees were unskilled and destitute, however; at the turn of the century about a third of all the Amsterdam poor were Huguenots, and solidarity quickly evaporated. Not only were cities swamped by poor migrants, but tax exemptions, credits and guild membership had also put Huguenots in a privileged position much envied by their Dutch competitors, who pleaded for a more even-handed policy. In 1690 the Amsterdam town council decided not to extend Huguenot privileges, and demanded that the large sums of money it donated into the coffers of the Walloon deaconry would only benefit Huguenots arriving directly from France, because fortune-seekers were known to roam the province and pocket charity in each church.

⁷⁴ Consistory minutes, 7-8 April 1710, GA DH, WHG 2, f. 15-16.

⁷⁵ Letter from Brusset to Walloon consistory The Hague, 7 December 1710, GA DH, WHG 31, incoming and outgoing correspondence: “Ce ne sont tout plus que des fleches tirées dans le secret pour me diffamer dans le public, et me fâcher ainsi amerement en âioutant au poids de mes autres disgraces.”

⁷⁶ Labrousse, *Une foi, une loi, un roi?*, pp. 146, 189, 207-208.

As the anticipated economic boost of Huguenot industriousness did not materialise, other Dutch towns quickly ended their privileged treatment, too.⁷⁷

With the promise of economic advantages disappearing into thin air, destitute Huguenots could only knock on the door of the Walloon Church for financial support. The plea of widow Rachel Michou was illustrative of the troubles many refugees encountered: in August 1710 she asked the consistory for charity, explaining that she had left France with her daughter's family, but now lived the worst of times as she had to feed five children. Her son-in-law Paul had gone to Leiden hoping to find employment as a smith, but his chances were uncertain. In the end elders and deacons granted Michou charity, but told her the rest of her family would not be supported.⁷⁸

Crucially, church charity in the Dutch Republic was reserved for church members only. In the seventeenth century poor relief was provided by many different institutions, ranging from hospitals and almshouses to orphanages and houses of correction – either run by town authorities, or privately funded by rich citizens and guilds. In addition the deaconry of Dutch Reformed churches also offered charity, be it only for church members. The trouble was that parishioners supported by their deaconry often tried to pocket urban charities as well. Surely costs could be reduced. From mid-century onwards town councils all over Holland and Friesland therefore pressured Protestant deacons to look after their own poor, making sure destitute church members did not end up under secular care as well. Next, magistrates forced the tolerated church communities of Catholics, Lutherans and Jews to support their own poor in similar fashion, even though this meant a de facto recognition of churches nominally forbidden. The result was a division of poor relief along confessional lines, each church supporting its own poor, while non-members could still obtain charity at secular institutions or at private foundations.⁷⁹

From the magistrates' point of view this was sensible policy, because it relieved them of a heavy financial burden, but for the urban poor it seriously reduced the chances of getting charity. Migrants were especially vulnerable. Whereas Dutch poor usually managed to obtain charity on the basis of their citizenship or guild membership, destitute newcomers were left with only one option: they had to become a church member if they wanted to be eligible for

⁷⁷ Frijhoff, 'Uncertain Brotherhood', pp. 143-150; E. Buning, P. Overbeek and J. Verveer, 'De huisgenoten des geloofs: De immigratie van de Huguenoten 1680-1720', *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis*, 100:3 (1987), pp. 360-367; Nusteling, 'The Netherlands and the Huguenot émigrés', pp. 17-24; Hans Bots, 'Le Refuge dans les Provinces-Unies', in Eckart Birnstiel and Chrystel Bernat, eds., *La Diaspora des Huguenots: Les réfugiés protestants de France et leur dispersion dans le monde, XVIe-XVIIIe siècles* (Paris, 2001), pp. 63-73.

⁷⁸ Consistory minutes, 11 August 1710, GA DH, WHG 2, f. 29.

⁷⁹ Joke Spaans, 'Welfare Reform in Frisian Towns: Between Humanist Theory, Pious Imperatives, and Government Policy', in Thomas Max Safley, ed., *The Reformation of Charity* (Leiden, 2003), pp. 121-132.

charity.⁸⁰ Thus Huguenots applying for church membership not only did so for religious zeal; the more pressing need to survive abroad could be an equally powerful incentive. Religious altruism and financial self-interest went hand in hand.

The less prosperous churches were obviously not pleased with the confessionalization of poor relief, because they were now burdened with a larger number of poor they could impossibly support. Especially the Lutheran and Catholic communities found themselves in financial trouble, since most of the poor German migrants swamping the Dutch Republic in the seventeenth century ended up in their churches.⁸¹ Protestant churches were generally much better off. Before the Revocation this was certainly true for the deacons of the Walloon Church in The Hague, who in 1681 even had to fight off financial claims made by their Reformed brothers. A deputation of Dutch deacons had unexpectedly turned up in the consistory room: their spokesman Zuyvendouck pointed out that while Walloon coffers were overflowing, his own deaconry faced an astounding deficit of 14,000 guilders. He therefore asked for a share of their funds, and demanded that the Walloon deacons would from now on support all the ‘poor French papists’ that the Reformed deaconry had looked after since 1631 – although Catholic, they were still French-speaking.⁸²

Pastor Desmarets flatly refused their demands, reminding Zuyvendouck that the Walloon community did not carry happy memories of 1631. That fateful year, a collection had been held in The Hague that was supposed to equally benefit the Reformed and Walloon churches, but much to the Walloons’ chagrin the Dutch had successfully claimed all collection money, in exchange for which they had promised to support the Catholic poor. This arrangement would not be overturned simply because Zuyvendouck had run out of money, nor was the Walloon deaconry keen on funding Catholics or on replenishing Reformed coffers. On the contrary, it was saving up for persecuted Huguenots arriving in their church: “although our thrift, our frugality and the donations of our small flock have put us slightly in advance,” Desmarets told him, “[the church] prepares itself for such raging thunderstorms on the French horizon, from where large numbers of poor people of the [Reformed] Religion come to us each day, that we should be and are being very prudent to save for bad times”.⁸³

⁸⁰ Ibid., pp. 133-134.

⁸¹ Ibid., p. 134; Erika Kuijpers, *Migrantenstad: Immigratie en sociale verhoudingen in 17e-eeuws Amsterdam* (Hilversum, 2005), esp. pp. 288-324.

⁸² Consistory minutes, 20 February 1681, GA DH, WHG 1, f. 170-171.

⁸³ Ibid., f. 172: “Quand nostre espargne, nostre frugalité et les charitez de nostre petit troupeau nous mettroient en avance de quelques choses, il se preparoit des orages si furieux du costé de la France, d’ou il nous venoit tous les jours quantité de pauvres gens de la Religion, nous furions et faisons tres prudemment de les conserver, pour les mauvais temps.”

The Walloon Church found itself in dire straits soon enough. Already in November 1682 the deacons warned that funds were running out, because large numbers of destitute Huguenots arrived in The Hague, applying for church membership and charity. The consistory petitioned both town council and the Court of Holland to organise a general collection for the refugees, which was immediately granted.⁸⁴ By 1685 the initial stream had turned into a flood, and the consistory had to appoint an additional deacon to cope with the growing number of refugees.⁸⁵ Asking town magistrates to hold yet another public collection met with resistance, however: the Court of Holland first ordered a thorough investigation into the deacons' handling of previous collection money before it would give its permission. Luckily one of the Walloon elders, Johan Rosa, also served as burgomaster on the town council. He managed to persuade his colleagues that funds were desperately needed, maintaining that "serving as elder in the French church [he] could testify of the misery of the refugees, because they appeared to the consistory without stopping". He vouched the money of previous collections had been spent to the last penny, adding that it had proven insufficient to support all Huguenot poor and had forced the deaconry to dig deep into its own coffers. Convinced by Rosa's account, the town council then agreed to organise a fresh collection.⁸⁶

Solidarity was fragile indeed, for besides allowing collections the town council seldom intervened directly on the Huguenots' behalf. Faced with a growing number of destitute migrants it wisely preferred to see poor relief as primarily the task of church communities. Only when magistrates hoped to reap some profit themselves did they offer financial support: in 1688 for example, the town council decided to finance two French textile workers with the apparent aim to boost the luxury industry of The Hague. After all, the town was home to the stadtholder's court, and served as residence to ambassadors, itinerant diplomats and other bureaucrats, all spending considerable sums on luxury items such as clothing, art and lavish books. Textile workers bringing their expertise could only boost The Hague's position, so the council granted them 3000 guilders over a ten-year period, and exempted them from taxes on alcohol and from serving on the town militia.⁸⁷

⁸⁴ Consistory minutes, 22 November 1682, GA DH, WHG 1, f. 174; town council resolution, 23 November 1682, GA DH, Ancien Régime municipal archives, (Oud Archief, hereafter OA) 55, resolutions taken by the sheriff, burgomasters and aldermen, f. 151v.

⁸⁵ Consistory minutes, 25 November 1685, GA DH, WHG 1, f. 182.

⁸⁶ Town council resolution, 20 November 1685, GA DH, OA 56, f. 31v-32r.: "Hij als ouderlingh sijnde inde voors. fransse kerck, wel konde getuijgen van de miserie van voors. gerefugieerden, vermidts die den kerckraedt in de consistorie sonder ophouden te vooren quam."

⁸⁷ Town council resolution, 27 november 1688, GA DH, OA 56, f. 124v. On economic life in The Hague, see: Thea Wijsenbeek, ed., *Den Haag: Geschiedenis van de stad, vol. II: De tijd van de Republiek* (Zwolle, 2005), pp. 57-89.

As Huguenot refugees kept arriving, the deaconry was seriously strained. In 1698 another elder and deacon were appointed “because of the great occupation caused by the poor refugees, whose number is still increasing”, bringing the total number of elders and deacons to eight, while in 1701 they were supplemented with another four men.⁸⁸ Financial difficulties continued well into the next century, for by 1711 collections benefiting the Huguenot poor had become an annual recurrence.⁸⁹

Given these financial difficulties, it is not surprising that the consistory was cautious to admit church members and grant them charity. Of course Catholics were prime suspects: the consistory not only doubted their religious sincerity in a purely dogmatic sense, but also feared these façade Protestants only converted to profit from church charity. For the privileges extended by town magistrates had undoubtedly also lured French Catholics to the Dutch Republic, who soon faced the same financial difficulties as Huguenot refugees.⁹⁰ Upon their arrival in The Hague *monsieur* Bussy and his wife immediately wished to abjure their Catholic faith, but the consistory suspected that pecuniary troubles rather than Protestant religiosity had motivated their rash demand: “Since it has only been a few days since they arrived from France, the Company has decided to give them some more days to instruct themselves, and to tell them that in the meantime they should not flatter themselves to believe we will support them.” Getting a thorough understanding of Protestantism took more than just a few days, however, because only three months later did the consistory deem the couple sufficiently instructed to admit them as church members eligible for charity.⁹¹

Apparently the Bussy couple was sincere, but at other times the consistory saw latent fears of Catholics exploiting church charity easily confirmed. In 1710 elders refused Marguerite Hugué's demand for additional church support, firstly because she already made a decent living as cook in the kitchen of nobleman D'Ayrollet, but the consistory had also discovered that her husband was a Catholic, who moreover lived off a generous state pension from the Dutch army ever since he had been wounded in battle. Catholics taking advantage of Protestant generosity did not merit church support, so in retaliation Marguerite's weekly allowance was cut down by 12 sols.⁹² And even when the consistory showed leniency, taking a Catholic

⁸⁸ Consistory minutes, 29 November 1698 and 23 November 1701, GA DH, WHG 1, f. 222 and f. 253: “A cause de grandes occupations que donnent les pauvres refugies dont le nombre va tousiours.”

⁸⁹ Consistory minutes, 12 and 19 January 1711, GA DH, WHG 2, f. 54-55.

⁹⁰ Frijhoff, ‘Uncertain Brotherhood’, p. 147.

⁹¹ Consistory minutes, 22 July 1715, GA DH, WHG 2, f. 176: “Comme il n’y a que quelques jours qu’ils arrivent de France, le Compagnie a resolu de leur donner encors quelque jours pour s’instruire, et de leur declarer qu’en attendant ils ne doivent pas se flatter qu’on se charge de leur entretien.” See for their admittance: consistory minutes, 7 October 1715, GA DH, WHG 2, f. 180.

⁹² Consistory minutes, 13 October 1710, GA DH, WHG 2, f. 38.

foundling into its care in 1683, it made sure the confessional boundaries of charity were observed: the Walloon deaconry would look after the baby, but town magistrates promised to pay for the wet nurse.⁹³

Huguenot refugees may have received preferential treatment, but they were never raised above suspicion either. Already after the first collection in 1682 elders and deacons had decided they would minutely examine the testimonies of refugees applying for poor relief, ruling moreover “that this collection money will be used principally for those who wish to live and settle here with their families” – the doom scenario of Huguenots travelling from town to town to pocket charity was always on their minds.⁹⁴ Indeed, the 1682 Walloon synod assembled at Nijmegen had also signalled that “several people, who after having received some support and having stayed in one Church, retire to another, and from there even to another, and after having toured several Churches and having been on our charge, return to their first Church.”⁹⁵ But rather than support the destitute indefinitely, elders and deacons preferred to make refugees self-reliant, securing them a job and paying for their education. The consistory thus paid Charles Petit 100 florins for his education as surgeon, while Marians Monier received 12 sols a week to learn the spinster’s profession.⁹⁶

Former galley slaves were the exception to the rule. As martyrs for the Protestant cause they had greatly suffered on the galleys of the French marine, because they had refused to renounce their beliefs. The number of captives had rapidly increased after May 1685, when a royal edict ordered that Huguenot men arrested while trying to escape France would no longer be executed, but sentenced to the galleys. Even on board the Catholic Church kept up the religious pressure: Carmelite brothers served as priests on the galleys, celebrating mass on Sundays and trying to persuade the slaves to convert. Outraged Protestants all over Europe held collections to support the Huguenot galley slaves, and pressured diplomats to work for their release. They were sadly disappointed, for during the 1713 peace negotiations at Utrecht Louis XIV refused to free any slaves, and only personal intervention of Queen Anne from England resulted in a meagre 180 releases, on the condition they never returned to France.⁹⁷

⁹³ Consistory minutes, 17 October and 13 December 1683, GA DH, WHG 1, f. 177.

⁹⁴ Consistory minutes, 6 December 1682, GA DH, WHG 1, f. 175: “Que lesdits deniers seront employez principalement pour ceux qui voudront s’habituer et s’establir icy avec leur familles.”

⁹⁵ Synod resolution 20, April 1682 (Nijmegen), *Livre Synodal contenant les articles résolus dans les Synodes des Eglises Wallonnes des Pays-Bas* (Den Haag, 1896-1904), ed. by E. Bourlier (hereafter LS), p. 809: “Il en vient plusieurs qui après avoir receu quelque assistance et fait quelque séjour en quelque Eglise se retirent en une autre, et de là encore en quelque autre, et après avoir fait le tour de plusieurs Eglises et leur avoir esté à charge, reviennent en leur première Eglise”.

⁹⁶ Consistory minutes, 7 July 1710 and 19 June 1712, GA DH, WHG 2, f. 23 and f. 121-122.

⁹⁷ Labrousse, “*Une foi, une loi, un roi?*”, pp. 189, 207; Samuel Mours, ‘Note sur les Galériens Protestants’, *Bulletin de la Société de l’Histoire du Protestantisme Français*, 116:2 (1970), pp. 178-231.

Many sought refuge in the Dutch Republic, where they received a warm welcome. At least the consistory in The Hague willingly granted them church charity. In 1713 Nicolas Robelains got a weekly pension of 40 sols, because the galleys had worn out his body, leaving him incapable to work and support himself.⁹⁸ Pierre Berteau was likewise heralded as a Protestant martyr, who on the galleys “had suffered during many years and had persevered in his faith”.⁹⁹ On the other hand deacons still kept a hand on their purse strings: the former galley slaves Daniel Bolonnois and Fiacre Dabelin got the financial support they asked for, but just for two years, and with the sole aim to learn the shoemaker’s and tanner’s trade.¹⁰⁰ All in all, religious zeal could motivate people to become a member of the Walloon Church, but financial difficulties often were an equally important impetus to cross the confessional boundary.

Catholic Boldness

Parishioners in the Walloon church crossed religious boundaries, much to the anxiety of elders and pastors trying to safeguard Protestant identity, but how exceptional was this border-crossing behaviour? In other words, were the confessional open-mindedness of parishioners and the zealous policing of the consistory truly distinctive of the religious mentality of Huguenot refugees, or did it merely echo the *modus vivendi* between Catholics and Protestants throughout the Dutch Republic? Admittedly church discipline was not unique to the Walloon Church, because Calvinist churches all over Europe tried to maintain moral and confessional rigour among their flock. Leafing through the pages of consistory books of the Scottish Kirk, the Dutch Reformed churches and the Huguenot churches of France, scholars have demonstrated how pastors and elders tried to reform both morals and religion in their Protestant communities.¹⁰¹ The moral disciplining of church members in the Walloon church of The Hague did not deviate from this general pattern.

Yet the religious worries of the Walloon consistory and the sort of confessional behaviour it encountered were markedly different than those of their Dutch confreres. Comparing the Walloon consistory book with the records of the two Reformed churches in The Hague, the *Grote Kerk* and the *Nieuwe Kerk*, whose elders and pastors met in a central consistory,

⁹⁸ Consistory minutes, 17 July 1713, GA DH, WHG 2, f. 122-123.

⁹⁹ Consistory minutes, 13 August 1714, GA DH, WHG 2, f. 153: “Il a souffert pendant un grand nombre d’années et perseveré dans la foi .”

¹⁰⁰ Consistory minutes, 17 and 25 September 1713, GA DH, WHG 2, f. 128-129.

¹⁰¹ See for good examples: Todd, *Culture of Protestantism* (on Scotland); Roodenburg, *Onder censuur* (on the Dutch Republic); and Chareyre, ‘The Great Difficulties One Must Bear’ (on France).

shows that the Dutch were hardly gripped by paranoia when it came to the private religious choices their parishioners made. Records mention only three church members crossing religious borders in the period between 1670 and 1700. In 1682 the consistory debated an unnamed woman, who had turned Catholic more than a year before, but was now trying to convert her children as well.¹⁰² Some years later minister Troje informed the elders that a certain Sophia van der Maa had converted to popery, but “several times being called to account for it, she refuses to give any reason for her apostasy, maintaining that she would never agree with us, (...) and she persists without even willing to hear him [Troje].”¹⁰³ And in 1686, the consistory worried over a woman that had announced she was moving to Antwerp with her ‘papist husband’; it was feared that in a Catholic town, she would abandon her faith. The local minister paid her a house visit, “particularly to urge her to persuade her man as much as possible to stay here, and in case he remained unwilling, to urge her steadfastness in her faith”. She was indeed adamant that she would follow her husband to Antwerp.¹⁰⁴

Rather than police the *private* behaviour of its own flock, however, the Dutch consistory did fear ‘papist insolences’, because these posed a *public* threat to the fiction of living in an all-out Protestant city. It was disconcerting enough that Catholics lived and worshipped in The Hague – in 1675 an estimated 4000, about 15 percent of the total population – but the elders would not tolerate that they held open-air catechisations, set up schools, built new churches, and openly went to mass at the French ambassador’s. Just as in other Dutch towns, Protestants in The Hague were willing to turn a blind eye as long as popery remained invisible, or to be more precise: as long as Catholics worshipped in unobtrusive back-alley churches known as *schuilkerken*, which were unrecognizable as such from the outside. In the public domain, the Reformed Church had to rule supreme. Catholics that self-consciously paraded their privately tolerated heterodoxy around in the public sphere thus made the consistory fly into a rage. The Dutch Republic was no Catholic territory, it fumed, so papists crossing the borders of privacy had to be pushed back behind the façade of nonexistence.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰² Consistory minutes, 3 July 1682 (art. 3), GA DH, Archives of the Dutch Reformed Church (Nederlands-Hervormde Gemeente, hereafter NHG) 4, consistory minutes 1673-1701, f. 200.

¹⁰³ Consistory minutes, 30 September 1689 (art. 3), GA DH, NHG 4, f. 285: “Tot verscheijde maels daer op aengesproocken sijde, de minste rednen van haer afval niet en wil geven, allen lijck voorgevende, dat sij nimmer met ons soude eens sijn, (...) en blijft volharden sonder hem maer te willen hooren.”

¹⁰⁴ Consistory minutes, 12 July (art. 1) and 2 August 1686 (art. 1), GA DH, NHG 4, f. 244-245: “Bijsonderlik om haar te vermanen, haar man, so veel sij kan, te beweegen alhier te blijven wonen, end in cas hij weijgerig blijft, haar te vermanen tot standvastigheid in haar geloove.”

¹⁰⁵ Kaplan, *Divided by Faith*, pp. 172-183; Wijsenbeek, *Den Haag: Geschiedenis van de stad, vol.II*, pp. 216-218.

The first clash between tolerating Catholics in private and the less than welcome confidence they demonstrated in public took place in 1678, when the Dutch consistory got wind of the construction of ‘a new papist church’ in de Oude Molstraat. The ministers went to complain with the judges at the Court of Holland, who took immediate action: they instructed the town council to summon the carpenter and bricklayer hired to build the new church, and forbid them to continue their work.¹⁰⁶ Yet one setback did not stop the Catholics of The Hague, because in the summer of 1682 the Reformed elders were alarmed to find that in the same street another church was under construction. After an unannounced house call the judges in the Court of Holland concluded that rumours were true, and again wished to close down the Catholic temple, but this time the burgomasters and aldermen put their feet down.¹⁰⁷ Although “having inspected the aforementioned home, and found that it was not appropriated but for the exercise of the papist Religion, just as in other places the same had been exercised by permitted priests; [we] have decided to desist from interdiction,” the town council noted.¹⁰⁸ Apparently the magistrates in town hall were more hesitant to restrict Catholic worship than their counterparts in the Court of Holland, who were spurred on by the Reformed consistory.

In The Hague, a second scene where Catholics could take their heresy outside the confines of privacy was a foreign envoy’s chapel. By 1680 ambassadors from several Catholic nations – such as Spain, France, and the German Empire – had opened up their embassy chapels to Dutch Catholics. On Sunday mornings these chapels attracted huge crowds: when the Spanish ambassador relocated to new premises in 1677, he had a spacious chapel constructed over the adjoining stables, which housed around 1000 believers, and the Austrian embassy was known to have a large chapel in its attic. Authorities generally made little fuss over foreign envoys bringing priests to serve their household and foreigners living in The Hague, not in the least because the States-General maintained its own Protestant chapels abroad, but allowing Dutch Catholics to worship in embassy chapels was an altogether different matter, especially if they made no secret of it.¹⁰⁹

In the 1680s, French ambassador d’Avaux thus found himself in the limelight of the Dutch Protestants, undoubtedly because the persecution of Huguenots in France fanned the fires of anti-Catholicism. The Reformed consistory urged the Court of Holland and the States-

¹⁰⁶ Consistory minutes, 1 July 1678 and s.d. [July] 1678 (art. 4), GA DH, NHG 4, f. 137 and f. 139; town council resolutions, 16 and 19 July 1678, GA DH, OA 55, f. 35r-35v.

¹⁰⁷ Consistort minutes, 3 (art. 2) and 10 July 1682, GA DH, NHG 4, f. 200-201.

¹⁰⁸ Town council resolution, 23 October 1682, GA DH, OA 55, f. 150r: “Inspectie hebbende genomen van de opgemelte huisinge; en bevonden, dat deselve niet andere tot het exerceren van den papisten Godsdiens was geappropriert, als andere plaetsen, daer deselve door gepermitterde priesteren was gepleecht; hebben goedgevonden te desisteren van de interdictie.”

¹⁰⁹ Wijsenbeek, *Den Haag: Geschiedenis van de stad*, vol. II, p. 216-218; Kaplan, *Divided by Faith*, pp. 187-188.

General to tighten the reigns of permissible Catholic worship in March 1683: the French priest serving d’Avaux had dared to visit Catholic prisoners that had been condemned to death, administering them the last rites. The cleric had no such right, the elders and ministers fumed; foreign priests should not lend Dutch citizens a helping hand.¹¹⁰ That same summer the consistory worried over the growing self-assertion of Catholics in public: “The daily increasing boldness of Popery and particularly the *publicly going to church* in the homes of ambassadors, of those that are subjects of this State” required them to “request an effective remedy against it, as well as [demand] that all ordained papists may be barred from The Hague”.¹¹¹

A final manifestation of Catholic boldness the consistory would not tolerate was the public teaching by priests. In October 1682 for example, the elders got enraged at open-air catechizations they held under the Uijlenbomen, a shady canal promenade at the southern end of The Hague. It proved a popular spot, because a few years later Calvinist church members alerted their consistory to Catholic preaching under these same trees.¹¹² The elders were appalled at the arrogance of the town’s Catholics, who believed they had the right to open schools, hold public meetings, and parade their heresy in front of the entire Protestant community – they fumed “about this liberty in this town, which is not kept in check”.¹¹³ Moreover, the consistory was genuinely worried that papist teaching would persuade the less steadfast Protestants to abandon their faith. In January 1683 it therefore decided that “the Brothers-Ministers will also warn the Community that it must not send its children to papist schools, and will particularly investigate which church members have sent their children in these schools, and that each in his quarter will dissuade his members from doing so”.¹¹⁴

While the Reformed elders and pastors sounded the tocsin whenever they found proof of ‘papist boldness’, the town council acted with greater circumspection. In 1685 the magistrates concluded a religious *entente cordiale* with father Smidts, who had approached them himself and “asked that by provision they would not act too rigorously against the ordained

¹¹⁰ Consistory minutes, 5 March 1683, GA DH, NHG 4, f. 210-211.

¹¹¹ Consistory minutes, 4 June 1683 (art. 2), GA DH, NHG 4, f. 208: “De daaglikse toenemende stoutigheden des Pausdoms en particulier het publiq gaan in de kerken van de huijsen der ambassadeurs van de geene die onderdanen zijn van deesen Staat, als ook in andere harer kerken; en een effectieve remedie daar tegen te versoeken, als mede, dat uijt ’s Gravenhage mogte worden geweerd alle geordende papen.” Emphasis added.

¹¹² Consistory minutes, 2 October 1682 (art. 3) and 5 October 1686 (art. 1), GA DH, NHG 4, f. 202 and f. 249.

¹¹³ Consistory minutes, 4 November 1689 (art. 1), GA DH, NHG 4, f. 286: “Over selver vrijheijt alhier, die also niet ingebonden is.”

¹¹⁴ Consistory minutes, 15 January 1683 (art. 2), GA DH, NHG 4, f. 207: “Sullen ook de Broeders predikanten de Gemeijnte waerschouwen dat sij hare kinderen in geen paapse scholen en willen senden, en particulierlik vernemen wat leden der gemeijnte hare kinderen in de selve sonden, en dat elk in sijn quartier sijne lidmaten met allen ernst daar van afmanen.”

papists, but only admonish them sternly to behave in all modesty”. The burgomasters and aldermen were more than happy to do: after a short lecture to profess his faith behind closed doors, father Smidts was sent home again, and as far as the magistrates were concerned that was the end of the affair. They also turned a blind eye to Catholic schoolmasters, who were told to behave in all modesty but never prevented from teaching altogether.¹¹⁵

When Protestant anger against Catholic preaching reached boiling point in the winter of 1690, culminating in efforts to close down a Catholic church installed on the ground floor of a house in the Nobelstraat, the town council again pleaded for cool-headedness. In a meeting with judges in the Court of Holland, the burgomaster and aldermen explained “that they of old had used moderation and circumvention, as long as no insolences or offences had been given by the papists”, and they had no intention to forbid Catholic worship entirely. This was not magisterial laxity, but a conscious effort to keep the peace by taking heresy out of the public domain and confine it to a separate sphere of privacy. Moreover, in this case moving the church from the attic to the ground floor – where it was more visible, the Protestants objected – was only for pragmatic reasons: the Catholics feared a repeat of the accident in the Austrian embassy, where not long ago the attic chapel had caved in during a Sunday mass.¹¹⁶ Yet the judges were deaf to these pleas, one of them telling the town magistrates “that if at present they did not want to oppose the papists for things they might be in possession of since times immemorial, [they] should in any case not grant them any larger or new freedoms”. Building a larger ground floor church that could be recognized from the street was a dangerous infringement of the boundary between private and public religiosity, so the Court of Holland eventually closed down this Catholic outpost.¹¹⁷

At the close of the seventeenth century, then, the Reformed consistory of The Hague was alarmed at what it perceived as ‘increasing papist boldness’, but this was largely the result of growing insecurity over the fortunes of Protestantism. The 1680s were a period of heightened fears of Catholic self-assertion, both at home and abroad: in Britain a Catholic king has ascended to the throne in 1685, and in France Louis XIV wasted no time rooting out Huguenot worship. Dutch Protestants could tap into their own reservoir of latent anti-

¹¹⁵ Town council resolution, 20 November 1685, GA DH, OA 56, f. 32r-33r: “Hadde versocht, dat men bij provisie niet al te rigoreus met de geordende papisten wilde handelen; maer alleentlijck derselven ernstige vermaningen laten vertonen, van dat sich in alle modestie souden hebben te gedragen.”

¹¹⁶ Town council resolution, 5 December 1690, GA DH, OA 56, f. 150r-152r: “Dat men van alle oudere tijden moderatie en circumventie daer omtrent hadde gebruickt, indien maer gheen insolentien, of aenstotelijckheden door de papisten wierden aengerecht.” On town policy in general, see: Spaans, ‘Religious Policies’, pp. 81-86.

¹¹⁷ Town council resolution, 26 December 1690, GA DH, OA 56, f. 152v-153r: “Dat indien men de papisten voor het tegenwoordighe in dingen daer van sij in immermoreale possessie mochten wesen, niet ten rigoreusten wille tegengaen, in allen gevallen aen hen gheen grooter of nieuwe vrijheden behoorde te vergunnen.”

Catholicism, filled during the Revolt against Spain, and more recently in the 1672 war against France. As the religious stakes were raised, Protestants eyed their Catholic neighbours with increasing suspicion, and made sure their community remained free of heresy that they would only tolerate behind closed doors. For this reason the Dutch Reformed consistory crusaded above all against the visible, public signs of Catholic self-assertion, such as open-air meetings, schools, new churches and worshipping in embassy chapels.

*

The religious worries of the Walloon elders and pastors were very different. They never recorded any signs of Catholic boldness in the public sphere, but were more concerned with combating religious border-crossing in their own community. Parishioners married Catholics, they were suspected of abjuring their faith in France, and there were even Catholics that came to be married in the Walloon church, or wished to convert to Protestantism. This was much more serious than pushing Catholicism out of the public sphere; as border-crossing behavior was in their midst, Huguenots had to fear for their own identity. Only a zealous border police could rescue the community's moral and religious rectitude. Moreover, the pastors' concern over the spiritual life of their Huguenot flock continued well into the eighteenth century. By 1715 the consistory still faced Catholics appearing in its meetings to abjure their faith, whereas their Dutch confreres rapidly lost interest in their crusade popery after 1690.

Parishioners in the Walloon church who self-consciously crossed the confessional boundary betrayed a more open-minded religious identity than we would perhaps expect of people that had escaped persecution. Did not conventional wisdom in early modern Europe have it that two faiths could never peacefully coexist? At least the consistory tried to maintain a morally and religiously unblemished *corpus christianum*, but the faithful did not mind crossing borders. Pragmatic concerns did play a role though, because those who became church members had access to charity and the mediating role of church elders in their familial disputes. It was probably a mix of all these considerations that made them adopt both Huguenot zeal and religious tolerance: they were godly people that abhorred going to mass, but also poor refugees in need of friends, money and a familiar environment.

3.

Militant Discourse

Just months after stadtholder William III had sailed across the Channel to rid England of its Catholic monarch James II and claim the throne as a truly Protestant ruler, Huguenots in the Dutch Republic already tried to cash in on William's success. Assembled at Utrecht in April 1689 for their biannual Walloon synod, pastors and elders congratulated the new monarch on his providential expedition, and reminded William of his religious duties:

All our flocks, Sire, incessantly praise God for the happy success that it has pleased Him to bestow upon the grand and pious designs of your Majesty. We also pray the Lord, with all the ardour that we are capable of, to honour your royal person, so that in God's hand it may be a powerful instrument for the deliverance of His afflicted Church.¹

The 1688 invasion was a sure sign of divine providence, but even more glorious than ousting James II from his throne and securing godly rule in England was to restore Protestant worship in France. The synod likened William to a new messiah, an instrument of God, who had to finish his divine mission of protecting the Protestant Church now that it was under attack all over Europe. The letter also cleverly appealed to William's honour, pleading with him to work "for the consolation of our most beloved brothers, the four pastors of Orange who for almost four years have been detained in prison". After all, the principality of Orange in southern France was part of the stadtholder's realm – surely a Protestant ruler could not tolerate the incarceration of ministers in his own backyard. In sum, the Huguenots viewed William III as God's own envoy to fight popery and re-establish Protestantism in France.²

Indeed, when we shift our focus from the day-to-day behaviour of parishioners to the religious attitudes of pastors and elders at the institutional level of synods and international

¹ Walloon synod to William III, 25 April 1689, *Livre des Actes des Eglises Wallonnes aux Pays-Bas, 1601-1697* (hereafter LA), edited by G. H.M. Posthumus Meyjes and Hans Bots (Den Haag, 2005), pp. 932-933: "Tous nos troupeaux, Sire, rendent sans cesse graces à Dieu, pour le succes heureux qu'il a plu à Dieu de donner aux grands et pieux desseins de vostre Majesté. Nous prions aussi le Seigneur, avec toute l'ardeur dont nous sommes capables de conferer vostre personne royale, afin qu'elle soit à la main de Dieu un puissant instrument pour la delivrance de son Eglise affligée."

² *Ibid.*, p. 933: "Pour la consolation de nos très chers freres, les quatre pasteurs d'Orange qui depuis près de quatre années sont detenus dans les prisons."

power politics, analyzing their vocabulary in letters and address, the religious worldview becomes solidly militant. Both the consistory in The Hague and pastors attending Walloon synods in the Dutch Republic drew a clear confessional boundary between diabolical Catholics on the one hand, who were bent on persecuting Huguenots, and a devout yet martyred flock that sought the protection of a divine stadtholder on the other. William III would persuade Louis XIV – with force if necessary – to restore Protestant worship in France, and thus secure the Huguenots’ return. Such rhetoric was a far cry from border-crossing behaviour. Still, heartfelt though the pastors’ abhorrence of Catholicism may have been, their militant vocabulary was above all an abstract indictment of persecution and plight, and was designed to either secure themselves a position in the Walloon Church, or rally public opinion under the banner of embattled Protestant faith, and urge William III to work for their return to France.

The Godly Messiah

Confessional militancy seeped through first of all in addresses the consistory held before the stadtholder. During the 1690s, pastors and elders regularly obtained audiences with William III, whose ascension to the British throne they hailed as the first stage in the deliverance of Protestantism in Europe. This message was not lost to William III, who since his rise to power in 1672 had styled himself the ‘champion of Protestant Europe’. The French invasion of the southern provinces during the *annus horribilis* had not only brought William to the office of stadtholder and army commander of the Dutch Republic, but had also made clear that invasion over land loomed larger than maritime competition. Judging by the outpouring of pamphlets, it was the expanding French monarchy and its aggressive Catholicism the Dutch came to fear most. Protestantism was under siege all over Europe: in 1685 the Catholic James II succeeded to the British throne, favouring the restoration of Catholicism in his kingdom, while in France the Huguenots faced the erosion of their civil rights, persecution and finally forced conversions. When in 1682 dragoons invaded the principedom of Orange and persecuted all Huguenot inhabitants, it only hardened William’s resolve to mount the barricades with a promise to protect Protestantism in Europe.³

The stadtholder was undoubtedly a pious Protestant who wished to protect his coreligionists, but the propaganda value of Huguenot persecution should not be underestimated. In

³ P.J.A.N. Rietbergen, ‘William of Orange (1650-1702) between European politics and European Protestantism: the case of the Huguenots’, in J.A.H. Bots and G.H.M. Posthumus Meyjes, eds., *La Révocation de l’Édit de Nantes et les Provinces-Unies 1685* (Amsterdam and Maarssen, 1986), pp. 35-43.

the reports French ambassador D’Avaux sent to his monarch in Versailles, he warned Louis XIV that the pamphlets, newspapers and sermons decrying the persecution of Protestants in France raised anti-French sentiments in the Dutch Republic, and whipped up support for the Huguenots and an anti-Catholic league. It only solidified William’s position, D’Avaux argued, because the stadtholder would be keen to exploit Huguenot plight and form a grand Protestant alliance against France. Much to his peril, Louis remained deaf: in 1685 the Revocation and James’ ascension convinced even the most reluctant Dutch regents that the Catholic threat had to be warded off, and they sanctioned William’s invasion of England.⁴ Once he had installed himself on the British throne, William did not abandon Protestant self-fashioning, for the newly crowned monarch and his entourage propagated the image of a providential and godly prince to legitimize the usurpation of royal power and continuous warfare against France.⁵

Whether Huguenot refugees believed that William III was a sincere protector of the Protestant faith or that he merely used religious vocabulary to prop up his regime was of little importance. As William continued to wage war against Louis XIV and promised to protect Protestantism, he was the exiles’ only hope to see Protestantism in France restored and make them return, so they were keen to appeal to the ruler’s religious self-image.

No one grasped the reciprocal value of Protestant discourse to both William and the Huguenots better than pastor Pierre Jurieu, who in his widely read sermons and pamphlets argued that William III was carrying out a divine plan to deliver Protestantism from its Catholic enemies. Born in 1637 in the small town of Mer in the Berry region as the son of a Huguenot minister, Jurieu had received his education at the Protestant academies of Saumur and Sedan before becoming a pastor himself, until he was awarded a professorship at Sedan in 1675. By this time Protestantism already was under severe restrictions, but in 1681 Louis also closed down the academy of Sedan. Jurieu made his way to the Dutch Republic, where he settled in Rotterdam to become a pastor to the Walloon Church as well as professor of theology at the newly established *Illustere School*.⁶

His religious writings drew a clear line between devilish Catholics and pious Huguenots. In his *Préservatif contre le changement de Religion* (1679) Jurieu granted that Catholi-

⁴ Ibid., pp. 43-47; Jacques Solé, ‘La diplomatie de Louis XIV et les protestants français réfugiés aux Provinces-Unies (1678-1688)’, *Bulletin de la Société de l’Histoire du Protestantisme Français*, 115 (1969), pp. 625-660; Hans Bots, ‘L’écho de la Révocation dans les Provinces-Unies à travers les gazettes et les pamphlets’, in Roger Zuber and Laurent Theis, eds., *La Révocation de l’Édit de Nantes et le protestantisme français en 1685* (Paris, 1986), pp. 281-298.

⁵ Tony Claydon, *William III and the Godly Revolution* (Cambridge, 1996).

⁶ Knetsch, *Pierre Jurieu*, pp. 13-52, 117-145.

cism was a Christian religion, but went on to argue that Rome was out of touch with the Word of God because it was corrupted by idolatry and superstitious ceremonies. Although Jurieu shared the ardent wish of bishop Bossuet to reunite all believers in one church, this sacred community had better bear the Reformed stamp if it was to pass God's litmus test. In *La politique du clergé de France* (1680), he therefore denounced the attempts of Catholic clergymen to convert Huguenots and pressure the king to restore religious unity. Jurieu continued his indictment in *Les derniers efforts de l'innocence affligée* (1682), in which he recounted the horrors of the Poitou *dragonnades*, and protested the conversion of young children as well as the outlawing of Protestant midwives, which allowed their Catholic counterparts to baptize the newborn in the other faith.⁷

In 1686 Jurieu published his perhaps most crucial work, which neatly laid out God's plans for the near future: *L'Accomplissement des prophéties, ou la délivrance prochaine de l'Eglise, Ouvrage dans lequel il est prouvé que le papisme est l'Empire antichrétien; que cet Empire n'est pas éloigné de sa ruine; que cette ruine doit commencer dans très peu de temps; que la persécution présente ne peut durer plus de trois ans et demi; après quoi commencera la destruction de l'Empire de l'Antéchrist, laquelle se continuera dans le reste de ce siècle, s'achèvera dans le commencement du siècle prochain, et enfin le règne de Jesus-Christ viendra sur terre*. Jurieu based his predictions on chapter eleven of the Apocalypse, in which two witnesses make their appearance. They prophesize for 1260 days under the reign of the Antichrist before being slaughtered by the Beast, but after three and a half days the Holy Spirit brings their bodies back to life, and they rejoin God in Heaven. Jurieu identified the witnesses as the Huguenots, who were the last in a series of evangelical movements that for 1260 years had preached the true gospel in the face of Catholicism. Though a diabolical Louis XIV believed that the Revocation had wiped them all out, Jurieu foresaid that the Protestant Church would miraculously rise again in three and a half years: Louis would restore the Edict of Nantes in 1689, and the Church of Rome would suffer its final defeat around 1710.⁸

Yet Jurieu did not wait for the Apocalypse to simply happen. As Protestantism balanced on the verge of extinction, he argued the Almighty should be given a hand to save the elect. Jurieu was no armchair theologian busying himself with mere theories, but a man on a mission. He believed history was providential, the Almighty constantly intervening in the

⁷ Ibid., pp. 98-116, 146-152; F.R.J. Knetsch, 'Pierre Jurieu (1637-1713) face à la Revocation', in J.A.H. Bots and G.H.M. Posthumus Meyjes, eds., *La Révocation de l'Édit de Nantes et les Provinces-Unies 1685* (Amsterdam and Maarssen, 1986), pp. 107-111.

⁸ Knetsch, *Pierre Jurieu*, pp. 205-208; Hubert Bost, *Ces Messieurs de la R.P.R.: Histoires et écritures de huguenots, XVIIe-XVIIIe siècles* (Paris, 2001), pp. 175-180.

course of events to bring His grand design a step closer. Jurieu saw it as his task to read the signs of history and divine God's intentions, so that Protestants could help fulfil this prophesy, by force if necessary. And obviously God's plan was to settle the apocalyptical battle between the forces of light and darkness with a ringing victory for the Protestant Church.⁹

Jurieu's political views thus tied in perfectly with his religious views. In *Les derniers efforts*, he went back to Protestant contract theories, arguing that rulers did not hold absolute power over their subjects, nor had the right to take arbitrary measures contravening fundamental rights. Imposing religious beliefs and persecuting citizens of different faith warranted popular resistance. No ruler should forget that the ultimate source of authority rested with the people that had appointed him. To Jurieu the Edict of Nantes was the perfect example: in sight of both the Lord and the people, the monarchy had negotiated a religious settlement to restore peace, to which the Huguenots had also pledged their attachment. Yet the erosion of their civil liberties and imposition of Catholicism had seriously undermined the contract, while its unilateral revocation in 1685 meant that Louis had forfeited Huguenot obedience. Although Jurieu never made an explicit case for violent resistance, he came dangerously close to a Huguenot call for arms.¹⁰

In his *Lettres Pastorales*, published twice a month as small eight-page quarto pamphlets and smuggled into France, Jurieu called upon Huguenots and *nouveaux convertis* to persevere in their faith. After all, because his vision of a triumphant Protestant Church would soon be fulfilled, the witnesses of the true faith had to prepare themselves for deliverance, not abandon all hope and convert to Catholicism. Jurieu thus catalogued atrocities committed by Catholics, unmasked their heretical teachings, and recounted stories of clandestine Huguenot meetings to inspire others. He also paid attention to miracles that he believed signalled the forthcoming deliverance: in the Béarn region for example, Protestants and Catholics had heard angelic psalm-singing at sites of destroyed Huguenots churches, a sure sign that God would soon unleash his wrath – did not the Apocalypse start with trumpets clamouring from the heavens, too?¹¹

An even surer sign of unfolding providence was the Glorious Revolution of 1688. Jurieu enthusiastically supported the regime change, which fitted his eschatological calendar: because William III had chased a Catholic monarch from the British throne and promised to

⁹ Knetsch, *Pierre Jurieu*, pp. 60-61; Labrousse, *Conscience et conviction*, pp. 209-216; Bost, *Ces Messieurs de la R.P.R.*, pp. 187-189.

¹⁰ Knetsch, *Pierre Jurieu*, pp. 152-160; Knetsch, 'Pierre Jurieu', pp. 111-112.

¹¹ Knetsch, *Pierre Jurieu*, pp. 219-243; Labrousse, *Conscience et conviction*, pp. 230-236; Bost, *Ces Messieurs de la R.P.R.*, pp. 189-211.

restore godly rule, he undoubtedly was an instrument of God, who would next slay the Beast embodied by Louis XIV. From a political point of view Jurieu had no reason to question William's invasion either: in his *Traité de la puissance des souverains* (1689), Jurieu argued that since James II had violated the fundamental laws of his kingdom by favouring popery instead of Protestantism, he had forfeited the people's obedience to their monarch. Kings that were deaf to God's Word merited replacement by a godly ruler.¹²

Jurieu's vision proved popular, much to the dismay of his former friend and colleague Pierre Bayle, who had also taken refuge in Rotterdam, yet had fallen out with Jurieu over the relationship between religion and politics. He accused Jurieu of handing Catholics a stick to beat the Huguenots with, because supporting the Glorious Revolution and encouraging civil disobedience in France only reinforced the Catholic perception that Huguenots were rebels and monarchomachs. Moreover, even though Jurieu ruled out persecution, Bayle found the pastor's plea to let state and church work in tandem to protect the true faith dangerous to society. It was no less intolerant than Catholic attempts to convert all Huguenots, Bayle argued: faith is matter between one's conscience and God, not the domain of state authorities. Imposing religion only made for lukewarm followers and resistance, while states tolerating religious pluralism produced loyal citizens.¹³

From Babylon to Jerusalem

It is telling, however, that the consistory in The Hague did not take Bayle's call for religious tolerance to heart, but echoed Jurieu's militant rhetoric. In addresses to William III the pastors and elders cultivated a special relationship with this providential ruler, tying the fate of the exiled Huguenots to his international battle for Protestantism. The consistory had little difficulties to obtain audiences, as their church was just a stone's throw away from the stadtholder's court at the *Binnenhof* in The Hague. The practice of going on audiences reached back at least to 1675, when the consistory had decided to offer its condolences to William after the princess dowager had passed away. According to the consistory book, the stadtholder warmly thanked pastor Jean Carré, who was accompanied by two of his elders and a deacon, for his sympathy, telling him that "if I can do something good for your Church, I will most gladly do so".¹⁴

¹² Bost, *Ces Messieurs de la R.P.R.*, pp. 181-183; Knetsch, *Pierre Jurieu*, pp. 278-291; Labrousse, *Conscience et conviction*, pp. 176-184, 233-236.

¹³ Labrousse, *Conscience et conviction*, pp. 167-174.

¹⁴ Consistory minutes, 27 October 1675, GA DH, WHG 1, f. 154: "Si je peux faire du bien à vostre Eglise je le feray tres volontiers."

The consistory went to visit William more often after he had ascended to the British throne, clearly hoping he would restore Protestantism in France in similar fashion. As soon as William set foot on Dutch soil again in 1691, pastors and elders hurried to court for an audience. Carré praised God for William's providential crossing to Britain and compared him to a glorious Roman emperor, because "as another Cesar he had come, seen and conquered".¹⁵ The pastor also weaved a religious bond between his flock and William's Protestant crusade, telling the monarch that God had surely blessed his designs, and that the Walloon community prayed the Almighty to keep William in his protection: "Our most ardent prayers have been and will always be for the continuation of this health that is so precious to us, and for the success of all his plans to glorify God and the well-being of his Churches."¹⁶

Subsequent addresses were consistently saturated with biblical rhetoric. Pastors spoke of divine providence, as they cast William as an instrument of God in the apocalyptic battle between the Protestant and Catholic Churches, the long-awaited saviour who would free them from Babylonian captivity and lead them back into the eternal city of Jerusalem. In 1692 William was addressed by refugee pastor Isaac Claude, who had fled his home town of Clermont to seek refuge in the Dutch Republic, where in 1685 he was installed as minister in the Wallon Church of The Hague.¹⁷ Contrary to Carré he had personally experienced religious persecution and exile, and was thus imbued with a strong sense of ending Huguenot plight. Claude started off his address by telling William he was God's own envoy on earth: "we regard His Majesty and will without stopping regard him as one of the greatest Kings that God has ever anointed, and as one of the most illustrious Ministers of his power and his decrees. He has entrusted you with their execution."¹⁸

To Claude it was no mystery what these decrees commanded, nor should it be to William. The Glorious Revolution had proven that God had chosen him to defeat the Church of Rome, not just in Britain but everywhere in Europe:

We cannot doubt, Sire, after all that his divine arm has bestowed for marvellous favours upon you, and the benedictions that he has conferred on Your Majesty in such an abundant manner, and by ways so unforeseen and surprising, [that these] are living proof that he calls you to

¹⁵ Consistory minutes, 2 February 1691, GA DH, WHG 1, f. 204: "Comme un autre Caesar il estoit venu, il avoit vu, et avoit vaincu."

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, f. 205: "Nos vœux avoient esté et seroient tousjours tres ardents pour la continuation de cette santé qui nous estoit si precieuse, et pour faire reussir tous ses desseins à la gloire de dieu [et] au biens de ses Eglises."

¹⁷ Consistory minutes, 24 June 1685, GA DH, WHG 1, f. 181-182.

¹⁸ Consistory minutes, March 1692, GA DG, WHG 1, f. 208: "Nous la regardons et que nous la regarderons sans cesse comme un des plus grands Roys que Dieu ait jamais oint, et comme un des plus illustres Ministres de son puissance et de ses decrets. Il vous en a confié l'execution."

plans worthy of your courage and your piety. May you, Sire, fulfil them to the full extent of our hopes and our designs. May you at the same time be the instrument of his [God's] mercifulness for his afflicted Church.¹⁹

Claude clearly agreed with Jurieu's eschatological calendar, urging William to continue his Protestant campaign and fulfil divine prophesy: he hoped "that the same zeal that had made him [William] often cry about the ruins of our Jerusalem will always move him to work for its restoration."²⁰

Claude referred to Jerusalem for good reasons. Used to reading their Bible, the Huguenots quickly drew a comparison between their own plight, the besieged Protestant Church, and the fate of the biblical people of Israel. Just as the Hebrews, the Huguenots were God's elect wandering in the desert en route to the Promised Land, either in clandestine meetings under the cross, or in the Refuge to escape Babylon altogether. Yet the metaphor worked both ways: perhaps France was an outpost of popery, it still remained their fatherland. Hence Huguenot refugees always wanted to break the chains of their Babylonian captivity and return home, telling each other that next year they would celebrate the resurrection of the Church in the Promised Land, just as scattered in the Diaspora the people of Israel longed for the rebuilding of the Temple in Jerusalem.²¹

They were not prepared to wait for deliverance, however, especially now that Jurieu had foretold the imminent triumph of Protestantism. In 1696 pastor Jordain Olivier therefore exhorted William to continue fighting the armies of the most Catholic monarch, telling him that "the God of battles wants to wage war with his anointed, and take him back from that campaign with fresh victories that procure us a happy peace, in which we will be able to find the peace of Jerusalem".²² The metaphysical clash between the forces of light and darkness was bound to result in William's triumph and the reinstatement of Protestant worship in France, allowing the Huguenots to return to their Promised Land. Pastor Claude had similarly ended his 1692 address in military style, assuring William that "we send up our prayers to

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, f. 208: "Nous n'en pouvons douter, Sire, apres tout ce que son divin bras a fait de merveilles en vostre faveur, les benedictions qu'il a répandues sur V. M. [Votre Majesté] d'une maniere si abondante, et par des voyes si impreuues et si surprenante, sont une preuve eclatante qu'il vous appelle à des desseins dignes de vostre courage et de vostre pieté. Puissez vous, Sire les remplir dans toute l'estendue de nos esperances et de nos desins. Puissez vous en même temps estre l'instrument de sa misericorde envers son Eglise affligée."

²⁰ *Ibid.*, f. 208: "Que le même zele qui la fait souvent pleurer sur les ruines de nostre Jerusalem l'animerà toujours pour travailler à sa restauration."

²¹ Bost, *Ces Messieurs de la R.P.R.*, pp. 283-287; Yardeni, *Refuge protestant*, pp. 107-108.

²² Consistory minutes, 19 May 1696, GA DH, WHG 1, f. 217: "Le dieu des batailles veuille combattre avec son Oinet [sic] et le remener de cette campagne avec de nouvelles victoires qui nous procurent une heureuse paix, ou nous puissions trouver la paix de Jerusalem."

heaven so that Your Majesty may always be preserved, and may always be covered by the Almighty's shadow, and that the God of battles, of whom solely depend all feats, will always attach victory to his arms, and will be his eternal Remunerator."²³

Militant religious discourse resonated clearly with William III, who after each address assured his interlocutors that he would protect the Walloon Church, because it formed part of his holy alliance. In 1695 for example he told the consistory to continue imploring God for divine protection, since "the interests of the Church, which he saw fused with our wants, were most dear to him, and that he always had in mind its consolation," adding moreover that "the Walloon Church he loved could always count on his protection".²⁴ William also hoped the apocalyptic battle would soon pave the way for victory: a year later he told pastor Olivier he wished "that God shall finally deliver us from the miseries that accompany this sad war".²⁵

Calling his holy war a sad business was significant, however. Eager to end a costly war that had dragged on for years, William ultimately wanted to conclude peace with France rather than gain a Pyrrhic victory. In 1699 Olivier would still tell William that the Huguenots hoped the monarch "would always think of the peace of Jerusalem as a place for desolate families, such as appear at your feet at this moment", but he must have known this was wishful thinking.²⁶ Two years before the Peace of Rijswijk had ended the Nine Year's War between France and the alliance of Protestant states led by William III, but the treaty had not resulted in the restoration of the Edict of Nantes, despite the lobbying efforts of Jurieu and other prominent exiles. The trouble was that France had not suffered total defeat, which made it difficult to make Louis XIV swallow a religious settlement that smacked of religious pluralism, not to mention the French threat to walk out of negotiations if Protestant diplomats tabled religious clauses.²⁷ The Huguenot exile community in The Hague quickly lost hope: although audiences continued until 1700, the addresses became shorter by the year – or at least the entries in the consistory book did – and were stripped of their usual pugnacity.²⁸ War was over.

²³ Consistory minutes, March 1692, f. 208: "Nous pousserons nos voeux au ciel a fin que V. M. [Votre Majesté] soit toujours conservée, et toujours couverte de l'ombre du toutpuissant, et que le Dieu des batailles, duquel seul dépendent les exploits, attache toujours la victoire à ses armes, et soit enfin son Remunérateur eternel."

²⁴ Consistory minutes, May 1695, GA DH, WHG 1, f. 214: "Que les interets de l'Eglise qu'il voyoit mesles dans nos valus lui estoient fort chers, et qu'il avoit eu tousiours en veüe sa consolation (...) Enfin que L'Eglise Walonne qu'il aimoit pouvoit s'assurer tousiours de sa protection."

²⁵ Consistory minutes, 19 May 1696, GA DH, WHG 1, f. 217: "Que dieu nous deliveroit enfin des miseres qui accompagnent cette triste guerre."

²⁶ Consistory minutes, 16 June 1699, GA DH, WHG 1, f. 224: "Que vous vous souviendrez tousiours de la paix de Jerusalem un milieu de familles desolaces comme si elles paroisoient dans ce moment en vos pieds".

²⁷ Knetsch, *Pierre Jurieu*, pp. 350-354.

²⁸ See for the last address: consistory minutes, 20 July 1700, GA DH, WHG 1, f. 236.

Pastors in Exile

Besides the consistory, Huguenot refugee pastors gave ample testimony of their religious attitudes when they addressed the Walloon synod. Having made a safe escape to the Dutch Republic, they wrote moving letters to ask for financial support and a new pulpit to preach, often recounting the horrors of persecution in France to mollify the synod. Some had already left France before 1685, but most pastors arrived quickly after the Revocation, since the Edict of Fontainebleau had granted them a two-week period to leave France: in the years 1685-1686, about 240 ministers went into exile to the Dutch Republic, a further 43 arriving in the period 1687-1690, while the last decade only brought 25 new refugee ministers. Out of 680 Huguenot pastors that chose exile rather than abjure their faith, an astounding 405 ended up in the Dutch Republic. It was the obvious safe haven, because the structure of French-speaking Walloon churches already present in the Dutch Republic offered refugee ministers the best chance of finding themselves a new flock.²⁹

Although the majority of Huguenot pastors took refuge abroad, exile remained controversial. Those who refused to leave argued that abandoning their Huguenot flock would doom Protestantism in France to a quick and certain death – they preferred to stay behind and keep alive the faith in clandestine communities. Refugee pastors by contrast claimed that suffering persecution was pointless; rather than fight an all-powerful Catholic state, going into exile was to board Noah’s arch, preserving Huguenot clergy for its glorious return to France once Protestant worship was restored. Of course staying behind nor exile were easy options: preaching under the cross required real courage, whereas refugee pastors gave up hearth and home for an uncertain existence abroad, since finding a new flock proved difficult.³⁰

Arriving in the Dutch Republic, the first step refugee pastors took was to present themselves at the Walloon synod. Ever since delegates to the 1578 Dutch Reformed synod at Dordrecht had granted the French-speaking lot the right to hold their own synods in the future, the Walloon churches had taken it in turn to organise these meetings twice a year. Delegated pastors and elders discussed doctrine and examined soon-to-be pastors among other things, but in the 1680s an increasing number of refugee pastors caught their attention: the keeper of the *Livre des Actes*, which contained all incoming and outgoing correspondence

²⁹ Hans Bots, ‘Les pasteurs français au Refuge dans les Provinces-Unies: un groupe socio-professionnel tout particulier, 1680-1710’, in Jens Häselser and Antony McKenna, eds., *La Vie intellectuelle aux Refuges protestants: Actes de la Table ronde de Münster du 25 juillet 1995* (Paris, 1999), pp. 9-11.

³⁰ Labrousse, *Conscience et conviction*, pp. 118-132.

of the synod, received ever more letters from exiled pastors petitioning for financial support and a ministry, while others appeared at synod meetings to present their requests in person.³¹

Their vocabulary was of militant make, for in their written and oral pleas the exiled pastors recounted the persecution they had suffered in France, and the ordeal of fleeing to the Dutch Republic, thus drawing a clear line between martyred Huguenots and their Catholic oppressors. In 1683 for example, minister Jean Ferrand wrote a moving letter from his home town Nérac, explaining the synod that the authorities had raised his church to the ground and had forbidden him to preach, next putting him in prison for three months to suffer the rudest treatments, “of which I will not talk here, there being several among those who compose your sacred assembly that have a particular knowledge of these things”.³² Ferrand clearly hoped that his story of persecution would stir older memories of plight among the Walloon and Huguenot exiles, and move them to offer him a ministry. Though he was aware that the Walloon Church already had plenty of pastors, Ferrand told the synod that God values all contributions to his tabernacle, including those of a humble village pastor, and once again asked “that you will look after one of your brothers who has suffered much for Jesus Christ and for the interest of his truth”.³³ The synod gathered at Haarlem was indeed struck by Ferrand’s tribulations, declaring him eligible for a ministry, and in 1685 he was called as pastor to the Walloon Church at Sas-van-Gent.³⁴

In 1684 the synod received an even more strident letter from Pierre Boyer, who had fled France at the age of sixty-six and now lived in The Hague. Because he had clandestinely given a sermon before the Huguenots of St. Hippolyte after their church had been destroyed, royal commissioners had confiscated Boyer’s possessions and sentenced him to death. The old pastor had had no choice but to flee. “The horrible tempest that Satan has unleashed against the churches of France has made me leave my country,” Boyer wrote, adding that “luckily it has driven me into your ports, where by the grace of the Lord I am beyond the

³¹ Hans Bots, ‘Le sort des frères huguenots à travers le Livre des Actes de l’Église Wallonne’, in Hubert Bost and Claude Lauriol eds., *Refuge et Désert: L’évolution théologique des huguenots de la Révocation à la Révolution française* (Paris, 2003), pp. 19-32. On the functioning of Walloon synods, see the modern-day introduction to the *Livre des Actes*, pp. IX-XV. Most letters predate 1685, probably because the post-Revocation period saw the arrival of so many pastors that letters were not kept, while record-keeping also suffered from a decision made in 1681 to rotate both the *Livre des Actes* and its keeper every three years.

³² Jean Ferrand to Walloon synod, 20 April 1683, LA, p. 877: “Dont ie ne vous ferai point ici le recit, y en ayant plusieurs de ceux qui composent vostre sainte assemblée qui en ont eu une cognoissance particuliere.”

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 877: “Que vous regarderez à un de vos freres qui a beaucoup souffert pour Jesus Christ et pour l’interest de sa verité.”

³⁴ Synod resolution 14, April 1683 (Haarlem), LS, p. 820; on Ferrand, also see no. 156 in the list compiled by Hans Bots, ‘Liste des pasteurs et proposants réfugiés dans les Provinces-Unies’, in Jens Häselser and Antony McKenna, eds., *La Vie intellectuelle aux Refuges protestants: Actes de la Table ronde de Münster du 25 juillet 1995* (Paris, 1999), p. 38.

reach of my enemies”.³⁵ In the spirit of Jurieu, Boyer believed God would soon unleash the Apocalypse against the Catholic Church, so that the Huguenot refugees could return to the Promised Land:

I hope that our great God, who has put bounds to the sea and who calms down his seas when they are turbulent, will soon put limits to this sharp and horrible persecution they wage against our poor brothers, and that (...) he will have mercy upon his dear Sion, and will remember his Jerusalem.³⁶

In the meantime he asked the synod to have pity on him. The delegates assembled at Arnhem lent him a willing ear, but although they declared Boyer eligible as minister he would never again stand in the pulpit.³⁷

Other pastors were not so zealous: in 1683 Daniel de Vernejoul, minister in Bergerac, blamed his plight less on Catholic neighbours than on God, whom he believed to have put the Huguenots and their Church to the test. Persecution was a litmus test for their piety, a sign of divine election rather than of wrath. Still, Vernejoul preferred to endure this test in the safe environment of the Dutch Republic.³⁸ His request met with considerable success, because the synod “has seen with edification that his works, his tenacity, his steadfastness, his zeal and his sufferings recommend him to us as well as his talents”: he was declared worthy of a ministry and in 1684 was installed as pastor in the newly established Walloon church of Arnhem.³⁹

Yet most exiled ministers showed up in person to recount their terrible ordeals before the synod. In the 1680s, the official resolutions jotted down in the *Livre Synodal* reveal an endless parade of ministers telling stories of persecution and suffering under the cross. Storytelling, or *faire le récit*, was of great importance, because some pastors were unable to produce church attestations and thus had to prove their zeal by testifying to their ordeals under Catholic rule. Pastor Jean Ducasse for example informed the synod that French authorities had seized all his documents when he had left France via Bordeaux, and therefore

³⁵ Pierre Boyer to Walloon synod, 3 September 1684, LA, p. 897: “L’horrible tempeste que Satan a excité contre les esglises de France m’a fait sortir de mon pays (...), et m’a ietté heureusement dans vos ports, où ie suis par la grace du Seigneur, hors des atteintes de mes ennemis.”

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 898: “I’espere que nostre grand Dieu qui a mis des bornes à la mer et qui appaise ses flots lors qu’elle est plus esmeue, mettra bien tost des bornes à cette fine et horrible persecution qu’on fait à nos povres freres, et qu’ (...) il aura compassion de sa chere Sion, et se souviendra de sa Jerusalem.”

³⁷ Synod resolution 12, September 1684 (Arnhem), LS, pp. 831-832; Bots, ‘Liste des pasteurs’, p. 26 (63).

³⁸ Daniel de Vernejoul to Walloon synod, August 1683, LA, p. 890.

³⁹ Synod resolution 7, September 1683 (Goes), LS, pp. 823: “Elle a veu avec édification que ses travaux, sa constance, sa fermeté, son zèle et ses souffrances nous le rendent recommandable de mesme que ses dons.”; Bots, ‘Liste des pasteurs’, p. 66 (394).

could not present any attestations.⁴⁰ We can only guess what exactly exiled ministers told the synod, since the records do not list their integral addresses, but the succinct, matter-of-fact resolutions still suggest that their stories closely matched those written by their confreres: continuous references to suffering, persecution and Catholic enemies reveal religious intransigence rather than toleration.

Take Zacharie Polgé, previously pastor in the small village of Florensac in the Languedoc, who in 1682 appeared at the synod of Nijmegen

to let here know how persecution had obliged him to promptly withdraw himself from France, and asking to be admitted in our pulpits and be declared eligible in our Churches, [and] *the Company having heard the stories he has told us of his misfortunes* (...) accords him the consolation of mounting our pulpits.⁴¹

The next year he was called as minister to the Walloon church of Nijmegen.⁴² This became a familiar pattern, as other exiles appealing to the synod with stories of their plight rapidly obtained a ministry, too. When in 1684 François Pichot “exposed to this Company [the synod] the reasons that had obliged him to leave France, not only because of the demolition of his temple, but also because of the persecution against himself”, the synod straightaway declared him eligible for a ministry, and in the spring of 1685 Pichot was already preaching in the Walloon church of Gouda.⁴³ Samuel George, a refugee minister from Vitry-le-François in the Champagne, also thanked his calling to Middelburg largely to storytelling: the assembled delegates noted that after George “had given us his account of the malice and assaults the enemies of the truth have used against him, and which have forced him to leave his Church and his family, the Company had been sensibly touched by his disgraces”.⁴⁴

Refugee ministers had undoubtedly lived through terrible ordeals, but we should nonetheless be careful to take their stories for granted. The fierce competition over ministries in the Dutch Republic meant that pastors painting a bleak picture of atrocities they had suffered

⁴⁰ Jean Ducasse to Walloon synod, 21 April 1686, LA, p. 919-920.

⁴¹ Synod resolution 12, April 1682 (Nijmegen), LS, p. 808: “Pour y faire savoir comment la persécution l’avoit obligé à se retirer promptement de France, et demandant d’estre admis en nos chaires et déclaré callable dans nos Eglises, la Compagnie aiant ouï les recits qu’il nous a fait de ses malheurs, (...) lui accorde la consolation de monter dans nos chaires.” Emphasis added.

⁴² Synod resolution 5, April 1683 (Haarlem), LS, p. 819; Bots, ‘Liste des pasteurs’, p. 58 (329).

⁴³ Synod resolution 4, April 1684 (Leeuwarden), LS, p. 827: “Ayant exposé à ceste Compagnie les raisons qui l’avoient obligé à quitter la France, non-seulement par la démolition de son temple, mais aussi par la persécution qu’on a excitée contre sa personne.”; Bots, ‘Liste des pasteurs’, p. 58 (325).

⁴⁴ Synod resolution 4, April 1685 (Brielle), LS, p. 834: “Nous ayant fait le récit de la malice et des attentats dont les ennemis de la vérité ont usé à son égard, qui l’ont contraint de quitter son Eglise et sa famille, la Compagnie a esté sensiblement touchée de ses disgraces.”; Bots, ‘Liste des pasteurs’, p. 40 (180).

at the hands of Catholics stood better chances of moving the Walloon synod and gaining a ministry. In the 1680s the French-speaking communities admittedly mushroomed as a result of the Huguenot exodus, and additional pastors had to be appointed to cope with the spiritual needs of their flock, but the exiled pastors were still disproportionate in number. Besides, finding the money to pay their salaries was a constant worry: the Walloon Church had insufficient funds to support all the refugee ministers, and although Dutch authorities gallantly offered to lend a helping hand – the States of Holland voted 25,000 guilders to support 70 pastors, and the larger cities also supported a small number – there always remained too many pastors.⁴⁵

Synod records offer ample evidence of ministerial competition. Delegates habitually incorporated a resolution that reads as a bulletin listing all the jobless pastors eligible for a ministry, a list that grew longer every year.⁴⁶ One way out for pastors that failed to find a new pulpit was to try their luck abroad, usually in England or Brandenburg. Just graduated from the Walloon college in Leiden, pastor Jacob Gallé adopted an even shrewder solution: realising that “the large number of refugee ministers that persecutions have brought to our country seems to have removed me from your pulpits forever”, he had started preaching in Dutch in the hope to be called by one of the Dutch Reformed churches. With success, for in 1686 Gallé wrote the synod that the States-General had appointed him as minister serving the Dutch ambassador in Paris.⁴⁷

Not all pastors were so lucky, however, and the fate of Gallé’s confreres in The Hague was no exception. When in 1685 the Walloon church rapidly expanded as a result of the Huguenot influx, the consistory secured the appointment of refugee minister Isaac Claude as third *pasteur ordinaire*, or official pastor, but other pastors seeking refuge in The Hague had to rely on state pensions or their own coffers.⁴⁸ The consistory book reveals that in 1690 fourteen pastors lived in The Hague, because that year the consistory summoned all resident pastors to have them sign up to the articles of faith confirmed at the 1618 synod of Dordrecht. Besides the three official pastors (of whom Jean Carré was the only Walloon), five pastors lived on a pension granted by the town council, preaching during evening services and occasionally on Sunday morning, while six others resided in The Hague with no apparent

⁴⁵ Bots, ‘Les pasteurs français’, p. 11-12

⁴⁶ See for example the list in synod resolution 19, September 1685 (Delft), LS, p. 842. That synod, it was also added that the delegates were “touched by the sight of the large number of refugee Pastors and other afflicted persons that were reduced to a deplorable state”, synod resolution 22, *ibid.*: “Touchée de la veue du grand nombre de Pasteurs réfugiés et autres personnes affligées réduites en un déplorable estat.”

⁴⁷ Jacob Gallé to Walloon synod, 20 April 1686, LA, p. 910: “Que ce grand nombre de ministres refugiez que la persecution vient d’amener dans nostre pais semble m’avoir éloigné pour tousiours de vos chaires.”

⁴⁸ Consistory minutes, 24 June 1685, GA DH, WHG 1, f. 181-182; Bots, ‘Liste des pasteurs’, p. 32 (111).

means of support, although most would eventually receive a pension or a ministry elsewhere in the Dutch Republic.⁴⁹

Frictions were the logical result, not just among newly arrived ministers competing for pensions and vacant ministries, but also because *pasteurs ordinaires* might look down on pastors enjoying a state pension, which – although it did not entitle them to any spiritual authority – often emboldened them to ask for more sermons and performing the sacraments. Moreover, they resented the influence Dutch authorities tried to exert over the Walloon churches, trying to get subsidized pastors appointed as minister so they could cut down on expensive pensions.⁵⁰ When in 1681 André Chion tried to get his son appointed as minister, producing a letter of recommendation from the States of Holland, the synod haughtily responded that they were under no obligation to force any Walloon church to take on Chion’s son, “since the perpetual usage of this republic has always left the venerable magistrates of the respective towns, as well as the churches, a total liberty in this matter”.⁵¹

In August 1688, conflict over a nomination in The Hague got seriously out of hand. The town council had allocated refugee minister Cornelis an annual pension of 200 guilders and told the Walloon consistory he was to preach during evening services, taking it in turn with the other pensioners Jacquelot and Arbussy. *Pasteurs ordinaires* Carré and Claude vehemently protested, however: the delegated aldermen reported back how “these gentlemen had made great protests, claiming that they had always, and in everything that was in their power, been excused to follow and oblige the wishes of the magistrate”.⁵² The town council had no business telling them who could preach in the Walloon church. Eventually Carré and Claude went on their knees, promising to let Cornelis preach, but a week later they had made volte-face again – despite ‘some stern words’ by town council secretary Assendelft the two pastors stood firm, and Cornelis never got to mount the pulpit.⁵³

Given all the obstacles Huguenot refugee pastors in the Dutch Republic faced in trying to obtain a ministry or even a state pension, recounting the horrors of persecutions and flight

⁴⁹ Consistory minutes, 27 September 1690, GA DH, WHG 1, f. 202. Cf. the entries in Bots, ‘Liste des pasteurs’: pastors-ordinary: Jean Carré, Isaac Claude (111), Jordain Olivier (309); on pension: Abel Rotolp de la Deveze (354), Abraham Coust du Vivier (120), Daniel Orillard (310), Joseph Carnéli (88), Isaac Jaquelot (215); other: Pierre Boyer (63), Théophile du Bayle (135), Claude de Jaussaud (216), Isaac de Brun (77), Daniel Reboulet (336), Gabriel Gouin (190).

⁵⁰ Bots, ‘Les pasteurs français’, pp. 12-15.

⁵¹ Walloon synod to States of Holland, April 1681, LA, p. 860: “Puisque l’usage perpetuel de cette republic a tousiours laissé aux venerables magistrats des villes respectives, aussi bien qu’aux esglises une entiere liberté sur ce sujet.”

⁵² Town council minutes, 21 August 1688, GA DH, OA 56, f. 120r-f.121r.: “Groote protestatien waeren gedaen, van dat sij heren altijdt, ende in alles wat in haere macht was, overboodich waeren de geliefte vande magistraat op te volgen ende te voldoen.”

⁵³ *Ibid.*, f. 121v.

was probably the best way to evoke pity and secure a job. And indeed, militant discourse resonated well with the synods, which moved by these stories swiftly declared refugee pastors eligible for a ministry. This is not to deny that pastors found the destruction of their church, the personal harassment, and the violent dragonnades deeply upsetting, or to claim that they were not genuinely outraged about Catholic persecutions, but when presenting their services to the Walloon synods and Dutch town councils they must have been aware that emphasizing religious plight rather than coexistence was the key to success.

*

So how serious should we take the rhetoric of religious intransigence? The apparent dichotomy between pastors and their flock – the former sticking to confessional boundaries and making a case for religious conflict, as they tried to stifle border-crossing behaviour and discoursed on apocalyptic conflict, while the latter were blatantly crossing religious borders – turns out to be less straightforward.

First, policing religious behaviour was the consistory's *raison d'être*, since its authority rested on the ability to keep the peace among the Huguenot flock. Pastors and elders also took a genuine interest in their parishioners, in the sense that they looked after collective well-being: moral offenders were called to order, because they endangered the sacred *corpus christianum*, while rendering justice often was a charitable act. And although they had a moral obligation to maintain Huguenot identity, the pastors and elders did water down their zealous stance. Catholic proselytes were admitted as church members, and moral offenders, intermarrying parishioners, and converts who humbly renounced their sorry ways were ultimately allowed back in the fold.

Second, the consistory had to look after the Huguenots' long-term interest. At The Hague they could easily remind William III of his duty to deliver the Huguenots from exile, pressuring him to continue his war against France and to secure a religious settlement that allowed them to return home. Religious rhetoric may not have been entirely heartfelt, but buttering up the stadtholder-king was necessary if the Huguenot refugees ever wished to worship the Lord in Protestant fashion on their own soil. To a large extent, discourse was exactly that: words aimed an audience for specific needs, be it maintaining a harmonious church community, an eventual return to France, or a job as pastor in exile.

4.

Storytelling

At first sight, a rift seemed to separate pastors and elders from their parishioners. While believers overstepped religious boundaries, abjuring their faith and cohabiting with the confessional foe, the consistory zealously patrolled these same borders. Transgressors were suspended from communion, and pastors waged a confessional war of words by discoursing on the apocalyptic battle against Catholicism in their addresses to William III and letters to the Walloon synod. We have already seen that clerics had ulterior motives to advocate intransigence, since they wanted to maintain an untainted, harmonious community as well as work for the Huguenot's return to France.

Yet the apparent dichotomy between the pastors and their flock is also an image that is derived from imperfect source material. Both consistory and synod records are the product of pastors, who usually only took up their pens when they encountered trouble-makers in their community, or when they tried to mollify the stadtholder and the synod. By result church records give an unbalanced account of the parishioners' religious attitudes, since we learn little about believers sticking to the religious and moral boundaries, and view recorded cases merely through the 'disciplining' lens of the consistory. Moreover, the sources can tempt historians to pitch the consistory against its flock in a never-ending battle over morals and religion, the former desperately trying to discipline the latter. In a study based almost exclusively on Scottish church records, Margo Todd has for example argued that Kirk consistories had a hard time persuading their parishioners to abandon ingrained Catholic and folk belief, but reality was probably less clear-cut.¹

Although nowadays most historians are aware that church discipline should not be depicted as a totalitarian regime separating consistory from parishioners, many still hold it for possible to count disciplinary cases. This is a pitfall to be avoided, too, for a comparison between the records of the Reformed church consistory at Utrecht with the diary of its elder

¹ Todd, *Culture of Protestantism*.

Arnoldus Buchelius has shown that many cases went unrecorded in the consistory book. The diary reveals that transgressors were often admonished during informal house visits, and cases consciously omitted because the consistory wanted to spare the reputation of elite church members or cover up disagreement among its own ranks.² We can only speculate about the ‘dark number’ of unrecorded cases in the Walloon church of The Hague, since we have no equivalent source to Buchelius’ diary, but the fact that the consistory book made no reference to the quarrel over the nomination of refugee pastor Cornelis (see chapter 3) suggests that omitting was common practice.

In sum, we need to balance official church records with ego documents composed by Huguenot believers themselves. How did they cope with the problem of religious diversity, both in France and in exile? Did they get along with their Catholic neighbours, or had persecution and subsequent refuge pushed them to hold a militant worldview? In other words, we need to investigate how *private* stories interacted with *public* rhetoric and consistory standards. Storytelling was prolific throughout the Refuge: once they had safely made it to the Dutch Republic, refugees started telling each other about the persecution they had suffered in France, explaining their motivations to flee, and recounting their hazardous escape abroad. For many of them storytelling even was a necessity of life, for if they wished to become a church member and obtain charity, upon arrival in the Walloon churches they had to deliver a convincing oral exposé on their suffering and escape from France.³

Admittedly their voices are lost, but some Huguenot refugees also drew up written memoirs recounting their flight from France to the Dutch Republic, which offer an invaluable insight in their religious mentality. Again a religious discrepancy emerges; just as consistory and synod records reveal how parishioners in the Walloon church crossed religious borders while pastors were only keen to affirm these, in their escape accounts refugees candidly explain how Catholic friends and neighbours helped them to escape the *dragonnades*, despite the chilling stories of persecution, forced abjuration and Catholic idolatry the authors recount in these same memoirs.

The accounts also cast light on the reasons underlying this double standard. How could refugees cross religious borders, fraternizing with their confessional foe and shattering the moral and religious unity of their community, when they had just fled Catholic persecution? Besides the aforementioned two-sided exile experience – the long-term goal to return to

² Judith Pollmann, ‘Off the Record: Problems in the Quantification of Calvinist Church Discipline’, *Sixteenth Century Journal*, 33:2 (2002), pp. 423-438.

³ Lougee Chappell, ‘The Pains I Took’, pp. 10-11.

France, rallying under the banner of an embattled faith to maintain a distinct identity, versus the short-term need to survive in an alien country, ignoring confessional boundaries – there was another reason, which worried some refugees to the point that they decided to take up their pens: they argued that Huguenots in exile were forgetting their former religious plight. In France they had experienced persecution on a daily basis, as dragoons had invaded their homes and destroyed their churches, but because in the Dutch Republic they were now safe from persecution, and could meet with Catholics that did not persecute them, it became more difficult to indentify with the rhetoric of papist foes. As lived experience became distant history, it required a conscious effort to maintain that Catholics were evil incarnate. The memory of plight was a shaky foundation for rebuilding Huguenot identity.

The Double Standard

First, an analysis of Huguenot escape accounts again brings to light a religious double standard. On the one hand, authors drew a clear confessional boundary. They denounced the superstitious beliefs of Catholics, they portrayed Catholic clergymen as malicious inquisitors, working in tandem with the dragoons to force Huguenots to abjure their beliefs, and they were shocked at the lack of religious steadfastness with their neighbours and family members, who abjured as soon as the dragoons entered their town. Yet despite the hardships they charted, the authors did not conceal that they had often crossed the confessional boundary: in France they had befriended Catholics, who willingly helped their Huguenot friends to escape persecution, and eventually most memorialists caved in to Catholic authorities pressuring them to abjure.

Take Jean Migault, a school master from the small town of Mougou, in the Huguenot heartland of the Poitou. He wrote his memoirs in two stages, the first part in 1683 shortly after the death of his wife Elisabeth, the second in 1690 once he had taken refuge in the city of Amsterdam. Migault's account is one of ongoing tribulations he and his family endured because of their refusal to abjure Protestantism, painting a bleak picture of the legal restrictions Huguenots suffered and the cruel *dragonnades* that forced him to hide his children and abandon his possessions to looting soldiers. The family resettled at Mauzé, where Elisabeth died in 1683 after giving birth to their son Olivier. Migault was heartbroken, and when a fresh wave of persecutions swept across the Poitou in the wake of the Revocation, he decided to escape France. Before he could carry out his plans, however, he was arrested in La Rochelle and thrown into prison, where he signed his abjuration. After a first attempt had failed, in

April 1688 Migault and a few of his children finally managed to board a ship bound for Holland.⁴

Although Migault penned down a grim chronology of persecution, he also praised his Catholic neighbours and friends. When the first dragoons arrived in Mougou during the summer of 1681, he initially took a firm stance on crossing the confessional boundary: shocked at the religious cowardice of his fellow Huguenots, he wrote that “the most pitiful was that most changed religion on the day of their [the dragoons] arrival in their homes, without having suffered the slightest”.⁵ Migault and his wife by contrast were steadfast believers, both refusing to sign their abjuration. Yet neither of them planned on dying as martyrs. Telling the soldiers he went to search provisions next door, Migault was rescued by his Catholic neighbours, who hid him in their secluded garden.⁶

Meanwhile the dragoons molested Elisabeth, kicking her and threatening to push her in the hearth fire unless she abjured. Again rescue came from across the confessional divide. The vicar of Mougou, “one of my best friends and an honest man” according to Migault, rushed to the scene and persuaded the soldiers to stop torturing Elisabeth, telling them he would force her to abjure himself. Under the pretence of putting her to bed, the neighbours then smuggled Elisabeth out of the house and hid her in their attic. As the dragoons discovered they had been duped, the vicar then ended this almost Shakespearian farce in fitting melodrama: “So they have escaped both of them; may God guide them!” he exclaimed.⁷

The Migaults’ neighbours and the local vicar were not the only Catholics to show them compassion. The couple had left their lastborn René with a Catholic wet nurse, but when the baby died and an ‘evil priest’ ordered her to throw the infant’s corpse to the dogs, her husband stepped in. “This man, although a papist, was as Christian as the priest was barbarian, and unwilling to do such a thing he took this innocent body to *sieur* Champion, who had the kindness to bury it at night in the cemetery of those of our religion”.⁸ Zealous clergymen and dragoons had turned the Migaults’ life into a tragedy, but even in times of religious

⁴ Jean Migault, *Journal de Jean Migault ou malheurs d’une famille protestante du Poitou victime de la révocation de l’Édit de Nantes, 1682-1689*, ed. by Yves Krumenacker (Paris, 1995). See for a good summary: Derek A. Watts, ‘Testimonies of Persecution: Four Huguenot Refugees and their Memoirs’, in J.H. Fox, M.H. Waddicor and D.A. Watts, eds., *Studies in Eighteenth-Century French Literature* (Exeter, 1975), pp. 320-321.

⁵ Migault, *Journal*, p. 27: “Ce qui était de plus pitoyable, c’est que la plupart changeaient de religion le jour de leur arrivée en leur maison, sans avoir souffert la moindre chose”.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 29-31.

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 31-36: “Ils sont donc échappés tous les deux; Dieu les veuille conduire!”.

⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 41-42: “Mais cet homme, quoique papiste, autant chrétien que le prêtre était barbare, n’en voulut rien faire, mais porta cet innocent cadavre chez ledit sieur Champion, lequel eut la bonté de le faire enterrer au soir dans les sépultures de ceux de notre religion”. Huguenots were often forbidden to bury their dead in the same cemetery as Catholics, and could only hold funeral services at night. See: Luria, *Sacred Boundaries*, pp. 103-140.

division the ties of interconfessional friendship held, as honest and truly Christian friends continued to show compassion for their Huguenot neighbours. The personal bond of piety thus exceeded abstract differences in doctrine.⁹

Whereas Migault balanced his account of the *dragonnades* with examples of interconfessional friendship, Claude Brousson was above all haunted by memories of plight. Writing his memoirs as an exile in Amsterdam, he recalled the troubled times back in France, when he had only been a ten-year-old trying to escape persecution in his home town of Montpellier, where his father Daniel Brousson served as elder on the consistory. After the Revocation his father tried to leave France with his mother and some of his children, but when they had to split up, only Daniel managed to reach Geneva. In 1686 the young Claude hazarded a second attempt on his own, which at first hardly went according to plan: he was arrested in the French Alps and thrown into prison. To obtain his release he eventually converted to Catholicism, and within weeks he crossed the mountains to Switzerland too, next travelling to Amsterdam to rejoin his father.¹⁰

Throughout his story, Brousson was keen to emphasize confessional oppositions. His account starts with a panoramic view of Huguenot life in the Languedoc, which was in serious trouble during the 1680s. The large Protestant church of Montpellier was for example closed down in 1682, because authorities accused its minister of permitting a *nouveau Catholique* to commune. One morning after Sunday service, soldiers entered the church with drawn swords to announce its closure; a massacre was narrowly avoided, and two weeks later the Protestants of Montpellier had to witness the destruction of their temple.¹¹ Brousson also drew a clear line between Protestant and Catholic worship: in Aix-en-Provence he was appalled at the ‘rotten ignorance’ of the Catholic inhabitants, who

have constructed small chapels at almost every street corner, in which they have placed small figures that represent a Holy Virgin, or a Holy Joseph, or some other saint for which they have much devotion (...). They offer them the best fruits to be found in their homes, they illuminate them every night with small lamps, and what’s even worse: all the children of the quarter kneel down before a chapel, singing Litanies and Hymns in honour of the Saint.¹²

⁹ For a similar process at work in the Dutch Republic, see: Pollmann, ‘The Bond of Christian Piety’.

¹⁰ Relation de la sortie de France du Sieur Daniel Brousson et de sa Famille pour cause de Religion, écrite par Claude Brousson son fils, University Library Leiden (hereafter UB Leiden), Walloon Library (Bibliothèque Wallonne, hereafter BW), Ms. B 67.

¹¹ Ibid., f. 4-9.

¹² Ibid., f. 14-15: ‘Ils ont construit de petites chapelles à presque tous les coins des rues, où ils ont mis des petites figurés qui representent une Sainte Vierge, ou un Saint Joseph, ou tel autre saint pour qu’ils ont le plus de devotion. (...) On leur offre des plus beaux fruits qu’on puisse avoir dans la maison, on les illumine tous les soirs

Surely this was not the first time he witnessed Catholic veneration, but this episode was interjected with a clear purpose: by venting his anger at popish ceremonial, Brousson wanted to make clear the confessional divide that pushed him to flee France.

Indeed, what finally made him hazard a second escape was the lacking zeal among the Huguenots of Montpellier, who abjured en masse, as well as the treatment of those parishioners staying true to their Protestant beliefs. He recounts the terrible fate that befell *mademoiselle* Carquet, who on her deathbed regretted her apostasy, abjured Catholicism, and told the priests she wanted to have a Protestant funeral. After her death, vengeance was both swift and brutal. Brousson witnessed Carquet's naked body dragged through the streets of Montpellier, preceded by a procession of soldiers and town magistrates, before they dumped her body on the local garbage heap. To Brousson, this was the drop that made the cup run over: "I was so touched by these spectacles that I could no longer bear to live in this unfortunate country, and having found an occasion that seemed favourable, I asked my mother to let me leave".¹³

She consented, and he joined a group of Huguenots trying to leave France by crossing the Alps to Geneva. In the mountains they were surprised by patrolling soldiers, however, and Brousson ended up in the dark and lice-infested cellars of Bellay's town prison. At this point his religious intransigence gave way to a more open-minded attitude. Though at night the prisoners defied their guards by singing psalms – the line "Never will I stop praising the Lord" was especially popular – interconfessional charity still sprung up. The bishop of Bellay took pity on the prisoners, who had only crusty old bread to eat, and ordered the villagers to bring them soup every day.¹⁴ Brousson himself also watered down his zealousness, because after six months in prison he abjured his faith. He next befriended the prison-keeper, a devout Catholic whom he believed to be the victim of manipulating clergymen rather than a demonic papist. When the man proudly showed him around the Bellay cathedral, pointing out the various relics and the miracles these could perform, Brousson could only be "indignant about the Priests who took advantage of the credulity of the people in such a shameful way".¹⁵

Because they were converts, Brousson and his prison comrade Perié were freed from their cells, but maintaining a façade of Catholicism was impossible to bear, so they quickly

par de petites lampes, et ce qu'il y a de pis c'est que tous les enfans du quartier se mettant à genoux au dessous de la chapelle, chantent des Litanies et des Cantiques à l'honneur du Saint".

¹³ Ibid., f. 21-29: "Je fus tant touché de ces spectacles que je ne pouvois obtenir sur moi à habiter plus longtemps ce malheureux pays, si bien qu'ayant trouvé une occasion qui me paroissoit favorable, je priaï ma mere de me laisser partir".

¹⁴ Ibid., f. 29-41.

¹⁵ Ibid., f. 42-45: "Indignez contre les Pretres qui abusoient de la credulité du peuple d'une façon si grossiere".

decided to make their escape to Geneva. Remarkably enough they turned to a Catholic for help, a man in town who had often smuggled wine inside prison. Brousson had no religious misgivings, however: “As he had seemed to us a truly honest man, we paid him a visit the very day of our liberation. He was delighted to see us, and made us a thousand friendly greetings.” When the boys next divulged their plan to escape across the mountains the man even offered to guide them, but they turned down his offer knowing their friend risked the death penalty if they were arrested. Leaving Bellay on their own, they safely reached Geneva a few days later.¹⁶

Finally, the escape accounts written by two Huguenot noblemen reveal that religious attitudes among the elite hardly differed from those of humbler backgrounds. Perhaps nobles had readier access to resources and networks to escape persecution, but their religious worldview was no less Calvinist than Migault or Brousson, and their battle of conscience between abjuration and refuge just as difficult. At first, Isaac Dumont de Bostaquet seemed untroubled by the persecutions: a Normandy *gentilhomme*, he had studied at the Saumur academy and followed a military education in Paris and Rouen, before marrying and settling at his estate at Fontelaye, where he led a carefree life among the country elite. Yet when Louis XIV revoked the Edict of Nantes in 1685, his Protestant zeal took centre stage, and he nonetheless abandoned his convenient life to escape to the Dutch Republic.¹⁷ Field marshal De Montacier similarly put religion before a brilliant army career: as his annual leave came up, he told his superiors he was fetching a company of new recruits – but in reality these soldiers were Huguenots from the Poitou, whom De Montacier secretly led across the Alps to Geneva.¹⁸

It was no coincidence that De Bostaquet and De Montacier headed for the Dutch Republic, because Huguenots had served in the stadtholder’s army for over a century. Already during the Dutch Revolt, Protestant noblemen from France had strengthened the rebels’ ranks as mercenaries, fighting both for profit and religion. The French Wars of Religion had turned them into experienced soldiers looking to fill their purse, but in their eyes the Spanish

¹⁶ Ibid., f. 46-49: “Comme il nous avoit paru fort honneste hommes, nous fumes lui rendre visite le jour mesme de notre delivrance. Il fut ravi de nous voir, et nous fut mille amitez”.

¹⁷ Isaac Dumont de Bostaquet, *Mémoires inédits de Dumont de Bostaquet, gentilhomme normand, sur les temps qui ont précédé et suivi la révocation de l’Édit de Nantes, sur le Refuge, et les expéditions de Guillaume III en Angleterre et en Irlande*, ed. by Charles Read and Francis Waddington (Paris, 1864). For a summary, see the accompanying introduction by Read, pp. v-xlvi, and Watts, ‘Testimonies of Persecution’, pp. 321-323.

¹⁸ ‘Relation de la sortie du Monsieur de Montarcier, Sieur de Lislemarais, du royaume de France, pour la persécution de la religion’, *Bulletin de la Société de l’Histoire du Protestantisme Français*, 31 (1882), pp. 261-272 and 310-325. See for the original manuscript: UB Leiden, BW, Ms. A3/J 2092. All citations are taken from the 1882 publication.

suppression of Protestant worship in the Low Countries also echoed the persecution of Huguenots in France, and therefore merited a zealous counterattack from God's Calvinist soldiers. In essence, fighting Spanish troops in Holland and Catholic armies in France was part of the same war against popery. After the Dutch Republic formally obtained its independence in 1648, the stadtholders had maintained Huguenot officers in their service.¹⁹ In his memoirs De Bostaquet thus mentions a trip to The Hague in 1653 to sort out his uncle's heritage, who had served as an officer in the Dutch army.²⁰

After the Revocation Huguenot exiles hoped that this tradition of military service would secure them a comfortable position as officer in the stadtholder's army, but for many this proved a painful miscalculation. The States-General merely granted 300 of them a pension, forcing others to try their luck in England and Brandenburg. Only when preparations for the expedition to England were in full swing in 1688 could William III afford to hire more Huguenot soldiers. Again religion and profit coalesced: Huguenot soldiers were paid mercenaries, who needed money to support their exiled families, but they were also marching for God, following William and Jurieu in their crusade against Catholicism, which would hopefully force Louis XIV to accept the Huguenots' return to their Promised Land.²¹ De Bostaquet indeed proved himself to be a godly revel, taking part in the invasion of England in 1688 and William's subsequent campaigns against Jacobite forces in Ireland.²²

Undoubtedly De Bostaquet and De Montacier were both devout men, but their memoirs still contain ample evidence of confessional border-crossing. Initially, De Bostaquet was outraged at the mass abjurations in Rouen following the Revocation, writing that the "general desertion of such a zealous town showed us man's weakness when God leaves him to his own devices, and made us fear that we would not in turn succumb to this rude temptation".²³ These were prophetic words, for within weeks he had signed his own abjuration. Plagued by remorse he soon tried to escape by sea, but just as he was ready to board an English vessel he was discovered by guards patrolling the Normandy coast line: the men opened fire, and after a

¹⁹ D.J.B. Trim, 'Huguenot Soldiering, c. 1560-1685: The Origins of a Tradition', in Matthew Glozier and David Onnekink, eds., *War, Religion and Service: Huguenot Soldiering, 1685-1713* (Aldershot, 2007), pp. 9-30.

²⁰ Bostaquet, *Mémoires inédits*, pp. 13-26.

²¹ Matthew Glozier and David Onnekink, 'Huguenot Soldiers in Dutch Service: "A good Captain to disperse the royal troops"', in Matthew Glozier and David Onnekink, eds., *War, Religion and Service: Huguenot Soldiering, 1685-1713* (Aldershot, 2007), pp. 111-130.

²² Bostaquet, *Mémoires inédits*, pp. 165-324.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 100: "Cette désertion générale de cette ville si zélée nous faisoit connaître la faiblesse de l'homme, quand Dieu l'abandonne à ses propres mouvements, et nous fit craindre que nous ne succombassions à notre tour à cette rude tentation".

bloody skirmish with one of them he fled back to Fontelaye, seeking refuge with his Catholic neighbours.²⁴

Even more striking was that on De Bostaquet's orders the peasant wife went to fetch the village *curé*, who pitied the Huguenots despite the religious divide:

He was one of my best friends, and had behaved to me in such an obliging manner in these unpleasant times of our persecution, that I had an entire confidence in him. In fact, he had never spoken about religion with me [i.e., persuading De Bostaquet to abjure], on the contrary: he had always maintained it would only be with an extreme sadness if he saw me enter his Church by force and that at least I should be convinced of the truths of his religion.²⁵

De Bostaquet asked him to look after his family, embraced the *curé*, and then mounted his horse to head northwards. En route to the Dutch Republic he constantly feared arrest, but still religious differences were easily bridged among fellow noblemen: De Bostaquet spent most nights with Huguenot friends, but when one evening he was lodged with a *gentilhomme* entertaining the local Catholic elite, the noblemen were more concerned about De Bostaquet's wounds than his Protestantism. "Although they were all papists, [they] harshly criticized my assassin and treated him as the greatest villain in the world," De Bostaquet wrote.²⁶

Likewise De Montacier almost casually blended his Protestant devotion with interconfessional camaraderie. Though shocked about the violent *dragonnades* in the Bearn region, he also informs us that news of the persecutions reached him via a letter sent by a comrade-in-arms who served as dragoon commander. The news made De Montacier decide to maintain the Huguenot fervour of his Protestant soldiers at all cost, leading them in prayer and psalm-singing as they begged God to give them the strength to bear their sufferings just as Jesus Christ.²⁷ Yet his friendships with Catholic comrades did not suddenly come to an end. One of them warned De Montacier that "in this century people were only trying to find an occasion to gain favours by destroying their best friends, and that I should be persuaded that he was one of mine". Evidently he did not want religious differences to come between them, although he regretted that De Montacier stubbornly stuck to his erring faith: "He deplored my misfortune

²⁴ Ibid., pp. 101-129.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 130: "Il étoit fort de mes amis et s'étoit conduit avec moi d'une manière si obligeante dans tous ces temps fâcheux de notre persécution, que j'avois une entière confiance en lui. En effet, jamais il m'avoit parlé de la religion, et au contraire, il m'avoit toujours protesté que ce seroit avec une douleur extrême s'il me voyoit jamais entrer dans son Eglise par contrainte et à moins d'être convaincu des vérités de sa religion".

²⁶ Ibid., p. 137: "Quoiqu'ils fussent tous papistes, firent le procès à mon assassin et le traitèrent du plus grand coquin du monde".

²⁷ 'Relation de la sortie de Montarcier', pp. 261-264.

to close my eyes at my salvation, and at the good fortune that I destroyed.”²⁸ Of course De Montacier did not cave in, and when he finally left his regiment all his subordinates embraced him, even the Catholic soldiers. Being loyal comrades-in-arms was more important than maintaining religious unity among the ranks.

Narratives of Justification

Huguenot exiles writing down their memoirs thus held no clear-cut religious identity. On the one hand Protestant zeal had pushed them to abandon their lives in France, now spilling their anger all over the pages to denounce the cruel *dragonnades*, the attempts of Catholic clergymen to convert them, and the superstitious beliefs of papists. On the other hand the memoirs also abound with interconfessional amity, as Catholic neighbours and friends helped them to escape persecution. Not all memorialists left traces of their religious attitudes, however, for the escape accounts written by two women, Marie de la Rochefoucauld and her daughter Suzanne, are remarkably devoid of religion. Their memoirs were justifications, not simply tales of plight.

Take Marie’s account, which lacks punctuation and therefore reads as an almost oral narrative. It was clearly modelled after the *reconnaissance* story she had made before the various consistories of Huguenot exile churches. Marie’s record of storytelling must have been impressive: after her escape from La Rochelle, she had first made her way to the English town of Dartmouth, where she had repented for abjuring her Protestant faith, next travelling on to Exeter to meet up with her children. Because she feared renewed persecution under the rule of the Catholic monarch James II, she had then taken her family to Rotterdam and Leiden before finally settling at Voorburg, near The Hague. In all those towns Marie had turned to the local Huguenot community for church membership and charity, and had thus needed to explain the reasons for fleeing France. Her story was both brief and matter-of-fact, because she was well aware that entering into the gruesome details of the *dragonnades* was pointless: if elders and pastors did not have firsthand experience themselves, they at least had heard countless stories of plight before. She also left out leaving behind her husband and baby, an embarrassing detail that might only put her in a bad light. All in all, the audience that Marie

²⁸ Ibid., p. 264: “Que dans le siècle où nous estions on ne tachoit que de trouver une occasion pour faire sa cour en destruisant ses meilleurs amis, que je devois être persuadé qu’il estoit des miens. (...) Il desplorait mon malheur de fermer les yeux à mon salut et à ma fortune que je détruisois”.

had addressed her story to and the corresponding goal of her narrative – obtaining church assistance – had shaped her ultimate memoir.²⁹

Besides the consistory, Marie’s second ‘hidden audience’ was her own family. She may have skimmed over her religious plight, but Marie certainly did not fail to mention the pains and costs it had taken her to look after her children since they had left France. Tellingly, she wrote her memoir on the first pages of her account book, and indeed Marie meticulously charted the financial costs of escaping: 1200 *francs* for embarking her children, 473 *livres* for her own voyage to Exeter in the company of her son and maidservant, and another 40 *écus* to reach Rotterdam with her family. She also explained how she had managed to secure them all a stable future. Thanks to her efforts, Marie’s claimed, her second son had become a page at the court of the princess of Anhalt, another served at the Orange’s court, and when in 1688 her husband finally arrived in the Dutch Republic, he easily entered the stadtholder’s army as captain. In a very literal sense Marie thus ‘rendered account’, charting her family’s fortunes to show that she was the *mater familias* who had taken care of her exiled siblings.³⁰

Her daughter’s parallel story was very different, though it also lacked religious overtones. Suzanne composed it with great literary care, and put herself at the centre of events, turning her mother’s blow-by-blow account into a tale of hardship, in which Suzanne starred as the sole hero. Since her mother had missed the first embarkation at La Rochelle, the task had fallen on Suzanne to guide her small brothers and sisters across the seas to England, where they wandered through the wilderness for a few days before reaching Exeter. In this town she looked after the kids better than any mother, saving money and slaving to cook and clean for her small household. Suzanne’s memoir reads as a modern-day fairy tale, in which she played the role of Cinderella.³¹ When Marie finally caught up with them, Suzanne wrote, she “seemed pleased by the cares and pains I had taken for my little children, for at Exeter they called me ‘the mother with the little children’. (...) I had missed no opportunity to fulfil my duties well, to the extent that my young age and capacity would permit.”³²

In sum, refugees penning down their memoirs did not necessarily have religion on their minds, because they were writing for specific purposes and audiences that suited different narratives. Marie and Suzanne hardly spoke about religious plight, because they wanted to emphasize the familial turmoil caused by exile, and bring out their own merits as

²⁹ Lougee Chappell, ‘The Pains I Took’, pp. 6-13. See for Marie’s account appendix A to this article, pp. 39-46

³⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 4-5, 14-17.

³¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 17- 30. See for Suzanne’s account: Suzanne Robillard, *Récit abrégé de ma sortie de France, pour venir dans les païs étrangers chercher la liberté de ma conscience et l’exercice de notre sainte religion*, ed. and trans. by Carlyn Lougee Chappell as appendix B to ‘The Pains I Took’, pp. 47-61.

³² Robillard, *Récit abrégé*, p. 59.

good mother or sister. So when we dig underneath the apparent storyline, asking for what reason authors composed their memoirs and which audiences they addressed, hidden narratives appear. The stories in ink were in fact dialogues between the author and his children, or lengthy monologues they held to themselves and God; their ultimate aim was to justify the authors' abjuration and ultimate escape, as well as define Huguenot identity in exile.³³ Yet whereas Marie rendered a formal account and Suzanne told a fairy tale, the male authors used a religious framework to mould their narrative, as their stories were structured around the biblical themes of sin, fall, plight and deliverance.

De Bostaquet for one wrote his memoir as a confession to his children and God. Like any Huguenot he viewed the Revocation as the turning point in his life, but the specific source of his guilty conscience was renouncing Protestantism in 1685. De Bostaquet argued that before that date he had failed live a godly life, more concerned with marrying the right women, entertaining his noble friends and enlarging his estate than devoting his time to God – indeed, the first part of his memoirs charts the carefree life of Normandy *gentilhomme*, not that of a devout Protestant. God sent his first warnings in the 1670s, when De Bostaquet's five-year-old son Charles and his second wife Anne died, and his chateau at Fontelaye went up in flames. In hindsight he observed that these misfortunes were due to divine providence, as the Lord put his Protestant faith to the test: "I saw all these redoubled blows as a result of God's anger against me: I made all the reflections of which the feeble human mind is capable, and throwing myself in the arms of his divine providence, I faithfully tried to bear all these displeasures".³⁴

He miserably failed, for after the Edict of Nantes was revoked De Bostaquet quickly signed his abjuration. Burdened by guilt, he considered himself a 'criminal', arguing that God had surely abandoned him. In the end the deluge of the Revocation punishing the wicked for their sins did sober him up, however, and that was precisely the lesson he wanted to teach his children: after his fall, De Bostaquet had been determined to recover, and had left France to repent. He therefore started the second part of his account, aptly entitled "Memoir of my new life" to emphasize the break with his sinful past, by thanking God for his deliverance:

³³ Ruth Whelan, 'Writing the self: Huguenot autobiography and the process of assimilation', in Randolp Vigne and Charles Littleton, eds., *From strangers to citizens: The integration of immigrant communities in Britain, Ireland and colonial America, 1550-1750* (Brighton and Portland, 2001), pp. 463-464.

³⁴ Bostaquet, *Mémoires inédits*, p. 79: "Je regardai tous ces coups redoublés comme un effet de la colère de Dieu contre moi: j'y fis toutes les réflexions dont la faiblesse humaine peut être capable, et me jetant entre les bras de sa divine providence, je tâchai à supporter constamment tous ces déplaisirs".

“I have enjoyed many good, but having not made as good use of it as I should have, God deprived me of it. But if he has knocked me down on the one side, he lifts me up on the other by giving me enough to get fed on my daily bread and to meet the pressing needs of this family (...); and since this subsistence is a result of his grace, it is only just that I mark him my gratitude, by engraving for my posterity in the strongest characters I possibly can, the penetration of my soul by these infinite benefactions.”³⁵

For De Bostaquet, composing an exile memoir was a form of Calvinist self-therapy, since it allowed him to examine his own conscience, confess his sins to God, and justify his escape from France to his children, teaching them a valuable lesson: their father had strayed from the path of righteousness, and even renounced his Huguenot identity by abjuring his faith, but fortunately he had managed to pull himself together and now enjoyed God’s blessing again.³⁶

Army commander De Montacier had never forsaken his religion, and therefore did not write his memoirs to relieve his guilty conscience or refashion his identity; his story was more an affirmation of his religious steadfastness. Yet he still felt the need to justify his escape from France, as well as abandoning his king. In a separate letter to his former comrade-in-arms, the Catholic field marshal De Catinat, De Montacier reminded his friend of Jesus’ teaching to “render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the thing that are God’s”. He had always served Louis XIV as a loyal army commander, De Montacier argued, and still been faithful to his Lord as a Protestant, but the Revocation had turned these into conflicting allegiances. It was the choice between serving God or his monarch that had forced him into exile: “when he [Louis] demanded from me what I could not render him, and which was not rightfully his, I was guided by neither flesh nor blood, and have come to render God what belongs to him”, he wrote, affirming once more “that our souls and our consciences depend absolutely but on God alone, and that no one has the right to rule over them”.³⁷

In his memoir De Montacier used religious narrative to underpin his argument, for the events he recounts are clearly moulded after biblical stories of suffering and deliverance. He for example likened the crossing of the river Durance by his Poitevin recruits to the exodus

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 164: “J’ai joui de beaucoup de bien, mais n’en ayant pas fait un aussi bon usage que je devois, Dieu m’en a privé. Mais si d’un côté il m’a abattu, il me relève de l’autre en me donnant de quoi être nourri du pain de mon ordinaire, et de quoi subvenir au besoins pressants de cette famille (...); et comme cette subsistance est un effet de sa grâce, il est juste que je lui en marque ma reconnaissance en gravant à ma postérité, en caractères les plus forts qu’il me sera possible, la pénétration de mon âme sur ces bienfaits infinis”.

³⁶ Whelan, ‘Writing the self’, pp. 465-469.

³⁷ ‘Relation de la sortie de Montarcier’, p. 323: “Lorsqu’il m’a demandé ce que je ne pouvois lui donner, et qui n’estoit point de son droit, je n’ay consulté ny la chair ni le sang; et je suis venu rendre à Dieu ce qui luy appartenoit. (...) Que nos âmes et nos consciences ne despendent absolument que de Dieu et que personne n’a le droit de dominer sur elles”. See for the original manuscript: UB Leiden, BW, Ms. A3/J 2094. Citations are taken from the 1882 publication.

from Egypt by the people of Israel. The torrent almost swept the men downstream, but God did abandon his elect: holding on to their horses none of them drowned, save a Catholic soldier, who “much devoted to the Virgin and the holy Nicholas, whereas all the Protestants, in the name of Christ, were on the riverbank”.³⁸ The episode clearly rang of providential deliverance to De Montacier, who thought of the people of Israel crossing the Red Sea to escape the pharaoh’s troops. As the company pursued its voyage, De Montacier shaped his narrative as an apostle writing the New Testament. He recounted how two soldiers had imprudently told a man called Sauveur de Barras that they were in fact Huguenots on the run. The man had seemed trustworthy since he was merely a *nouveau catholique*, but he proved a real Judas, because he reported them to the authorities for money. At night a regiment of soldiers accompanied by the local judge arrested them, but De Montacier managed to deliver his men by persuading the governor he was leading these so-called recruits back to his troops.³⁹

Countering Amnesia

Both De Montacier and De Bostaquet thus wanted to leave a testimony of persecution as well as a justification of their exile in the Dutch Republic, cleverly using biblical storylines to emphasize that Huguenots must never renounce their Protestant identity. Jean Migault’s account was also shaped by religious narrative, for just as other memorialists the schoolmaster from Mougou wrote to legitimize his refuge in the Dutch Republic, affirming the importance to follow one’s religious conscience after he had initially abjured. Yet in addition Migault had an understanding of divine providence that went beyond his own deliverance: he directly addressed his children, and explained that he wanted to remind them that God looked after his elect. In other words, Migault was writing for posterity, penning down his story of deliverance to ensure that his children would never forget their Huguenot identity – it was not intended a self-centred story of his own troubles, but as a commemorative account centring on *nous* and *vous*.

Right at the start of his account, Migault told his children that God’s hand was behind their tribulations and the family’s ultimate deliverance from Babylon, the Lord working in mysterious ways to make even Catholics help them escape. In his memoirs they would find reason enough

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 268: “fort desvoué à la Vierge et à saint Nicolas pendant que tous les protestants, du nom de Christ, étoient sur le rivage”.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 269-272, 310-317.

to praise God's goodness for electing us (...) to bring us to these fortunate provinces, enjoying in full liberty the preaching of his sacred Word. You will also find another subject to praise the Lord: he had taken pity on me, giving me the grace to put me back on my feet after that terrible and unfortunate fall. (...) You will finally find, each and every one of you, ample material to admire and praise God's wise providence in using such efficacious means to sort you, each in turn, from that horrible persecution.⁴⁰

Admittedly the aim of any memoir-writer is to leave a record for posterity, but to Huguenot exiles like Jean Migault remembering had added importance. Writing down his life had less to do with rendering a factual account of persecution and exile than with maintaining a collective Huguenot identity: he feared that Huguenot exiles were only trying to forget the horrors that had befallen them, so to keep alive the memory of plight his story should be written down. But why was forgetting such a bad thing? Because it made possible the blurring of religious boundaries, Migault would have answered. The reason why Huguenot exiles, even though they had suffered persecution, could befriend Catholics and allow papists to become a member of the Walloon church, was because they forgot about their past. If only Migault could remind his children of the terrible ordeals they had all been through, surely they would never renounce their Protestant identity, he hoped. Memorialists were fighting a losing battle against amnesia, however: as the lived experience of persecution became distant history, it required a conscious effort to remember their plight. Huguenots were inevitably losing all memory.

The concept 'memory' has only been under scrutiny from historians for a few decades. The dual process of remembering and forgetting has always been the focus of mostly psychological and social research, but in the 1980s this changed. Especially the French historian Pierre Nora gave a boost to so-called historical memory studies, with the publication of his multi-volume *Les lieux de mémoires*. In his accompanying introduction to the series, Nora gave a lucid analysis of the relationship between history, memory and identity, arguing that the terms 'memory' and 'history' cannot be used as interchangeable synonyms to describe our experience of the past. To explain this difference, Nora compares the different ways in which 'primitive' and 'modern' societies experience time. People in archaic societies

⁴⁰ Migault, *Journal*, p. 21: "À louer la bonté de Dieu de ce qu'il nous a choisis (...) pour nous amener dans ces heureuses provinces, jouir en pleine liberté de la prédication de sa sainte Parole. Vous aurez encore un autre sujet à bénir Dieu de ce qu'il a eu pitié de moi, m'ayant fait la grâce de me relever de cette terrible et malheureuse chute où j'étais tombé. (...) Vous y trouverez enfin, chacun à votre égard, ample sujet d'admirer et bénir la sage providence de Dieu de ce qu'il s'est servi de moyens si efficaces pour vous faire sortir, chacun en son temps, de cette horrible persécution".

live in a temporal continuum: they see no real difference between past, present and future, relying on the oral transmittance of mores and knowledge, and venerating their ancestors as still living among them. In other words, they have an unconscious and constantly living memory. In modern societies, by contrast, our understanding of time has evolved to the point that we experience a break between the past and the present. In our minds, the past is a strange country to which we can never return.⁴¹

This is precisely the reason modern man is obsessed with memory, Nora argues: because we know history to be dead, and are aware that time is slipping through our fingers, we consciously try to retain the few living memories of the past that we still have, in a desperate attempt to fight time. Memories are enshrined in so-called ‘realms of memory’, places where modern man clings on to a past he is losing, or as Nora puts it, “the extreme form in which a commemorative conscience subsists”. Since we have become incapable of having a continuous and unconscious memory, of truly ‘living the past’, we are doomed to salvage only the pieces of history and store these in realms of memory. Therefore modern societies record, archive, celebrate, commemorate and build monuments to keep its precious memories of the past, because “without commemorative vigilance, history will quickly sweep them away”. Modern memory thus differs from primitive memory, because rather than a spontaneous state of mind, it is a conscious and desperate effort to keep alive what is already dead. The difference between memory and history is that we experience the latter to be dead, while the former is still alive, if only just.⁴²

Nora also listed the symptoms of our mnemonic illness. First, we are gripped by archival fervour. Since memory is no longer a self-evident *habitus*, we need an external support to retain it, and therefore we endlessly record, conserve and archive to make sure we lose as little history as possible. Second, remembering becomes mandatory, because in a society that has lost its memory, the past only survives if individuals make a conscious decision to remember and define their own identity. In sum, realms of memory are loci intended to counter amnesia, freezing memory before it falls into oblivion and becomes ‘past’.⁴³

Perhaps Nora believed that early modern Europe also ranked as a ‘primitive’ society with a continuous and living memory, but Huguenot memorialists proved him wrong. No one betrayed a greater fear of amnesia than memoir-writer Claude Brousson, who in the introduc-

⁴¹ Pierre Nora, ‘Entre Mémoire et Histoire: La problématique des lieux’ in Pierre Nora, ed., *Les lieux de mémoire, vol. I: La République* (Paris, 1984), pp. xvii-xviii.

⁴² *Ibid.*, pp. xviii-xxv.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, pp. xxv-xxxv.

tory chapter to his account – entitled “Motives and design of this work” – fumed that Huguenot did tell not enough stories of plight, and accused them of collective amnesia:

Those of our fathers who embraced the Reformation since its birth, and for this reason were exposed to cruel persecutions, would have done us a great pleasure to communicate us their adventures, the ways they held their secret assemblies, and to tell us into detail what every one of them suffered at the hands of the Persecutors.⁴⁴

Brousson lamented this lack of storytelling, because as a result Huguenot exiles were forgetting the horrors of Catholic persecution, and were less steadfast in their faith as they crossed religious borders in the Dutch Republic. If only his father and other parents would have told the younger generation about their tribulations more often, Brousson argued, Huguenot zeal would never have given way to religious laxity: stories of plight “would have made a great impression on our spirit, and would have urged us to imitate them, and to support like them with patience all sorts of trials, and stay firm and unwavering in our faith”.⁴⁵

Brousson did not want to repeat the errors of his forefathers; the only way to counteract amnesia was to recount his own story of suffering and refuge. His account served as a realm of memory, enshrining the few living memories of the past he could recall, and thus ensure that Huguenots never forgot their former plight:

I have reason to believe that many a tragic scene has taken place of which only the true actors can honourably testify to us, as they have undergone themselves the evils that have been recounted. It is thus necessary that many of these sorts of Relations are made, which by their style, their veracious report of circumstance and their uniformity, will one day be in the homes of Refugees as the irrevocable monuments of these things.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Relation de la sortie de France du Sieur Daniel Brousson et de sa Famille, UB Leiden, BW Ms. B 67, f. 1: “Ceux de nos peres qui embrasserent la Reformation des sa naissance, et qui par la se virent exposez a de cruelles persecutions nous auroient fait un grand plaisir de nous communiquer leurs aventures, la maniere dont ils faisoient leurs assemblées secrettes, et de nous faire le detail de ce que chacun d’eux à souffrir de la part des Persecuteurs”.

⁴⁵ Ibid., f. 1: “Auroint fut beaucoup d’impression sur notre esprit, et nous auroient engagé a les imiter, a supporter avec patience comme eux toutes sortes d’Epreuves, et a demeurer fermes et inbranlables dans la foy”.

⁴⁶ Ibid., f. 2: “J’ay lieu de croire qu’il s’est passé bien de scenes tragiques dont il n’y a que ceux qui en ont été les veritables acteurs qui puissent dignement temoigner comme ayant eux memes essuyé les maux qui ont été representez. Il seroit donc necessaire que se fit quantité de ces sortes de Relations qui par la simplicité de leur stile, par le raport vraisemblable de leurs circonstances, et par l’uniformité que l’on verroit en elles fussent un jour dans chaque maison des Refugiez comme autant de monumens irrecusables de ces choses”.

Brousson took up his pen to keep alive the memory of his plight and subsequent deliverance, leaving an 'irrevocable monument' to remind the Huguenot exiles of their religious identity. His memoir was a deliberate attempt to salvage memories of plight, lest the past should be forgotten.

*

All in all, Huguenot memoir-writers consciously wrote down their stories to counter amnesia. Their accounts were monuments in print that would hopefully function as 'realms of memory'. Above all these were testimonies of suffering, persecution, and ultimate deliverance from Babylon, drawing a clear confessional boundary. Yet the very fact that exiles took up their pen was telling: they were aware that memory cultures are inherently problematic, because it requires a conscious effort to keep alive memories of the past – we prefer to bury our dark past rather than keep it alive. Huguenot refugees in the Dutch Republic were no different. Once arrived in their safe haven, they simply wanted to get on with their lives, not recall the horrors of persecution. As memory of confessional conflict was lost, it became possible to cross religious borders. Storytellers themselves also betrayed a double standard: their memoirs catalogue plight, and exhort readers never to renounce their Huguenot identity, but they also thanked their Catholic friends and neighbours for helping them escape.

Private sources thus show that Huguenot parishioners were no less on a tightrope than their pastors and elders. On the one hand authors encouraged religious intransigence, writing their memoirs as a testimony of suffering at the hands of Catholic dragoons and clerics, just as the consistory zealously patrolled the boundaries of moral and religious behaviour, and pastors reminded William III of his duty to defeat the Antichrist. On the other hand, clerics and their flock were prepared to cross borders, allowing Catholics to become a church member and reconciling erring sheep with their community, just as Huguenot memorialists did not forget to mention their friendships with Catholics. Memory was essential to this balancing act: because Huguenots nurtured sincere hopes to return to France, they kept alive memory of plight as a binding group ingredient, but in the short run they preferred to leave the horrors of persecution behind them, focussing instead on building up their new life abroad.

Conclusion

The first article of the 1598 Edict of Nantes ordered that “the memory of all things done by one party or the other (...) remain obliterated and forgotten, as if no such things ever happened.” Lest French citizens missed the point, in the second article Henry IV forbade all his subjects

*to renew the memory, to attack, to resent, to scold, nor to provoke each other by reproach of what has taken place, no matter for what cause and excuse it may be, and to dispute, contest, quarrel nor offend itself or take offence at facts or at words, but to contain itself and live peacefully together as brothers, friends and fellow citizens.*¹

Clearly the king believed that remembering the recent past would only fuel religious hatred. If the French would recall which Catholic had butchered his Protestant neighbour during the St. Bartholomew’s massacres, or which Huguenot had smashed up a statue of the Holy Virgin, religious feuds would have no end. On an abstract level the Edict acknowledged religious differences, albeit reluctantly and with the express wish to eventually unite all French citizens in the Catholic Church, but if peace was to be restored on a local level, that is, if the French were to re-establish the bonds of amity and toleration among neighbours, town citizens and families, the only cure was forced amnesia.

For almost a century forgetting seemed possible, but after the Revocation and subsequent Refuge, Huguenot refugees in the Dutch Republic felt ill at ease with such as solution to religious diversity. They had been stripped of their civil rights, persecuted for their beliefs, and had abandoned their possessions to meet an uncertain destiny in exile. How could they ever forget their suffering at the hand of Catholics, and reject confessional difference? Yet memory did not necessarily fuel confessional division and conflict. For when we return to the two-pronged question of (1) how important religion was to Huguenot refugees refashioning their identity in exile, and (2) what practice of religion most appealed to them, the picture becomes blurred. Their religious behaviour, discourse and memoirs betrayed a complex blend of confessional intransigence as well as open-mindedness.

¹ Quoted from: Mousnier, *Assassination of Henry IV*, p. 318. I have slightly modernized the spelling; emphasis added.

On the one hand Huguenot refugees did recall their plight, and drew a clear boundary between the Protestant and Catholic faiths. Pastors in exile recounted the horrors of persecution and flight, just as the consistory addressed militant speeches to William III, reminding him of his godly duty to avenge Huguenot suffering, while the elders and pastors were also concerned to patrol the borders of moral and religious behaviour among their parishioners. Yet besides the Huguenots' undoubtedly heart-felt adversity to popery and persecution, in many cases the dissociation of faiths was also a calculated strategy. Discouraging on confessional conflict and policing religious behaviour served to rally the Huguenots under the banner of embattled faith, forging a community of exiled brothers-in-plight, and to pressure Dutch authorities to work for their return to France. The memory of plight and their well-guarded religious identity delineated Huguenot refugees as a distinct group, battling for their return to the New Jerusalem. Exiled pastors and believers also served their own interests: they reaffirmed their attachment to Protestantism not in the least to reap the benefits of Walloon charity.

On the other hand refugees did manage to forget the past, even to such a point that memoir-writers sounded the alarm. They wrote down their stories to preserve the memory of plight, fearing that the lack of storytelling among Huguenot exiles made them forget their hard-won identity. When exiles chose to leave the past behind, and ignore the violent clashes with Catholics, they would befriend the papist foe, these authors argued. Indeed, identity founded on memory generally risks imminent collapse: as time and distance separate lived experience from memory, it requires an ever more conscious and forced effort to remember the past. For Huguenot exiles, intransigent memories were even more difficult to preserve, because the struggle to survive could outstrip religious fervour, while the multi-confessional Dutch society facilitated the crossing of religious boundaries. The direct experience of persecution was not reinforced on a daily basis, so Huguenot refugees had to rely on the shaky practice of storytelling to sustain the argument for religious conflict.

And stories that were intended as realms of memory did not always fit the template of religious enmity. Admittedly Huguenot escape accounts abounded with mischievous clergymen, converts and dragoons, but Catholic neighbours and friends also made an appearance, reaching out across the confessional divide to help Huguenots flee. This was a Janus-faced approach to religion many Huguenots adopted: they cherished memories of religious open-mindedness as well as of confessional hatred. Even the elders and pastors at The Hague were willing to compromise over confessional rigor, readmitting the black sheep, and even Catholic converts. Militant fervour and inter-confessional bonds thus were not mutually exclusive

categories, but two sides of the same coin. On the abstract level Huguenot refugees abhorred Catholicism for its superstitious beliefs and persecution of Protestants, and would therefore nourish notions of confessional strife, but when in practice direct persecution was absent and religion took a back seat to building up a new life, religious intransigence could easily give way to a more open-minded praxis of religious coexistence, or even fraternity.

In sum, rather than assuming that memories of plight inevitably fuel religious hatred, we should interrogate the ways people in early modern societies used memory to suit their own purposes. This case-study of Huguenot refugees has clearly shown that it was the interaction between genuine religiosity and self-preservation in exile that made them seize upon the memory of plight, while such recollections could still accommodate bonds of friendship across the confessional divide, or even be ousted from the Huguenot mind altogether. It would be foolish to claim that Huguenot exile identity was *sola fide*; religion was undeniably a key ingredient to Huguenots redefining themselves abroad, but it had to compete with their down-to-earth struggle to make ends meet, while religious attitudes were a mix of both conflict and coexistence. Huguenot refugees did not suffer from schizophrenia when it came to religion; as they tried to solve the dilemma of how to be Protestant in times of exile and confessional diversity, they simply refused to be straight-jacketed into a single identity.

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