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The Exile Experience

Geert H. Janssen

In contrast to its Protestant counterpart, the Catholic exile experience has long been neglected by historians. Textbooks of the early modern period generally inform us about Calvinist refugees, Jewish diasporas and the expulsion of Muslims, but rarely consider the migration of Catholic minorities. Even within the niche of Catholic historical scholarship, the study of exile has tended to be piecemeal and antiquarian in nature. Only in the past few years has this situation changed. As the bibliography of this chapter testifies, the history of Catholic refugees is currently enjoying interest from religious, social and literary historians alike. Rather than being a marginal phenomenon, the flight and migration of Catholics during the Reformation period appears to have affected, directly or indirectly, thousands of men and women. The experience of exile should therefore be regarded as an integral part of the history of the Catholic Reformation.

There are a number of reasons for this belated rise of academic interest. First, the history of refugees does not sit comfortably with the narrative that has often been created of the (post-)Tridentine Church. Until quite recently, scholars studied early modern Catholicism through the lens of a triumphant, militant, and highly visible Church, whose development was closely connected to that of the growing state. As a result, the lives of Catholic minorities in Protestant lands, and of those who left these areas, were easily overlooked.[1] Second, the overwhelming popularity of national history writing in the nineteenth and twentieth century prevented historians from studying displaced communities outside national boundaries. Within these nationalist traditions, the history of the Catholic diaspora could even be politically sensitive. In mainstream historical scholarship Catholic exiles from, for example, Elizabethan England or the Dutch Republic were often portrayed as traitors who had associated themselves with foreign Catholic princes or dubious royal pretenders. Hence, if Catholic refugees were studied at all, they generated a

[1] Benjamin J. Kaplan and Judith Pollmann, 'Conclusion', in Benjamin J. Kaplan et al. (eds), *Catholic Communities in Protestant States: Britain and the Netherlands, c. 1570–1720* (Manchester, 2009), pp. 249–50; R. Po-chia Hsia, *The World of Catholic Renewal, 1540–1770* (Cambridge, 2005), pp. 82–95. I am grateful to Katy Gibbons for her comments on an earlier version of this essay.

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scholarship that was either accusatory or apologetic in nature. In both variants it produced highly caricatured images of villains and martyrs.[2]

From the 1960s onwards this bipolar imagery gradually dissolved as nationalist narratives were challenged and anthropological approaches made Reformation scholarship less confessionally biased. Studies of Catholicism shifted away from a focus on the institutions of the Church and the state, to local parishes and the religious world of the laity. This changing agenda made scholars more aware of the variety of Catholic cultures that coexisted in early modern Europe, including exile communities. At the same time, a number of interrelated historiographical trends stimulated the study of Catholic migrations. For example, it has been remarked that geopolitical events of the twentieth century triggered a rise in 'exile scholarship' in general.[3] The dramatic increase in the numbers of displaced persons since the Second World War seems to have fuelled the historical interest in forced migrations, including Catholic ones. In addition, the 'linguistic turn' of the 1980s and 1990s affected the way these migrations were approached. It prompted scholars to examine not only the profile and statistics of historical refugee movements, but also perceptions of displacement and evolving exile discourses.

Finally, the study of exile has recently been modernized by a 'spatial turn' in scholarship. Among other things, this has involved research into the religious meanings attributed to space and the way in which physical environments shaped religious practices. It has thus become clear that displacement was a concern not restricted to refugee communities. Alexandra Walsham, for one, has pointed out that Catholics in Protestant areas often perceived of themselves as inner exiles, while physical migration was a common experience for those who attended Catholic schools and universities abroad, travelled distances to attend (underground) Catholic services or undertook pilgrimages.[4] This growing awareness of the spatial dimension to Catholic life in Protestant Europe has thus broadened our understanding of exile and migration as key concepts in the early modern Catholic mindset.

This changing historiographical landscape has also generated some new methodological approaches. Mark Greengrass, Heinz Schilling and Alexander

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2 Christopher Highley, *Catholics Writing the Nation in Early Modern Britain and Ireland* (Oxford, 2008), pp. 1–22; Robert Descimon and José Javier Ruiz Ibáñez, *Les ligueurs de l'exil. Le refuge catholique français après 1594* (Seyssel, 2005), pp. 7–49; Henk van Nierop, *Treason in the Northern Quarter: War, Terror and the Rule of Law in the Dutch Revolt* (Princeton, NJ, 2009), pp. 239–58.

3 F.A. Norwood, *Strangers and Exiles: A History of Religious Refugees* (Nashville, 1969); Philip Major, 'Introduction', in Philip Major (ed.), *Literatures of Exile in the English Revolution and its Aftermath, 1640–1690* (Farnham, 2010), pp. 1–13; Henry Kamen, *The Disinherited: The Exiles who Created Spanish Culture* (London, 2007), pp. ix–xvi.

4 Alexandra Walsham, *The Reformation of the Landscape: Religion, Identity and Memory in Early Modern Britain and Ireland* (Oxford, 2011). Also Willem Frijhoff, *Embodied Belief: Ten Essays on Religious Culture in Dutch History* (Hilversum, 2002); Benjamin J. Kaplan, *Divided by Faith: Religious Conflict and the Practice of Toleration in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, MA, 2007). Compare Chapters 8 and 11 of this volume.

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Schunka have recently adopted a cross-confessional and comparative perspective to the Catholic diaspora. They assert that the Reformation period witnessed a European-wide refugee crisis, which affected all religious denominations, including Catholics, Protestants, Jews and Muslims. If Catholic exiles were thus part of a larger, international phenomenon, the possible parallels and interconnections between different groups of religious refugees deserve more attention. Proceeding from this cross-confessional approach, scholars have started to compare Catholic, Protestant and Jewish exile narratives, identifying common responses to displacement, which had long been regarded as 'typically Calvinist', 'uniquely Catholic' or 'distinctly Jewish'.[5]

Despite its broadening scope, the study of Catholic exile is still spread unevenly geographically and chronologically.[6] We are relatively well informed about the experiences of refugees from Henrician and Elizabethan England, but few scholars have considered Catholic migrations from, for example, Scandinavian countries during the Reformation. The sixteenth century has traditionally been better served than the later seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Whereas there are great holes in our knowledge about size and impact, the time seems right to bring together the results of recent scholarship. Rather than attempting to provide a comprehensive overview of Catholic refugees across early modern Europe, this chapter seeks to identify some common thematic trends in current research. Since the majority of scholarship has focused upon Catholics from the British Isles and the Low Countries, the following assessment will mainly centre on Northern Europe.

Forces of migration

While Catholic migration in early modern Europe was undoubtedly smaller in size than its Protestant equivalent, it shared many of its characteristics. Both Protestant and Catholic refugees were, in a sense, the victims of a shared belief in the need for religious uniformity. In the sixteenth century, the medieval concept of society as a communal and sacred body, a *corpus christianum*, still reigned supreme.[7] This

[5] Mark Greengrass, 'Two Sixteenth-Century Religious Minorities and their Scribal Networks', in Heinz Schilling and István György Tóth (eds), *Cultural Exchange in Early Modern Europe: Religion and Cultural Exchange in Europe, 1400–1700* (Cambridge, 2007), pp. 317–37; Heinz Schilling, 'Christliche und Jüdische Minderheitengemeinden im Vergleich. Calvinistische Exulanten und westliche Diaspora der Sephardim im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert', *Zeitschrift für Historische Forschung*, 36 (2009): 407–44; Alexander Schunka, 'Konfession und Migrationsregime in der Frühen Neuzeit', *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, 35 (2009): 28–63.

[6] Bettina Braun, 'Katholische Konfessionsmigration im Europa der Frühen Neuzeit – Stand und Perspektiven der Forschung', in Henning P. Jürgens and Thomas Weller (eds), *Religion und Mobilität. Zum Verhältnis von raumbezogener Mobilität und religiöser Identitätsbildung im frühneuzeitlichen Europa* (Göttingen, 2010), pp. 75–112.

[7] See Chapter 14.

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deeply ingrained notion of overlapping religious, political and social communities made it difficult for many contemporaries to imagine a religiously divided society. The split of the western Christian Church after the Reformation only reinforced these medieval concerns. Religious diversity was generally seen as a threat to Catholic and Protestant believers alike. In these circumstances, religious dissenters on both sides had the option to conform, accept persecution, or emigrate.[8] As Keith Luria shows in Chapter 3, it was only in the course of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries that authorities and local citizens started to experiment tentatively with biconfessional arrangements and forms of religious coexistence.

Gripped by a spirit of 'confessionalism', Reformation Europe thus witnessed a dramatic increase in the number of refugees. Less clear, however, are the precise reasons for individual migrants to leave their homeland. In migration studies there has been an ongoing debate about whether religious concerns proper or economic considerations guided the growing numbers of displaced persons in the sixteenth century. Some have sought to distinguish between religious and economic migration or have seen religion as a 'push' factor and the economy as a 'pull' factor. However insightful these exercises in categorization may be, they have also made for some rather simplified approaches. Henning Jürgens and Thomas Weller have pointed out that by privileging one incentive over the other, some migration historians have failed to acknowledge that for contemporaries religious and material motivations were often intertwined.[9] What is more, studies of expatriate mercantile communities in early modern Europe have shown that even economically driven migration could have a profound impact on the religious self-image of those concerned.

These perspectives are also pertinent for our understanding of the Catholic refugee movement. The emigration of Antwerp merchants to Cologne during the Dutch Revolt may serve as a case in point. This migration during the 1580s was partly prompted by the economic opportunities of Cologne, which enabled Antwerp entrepreneurs to continue their business during the disrupting war in the Low Countries. Yet religious motives played an equally important part in the decision to leave. It is notable that many Antwerpers in Cologne became members of the local Jesuit confraternity, which sought to encourage the expatriates to forge a more self-conscious Tridentine mentality. In these militant Jesuit sodalities Antwerp Catholics thus found the spiritual consolation as well as the business networks and social prestige that compensated for the loss of contacts and reputation back home.[10] Such examples remind us that material considerations and religious commitments were intrinsically connected in the sixteenth-century mindset. At the same time it is clear that for some groups political concerns, rather

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[8] Kaplan, *Divided by Faith*, pp. 156–61; Alexandra Walsham, *Charitable Hatred: Tolerance and Intolerance in Early Modern England, 1500–1700* (Manchester, 2006), pp. 182–8.

[9] Henning Jürgens and Thomas Weller, 'Einleitung', in Jürgens and Weller, *Religion und Mobilität*, pp. 1–12.

[10] Geert H. Janssen, 'The Counter-Reformation of the Refugee: Exile and the Shaping of Catholic Militancy in the Dutch Revolt', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 63 (2012): 671–92.

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than trade opportunities, guided their behaviour. For example, the availability of noble patronage and academic facilities made Douai and Rheims attractive places of settlement for many Catholics from Elizabethan England. Dynastic links between Scotland and France simultaneously encouraged Scottish Catholics to opt for Paris.[11]

Patterns of migration

These patterns become more apparent when we map the different Catholic refugee communities in some detail. The first examples of Catholic diasporas could be observed in European states whose governments turned 'Protestant' in the 1520s, 1530s and 1540s. This included England and later Scotland, Lutheran states in the Holy Roman Empire and Scandinavia as well as Reformed polities in the Swiss Confederation. These early Catholic migrations were generally small in size. They typically consisted of individual clerics (notably expelled bishops), members of convents, academics, noblemen and their entourages.[12] Some of them will not even have regarded themselves as Catholic exiles, let alone as part of a distinctive émigré community. Their displacement had often been the result of religious reforms and the interconnected political ambitions of the sovereign, yet the dividing lines between Protestant and Catholic belief systems were in many respects still blurred.

More mixed and larger streams of Catholic refugees arose in the 1560s and 1570s, especially during the religious wars in France and the Low Countries. The revolt in the Netherlands sparked a considerable refugee crisis affecting Catholic clerics, female religious as well as Habsburg office-holders and numerous lay men and women. Some were forcibly expelled by the rebel authorities while others moved 'voluntarily', often for a combination of religious and political concerns. In neighbouring France military successes by the Huguenots similarly triggered local Catholic diasporas. Finally, members of the Catholic League formed a distinct group of expatriates, who left the country after the ascension of Henry IV in 1594.[13]

The destinations of these various groups of exiles and travellers differed and also changed over time. In war-ridden France and the Netherlands displaced Catholics often moved to nearby royalist strongholds, awaiting better military

[11] Highley, *Catholics Writing*, pp. 23–53; Peter Guilday, *The English Catholic Refugees on the Continent, 1558–1795* (London, 1914); David Worthington (ed.), *British and Irish Emigrants and Exiles in Europe, 1603–1688* (Leiden, 2010).

[12] Matthias Asche, 'Auswanderungsrecht und Migration aus Glaubensgründen – Kenntnisstand und Forschungsperspektiven zur *ius emigrandi* Regelung des Augsburger Religionsfriedens', in Heinz Schilling and Heribert Smolinsky (eds), *Der Augsburger Religionsfrieden 1555* (Münster, 2007), pp. 75–104; Braun, 'Katholische Konfessionsmigration'; Peter Marshall, 'Religious Exiles and the Tudor State', in Kate Cooper and Jeremy Gregory (eds), *Discipline and Diversity* (Woodbridge, 2007), pp. 263–84.

[13] Descimon and Ruiz Ibáñez, *Les ligueurs*.

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fortunes. Others opted for Catholic safe havens across the borders. Particularly large concentrations of Catholic refugees emerged in the Southern Habsburg Netherlands (Douai, St Omer, Brussels, Louvain), France (Paris, Amiens, Rheims, Rouen) and Catholic bastions in the Holy Roman Empire (Cologne, Mainz, Trier). Smaller numbers settled further away, journeying to Habsburg Spain and Portugal (Seville, Madrid, Lisbon) and Rome, among other destinations. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries these established émigré centres continued to attract Catholics from Protestant lands, notably the British Isles, the Dutch Republic and Sweden. The turmoil of the Thirty Years Wars also produced large movements of refugees after 1618, although the Catholic part in these migrations has not yet been firmly established.[14] Finally, the Catholic Stuart court, which based itself occasionally in France and Italy in the later seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, constituted a special category of exiles.[15]

The Catholic refugee crisis peaked during the later sixteenth century. Why, as many have wondered, did it take so long for Catholic believers to decide to move away, in some cases decades after the implementation of Protestantism in their home area? This surprising delay in the rise of Catholic migration becomes better understandable when appreciating the gradual development of Catholic identities. German scholarship adopting the 'confessionalization' thesis in the 1980s and 1990s has been particularly influential in this respect. It emphasized that the construction of a distinct Catholic identity that was separate from, and incompatible with, evangelical beliefs was piecemeal. Indeed, many Catholic believers in Protestant lands only started to think of themselves as 'Catholic' – and thus consider exile an option – after both the Protestant Churches and the Church of Rome forged more clearly defined, 'confessionalized' agendas. This gradual politicization of religion goes a long in way in explaining why it could also take some time before Protestant governments regarded their non-conformist citizens as a serious threat. It is typical that in Lutheran Sweden lay Catholics were generally left untouched until well into the 1580s. Only in 1595 did the crown feel the need to expel them.[16] Similarly, until the late 1570s many Catholics in the Low Countries saw no harm in staying in rebel areas. The gradual calvinization of the Dutch Revolt in the 1580s however fostered the creation of a self-conscious Catholic 'counter party', a development which also galvanized a Catholic exodus.[17]

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[14] Paul Arblaster, 'The Southern Netherlands Connection: Networks of Support and Patronage', in Kaplan et al., *Catholic Communities*, pp. 123–38; Guilday, *English Catholic Refugees*; Trevor Johnson, *Magistrates, Madonnas and Miracles: The Counter Reformation in the Upper Palatinate* (Farnham, 2009), pp. 71–88; Peter H. Wilson, *Europe's Tragedy: A History of the Thirty Years War* (London, 2009), pp. 487–8, 522, 835–6.

[15] Edward Corp, *A Court in Exile: The Stuarts in France, 1689–1718* (Cambridge, 2003); Edward Corp, *The Stuart Court in Rome: The Legacy of Exile* (Aldershot, 2003).

[16] Braun, 'Katholische Konfessionsmigration', pp. 77–83.

[17] Judith Pollmann, *Catholic Identity and the Revolt of the Netherlands* (Oxford, 2011).

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Social profiles of refugees

It is impossible to provide clear-cut numbers of these scattered, ever-changing and multinational streams of refugees. Peter Guilday assumed that the number of Catholic exiles from England in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries never exceeded 3,000, but the accuracy of this figure has been questioned.[18] The Dutch Revolt may have produced about 5,000 to 10,000 displaced Catholics in the 1570s and 1580s.[19] Such statistics are of limited value, however, since refugees were not normally registered and the distinctions between religious, political and economic migrants were blurred. More illuminating are recent case studies that have mapped the social profile of some centres of asylum. They allow us to identify a few common characteristics of the Catholic émigré community. Apart from clerics and members of religious orders, it appears that nobles, urban patricians and entrepreneurs were overrepresented – in other words, those groups who could afford to go into exile. The examples of Paris, Cologne and Douai demonstrate that exiles were generally men who had a reasonable prospect of patronage or alternative income in host towns and were less hampered by, among other things, local guild restrictions.[20] Exceptions to this rule include places in areas disrupted by war. During the Thirty Years War Catholic safe havens in the Holy Roman Empire accommodated large and mixed groups of refugees including artisans and farmers who escaped the violence. Amsterdam and Utrecht likewise turned into overcrowded refugee centres during the Dutch Revolt of the 1570s.[21]

As was the case with Calvinist and Anabaptist émigré communities, men generally outnumbered women among Catholic exiles. As a result of this striking gender imbalance, studies of religious exile have tended to concentrate on male experiences and few have sought to explain for the relatively small numbers of women. Evidence from German and Netherlandish towns, however, show that lay women often deliberately stayed at home while their male relatives moved away. Since women were less likely to be harassed and expelled by Protestant authorities, they were probably in a better position to protect the family's possessions, continue their husbands' businesses, and to provide their exiled relatives with financial means. Correspondence between members of divided families has further revealed how women served as strategic brokers in Catholic émigré networks, accommodating underground travelling priests and connecting their exiled family members to the outside world.[22]

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[18] Guilday, *English Catholic Refugees*, p. xx; Katy Gibbons, *English Catholic Exiles in Late Sixteenth-Century Paris* (Woodbridge, 2011), p. 16; Marshall, 'Religious Exiles', pp. 268–9.

[19] Janssen, 'Counter-Reformation'.

[20] Fernand Donnet, 'Les exilés anversois à Cologne, 1582–1585', *Bulletin de l'Académie royale d'Archéologie de Belgique*, (1898): 288–355; Gibbons, *English Catholic Exiles*; Johnson, *Magistrates*, pp. 72–3; Kaplan, *Divided by Faith*, pp. 156–61.

[21] Wilson, *Europe's Tragedy*; van Nierop, *Treason*, pp. 165–85.

[22] Geert H. Janssen, 'Quo Vadis? Catholic Perceptions on Flight and the Revolt of the Low Countries, 1566–1609', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 64 (2011): 480–81.

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For members of religious orders the implications of exile appear to have been gender-specific as well. In a society in which independently travelling women were regarded with suspicion and the Tridentine Church became increasingly obsessed with rules of enclosure, displacement was a sensitive issue. Claire Walker and others have described how a number of English women convents successfully based themselves in Habsburg territory in the sixteenth century, but relocation was not always deemed appropriate for female religious.[23] For example in Douai in the 1580s nuns who had recently escaped from Protestant Flanders were regarded with suspicion. To assert their exemplary lifestyle the dislocated nuns had to inform local ecclesiastical authorities about their daily activities and clothing habits in exile. Letters of recommendation, written by local priests or men of immaculate Catholic reputation, served to confirm their pious conduct in refugee towns.

Such documentation also provides historians with some rare insights into the social conditions in centres of asylum in the second half of the sixteenth century. This material is all the more valuable because Catholic exiles are generally hard to trace in archival sources. In contrast to their Protestant counterparts in places such as London, Norwich or Emden Catholic refugees did not establish their own 'strangers' churches. They were expected to assimilate into existing ecclesiastical infrastructures in their places of settlement. Still, we know that Catholic refugees in Paris tended to settle in specific parts of the city and banded together in the same local churches.[24] In Cologne many became members of the same religious confraternities. What is more, distinct exile institutions emerged in the form of religious houses set up by expelled convent communities and seminaries that specifically catered for exiles. The majority of these were established by Catholics from the British Isles in the Habsburg Netherlands, Spain and France in the second half of the sixteenth century. The availability of their respective archives has made these religious institutions in exile a focal point of research.

The radicalizing impact of exile

Studies of Calvinism have long highlighted the unifying as well as radicalizing impact of exile among evangelical dissenters. The experience of flight and displacement appears to have encouraged a sense of solidarity among various Protestant refugees and to have created what has been called International Calvinism. What did the Catholic response to exile look like? There is no doubt that forced migration was an equally unsettling and formative experience for Catholic men and women. It generally meant the loss of housing, income and

[23] Claire Walker, *Gender and Politics in Early Modern Europe: English Convents in France and the Low Countries* (Basingstoke, 2003); Caroline Bowden, 'The English Convents in Exile and Questions of National Identity c. 1600–1688', in David Worthington (ed.), *British and Irish Emigrants and Exiles in Europe, 1603–1688* (Leiden, 2010), pp. 297–314.

[24] Gibbons, *English Catholic Exiles*, pp. 66–74.

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contacts, thus turning respectable citizens into unknown strangers. What is more, Protestant authorities back home sought to reinforce this estrangement by erasing the memory of those who were once part of their community. In the rebellious Low Countries, properties of escaped Catholic citizens were often confiscated or destroyed. Catholic belongings also became a useful instrument with which to 'cleanse' the area symbolically and redefine the urban landscape. For example, in rebel Leiden and The Hague in the 1570s houses of Catholic refugees were typically granted to new Protestant office-holders. Former convents in Ghent and Antwerp were converted into Calvinist schools, thus marking the arrival of a new order.[25]

Yet the way in which displaced Catholics responded to these challenges was not just determined by the policies of their enemies. It was equally informed by the local facilities offered in the receiving towns. For example, in Douai and Cologne the Society of Jesus offered accommodation and a social network to Catholic refugees from the Netherlands. In providing charity and sociability, the Jesuits also introduced exiles to a new spiritual agenda. Through print, sermons and communal activities of the sodality, the refugees were encouraged to organize themselves and internalize the guidelines of Trent.[26] Here, a comparison with studies of the Calvinist exile experience offers some helpful perspectives. Research by Heinz Schilling and Andrew Pettegree, for example, has similarly shown how Reformed exile churches in places such as Geneva, Emden and London sought to turn evangelical refugees into fixed Calvinists.[27] In other words, the impact of displacement in Calvinist and Catholic circles seems to have been surprisingly similar in that exile served as a catalyst for confessional radicalization.

These conclusions also point to an inherent paradox regarding the study of Catholic exile. Historians often tend to describe refugees as straightforwardly 'Catholic', implicitly assuming that exiles shared a static, monolithic religious belief. Considering that exile could have a transforming impact on refugees, these assumptions are highly problematic. Catholics from Elizabethan England, the rebellious Low Countries or civil war France may have migrated because of their orthodox religious views; the subsequent experience of flight and displacement often forced them to adapt and change those very religious views. In this way, exile transformed, rather than affirmed their religious identity.

Notwithstanding its merits, the confessionalization paradigm has its limitations too. Critics have argued that its generalizing tendency obscures the view of the alternative responses to exile. Indeed, not all displaced Catholic men and women in

[25] Geert H. Janssen, 'Exiles and the Politics of Reintegration in the Dutch Revolt', *History*, 94 (2009): 36–52; Ph. de Kempenare, *Vlaemsche Kronijk, of dagregister van al het gene gedenkweerdig voorgevallen is, binnen de stad Gent*, ed. Ph. Blommaert (Ghent, 1839).

[26] Janssen, 'Counter-Reformation'; Louis Châtellier, *The Europe of the Devout: The Catholic Reformation and the Formation of a New Society*, trans. Jean Birrell (Cambridge, 1989), pp. 20–21, 33–46.

[27] Andrew Pettegree, *Emden and the Dutch Revolt: Exile and the Development of Reformed Protestantism* (Oxford, 1992); Heinz Schilling, *Niederländische Exulanten im 16. Jahrhundert. Ihre Stellung im Sozialgefüge und im religiösen Leben Deutscher und Englischer Städte* (Gütersloh, 1972).

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places such as Cologne and Douai showed themselves receptive to the vocabulary of Tridentine spirituality. For some the Jesuit enterprise in particular presented an unwelcome break with the world of traditional Catholicism they were used to back home. What is more, it is not always clear whether an appetite for Tridentine militancy really was the result, or rather the cause, of their exile. Jesse Spohnholz has further remarked that our image of the confessional model among Protestant refugees is distorted by ecclesiastical records that are biased towards more confessional voices.[28] Similarly, source material from Catholic exile communities may suggest more uniformity than actually existed. Some illuminating examples of alternative responses to exile can be found in refugee centres that were located in the middle of war zones and lacked the supply of militant Catholic print and clerical leadership. Henk van Nierop, for one, has observed that in Amsterdam in the 1570s the harsh conditions of exile caused general despair and defeatism, but did not breed a sense of Tridentine militancy.[29] Such contrasting examples in a sense confirm that local facilities in host towns guided the way in which Catholic refugees confronted and negotiated their exile experience.

In a similar fashion we may nuance the supposedly unifying and integrating effects of exile. Claire Walker, for example, has pointed to the many quarrels and the fierce competition that existed between members of English religious houses in the seventeenth-century Southern Netherlands.[30] Differences of opinion between secular and regular priests likewise paralysed the Catholic missionary project in England and the Dutch Republic in this period.[31] Petitions addressed to the pope or the king of Spain also expose the contrasting views and the variety of religious cultures that existed within the Catholic émigré communities. These different examples remind us that displacement could equally reinforce, rather than overcome, internal divisions.

What these contrasting responses to exile have in common, though, is that they point to a sense of agency among exiles. More specifically, it is striking to observe the considerable number of diaries, reports, pamphlets and letters composed by displaced Catholics. This material offers historians some fascinating glimpses into the exiles' world views. Conditioned by religious commonplaces and established literary traditions, their diaries and chronicles often served to connect individual experience to more generally recognizable models and biblical interpretations. For example, the priest Wouter Jacobsz in Amsterdam integrated tales from the Old Testament in his diary to allow him to attribute a religious meaning to the dramatic events in his life. Several chronicles of exiled convents in the Southern Netherlands similarly incorporated biblical blueprints of exile. The format of the ancient Christian

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[28] Jesse Spohnholz, *The Tactics of Toleration: A Refugee Community in the Age of Religious Wars* (Newark, NJ, 2011), pp. 11–33.

[29] Van Nierop, *Treason*, pp. 175–85.

[30] Walker, *Gender and Politics*, pp. 38–42, 174–6.

[31] Charles H. Parker, *Faith on the Margins: Catholics and Catholicism in the Dutch Golden Age* (Cambridge, MA, 2008); Alexandra Walsham, 'Translating Trent? English Catholicism and the Counter Reformation', *Historical Research*, 78 (2005): 288–310.

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martyr book too inspired refugees to frame their personal experiences, thus fashioning a more heroic image of the exile experience. By appropriating classical and Christian paradigms, autobiographical texts enabled exiles to identify with the key narratives of the Christian tradition. In some cases such spiritual exercises could also be part of a wider, rhetorical strategy. For example, by explicitly using narratives of the exiled Israelites Catholic authors showed their readers that the model of the Babylonian exile was not the exclusive domain of Calvinist and Jewish migrants. Indeed, some Catholic authors were keen to stress that their writings were intended to remind posterity of similar Catholic suffering as well as of God's unbroken protection.[32]

National identities in exile

We have just seen how the Jesuits in Cologne and Douai sought to channel the experiences of exiles. Yet host environments were equally influenced by the presence of immigrants.[33] Catholic refugees infused the university towns of Douai and Louvain with a cosmopolitan intellectual culture. Publications from exile printing presses supplied the local population with a steady stream of propaganda material and informed them of the exiles' concerns. The presence of expelled convent communities in towns in the Southern Netherlands contributed to the economic recovery of these areas after the Dutch Revolt. Such interactions prompt the question of how exiles perceived their status in receiving societies and vice versa. For example, did Catholic refugees seek to integrate fully into local communities, become protagonists of a universal, transnational Church or did they retain their status as members of a separate national community?

Some Catholic scholars in the past felt the need to stress the continuing national affinity of Catholic exiles, for example by downplaying their allegiance to foreign Catholic princes – notably Philip II of Spain. To some extent, this image has prevailed in modern historiography. Studies of English convents in the seventeenth-century Habsburg Netherlands have recorded a strong sense of 'Englishness' within these communities. Evidence for this attitude may be found in the reluctance of English nuns to admit foreign members to their convents. In the words of Claire Walker, 'many women saw themselves primarily as members of the English Catholic

[32] Highley, *Catholics Writing*; Alison Shell, *Catholicism, Controversy and the English Literary Imagination, 1558–1660* (Cambridge, 1999); Janssen, 'Quo Vadis?', pp. 476–7, 483–9; Greengrass, 'Two Sixteenth-Century Religious Minorities', pp. 324–37; Walsham, *Charitable Hatred*, pp. 182–8; Alexander Schunka, 'Constantia im Martyrium: Zur Exilliteratur des 17. Jahrhunderts zwischen Humanismus und Barock', in Thomas Kaufmann, Anselm Schubert and Kaspar von Greyerz (eds), *Frühneuzeitliche Konfessionskulturen* (Gütersloh, 2008), pp. 175–200.

[33] Raingard Esser, 'Immigrant Cultures in Tudor and Stuart England', in Nigel Goose and Lien Luu (eds), *Immigrants in Tudor and Early Stuart England* (Brighton, 2005), pp. 161–2.

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community, and only secondly as members of the universal Catholic church'.[34] This apparent obsession with ethnic exclusiveness has further been explained by the legal requirements regarding the foundation of some of these convents as well as by the specific challenges they faced. 'At the time when Protestant polemic emphasized the "otherness" of Catholic culture', Caroline Bowden observed, 'these choices emphasizing both Englishness and a sense of continuity with the distant past in England were significant'.[35] By alienating them, Protestant authorities thus seem to have encouraged Catholic exiles to forge distinctive national identities for themselves. Similar conclusions have been drawn by literary historians including Alison Shell and Christopher Highley, who have examined the development of Catholic national discourses.[36]

Quite how these exercises in national self-invention related to identification with the international Church of Rome is not always clear. In some cases it appears that a reliance on available source material has created a misleading picture. After all, correspondence and pamphlets composed by exiles often served propagandistic purposes. Pitched at the scattered émigré community or the Catholic market back home, these texts sought to propagate more national commitment and internal agreement than may have existed. It is striking that research into other source material sometimes leads to contrasting conclusions. In their letters to the Spanish crown or the Roman Curia, for example, English Catholics could be equally keen to assert their allegiance to the Habsburg monarchy and the universal Church. Indeed, a considerable number of English, Scottish and Irish Catholics profited directly from Spanish patronage and were happy to serve in the Habsburg administration.[37]

Appreciating the existence of different – sometimes overlapping, sometimes competing – exile identities is also important from a comparative point of view. As we have seen, studies of the Protestant Reformation have stressed how exile bred a sense of International Calvinism in sixteenth-century Europe.[38] The notion of a pan-European Calvinist network has not received universal endorsement but scholars generally agree that Reformed refugee communities shared a sense of mutual

[34] Walker, *Gender and Politics*, p. 183.

[35] Bowden, 'English Convents', p. 309.

[36] Highley, *Catholics Writing*; Shell, *Catholicism*; Alison Shell, *Oral Culture and Catholicism in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 2007). A refreshing perspective is offered by Liesbeth Corens, 'Catholic Nuns and English Identities: English Protestant Travellers on the English Convents in the Low Countries, 1660–1730', *Recusant History*, 30 (2011): 441–59.

[37] Enrique García Hernán, *Ireland and Spain in the Reign of Philip II* (Dublin, 2009); K. Schüller, *Die Beziehungen zwischen Spanien und Irland im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert* (Münster, 1999); Albert J. Loomie, *The Spanish Elizabethans: The English Exiles at the Court of Philip II* (London, 1963); Hubert Chadwick, 'The Scots College, Douai, 1580–1613', *English Historical Review*, 56 (1941): 571–85; Jose Ignacio Tellechea Idigoras, *El Papado y Felipe II. Coleccion de breves pontificios. 1572–1598* (Madrid, 2000), pp. 12–22, 79.

[38] Philip Benedict, *Christ's Churches Purely Reformed: A Social History of Calvinism* (London, 2002), pp. 70–71, 179–80; Alastair Duke, 'Perspectives on European Calvinism', in Alastair Duke, Gillian Lewis and Andrew Pettegree (eds), *Calvinism in Europe 1540–1620* (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 5–6; Greengrass, 'Two Sixteenth-Century Religious Minorities'.

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solidarity. A similar pattern among the contrasting, yet equally cosmopolitan Catholic émigré community has not yet been established. At most, it has been claimed that tensions between, for example, Irish and English exiles at the Spanish court indicate that Catholic exiles from different countries did not have as much to do with each other as one might expect.[39]

But evidence from seventeenth-century Brussels and Antwerp points towards more complex modes of interaction and cultural transfer. Here, Catholic exiles from England, Ireland, the Dutch Republic and France often shared the same facilities and had easy access to each other's networks and publications. In the universities of Douai and Louvain displaced Catholics inevitably participated in a common academic community. Alexandra Walsham has pointed to the readiness of English exiles in Douai to engage with state-of-the-art works of Bellarmine, Canisius and Loyola, which aligned them to internationally oriented Tridentine piety. In correspondence, exiles regularly discussed the fate of suppressed Catholic brethren elsewhere in Europe. Catholic victories in France or the Netherlands were celebrated across national divides.[40] The appreciation of books of martyrs is another case in point. It is typical that Richard Verstegan's popular *Theatrum crudelitatum haereticorum nostri temporis* (1587) offered a pan-European martyrology, integrating examples from England, France and the Low Countries.[41] In Cologne, the exiled priest Christiaan van Adrichem likewise included Dutch and English victims of recent Protestant atrocities in his handwritten book of martyrs.

Rather than presenting national commitments and international allegiances as contrasting modes, it may be more illuminating to examine how individual Catholic exiles negotiated their different identities. Recent scholarship by Katy Gibbons and Liesbeth Corens provide some good examples of this approach. Exploring the appropriation of space in sixteenth-century Paris, Gibbons has pointed out that English and Scottish exiles used specific locations in the city to articulate their national identity publicly while simultaneously mobilizing local French Catholics for their cause.[42] Liesbeth Corens has studied how Marian devotion and the veneration of the relics of English martyrs enabled seventeenth-century English exiles in the Habsburg Netherlands to integrate their competing commitments to Rome and England.[43] It is typical that Thomas Becket, an English

[39] García Hernán, *Ireland and Spain*; Arblaster, 'Southern Netherlands Connection', pp. 123–38; Walker, *Gender and Politics*.

[40] Alexandra Walsham, 'Domme Preachers: Post-Reformation English Catholicism and the Culture of Print', *Past and Present*, 168 (2000): 100, 113–14; B.A. Vermaseren, *De katholieke Nederlandse geschiedschrijving in de 16e en 17e eeuw over de opstand* (reprint: Leeuwarden, 1981).

[41] Paul Arblaster, *Antwerp and the World: Richard Verstegan and the International Culture of Catholic Reformation* (Leuven, 2004); Anne Dillon, *The Construction of Martyrdom in the English Catholic Community, 1535–1603* (Aldershot, 2002), pp. 243–76; Brad S. Gregory, *Salvation at Stake: Christian Martyrdom in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, MA, 1999), pp. 250–314.

[42] Katy Gibbons, '"A Reserved Place"? English Catholic Exiles and Contested Space in Late-Sixteenth-Century Paris', *French Historical Studies*, 32 (2009): 33–62.

[43] Liesbeth Corens, unpublished paper; Dillon, *Construction*, pp. 197–9.

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saint with continental links, occupied a central space in devotional practices, as he offered a bridge between the two worlds and was reminiscent of the migrants' own experience.[44]

Plotting, propaganda and print

Catholic exiles from the British Isles, Henry IV's France and the Dutch Republic have often been viewed as an inward-looking community of religious fanatics, fighting a lost cause. This image of isolation and marginality has been reinforced by their poor coverage in mainstream historiography. As scholars have now moved beyond the narratives of treachery and victimhood, they have also become more interested in the wider networks in which exiles participated and the impact these had on early modern societies at large. Displaced Catholics appear to have played a comparatively important part in the refashioning of Catholicism after Trent and its exploitation in print. John Bossy and Stuart Carroll have mapped how Catholic asylum towns developed into epicentres of international plotting and propaganda.[45] Indeed, throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries exiles were actively involved in ambitious projects to reclaim Protestant Europe for the Catholic cause and themselves.

It is striking that exiles generally saw their displacement as a temporary issue. Many were confident that one day God would restore the fortunes of the Roman Church in their home lands. For example in wills, Netherlandish Catholics in Cologne in the 1580s indicated their wish to be (re)buried in their original parish church in due course. Even in the seventeenth century English and Dutch exiles continued to bequeath money, books and property to ecclesiastical institutions which were expected to return after the eventual restoration of Catholicism back home.[46] With hindsight, these expectations seem highly unrealistic. Some scholars have argued that they confirm the impression that many exiles had lost touch with the times. Yet for contemporaries this was not always evident. Catholics from England, Ireland and Scotland had reasons to feel strengthened in their expectations when rumours spread about Spanish military advances in the 1580s, marriage negotiations between the king of England and a Spanish princess in the 1620s and shifting religious sympathies of the Stuart monarchs in the later seventeenth century. These anticipations received a further boost since in a few cases Catholic hopes did in fact come true. Notably, in the course of the 1580s Habsburg forces succeeded in recapturing Protestant Antwerp, Brussels

[44] Katy Gibbons, 'Saints in Exile: Saint Thomas of Canterbury and Elizabethan Catholics in France', *Recusant History*, 29 (2009): 315–40.

[45] John Bossy, *Elizabethan Catholicism: The Link with France* (PhD diss., University of Cambridge, 1960); John Bossy, *Giordano Bruno and the Embassy Affair* (London, 1991); Stuart Carroll, *Martyrs and Murderers: The Guise Family and the Making of Europe* (Oxford, 2009).

[46] Bowden, 'English Convents', pp. 299–305; Donnet, 'Les exilés'.

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and Ghent. As a result large numbers of Catholic refugees in Cologne, Douai and St Omer were able to return to these recatholicized areas. In the following years the returning exiles played a vital role in transforming the Southern Netherlands from breeding grounds of Reformed Protestantism into bastions of Tridentine Catholicism.

The example of the returning exiles in the Habsburg Netherlands helps to overcome modern, anachronistic projections about the limited agency of Catholic exiles. Particularly with respect to England scholars have generally preferred to downplay the real impact that exiles could make. Considering their small and dispersed numbers, their lack of contacts back home and their dependence upon the conflicting interests of their French, Spanish or Roman patrons, the exiles' capacity to shape events across the Channel seems to have been limited indeed.[47] Even so, it is interesting to note that the successful Catholic remigration to the Southern Netherlands after 1585 had in fact been envisaged in a number of white papers composed by exiles in previous years. Some of these show striking parallels with similar plans developed by English exiles such as William Allen.[48] Although the latter never materialized, the counterexample of the Southern Netherlands reminds us of what exile preparations could potentially achieve. From this perspective it is also easier to understand why Protestant regimes continued to regard their Catholic subjects abroad as a serious and continuous threat.

What strategies, then, did exiles employ to facilitate a Catholic victory in Europe? As mentioned, some sought to mobilize Catholic forces for a pan-European crusade by composing ambitious white papers. At a more practical level, refugees acted as fundraisers for Catholic armies, notably those of Philip II and the French Catholic League. Karin Schüller and Enrique García Hernán have assessed the role of exile volunteers in the Spanish army and the incorporation of Irish and English regiments in the Habsburg forces.[49] Above all, it was the seminaries in exile that served as centres for such visionary campaigns. Colleges in places such as Rheims, Douai and Louvain in fact served a double purpose, as Eamon Duffy and others have remarked.[50] On the one hand they supplied spiritual services to the local émigré community and became a source of patronage for expatriates. On the other hand, they were training camps for missionary priests and coordinated the distribution of printed devotional material, pitched at the underground Catholic market back home.

The study of exile seminaries has also been instrumental for the recent re-assessment of the role of the printing press in the Catholic Reformation, a topic that is explored in more detail by Andrew Pettegree in Chapter 6. While the

[47] Walsham, *Charitable Hatred*, p. 186; Carroll, *Martyrs and Murderers*; Peter Marshall, 'The Greatest Man in Wales: James ap Gruffydd ap Hywel and the International Opposition to Henry VIII', *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, 39 (2008): 681–704.

[48] Janssen, 'Counter-Reformation'; Eamon Duffy, 'William Allen', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

[49] Schüller, *Beziehungen*; García Hernán, *Ireland and Spain*.

[50] Duffy, 'William Allen'.

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powerful potential of print has traditionally been associated with Protestantism, scholars have recently challenged the assumption that the Catholic Church was decidedly hostile towards the printing press. Catholic asylum centres in particular developed among the most vibrant distributors of Tridentine propaganda in Northern Europe. There may not have been a Catholic equivalent to the large exile printing houses of Geneva and Emden, but studies by Mark Greengrass, Paul Arblaster and Alexandra Walsham have shown how places such as Douai and Louvain served a similar function for Catholic markets in the Low Countries and the British Isles.[51] Walsham has contended that this outpouring of Catholic print can be seen as a surrogate for the personal pastoral care of which Catholics in Protestant areas were deprived.[52] The circulation of manuscripts proved fit for this purpose as well. As had been the case with evangelical Protestants, networks of correspondence served as a powerful vehicle for the shaping of confessional loyalties.[53]

Such exercises also helped to create a martyr-like image of the exile experience. While in the 1550s and 1560s a number of Catholics in, for example, the Low Countries had argued that to escape was an act of cowardice and a defiance of divine providence, in the 1580s this public perception was clearly shifting. Pamphlets, correspondence and devotional literature now portrayed exiles as exemplary role models of the Counter-Reformation and as re-enactors of an old Christian tradition. Juxtaposing themselves to Calvinist exiles of a previous generation, Catholics presented their respective refugees as the true elect people of God, a latter-day Israel exiled from Egypt.[54]

The exile legacy

Overlooking recent scholarship, some general patterns and directions for future research emerge. First, there is the obvious *desideratum* to have more information about Catholic diasporas in understudied areas such as France, Scandinavia and parts of the Holy Roman Empire. Second, and arguably more important, there is a need to approach the Catholic exile experience from a transnational angle that allows a comparison of strategies and responses across national divides. Third, recent scholarship has shown the merits of cross-confessional approaches to exile. Protestant, Jewish and Catholic migrations have long been considered separately and nationally, but they showed many similarities and were, in fact, dialectically linked. After all, it was Catholic suppression that effectively created the Protestant

[51] Greengrass, 'Two Sixteenth-Century Religious Minorities'; Arblaster, *Antwerp*; Walsham, 'Domme Preachers'; Walker, *Gender and Politics*, pp. 148–9.

[52] Walsham, 'Domme Preachers', p. 80.

[53] Greengrass, 'Two Sixteenth-Century Religious Minorities', pp. 330–31; Schunka, 'Constantia im Martyrium', pp. 175–200.

[54] Highley, *Catholics Writing*; Janssen, 'Quo Vadis?', pp. 472–94.

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refugee experience, and vice versa. Seen from this perspective, Catholic exile culture was partly the product of Protestantism.

A transnational and cross-confessional analysis of the Catholic exodus will also help to overcome the insular essentialism that has long coloured our understanding of exile communities in Europe at large. Rather than marginal, unique and isolated, émigré communities continuously interacted with their environments and were an integral part of early modern society. It is equally misleading to view religious exiles as mere victims of intolerant, repressive regimes. As this chapter has sought to show, exile could also be a creative force and the impact refugees made on their surrounding environments was often more profound than their small numbers suggest.

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