

REVIEW

Experiencing Exile: Huguenot Refugees in the Dutch Republic, 1680–1700. By DAVID VAN DER LINDEN. (Politics and Culture in Europe, 1650–1750.) Farnham: Ashgate, 2015. xvi + 289 pp., ill.

Could exile ever be anything other than unsettling? At first glance the final lines of this book's conclusion (that 'exile was a thoroughly unsettling experience, not a clear-cut quest for religious freedom', p. 230) might seem obvious to the reader. However, set against the background of a long tradition of scholarship, which has tended to paint too bright and possibly too heroic a picture of Huguenot exile, the urgency of David van der Linden's enquiry becomes increasingly clear. Divided into three parts, the work focuses on various aspects of exile as experienced by Huguenot refugees in the Dutch Republic at the time of the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes (1685). Its first part, on the socio-economic experience of exile, argues that exile was determined by socioeconomic opportunities, not 'just' religious courage and devotion. Refugees made carefully deliberated decisions based on their own practical prospects and connections — and even so, many struggled to make ends meet in their new country. Through an in-depth analysis of a wide range of source material and a wealth of individual stories, Van der Linden convincingly exposes the bleak and truly unsettling reality of exile. The second part, on the religious experience of the refugees, studies a variety of Huguenot sermons from the perspective of ministers as well as their audience, and argues that such sermons served a multifaceted purpose: they were meant to comfort the refugees, but also to convince those Protestants left in France (*nouveaux convertis*) to join the Refuge, and, after the Peace of Rijswijk (1697), to dissuade disillusioned Huguenots from returning to France as converts. The third part, on the historical consciousness of refugees, argues that the latter shaped their individual and collective memories to fashion and sustain their Huguenot identity — and in an excellent section on Élie Benoist's *Histoire de l'Édit de Nantes* (Delft: Adriaan Beman, 1693–95) sketches how such stories were inscribed into Protestant history. Together, these sections create a subtle and intelligent attempt to capture the experience of exile and challenge scholarship to date. Unavoidably, in an exercise of this magnitude, some gaps remain, the most conspicuous of which is probably the near-absence of Bayle. This may seem unfair to mention, since incorporating Bayle's corpus would require a project in itself, and, furthermore, the author specifically seeks to compensate earlier scholars' focus on 'the intellectual achievements of refugee savants' by looking at 'ordinary people' and ministers (pp. 8–9). However, Bayle's absence is of the sort that causes other absences: for instance, the political debate in the Refuge on whether to stay loyal to Louis XIV or support the Glorious Revolution; the widespread discomfort with Pierre Jurieu's prophetic tendencies; the heated theological debates among the refugee ministers (for instance on reason and tolerance); and lay authors' narratives of exile. But far from harming this highly impressive work, its occasional gaps suggest fruitful further lines of enquiry. Van der Linden has produced an exquisite piece of scholarship that will speak to a wide range of scholars and will remain relevant to historians of the Refuge and beyond for a long time to come.

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