

H-France Review Vol. 8 (August 2008), No. 97

Anne Dunan-Page, ed., *The Religious Culture of the Huguenots, 1660-1750*. Aldershot, U.K., and Burlington, Vt.: Ashgate, 2006. xvi + 218 pp. Bibliography and index. \$99.95 U.S. (hb). ISBN 978-0-7546-5495-7.

Review by Carolyn Lougee Chappell, Stanford University.

For nearly 300 years after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, Huguenot history in France attended far more to the remnants of the religion within the country than to the experiences and fates of those who fled. While English, Dutch, German, and American writers—often descendants of the refugees— assembled a picture of Huguenot immigrants, French Protestant memory privileged the pre-revocation experience of persecution and the post-revocation resistance by those who, by staying, made possible a future for “notre église des martyrs.”[1]

From the tercentenary commemorations onward, however, French historians’ attention to the refuge increased, studying in particular the exile communities in Holland, Switzerland, and Germany.[2] One purpose of Anne Dunan-Page’s *Religious Culture of the Huguenots* is to persuade French historians of the importance of studying the implantation of French Protestants in England by showing “the diversity of the religious history, literature and culture of the British Refuge from the late seventeenth century” (p. 21). Several of the articles in the collection are drawn from a colloquium on “Huguenots in the British Isles and the American Colonies, 1550-1789” that was held, with that very objective, at the University of Montpellier in 2004.[3]

A second purpose of the volume concerns an English audience, however, for it aims to serve as a “reminder in England of the nature of French Protestantism and the contribution of the early-modern *réfugiés* to English culture” (p. 1). Choosing English dates in the book’s title (“from the Restoration of Charles II to the mid-eighteenth century” [p. 7]) bespeaks this second orientation. Dunan-Page, in her introduction, expresses wonder that this minority, with its ambiguous relation to the established church in England, “does not feature more prominently, with a few notable exceptions, in the work of historians who have paid particular attention to religious dissidence or non-conformity in Britain and America” (p. 4). Not only the discussions of the adjustment of Huguenot congregations to the religious situation in their host country but also the essays demonstrating “contributions” to far-ranging facets of English culture add up to a claim that the Huguenots are a significant missing piece in the English national narrative.

The title of the collection suggests a narrower range of issues than is actually found in the ten essays, so some whose work would benefit may not know to pick up the book. One set of essays focuses directly on the controversies over form of worship and discipline that split the refuge into Anglican and non-conformist congregations. Dunan-Page sums up the diversity within the Huguenot community in England as it is exposed in the volume: “We can approach the French community from many different angles: accepting Anglicanism; resisting Anglicanism but distancing itself from English non-conformity on account of its legal right to worship; resisting Anglicanism because of affinities with a Presbyterian system; resisting Anglicanism with surface conformity. All these patterns correspond to circumstances that can be glimpsed at different times, in different communities and with different individuals, and the articles below seek to map out this diversity rather than to suggest a single model of explanation” (pp. 13-14). On this basis, one might argue that the title of the volume would more properly speak of

“religious cultures.”

But the rest of the articles range far beyond the issues of worship and discipline that are evoked by the title phrase of “religious culture”—to coffee houses, libraries, aristocratic tutors, battlefields—mapping the consequential involvement of Huguenot exiles in broad areas of English life. Anyone interested in the international “Republic of Letters,” in the writings of John Locke and John Toland, in the evolution of charitable institutions in England, or in the soldiers of William III will find important insights in this book.

Anne Dunan-Page’s introduction is an informative prologue to the book and offers an excellent overview of the state of refuge studies. But of the two main issues she highlights—the form of worship and cultural assimilation—the essays significantly address only the first. How Huguenots proceeded “from periods of chaos and urgency in the face of persecution, to organisation yet separation from British mainstream culture and finally to assimilation, when Huguenots become Englishmen of French origin” (p. 9) is a key historical issue, but there is little in this collection that speaks to this, unless one (erroneously) takes conformity to Anglican worship as evidence of eagerness to conform to British culture.

Three essays directly address the issue of conformity to Anglicanism. Robin Gwynn’s “Conformity, Non-conformity and Huguenot Settlement in England in the Later Seventeenth Century” is definitive. It challenges the argument made by French scholars such as Cottret and Chamayou that Huguenots themselves desired to conform to Anglicanism. Gwynn, whose knowledge of the Huguenot communities in England is unmatched, offers a comprehensive enumeration and chronology of the French churches in England to show that “most first-generation Huguenot refugees were profoundly reluctant to follow the conformist path” (p. 34), consistories and communicants alike opposed conforming (“only a minority wanted anything to do with Anglican worship”), and even those who were “reluctantly bullied into Anglicanism” (p. 38) often established a hybrid “French Anglicanism” that was not entirely orthodox.

To substantiate this contention and explain how Huguenot views on conformity came to be misconstrued, Gwynn offers a revised picture of the size, chronology, and geographic distribution of the Huguenot migration itself. From church records he concludes that entries into England were minimal in 1685, picked up in 1686, and peaked in 1687 (arrivals at the Threadneedle Street Church quadrupled in 1687, for example), whereas entries into the Netherlands peaked sharply in 1685-86 before declining. Gwynn draws two conclusions and one hypothesis from these data. First, relating the curve of English entries to royal legislation on conformity, he argues that the beginnings of substantial immigration into England may have lagged after the revocation, not simply out of Huguenots’ reluctance to settle where the monarch was Catholic, but because they knew they would be required to worship according to Anglican forms in England, whereas they could have their own French Reformed churches in Holland. The upswing in immigration occurred after James loosened the expectation of conformity by publishing the Declaration of Indulgence in the spring of 1687. Gwynn’s second conclusion is that the dating of the influx into England explains, at least in part, the limited familiarity with the English Refuge among French scholars, for both of the major French works on the subject—Schickler’s [4] and Cottret’s—close at the revocation. Finally, Gwynn’s hypothesis is that, given the upward curve of arrivals in England and the declining curve of arrivals in Holland, the Dutch Refuge, famously dubbed by Bayle the “Grand Arche des fugitifs,” may have been smaller by 1700 than the English Huguenot community—in itself an argument for the enhanced importance of studying the latter.

Two thinner articles likewise address the issue of conformity. Susanne Lachenicht contrasts the treatment of Huguenot immigrants in Ireland and England. The Irish authorities encouraged Huguenot immigration both during the interregnum and after 1688, granting them more privileged civil status, special access to naturalization, and exemption from the requirement of conformity. Though the authorities later attempted to persuade the French churches to come into full conformity (by, for

example, limiting state support for ministers to conforming churches), the Irish Huguenots nonetheless “enjoyed a degree of religious toleration greater than that which Huguenots in England could expect” (p. 44). Lachenicht agrees with Gwynn that most expatriate Huguenots preferred non-conformity but asserts that “Huguenots’ resistance in Ireland against conformism seems to have been much stronger than those of their dissenting brethren in England” (p. 53). Also extending Gwynn, Lachenicht says that a “very liberal interpretation of conformity” (p. 50) allowed the conforming churches in Ireland to retain enough Calvinist elements to make the hybrid character of worship even stronger in Ireland than in England. Lachenicht’s article offers a straightforward summary of preliminary findings from a larger collective project on assimilation. Her conclusion that conformity to Anglicanism can be used as an indicator of “the degree of assimilation of Protestant strangers” (p. 53) will need to find its confirmation in the larger study, since it is not supported by the body of her material here. Non-conformity can be a form of refusal to assimilate in a single (though crucial) area of life, but willingness to conform means little about readiness to assimilate entirely, to lose one’s separate identity.

In the third of the articles on conformity, Paula Wheeler Carlo previews her longer study of the pastor at the conformist Eglise Française du Saint Esprit in New York City from 1710 to 1750. Louis Rou’s ninety-six manuscript sermons comprise one of the largest collections of French Protestant sermons in colonial North America. From these and other records, Carlo draws a sketch of the theological, political, and personal controversies that tore the church apart during Rou’s pastorate.

Of the remaining seven essays, which pursue Huguenot religious culture into secular realms, four have particular importance by virtue of showing how a facet of Huguenot belief shaped a contribution to English (and in some cases cosmopolitan) culture. Randolph Vigne’s “*Dominus Providebit*: Huguenot Commitment to Poor Relief in England” argues convincingly that the charitable institutions Huguenots in England developed in the aftermath of the revocation were influential, as alternatives to contemporaneous English models of both “indoor” and “outdoor” relief, in the longer-term evolution of English social welfare systems. Few English historians will be familiar with these institutions—La Soupe, the Pest House, and the French Hospital established in 1718, the Royal Bounty—which had no exact precedent in England. In an age when poor relief was understood as a responsibility of local parishes for their own residents, the Royal Bounty was the first nationwide relief distribution. In an age when poor relief tended to the punitive, Huguenot charities were more sympathetic to the plight of the needy. Vigne connects the Refuge’s alternative model of poor relief integrally to its “religious culture,” suggesting that it was inspired not only by the Huguenots’ own experience of suffering or perhaps their knowledge of charitable practices in France but also by their sense of solidarity—a Calvinist commitment that bound the community together across its members’ diversity of languages, geographical origins, occupations, and membership in conforming or non-conforming congregations.

The remaining three articles asserting an influence of Huguenot belief on English culture deal with refugee involvement in the “Republic of Letters” and have important implications for studies of intellectual communication and exchange in the early eighteenth century. In a vigorous, important, and thought-provoking essay on the intellectual evolution of John Locke, S. J. Savonius identifies specifically religious Huguenot influences on Locke’s strictly secular, politically-based educational thought. Savonius stresses the radicalism of the “remarkably subversive corpus” (p. 137) Locke developed during his five and a half years of exile in the Dutch Republic and attributes his radicalization in some measure to his associations in exile with anti-authoritarian, anti-establishment, even anti-Trinitarian Huguenots who were at odds not only with Catholics but with mainstream Protestantism both inside and outside of France, both before and after the revocation. Savonius’ focal point is Locke’s recommendations of various Huguenot refugees as tutors for English aristocratic households, which signal Locke’s approval of “particular values embedded in the exiled Huguenots’ religious culture” (p. 142). The thrust of this seemingly narrow topic is to place Huguenot-borne French culture at the core of Locke’s thought. Savonius portrays Locke as “a Frenchified thinker” (p. 142) who needed to be reinvented (or “tamed”) as quintessentially English by eighteenth-century Whigs and twentieth-century political theorists. And by

implication, the orthodox view of the influence of Locke's writings on the early Enlightenment in France needs to be revised to incorporate the French refugee fount from which they themselves sprang.

Simon Harvey and Elizabeth Grist mine the large Des Maizeaux collection of manuscript correspondence in the British Library to trace the vast network of contacts that Pierre Des Maizeaux and Michel de Laroche maintained in the early eighteenth century. Largely operating out of their "talking-shop" at the Rainbow Coffee House, a London equivalent of Paris's Procope that was located near the Savoy Chapel and the Royal Society—in other words at the heart of thinking London" (p. 165)—radical Huguenot intellectuals like Pierre Coste and Abel Boyer (dubbed by their enemies "dangerous Frenchies"), free thinkers, unorthodox Socinians, anti-dogmatics who were working out the philosophical underpinnings of deism, and advocates of religious toleration inspired by Bayle and Spinoza (Collins, Toland, Mandeville) circulated new ideas among the English and Dutch and into France. Through letters, journals, newsletters, and translations of new books, they were instrumental in transmitting ideas that would later bear fruit in support for religious toleration in France, "which was not quite what Louis XIV had in mind in 1685" (p. 172).

Miriam Yardeni's immensely insightful "Huguenot Traces and Reminiscences in John Toland's Conception of Tolerance" deepens the mutual influence of British intellectuals and the Huguenot diaspora. Through an analysis of his writings, Yardeni shows that for the deist Toland, "in every phase of his reading, his journeys and his travels, there is always a Huguenot element" (p. 175). Moreover, at the center of his view of religion stood such facets of Huguenot religious culture as the rights of "the erring conscience" and the notion that religions contain both accretions of idiosyncratic superstition and a common core of truth accessible to "natural illuminations." Though the interlocutors were far apart in their personal situations—Huguenots searching for an identity and Toland self-consciously part of a commonwealth—their interchanges led to "a common mental universe, indeed, to a single mentality which abhors fanaticism, prejudice, and persecution" (p. 188). In Toland's case, then, as with the coterie of intellectuals at the Rainbow, of which he was a part, ideas circled out from, and back to, French culture, through intermediaries in the English Refuge.

Another two articles offer preliminary findings from ongoing collective projects. Vivienne Larminie, a member of the research staff at the new *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2004), sketches a comparison of the Huguenot entries in the new edition with those in its nineteenth-century predecessor. Overall, inclusion of more Huguenots and other foreign-born persons, more non-English contributors, and a less secularist bias permit more attention to religious controversies as well as more sensitivity to religious experiences in private life, and greater awareness of the European dimension of English political and religious issues. Larminie illustrates the updating with the example of the brothers Peter and Lewis Du Moulin, whose divergent reactions to the ever-changing religious and political situations estranged them from one another.

Jane McKee inventories the Huguenot authors in the libraries of two Irish churches in Cashel and Armagh. Early inclusion of the works by Reformation founders bespeaks interest in theological debates carried on by French Calvinists and in their historical experience (legal, historical, travel literature). Later eighteenth-century acquisitions were more secular, though histories and memoirs by Huguenots declined less than theological works, suggesting that "the legend of the Huguenots had clearly begun to take root" (p. 136). However, some of the numbers do not add up and will need revision before publication of the full project.

Finally, Matthew Glozier looks to the wars of William III in the British Isles to find the "reaction of Huguenot soldiers to their betrayal by their king" (p. 89). Glozier knows the Huguenot soldiery better than anyone else,^[5] but it is hard to see how this essay fits in this volume on religious culture. The essay opens by juxtaposing Calvin's refusal to resist tyranny with anything but patience and prayer to the refugees' engagement in armed warfare and makes several suggestions as to why refugees were not

reluctant to fight against the king they had for their entire lives been admonished to obey. But allusions to “Protestant fervour,” a “militant Protestant spirit among William’s forces” and “deeply pervading religiosity” (p. 97) do not compose an explanation. There is a fascinating question here that Glozier does not quite pose—was there ambivalence about taking up arms against Louis XIV or against fellow French men they had fought alongside, or even lived alongside, before their emigration? Or was movement between armies so normal an occurrence in the seventeenth century that no particular mental accommodation was necessary? Such questions could be answered better through the use of soldier memoirs, such as those of Dumont de Bostaquet, than through anecdote and a summary of views of Jacques Fontaine, who was not a soldier.

LIST OF ESSAYS

Anne Dunan-Page, “Introduction”

Robin Gwynn, “Conformity, Non-conformity and Huguenot Settlement in England in the Later Seventeenth Century”

Susanne Lachenicht, “Differing Perceptions of the Refuge? Huguenots in Ireland and Great Britain and their Attitudes towards the Governments’ Religious Policy (1660-1710)”

Vivienne Larminie, “The *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, the du Moulin Connection and the Location of the Church of England in the Later Seventeenth Century”

Randolph Vigne, “*Dominus Providebit*: Huguenot Commitment to Poor Relief in England”

Matthew Glozier, “Killing in Good Conscience: Marshal Schomberg and the Huguenot Soldiers of the Diaspora”

Paula Wheeler Carlo, “The Huguenot Soul: The Calvinism of Reverend Louis Rou”

Jane McKee, “The Influence of the Huguenots on Educated Ireland: Huguenot Books in Irish Church Libraries of the Eighteenth Century”

S.J. Savonius, “The Role of Huguenot Tutors in John Locke’s Programme of Social Reform”

Simon Harvey and Elizabeth Grist, “The Rainbow Coffee House and the Exchange of Ideas in Early Eighteenth-century England”

Myriam Yardeni, “Huguenot Traces and Reminiscences in John Toland’s Conception of Tolerance”

NOTES

[1] See Philippe Joutard, “The Museum of the Desert: The Protestant Minority,” in Pierre Nora, ed., *Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past: Conflicts and Divisions*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), pp. 353-77.

[2] Notable exceptions to such neglect of the British experience are Bernard Cottret, *The Huguenots in England: Immigration and Settlement, c. 1550-1700*, trans. Peregrine and Adriana Stevenson (New York and Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991); Bertrand Van Ruymbeke,

From New Babylon to Eden: The Huguenots and their Migration to Colonial South Carolina (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2006); Miriam Yardeni, *Le Refuge huguenot: assimilation et culture* (Paris: Champion, 2002); and Fabienne Chamayou, "Le Refuge dans les îles britanniques" in Eckart Birnstiel and Chrystel Bernat, eds., *La Diaspora des huguenots. Les réfugiés protestants de France et leur dispersion dans le monde (xvie-xviiiè siècles)* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2001), pp. 43-62.

[3] A further selection of the papers from the conference is to be published as *Les Huguenots dans les îles britanniques et les colonies américaines. Ecrits religieux et représentations*.

[4] Fernand de Schickler, *Les Eglises du refuge en Angleterre*, 3 vols. (Paris: Fischbacher, 1892).

[5] See Matthew Glozier, *Marshal Schomberg 1615-1690, "the ablest soldier of his age": International Soldiering and the Formation of State Armies in Seventeenth-Century Europe* (Portland, Ore.: Sussex Academic Press, 2005); *The Huguenot Soldiers of William of Orange and the "Glorious Revolution" of 1688: The Lions of Judah* (Portland, Ore.: Sussex Academic Press, 2002).

Carolyn Lougee Chappell
Stanford University
lougee@stanford.edu

Copyright © 2008 by the Society for French Historical Studies, all rights reserved. The Society for French Historical Studies permits the electronic distribution of individual reviews for nonprofit educational purposes, provided that full and accurate credit is given to the author, the date of publication, and the location of the review on the H-France website. The Society for French Historical Studies reserves the right to withdraw the license for redistribution/republication of individual reviews at any time and for any specific case. Neither bulk redistribution/republication in electronic form of more than five percent of the contents of H-France Review nor re-publication of any amount in print form will be permitted without permission. For any other proposed uses, contact the Editor-in-Chief of H-France. The views posted on H-France Review are not necessarily the views of the Society for French Historical Studies.

ISSN 1553-9172