

Carolyn Chappell Lougee, Facing the Revocation. Huguenot Families, Faith, and the King's Will, Oxford (Oxford University Press) 2016, XVIII–466 p., 50 b/w ill., ISBN 978-0-19-024131-5, GBP 21,99.

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»Facing the Revocation. Huguenot families, Faith and the King's Will« is a family saga, that of the Robillard de Champagné family in the period around 1685. Based on meticulous research carried out in a number of European archives, the book wants to tell the story of this noble family from the Saintonge region.

When in 1598, the Edict of Nantes put an end to the French wars of religion, Calvinism became – to some extent – a tolerated denomination (»tolerated« in the early modern sense of the word)¹. At the latest from the 1660s, Louis XIV of France made attempts to cut back the privileges granted in 1598. With the Edict of Fontainebleau of 1685 came the revocation of the 1598 stipulations: Calvinism and its institutions were to be suppressed, Huguenots were meant to convert to Catholicism, their children were forcibly brought up as Catholics, Protestants were banned from emigration. The Edict of Fontainebleau left French Calvinists with difficult options: conversion or flight? At which risks? With a view of returning some day?

Caroline Chappell Lougee tackles these questions through the lens of family history. The story of the Robillard de Champagné family is told through four parts. The book starts out with the family's social (and material) framework back in France and discusses the multi-faceted decision-making processes for family members deciding to leave France or to stay behind. Part two considers the difficult experience of flight, part three that of the family members who preferred to stay in France and convert to Catholicism. The fourth and last part discusses the experience of exile, mostly the Dutch and Irish refuge – all of this in great detail.

The book's aim – as Caroline Chappell Lougee notes in both the introduction and the conclusions – is to challenge too simplistic narratives with regard to Huguenot history and the Revocation period in particular: 1) that staunch Protestantism was the driving force for Huguenots choosing exile, 2) the rigorous persecution of those who left the country without permission, 3) the number of Huguenot conversions prior to the Revocation, and 4) the »modernization« narrative, that is that Huguenots enhanced the modernization of the economies and cultures of the countries of refuge (that is of exile). Through the detailed stories of the Robillard de Champagné family members she contributes indeed to a more nuanced and more complex understanding of how Protestant and noble individuals reacted (and could react) to the Revocation, how they tried to reconcile themselves with choices made – at home and



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¹ Susanne Lachenicht, Conclusions, in: Tolérance et intolérance des religions en Europe. XVIe–XVIIIe siècle, in: Annales de Bretagne et des Pays de l'Ouest 125-1 (2018), p. 151–159.

abroad, how family stories built a powerful narrative of what Bertrand van Ruymbeke has dubbed »Huguenot exceptionalism«.

While Caroline Chappell Lougee intends her narrative to be a revisionist one, one that questions narratives promoted by Huguenots and Huguenot descendants from the Revocation onwards, while she wants to question »widely assumed features of the Huguenot story« (p. 3), her narrative does not embrace, though, what studies on early modern migrations and diasporas have on offer for a truly revisionist, more complex and more integrated narrative of the Huguenot story: how much features of persecution, decisions on whether to leave or to stay, experiences of flight and exile resemble other early modern persecuted minorities' experiences – e. g. Ashkenazi and Sephardi Jews, Bohemians, Salzburg Protestants – so where the Huguenots' history is specific and where it is typical of early modern persecutions and migrations. In many ways, Chappell Lougee thus reproduces the story of »Huguenot exceptionalism« and some of the narratives she intended to challenge in the first place – narratives which by the way have been revised by specialists of the Huguenot refuge over the last thirty years².

Thus, with regard to the claims towards revisionism the book is in many ways old wine in new skins. For those not familiar with the developments in early modern migration history and the history of Huguenots more specifically, the book might – as others have done before – indeed alter some of the persistent simplistic narratives that need revision. For specialists of Huguenot history the book offers great detail on the Robillard de Champagné family – which scholars might then use to compare it to their findings on other Huguenot families and early modern migrations at large.

² See e.g. the most recent and comprehensive English-language handbook on Huguenots which Caroline Chappell Lougee mentions in her bibliography without integrating the chapters' findings into her book: Raymond A. Mentzer, Bertrand van Ruymbeke (ed.), *A Companion to the Huguenots*, Leiden Boston 2015. See also e. g. Stefi Jersch-Wenzel, *Juden und »Franzosen« in der Wirtschaft des Raumes Berlin/Brandenburg zur Zeit des Merkantilismus*, Berlin 1978; Ingrid Mittenzwei, *Hugenotten und Manufakturkapitalismus. Zur Rolle der Hugenotten in der gewerblichen Wirtschaft Brandenburg-Preußens*, in: id., (ed.), *Hugenotten in Brandenburg-Preußen*, Berlin 1987, p. 112–168; Étienne François, *Die Traditions- und Legendenbildung des deutschen Refuges*, in: Heinz Duchhardt (ed.), *Der Exodus der Hugenotten. Die Aufhebung des Edikts von Nantes 1685 als europäisches Ereignis*, Cologne, Vienna 1985, p. 177–193; Étienne François, *La mémoire huguenote dans le pays du Refuge*, in: Frédéric Hartweg, Stefi Jersch-Wenzel (ed.), *Die Hugenotten und das Refuge. Deutschland und Europa. Beiträge zu einer Tagung*, Berlin 1990, p. 233–239; Bertrand van Ruymbeke, *Minority Survival. The Huguenot Paradigm in France and the Diaspora*, in: id., Randy J. Sparks (ed.), *Memory and identity. The Huguenots in France and the Atlantic Diaspora*, Columbia, SC 2003, p. 1–25; Susanne Lachenicht, *Hugenotten in Europa und Nordamerika. Migration und Integration in der Frühen Neuzeit*. Frankfurt a. M., New York, 2010; Id., *Étude comparée de la création et de la survie d'une identité huguenote en Angleterre et dans le Brandebourg au XVIIIe siècle*, in: Philip Benedict, Hugues Daussey, Pierre-Olivier Lehot (ed.), *L'Identité huguenote. Faire mémoire et écrire l'histoire (XVIe–XXIe siècle)*, Geneva 2014, p. 279–294.



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