

# A Companion to the Huguenots

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# Histories of Martyrdom and Suffering in the Huguenot Diaspora

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## 1 Introduction

Stories of martyrdom and suffering have always been perceived as central to the Huguenot exile experience. Indeed, as soon as Huguenot refugees reached the countries of the Refuge they began writing down histories of the persecutions they had endured in France. Arguably, the most recurrent event in these stories was the *dragonnades*. Starting in Poitou in 1681, French authorities quartered dragoons on Huguenot families to force them to convert to Catholicism.<sup>1</sup> As the soldiers often used excessive violence and even torture to extract an abjuration, it is not surprising that this traumatic moment stood out in many refugee memoirs. The history of Jean Migault, a refugee schoolmaster from Poitou, is a case in point. After the Revocation, Migault had fled to Amsterdam, where he composed a memoir of the sufferings that had befallen his family, including the *dragonnades* that had taken place in his home town of Mougouin in August 1681. Whereas most Huguenot families had quickly signed their abjuration, Migault and his wife Elisabeth had suffered the abuse of the soldiers because they refused to convert. The dragoons had kicked Elisabeth and threatened to push her into the fire if she did not abjure her faith. Although the Migault eventually managed to escape the soldiers with the help of their Catholic neighbors, Jean suffered many more ordeals before he went into exile. His beloved wife passed away in 1683 and he himself was ultimately forced to convert to Catholicism at the Revocation.<sup>2</sup>

The reason that Migault's trials and tribulations, along with many similar stories of plight, continue to be cited as prime examples of religious intolerance and Huguenot suffering has much to do with the memorialization practices of

1 Yves Krumenacker, *Les protestants du Poitou au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle, 1681–1789* (Paris: 1998), 62–83; Roy L. McCullough, *Coercion, Conversion and Counterinsurgency in Louis XIV's France* (Leiden: 2007), 125–79.

2 Yves Krumenacker (ed.), *Journal de Jean Migault ou malheurs d'une famille protestante du Poitou victime de la révocation de l'Edit de Nantes, 1682–1689* (Paris: 1995). See also the essay by Carolyn Lougee in this volume.

the refugees and their descendants. Already in the first decades following the Revocation, refugee authors such as Pierre Jurieu and Elie Benoist included the most brutal examples of persecution in their printed histories, stressing the suffering of the Huguenots in order to denounce the discriminatory policies of the French state. Large-scale interest in the fate of the French Protestants reemerged in the 19th century when Huguenot descendants all over Europe created societies to extoll their past. The reaffirmation of a Huguenot identity was most visible in France, where in April 1852 a group of prominent Protestants founded the *Société de l'Histoire du Protestantisme Français*, together with their own library and a review, the *Bulletin*. The Society had a clear emancipatory mission: Protestants were to reclaim their rightful place in French history, which, the founding fathers argued, had always stigmatized them as rebels and heretics.<sup>3</sup>

As part of this campaign Protestant authors soon turned their attention to the years surrounding the Revocation, publishing histories that glorified the refugees and their suffering. During the first general assembly of the *Société* in 1853, for instance, vice-president Charles Weiss gave a lecture in which he praised the heroic decision of the Huguenots to flee religious oppression in France. His two-volume *Histoire des réfugiés protestants de France*, which appeared later that year, even referred to the refugees as “martyrs of their faith.”<sup>4</sup> Likewise, many of the articles published in the *Bulletin* during the first decades of its existence focused disproportionately on Huguenot suffering and martyrdom. The persecution of the Huguenots during the French Wars of Religion and under the rule of Louis XIV took center stage, with particular attention being paid to the St. Bartholomew’s Day massacre of 1572 and the *dragonnades* associated with the Revocation.<sup>5</sup>

Since the 1980s, however, historians have begun to research the Refuge with a more critical attitude. As a result, stories of heroic suffering are no longer

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3 Patrick Harismendy, “‘Post tenebras lux,’ ou cent ans de la Société de l’Histoire du Protestantisme Français,” *Revue d’Histoire de l’Eglise de France* 86 (2000), 717–33; Roger-Armand Weigert, “Cent ans d’érudition nationale: La Société de l’Histoire du Protestantisme Français, 1852–1952,” *BSHPF* 98 (1952), 219–50. See also the chapter by Bertrand Van Ruymbeke in the present volume.

4 Weigert, “Cent ans d’érudition nationale,” 240; Charles Weiss, *Histoire des réfugiés protestants de France depuis la révocation de l’Edit de Nantes jusqu’à nos jours* (2 vols. 1853, repr. Paris: 2007).

5 André Encrevé, “Les premières années du Bulletin de la Société de l’Histoire du Protestantisme Français,” *BSHPF* 148 (2002), 709–33; Anne Reichert, “La Société de l’Histoire du Protestantisme Français et son Bulletin: Un regard protestant sur l’histoire du protestantisme français,” *BSHPF* 143 (1997), 63–97.

taken at face value. Rather than reading them as clear-cut news reports that allow us to get at the heart of the Huguenot exile experience—as was often argued in the 19th century—scholars are currently analyzing memoirs and histories as constructed narratives, which tell us something about the way refugees perceived their own past and created a new identity in exile. Without dismissing the centrality of suffering and martyrdom in the Huguenot diaspora, historians are more interested in the formulation and uses of this widespread vocabulary of victimhood. This shift in focus can be attributed, first of all, to postmodern theories of self-fashioning, which were developed in the field of literary studies to underscore the notion that texts do not necessarily communicate a true version of the past, but are purposefully constructed narratives, shaped by literary genres and the objectives of their authors. In this sense, Huguenot autobiographies reveal more about the narrative strategies of their authors than about the lived experience of exile.<sup>6</sup> The recent boom in memory studies also accounts for a reappraisal of Huguenot suffering. As memory scholars have argued, examining the ways in which early modern communities such as Huguenots remembered their past helps us understand how group identities were formed in this period.<sup>7</sup> Instead of reading Huguenot histories for their factual information, we should analyze how their authors presented a particular version of the past to define the refugees as a suffering yet strong-minded community.

Because it falls outside the scope of a single chapter to offer a comprehensive overview of victimhood narratives in the Huguenot diaspora, attention will focus on the many published histories that were produced in exile,<sup>8</sup> analyzing how their authors crafted a Huguenot past permeated by martyrdom. The focus

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6 Carolyn Chappell Lougee, "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 (1999), 1–64. Ruth Whelan, "Writing the Self: Huguenot Autobiography and the Process of Assimilation," in *From Strangers to Citizens: The Integration of Immigrant Communities in Britain, Ireland and Colonial America, 1550–1750*, (eds.) Randolph Vigne and Charles Littleton (Brighton: 2001), 463–77.

7 Recent examples include Philip Benedict, "Divided Memories? Historical Calendars, Commemorative Processions and the Recollection of the Wars of Religion During the Ancien Regime," *French History* 22 (2008), 381–405; idem, "Shaping the memory of the French Wars of Religion: The first centuries," in *Memory before Modernity: Practices of Memory in Early Modern Europe*, (eds.) Erika Kuijpers et al. (Leiden: 2013), 111–26; David van der Linden, *Experiencing Exile: Huguenot Refugees in the Dutch Republic, 1680–1700* (Aldershot: 2015), Chapter 7.

8 For an analysis of private memoirs, see the chapter by Carolyn Chappell Lougee in this volume.

will be on the Dutch Republic, which not only was the principal destination for Huguenot refugees, but also witnessed the largest production of histories and martyrologies in the decades following the Revocation. At the same time, it is clear that more research needs to be done on comparable histories from other refugee destinations before we can assess the true importance of the Dutch Republic, both in sense of output and content. For purposes of clarity and analysis this chapter has been divided into four parts, each of which discusses a different aspect of these printed histories: the tradition of martyrdom, which provided the framework for narratives of suffering; the *Lettres pastorales* by the refugee minister Pierre Jurieu, who acknowledged suffering Huguenots as martyrs and reproduced the most brutal stories to exhort Protestants to persevere; the *Histoire de l'Edit de Nantes* by Elie Benoist, who offered a judicial perspective on Huguenot victimhood by tracing the dismantlement of Protestant communities over the course of the 17th century; and his re-appropriation of stories on suffering Protestants to dramatize Huguenot victimhood.

## 2 The Tradition of Martyrdom

Huguenots habitually perceived their own suffering and that of their ancestors in terms of martyrdom. This religious tradition stretched back to medieval times, when the Church of Rome celebrated as saints those men and women, who during the first centuries of Christianity, had been executed by the Roman authorities on charges of heresy. When the Reformation split Europe along confessional lines in the 16th century, Protestants and Catholics were quick to canonize the victims of religious persecution as martyrs for their own cause. Authors began compiling martyrologies that detailed the lives of those executed by their confessional opponents. Among the most famous of these early martyrologies were John Foxe's massive *Acts and Monuments* (1563), later known as the *Book of Martyrs*, which catalogued the fate of Protestant martyrs from the British Isles, and from a Catholic perspective the *Theatre of the Cruelties of the Heretics of Our Time* (1587) by the Antwerp publisher and author Richard Verstegan, who included Catholic martyrs from France, England and the Low Counties.<sup>9</sup>

9 Brad Gregory, *Salvation at Stake: Christian Martyrdom in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, Mass.: 1999); John N. King, *Foxe's Book of Martyrs and Early Modern Print Culture* (Cambridge: 2006); Romana Zacchi, "Words and Images: Verstegan's 'Theatre of Cruelties,'" in *Richard Rowlands Verstegan: A Versatile Man in an Age of Turmoil*, (eds.) Massimiliano Morini and Romana Zacchi (Turnhout: 2012), 53–75.

The first and most influential Huguenot martyrology was produced by the Genevan-based publisher Jean Crespin, who collected stories of Huguenot martyrs for his *Livre des Martyrs* (1554). Although the book included martyrs' stories from across Europe, even those of Hussites, Waldensians and Lutherans, Crespin devoted ample space to the sufferings of French Protestants. The book was clearly aimed at a Huguenot audience, as Crespin wrote in the French vernacular and printed the first edition in a portable octavo format, which facilitated its clandestine circulation in France. The martyrology was expanded with each successive edition, and from 1564 onwards the book appeared in huge folio volumes. After Crespin's death in 1572, the Genevan minister Simon Goulart continued to add material, so that when the final edition of the *Livre des Martyrs* appeared in 1619 it stretched to almost 1,800 pages.<sup>10</sup>

Crespin's martyrology, read by French Protestants throughout the 17th century, was to have a lasting impact on Huguenot consciousness. In the city of Metz, for example, the *Livre des Martyrs* was the most widely owned book by Protestant households around 1650, after the Bible and the Huguenot Psalter.<sup>11</sup> On the eve of the Revocation its popularity had not diminished: Jean Migault noted in his journal that his wife Elisabeth was an avid reader of Crespin.<sup>12</sup> The book also circulated outside France. In 1684, Daniel Desmarests, a minister in the Walloon Church of The Hague, published an abridged version that included only the French martyrs, entitled *Histoire abrégée des martirs françois du tems de la Reformation*. Reflecting on the recent persecutions in France, Desmarests argued that the Huguenots should follow in the footsteps of their ancestors and remain steadfast in their faith, even if this entailed their death.<sup>13</sup> By 1685, the tradition of martyrdom was thus deeply rooted in Huguenot mentality, offering the refugees a well-established framework to narrate stories of adversity and suffering.

Yet the notion of martyrdom also presented problems. In particular, martyrologists found it difficult to agree on who qualified as a martyr, and who did not. The most obvious definition—surely, all those who had suffered at the

10 Jean-François Gilmont, *Jean Crespin: Un éditeur réformé du XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Geneva: 1981), 165–90; Arthur Piaget and Gabrielle Berthoud, *Notes sur le livre des martyrs de Jean Crespin* (Neuchâtel: 1930); David El Kenz, *Les bûchers du roi: La culture protestante des martyrs, 1523–1572* (Seyssel: 1997), 121–84.

11 Philip Benedict, "Protestant and Catholic Book Ownership in Seventeenth-Century Metz," in *The Faith and Fortunes of France's Huguenots, 1600–85*, (ed.) Philip Benedict (Aldershot: 2001), 166–67 and 173.

12 Krumenacker (ed.), *Journal de Migault*, 50.

13 Daniel Desmarests, *Histoire abrégée des martirs françois du tems de la Reformation* (Amsterdam: 1684). See also Piaget and Berthoud, *Notes sur le livre des martyrs*, 67–72.

hands of their confessional opponent should be considered as martyrs—was in fact deeply contested. Since the 16th century, Protestants and Catholics had continuously clashed over the definition of “true” and “false” martyrs. Some authors came up with circumstantial evidence, such as the martyrs’ willingness to die, their brutal punishment, or even the number of executions. Others, including Crespin, adhered to Augustine’s famous dictum that it was “not the punishment, but the cause, that makes the martyr.” Yet because Catholics and Protestants held fundamentally different views on what constituted a true religious cause, applying Augustine’s definition hardly solved the problem.<sup>14</sup>

One of the first refugee authors who tried to re-define martyrdom was Pierre Jurieu, a professor of theology and refugee minister in the Walloon Church of Rotterdam.<sup>15</sup> In 1683 he published the *Histoire du Calvinisme*, (see figure 13.1) written in response to a history of Protestantism by the Jesuit priest and church historian Louis Maimbourg. In his book, Jurieu firmly rejected Augustine’s definition of martyrdom, as he spotted the obvious problem that “each sect in Christendom, claiming to be the true Church, will pretend with this argument that its martyrs are true martyrs.” Hence his alternative was to look for “particular characteristics in those who suffer for justice and truth.”<sup>16</sup> The more people went to their death, Jurieu argued, the more likely it was that they defended a true cause. Constancy and devotion at the stake also marked them as martyrs, as did the calm or even joyful acceptance of one’s imminent death. Jurieu finally ranked women, children and otherwise simple folk among true martyrs. Although they lacked sophisticated religious training, they were nonetheless often willing to die for their beliefs.<sup>17</sup>

The widespread *dragonnades* made Jurieu change his mind. What about all the Protestants who had suffered, but never died as martyrs? Martyrologies typically included stories of people who had been arrested, sentenced and executed. Crespin, for instance, only acknowledged as martyrs those Protestants who had been formally convicted, while he designated the victims of massacres during the French Wars of Religion simply as “persecuted believers.” Simon

14 Gregory, *Savation at Stake*, 315–32. For a discussion of Augustine’s dictum by French martyrologists, see Frank Lestringant, *Lumière des martyrs: Essai sur le martyre au siècle des réformes* (Paris: 2004), 62–72.

15 On Jurieu, see: F.R.J. Knetsch, *Pierre Jurieu: Theoloog en politikus der Refuge* (Kampen: 1967); Robin Howells, *Pierre Jurieu: Antinomien radical* (Durham: 1983).

16 Pierre Jurieu, *Histoire du Calvinisme & celle du Papisme mises en parallèle, ou Apologie pour les Reformateurs, pour la Reformation, et pour les Reformez, divisée en quatre parties; contre un libelle intitulé l’Histoire du Calvinisme par Mr Maimbourg*, vol. 1 (Rotterdam: 1683), 169.

17 Jurieu, *Histoire du Calvinisme*, 1:164–69.



FIGURE 13.1 *Frontispiece of Pierre Jurieu's Histoire du Calvinisme, depicting the crucifixion of the true Church in the form of a woman. The Latin text encourages martyrdom: "If we suffer with Him, we shall be glorified together" (Rom. 8:17)*  
 COURTESY OF THE KONINKLIJKE BIBLIOTHEEK, THE HAGUE, KW 1791F 101

Goulart blurred this distinction in later editions of the *Livre des Martyrs*, because he felt that those murdered during the St. Bartholomew's Day massacre of 1572 also deserved inclusion.<sup>18</sup> Jurieu likewise understood that a narrow definition would deprive the Huguenots of many valid martyrs. After all, during the *dragonnades* Protestants had fallen victim to persecution in their own homes rather than on the scaffold, while those who refused to abjure were imprisoned rather than executed. Jurieu labeled these men and women as "confessors," Protestants who had suffered because they bravely clung to their religious beliefs, but who had not perished in the persecutions.<sup>19</sup> Jurieu actually admired these confessors more than formal martyrs: "In my opinion, it is a far more serious matter to sustain a terrible and intense struggle for several months or years, than to suffer the prospect of dying for only a few moments."<sup>20</sup> The persecutions in France thus forced Jurieu to rethink his conception of martyrdom and to concede that Augustine was right after all. In 1688 he concluded that "it is not the punishment, but it is the cause that makes the martyr."<sup>21</sup>

### 3 Martyrdom in Jurieu's *Lettres pastorales*

Jurieu's reflections on martyrdom also prompted him to document systematically stories of Huguenot suffering, and to publish the most brutal examples in what was arguably one of his most successful publications: the *Lettres pastorales adressées aux fidèles de France qui gémissent sous la captivité de Babylon* (*Pastoral Letters to the Faithful in France Groaning in Babylonian Captivity*). As the title suggested, Jurieu addressed his letters to the Protestants who had stayed behind in France, encouraging them to persevere in their faith despite their forced conversion to Catholicism. The letters appeared every fortnight from September 1686 to July 1689, when Jurieu had to abandon his project because of illness, although he would briefly resume the project between November 1694 and January 1695. Jurieu had his letters printed in inexpensive installments of just eight pages in quarto by the refugee bookseller Abraham

18 Amy C. Graves, "Martyrs manqués: Simon Goulart, continuateur du martyrologue de Jean Crespin," *Revue des Sciences Humaines* 269 (2003), 53–86.

19 Pierre Jurieu, *Lettres pastorales adressées aux fidèles de France qui gémissent sous la captivité de Babylon*, (ed.) Robin Howells (Hildesheim: 1988), 15 December 1686, 62.

20 Jurieu, *Lettres pastorales*, 1 January 1687, 72. See also Hubert Bost, "La conscience martyre des Eglises sous la croix au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle," *Revue des Sciences Humaines* 269 (2003), 251–53.

21 Jurieu, *Lettres pastorales*, 1 April 1688, 114.

Acher. The latter smuggled the letters from Rotterdam in casks of dried herring and secretly sold them in France.<sup>22</sup>

The *Lettres pastorales* offered readers lengthy theological arguments against the doctrines taught by the Church of Rome, but Jurieu also included numerous reports and original letters sent by Huguenots from France and across the Refuge. He believed that these stories would encourage Protestants in the kingdom to persevere. These documents all revolved around the theme of martyrdom, as Jurieu mostly reproduced stories by Huguenots who had suffered religious persecution in the wake of the Revocation. "Letters are reaching us from our confessors who are in chains, on the galleys, in dungeons a hundred feet down, in the darkest prisons, in torture," he wrote. "From them, I say, arrive letters that excite us, that revive the ancient times, and that show that the greater the torments are to which you are exposed, the more God will give you the strength and the courage to overcome them."<sup>23</sup> Jurieu's observation that letter-writers were "reviving the ancient times" clearly shows that he intended these stories as a martyrology. Amid the tribulations of 17th-century Huguenots, he saw a reflection of the early Christian martyrs.

Jurieu was especially interested in a specific category of confessors—the many Protestant galley slaves. Between 1685 and 1748, roughly 38,000 Frenchmen were sent to serve on the Mediterranean galleys. Some 1550 were Protestants arrested on their escape from France or during secret assemblies. Besides the strenuous labor aboard the Protestant galleys, slaves had to contend with priests trying to convert them to Catholicism.<sup>24</sup> In the eyes of Jurieu, these men therefore ranked foremost among the Protestant martyrs. In 1686, for example, he included two letters written by Louis des Marolles, "one of our most illustrious confessors," who had been arrested during an escape attempt near Strasbourg and subsequently sent to the galleys. Before he was marched to the port of Marseille, Des Marolles wrote Jurieu two letters detailing his plight. He shared a small cell with 52 other men, he was chained around both his neck and feet, and he had suffered no less than five fever attacks.<sup>25</sup> In his

22 The best introduction is given by Robin Howells in his edition of Jurieu's *Lettres pastorales*, vii–lix. See also Knetsch, *Pierre Jurieu*, 219–43; Elisabeth Labrousse, "Les Pastorales de Pierre Jurieu," in *Conscience et conviction: Etudes sur le XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, (ed.) Elisabeth Labrousse (Oxford: 1996), 230–37. On Acher's clandestine trade, see the report from Louis XIV to Feydeau de Brou, Versailles, 27 February 1688, Paris, AN, O1/32, fols. 58v–59r.

23 Jurieu, *Lettres pastorales*, 1 September 1686, 3.

24 André Zysberg, *Les galériens: Vies et destins de 60,000 forçats sur les galères de France, 1680–1748* (Paris: 1987), 102–11 and 172–93; Gaston Tournier, *Les galères de France et les galériens protestants des XVII<sup>e</sup> et XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècles* (3 vols. Montpellier: 1943–49).

25 Jurieu, *Lettres pastorales*, 15 September 1686, 15–16, and 1 November 1686, 39–40. On Des Marolles, see also: Tournier, *Les galériens protestants*, vol. 2, 46–49.

first pastoral letter of 1687 Jurieu could reassure Des Marolles that his suffering was not in vain, as he compared him to another Protestant captive and wrote that “both of them follow with equal courage the glorious course of their martyrdom.”<sup>26</sup>

To obtain these pitiful stories, Jurieu relied on a vast epistolary network that stretched across the Huguenot diaspora, and even reached into France. In his very first letter, dated 1 September 1686, Jurieu issued a call for papers, asking readers to send him memoirs on the persecutions in France: “Since we have the intention to enter in these letters the major acts of our confessors and martyrs, may those who know something for certain take the pains to inform us about them.”<sup>27</sup> Before long, Jurieu was flooded with letters. Some Huguenots wrote to him directly, such as Marie du Bois from Metz, who explained from her refuge in Germany how she had courageously escaped the Catholic convent in which she had been locked up.<sup>28</sup> Most letters, however, reached Jurieu through the large network of refugee ministers, many of whom were still in touch with their former communities. In 1686, reports by Protestants from Béarn, claiming that they had heard angels singing Psalms from the skies, reached Jurieu via Arnaud Majendie and Jacob Garcin, two ministers from Orthez who had taken refuge in Amsterdam but still corresponded with their flock in France.<sup>29</sup>

That ministers were the intermediaries upon whom Jurieu relied for his *Lettres pastorales* can be seen most clearly in the case of Blanche Gamond, a Protestant woman imprisoned at the hospital of Valence. Although hospital director La Rapine was known to convert even the most stubborn Protestants through brutal torture, Gamond managed to persevere because she exchanged regular letters with her godfather François Murat, a refugee minister living in Geneva, who encouraged her to remain a proud Protestant.<sup>30</sup> Having read Jurieu’s letters, Murat realized that Gamond’s story also merited inclusion in the *Lettres pastorales*. A letter he received from her in October 1687 was especially useful, as Gamond detailed how La Rapine and his aides had beaten her with wooden sticks until she was bleeding. Praising her “spirit of martyrdom,”

26 Jurieu, *Lettres pastorales*, 1 January 1687, 72.

27 Jurieu, *Lettres pastorales*, 1 September 1686, 2.

28 Jurieu, *Lettres pastorales*, 15 January 1688, 79–80.

29 Jurieu, *Lettres pastorales*, 1 December 1686, 49–56. See also Hubert Bost, “L’Apocalypse et les Psaumes dans l’arsenal des Pastorales de Jurieu,” in *Ces Messieurs de la R.P.R.: Histoires et écritures de huguenots, XVIIe–XVIIIe siècles*, (ed.) Hubert Bost (Paris: 2001), 175–213. Short biographies of both ministers can be found in Albert Sarrabère, *Dictionnaire des pasteurs basques et béarnais, XVIe–XVIIe siècles* (Pau: 2001), 130 and 187.

30 Théodore Claparède, “Une héroïne protestante: Blanche Gamond de Saint-Paul-Trois-Châteaux, 1686–1687,” *BSHPF* 16 (1867), 366–77.

Murat asked Gamond to supply him with a detailed account of her sufferings, but when she was unexpectedly released he decided to send off her last letter instead, which Jurieu duly included in his *Lettres pastorales*.<sup>31</sup>

Jurieu was not the only refugee minister who relied on epistolary networks to publish histories of Huguenot suffering. Many exiled ministers were still corresponding with their former communities and individual Huguenots in France, and ultimately used these stories to publish their own histories of martyrdom, focusing in particular on the fate of the galley slaves.<sup>32</sup> The letters written by Louis des Marolles, for example, who served on the galleys until his death in 1692, were turned into a history by refugee minister Isaac Jaquelot in 1699.<sup>33</sup> Jaquelot may well have hit on the idea in February 1699, when the consistory of the Walloon Church in The Hague organized a collection for “our poor brothers who are on the galleys” and asked Jaquelot to draw attention to their miserable life in his Sunday sermon.<sup>34</sup> Other epistolary bestsellers were the *Histoire des souffrances et de la mort du fidèle confesseur et martyr, M. Isaac le Febvre*, compiled by refugee minister Etienne Girard from Utrecht, and the *Histoire abrégée des souffrances du Sieur Elie Neau sur les galères et dans les cachots de Marseille* by Jean Morin, a refugee minister in Bergen-op-Zoom. Both books, incidentally, were published by Abraham Acher, who also printed Jurieu’s *Lettres pastorales*.<sup>35</sup> The refugee minister Daniel de Superville in Rotterdam was even working on a comprehensive history of the Huguenot

31 Jurieu, *Lettres pastorales*, 1 April 1688, 119. The letters between Gamond and Murat are published in Théodore Claparède (ed.), “Récit des persécutions de Blanche Gamond,” *BSHPF* 16 (1867), 497 and 502–05.

32 Ruth Whelan, “Résistance et spiritualité dans les témoignages des galériens pour la foi,” *BSHPF* 156 (2010), 231–46; idem, “Turning to Gold: The Role of the Witness in French Protestant Galley Slave Narratives,” *Seventeenth-Century French Studies* 32 (2010), 3–18.

33 Isaac Jaquelot, *Histoire des souffrances du bien-heureux martyr Mr Louis de Marolles, Conseiller du Roy, Receveur des Consignations au Baillage de Sainte-Menehould en Champagne* (The Hague: 1699). See also Ruth Whelan, “Diamants dans les ténèbres: La fortune en France et en Angleterre des mémoires de Louis de Marolles, galérien protestant,” in *La réception des mémoires d’Ancien Régime: Discours historique, critique, littéraire*, (ed.) Jean-Jacques Tatin-Gourier (Paris: 2009), 75–99.

34 Consistory minutes Walloon Church The Hague, 1 February 1699, The Hague, Gemeentearchief, EW 1, fol. 223.

35 Etienne Girard, *Histoire des souffrances et de la mort du fidele Confesseur et Martyr, M. Isaac le Febvre, de Châtelchignon en Nivernois, Avocat en Parlement* (Rotterdam: 1703); Jean Morin, *Histoire abrégée des souffrances du Sieur Elie Neau sur les galères et dans les cachots de Marseille* (Rotterdam: 1701). For a modern edition, see: *Histoire des souffrances du sieur Elie Neau, sur les galères, et dans les cachots de Marseille*, (eds.) Didier Poton and Bertrand Van Ruyambeke (Paris: 2014).

galley slaves, based on the many letters he had received from them, although the work was still unfinished when he passed away in 1728.<sup>36</sup>

Unfortunately, we shall never be able to know whether Jurieu also edited the memoirs he received, because the original documents have largely been lost. Jurieu himself always maintained that he did not polish the texts he published. In 1687, he promised to include only unabridged letters in an attempt to silence critics who argued that “everything one reads in the *Lettres pastorales* are fables invented by the author.”<sup>37</sup> Concern about the veracity of his reports also showed in a pastoral letter from December 1687. Everyone knew about the horrific persecutions in the Poitou, Jurieu wrote, but since he lacked written memoirs to back up these stories, he would not report on the basis of hearsay evidence.<sup>38</sup> Yet even if Jurieu did not rewrite the memoirs he received, his writing strategy clearly transformed individual stories into a collective narrative of Huguenot martyrdom. He consciously asked readers to supply him with accounts of their plight. Huguenots throughout the Refuge drafted memoirs that were shaped by Jurieu’s narrative of suffering, as they consistently framed their experiences as tales of perseverance in the face of persecution.

#### 4 Elie Benoist and the Archeology of Persecution

Whereas Jurieu was mostly interested in recent examples of Huguenot suffering, other refugee ministers took a long-term perspective on the persecution of French Protestants. The most impressive of these Huguenot histories was the five-volume *Histoire de l’Edit de Nantes*, written by Elie Benoist, a minister from Alençon who had left France after the Revocation and found a position in the Walloon Church of Delft.<sup>39</sup> Scholars of French Protestantism have often cited Benoist’s magnum opus to reconstruct the history of the Huguenots under the Edict of Nantes. Yet in 1985 Elisabeth Labrousse warned that despite his factual accuracy, Benoist had written a “militant” history that stresses Huguenot

36 Court to Superville the Younger, Lausanne, 11 April 1733, BGE, Court 1, vol. 8, fol. 209r; Superville the Younger to Court, Rotterdam, 16 September 1733, BGE, Court 1, vol. 9, fol. 16.

37 Jurieu, *Lettres pastorales*, 15 September 1687, 15.

38 Jurieu, *Lettres pastorales*, 15 December 1687, 64.

39 On Benoist see Paul Pascal, *Elie Benoist et l’Eglise Réformée d’Alençon, d’après des documents inédits* (Paris: 1892). The full title of his book is *Histoire de l’Edit 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, Articles, Violences & autres Injustices, que les Reformez y ont souffertes, jusques à l’Edit de Révocation, en Octobre 1685, 5 vols* (Delft: 1693–95).

victimhood.<sup>40</sup> Following her lead, several scholars have taken a closer look at Benoist's history, focusing on the aims, composition and sources of the *Histoire de l'Edit de Nantes*.<sup>41</sup> This section will summarize some of their findings, but also explore the content of the book and the ways in which Benoist gathered his information, as these aspects are revealing of his belief that history could convince the world that the Huguenots had been unjustly persecuted.

The *Histoire de l'Edit de Nantes* differed markedly in scope from Jurieu's *Lettres pastorales*, because Benoist charted the entire history of French Protestantism, from the Reformation of the 16th century until his present day. The idea for this grand project came to Benoist only after the Revocation, and may well have been prompted by a letter from the Walloon consistory in Amsterdam. In November 1685, one of the elders raised the question whether "given the great and extraordinary persecutions in France against those of our religion, it would not be a good idea to write some history about it." The consistory discussed the project with all French ministers living in Amsterdam, but also resolved to write letters to those in other Dutch towns.<sup>42</sup> By September 1687, Benoist was seriously contemplating such a Huguenot history. His friend Pieter Teding van Berkhout, a burgomaster in Delft, noted in his diary that Benoist had come to see him "about his history of the persecution, which he is considering." Van Berkhout also discussed the project with pensionary Gaspar Fagel, who persuaded the States of Holland to accord Benoist a secret annual subsidy of 315 guilders to cover research expenses.<sup>43</sup>

When the book was finally published, it numbered well over 3500 pages in quarto, spread out over three parts and five volumes (see Table 13.1). Parts one and two rolled off the presses in 1693, each in a separate volume, and covered the Wars of Religion, the promulgation of the Edict of Nantes and the reigns of

40 Elisabeth Labrousse, "Une foi, une loi, un roi?" *Essai sur la Révocation de l'Edit de Nantes* (Geneva: 1985), 25–26.

41 Hubert Bost, "Elie Benoist et l'historiographie de l'édit de Nantes," in *Coexister dans l'intolérance: L'édit de Nantes, 1598*, (ed.) Michel Grandjean and Bernard Roussel (Geneva: 1998), 371–84; Frank van Deijk, "Elie Benoist (1640–1728), historiographer and politician after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes," *Nederlands Archief voor Kerkgeschiedenis* 69 (1989), 54–92; Charles Johnston, "Elie Benoist, Historian of the Edict of Nantes," *Church History* 55 (1986), 468–88.

42 Consistory minutes Walloon Church Amsterdam, 11 November 1685, Amsterdam, Gemeentearchief, EW 5.

43 Teding van Berkhout, *Journal de mes occupations*, 20 September 1687, The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, 129 D 16; Secret resolution Gecommitteerde Raden States of Holland, 6 November 1687, The Hague, Nationaal Archief, GR 3037, fol. 203r-v. On Teding van Berkhout and his diary, see Jeroen Blaak, *Literacy in Everyday Life: Reading and Writing in Early Modern Dutch Diaries* (Leiden: 2009), 113–87.

TABLE 13.1 *Contents of the Histoire de l'Edit de Nantes by volume*

Vol.	Year of publication	Page length chapters	Page length compendium	Period covered	Main events
1	1693	544	100	1517–1610	Wars of Religion; Edict of Nantes; reign of Henry IV
2	1693	646	98	1610–43	Reign of Louis XIII; revolt of 1610–29
3	1695	686	197	1643–65	Regency of Queen Anne and Mazarin; the Fronde
4	1695	630	0	1665–83	Reign of Louis XIV; “Cold War” against the Huguenots
5	1695	422	201	1683–86	Reign of Louis XIV; the Revocation and its aftermath

*Note:* Benoist integrated the compendium of laws covering the years 1665–83 into volume 5.  
*Source:* Elie Benoist, *Histoire de l'Edit de Nantes*, 5 vols (Delft: 1693–95).

Henry IV and Louis XIII. Part three appeared in 1695, presenting readers with the history of the Edict under Mazarin, Queen Anne and Louis XIV.

Benoist's history was not an ordinary chronology of events, but a legal history of the Edict of Nantes and its dismantlement by the French state. Rather than emphasize the suffering of the Huguenots through exemplary stories of martyrs and confessors in the years surrounding the Revocation, Benoist argued that Huguenot victimhood stretched back to the beginning of the 17th century. He demonstrated that prior to the *dragonnades* of the 1680s, French Protestants had suffered a more subtle form of persecution. The French state had first and foremost relied on legal discrimination to harass the Huguenots, gradually robbing them of their civil and religious rights. According to the general preface of the *Histoire de l'Edit de Nantes*, the book served to unmask this steady erosion of Huguenot liberties, and to safeguard the memory of persecution for generations to come. Benoist wrote that

If history be properly devoted to preserve for posterity the memory of the most remarkable things that happen in the world, it cannot be denied that the sorry end of the liberties, which the Reformed have so long enjoyed in France, is one of the most memorable events, which merits to be taken in hand to instruct those in times to come.<sup>44</sup>

44 Benoist, *Histoire de l'Edit de Nantes*, vol. 1, preface, sig. b3.



FIGURE 13.2 *Frontispiece to the first volume of the Histoire de l'Edit de Nantes, depicting French Protestantism as a woman assailed from all sides.*  
 COURTESY OF THE KONINKLIJKE BIBLIOTHEEK, THE HAGUE,  
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Benoist thus took a different approach than Jurieu in his *Lettres pastorales*. Rather than collecting examples of Huguenot martyrdom, Benoist sought out legal documents to hammer home the argument that church and crown had worked in tandem to undermine Protestantism in France. His method can best be described as the “archeology of persecution,” because Benoist deconstructed the origins, mechanisms and effects of what Elisabeth Labrousse has termed the “judicial Cold War” against French Protestants: the series of royal declarations, arrests and edicts that gradually tore apart the fabric of the Huguenots’ civil and religious rights.<sup>45</sup> To unearth the historical roots of anti-Protestant legislation, Benoist discussed in great detail the creation of laws that targeted Protestantism, analyzing their content and describing the effects on local communities. The importance Benoist attached to law-making is obvious not only from the detailed discussion of each successive law, but also from the lengthy appendices he included in each volume, which offered readers an unabridged anthology of anti-Protestant laws under the heading “Compendium of edicts, declarations, arrests, petitions, memories, and other authentic pieces serving as proof of the reported facts” (see Table 1). The compendium was essential to Benoist’s conception of history, as he believed that readers should be able to see for themselves that Protestants were the victim of royal policies.

To trace the evolution of anti-Protestant law-making, Benoist borrowed heavily from the histories written by other refugee ministers, who had already detailed the discriminatory policies against French Protestants and their churches. In 1687, for example, refugee minister Jean Claude in The Hague published *Les plaintes des Protestans*, which listed all the methods employed by the French state to convert Huguenots, with a heavy focus on restrictive laws.<sup>46</sup> Most of Benoist’s material, however, came from the *Histoire apologetique* by François Gaultier de Saint-Blancard, a refugee minister from Montpellier who had become court chaplain to the elector of Brandenburg in Berlin. In his book, Gaultier stressed that the Revocation was the result of a decade-long campaign against the Huguenots, and in 1687 he published a compendium of all the edicts, declarations and arrests issued against the Huguenots since 1652.<sup>47</sup> Finally, in 1689, Benoist obtained the papers of

45 Labrousse, “*Une foi, une loi, un roi?*”, 119–24.

46 Jean Claude, *Les plaintes des Protestans, cruellement opprimez dans le Royaume de France* (Cologne: 1686). On Claude’s career, see David van der Linden, “Predikanten in ballingschap: De carrièrekansen van Jean en Isaac Claude in de Republiek,” *De Zeventiende Eeuw* 27 (2011), 141–61.

47 François Gaultier de Saint-Blancard, *Histoire apologetique, ou Défense des libertez des Eglises Réformées de France* (2 vols. Mainz: 1687–88). The compendium appeared as

Abraham Tessereau, a former royal secretary and lawyer in the *parlement* of Paris, who had amassed a large number of state papers, including royal edicts, declarations and arrests.<sup>48</sup>

Benoist's legal approach is evident throughout the *Histoire de l'Edit de Nantes*, but as the book progressed into the reign of Louis XIV, his main focus in describing the judicial campaign against French Protestants was the attack on their churches. Benoist meticulously analyzed the series of royal laws that allowed the authorities to put ministers on trial and close their churches, and he supplied readers with examples from all over France to illustrate how these laws had cost congregations the destruction of their temples. The most important of these laws was issued in 1661, when Louis XIV dispatched into the provinces bipartisan commissions, composed of one Catholic—usually the local intendant—and one Huguenot. Their task was to ask Protestant consistories to supply evidence that their community had already existed in the years 1596–1597, otherwise their church would be closed.<sup>49</sup>

In Benoist's home town of Alençon, for example, the commissioners arrived in 1664. The Protestant consistory soon supplied documents proving that its community had been worshipping in town since 1597, including an ordinance issued in 1600 that formalized Protestant worship at Alençon. Pressured by the Catholic commissioner, however, a handful of local Catholics testified that more than a century ago some Protestants had been arrested for mistreating the nuns from the nearby convent of Saint Claire. As a result, the royal council ruled that the Protestant temple in the center of Alençon was to be closed, although the Huguenots were allowed to construct a new temple in the *faubourg* Lancrel.<sup>50</sup>

Most Protestant churches were closed down only in the 1680s, when the king issued a new set of laws. In June 1680, for example, Louis XIV decreed that Protestants who had abjured their faith were no longer allowed to reconvert to

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*Recueil de Plusieurs Edits, Declarations et Arrets, et de quelques autres Pieces, qui servent à justifier les Principaux faits, qu'on avance dans cette Histoire Apologétique* (Mainz: 1687).

On Gaultier, see Hubert Bost, "De Montpellier à Berlin: L'itinéraire du pasteur François Gaultier de Saint-Blancard (1639–1703)," in *Hugenotten zwischen Migration und Integration: Neue Forschungen zum Refuge in Berlin und Brandenburg*, (eds.) Manuela Böhm, Jens Häselser and Robert Violet (Berlin: 2005), 179–204.

48 Thomas Philip Le Fanu, "Mémoires inédits d'Abraham Tessereau," *PHSL* 15 (1937), 566–85. Benoist paid tribute to Tessereau's research in the third volume of his book: Benoist, *Histoire de l'Edit de Nantes*, vol. 3, preface, sig. \*\*\*2.

49 Labrousse, "Une foi, une loi, un roi?," 125–26.

50 Benoist, *Histoire de l'Edit de Nantes*, vol. 3, 597–99. See also Luc Daireaux, "Réduire les Huguenots." *Protestants et pouvoirs en Normandie au XVIIe siècle* (Paris: 2010), 355–65.

Calvinism—the so-called *crime de relaps*. If they returned to worship at a Protestant church, the serving minister would be removed from office and see his temple demolished.<sup>51</sup> The *Histoire de l'Edit de Nantes* contains numerous examples of communities that suffered under this law. In 1684, for instance, the pastor Pierre du Bosc from Caen was accused of allowing a lapsed woman, Elisabeth Vaultier, into his church. Although she had married a Catholic in 1664, she continued to attend services at the Protestant temple. The local priest actually produced an attestation showing that Elisabeth had converted to Catholicism, as well as a statement from her daughter claiming that her mother had recently taken communion at the Protestant church. This sealed the fate of the church at Caen. In June 1685 a local court ordered the church to be closed and had the building razed to the ground.<sup>52</sup>

## 5 Martyrdom in the *Histoire de l'Edit de Nantes*

Although the main focus of the *Histoire de l'Edit de Nantes* was the judicial campaign against the Huguenots, Benoist occasionally included stories of individual Protestants and specific communities to illustrate how royal and ecclesiastical policies had affected them. Especially in the last two volumes, which covered the years before the Revocation, the emphasis shifted from an almost exclusive focus on legal texts to a narrative interspersed with touching stories of Huguenot suffering. The fifth and final volume of the *Histoire de l'Edit de Nantes* even contained a long list of all the victims of the *dragonnades*, whom Benoist praised as “confessors.”<sup>53</sup> Despite his legal analysis, he certainly agreed with Jurieu that history could supply Huguenots with noteworthy examples that they should emulate. In a pastoral letter of 1686 addressed to his former congregation at Alençon, Benoist urged them to follow in the footsteps of their forefathers, who had bravely suffered persecution in the decades of the Reformation. “Go through the history of your fathers,” he wrote. “Many, to be sure, were weaklings and cowards, but many also were steadfast and faithful witnesses who lost their peace, fortune and even their lives for the Reformation that you have abandoned.”<sup>54</sup>

51 The law is published in Léon Pilatte, *Recueil des Edits, Déclarations et arrests concernans la Religion P. Réformée, 1662–1751, précédés de l'Edit de Nantes* (Paris: 1885), 51–53.

52 Benoist, *Histoire de l'Edit de Nantes*, 5: 774–76; Daireaux, “Réduire les huguenots,” 556–62.

53 The non-paginated list of victims, which comprises 22 pages, is attached as an appendix to volume 5.

54 Elie Benoist, *Lettre d'un pasteur banni de son pays, à une Eglise qui n'a fait pas son devoir dans la dernière Persécution* (Delft: 1686), 22–23.

To obtain inspiring stories for his book, Benoist first enlisted the epistolary network of the Huguenot Refuge. In 1688, the Walloon synod encouraged all ministers in the Dutch Republic to conduct a thorough inquiry among their flocks, asking that “if there be some people that have memoirs concerning the persecution of the churches in France, let them have the charity to address them to our most beloved brother, Monsieur Elie Benoist.”<sup>55</sup> Benoist also circulated a letter to all refugee communities across Europe, soliciting original documents on the persecutions.<sup>56</sup> But the results were disappointing. In 1695, Benoist complained that he had hardly received any reports on the sufferings of Protestants who had been executed, banished, or sentenced to serve on the galleys.<sup>57</sup>

Benoist relied instead on the histories of specific Huguenot communities that had been published by other refugee ministers, selecting from these books the cruelest episodes to demonstrate the fate of the Huguenots in France. Gaultier’s *Histoire apologétique*, for example, not only offered an overview of royal laws, but also included an account of the persecutions in Montpellier, where he had served as a pastor before the Revocation. The story that Benoist took straight from this book was the remarkable episode of an eleven-year old Protestant boy who refused to convert to Catholicism, even though his father had already done so. When two noblemen tried to trick the boy into a conversion with a fake order to hang him at the gallows if he did not abjure his faith, he threw himself from the nearest window—a fall he miraculously survived because the neighbors had spread sheets across the street to create some shade during the hot summer. Benoist recounted this story in the *Histoire de l’Edit de Nantes* to illustrate how royal laws had made life miserable for French Protestants, in this case an edict issued in June 1681 that allowed children to convert to Catholicism from the age of seven, even without their parents’ consent.<sup>58</sup>

Benoist also mined an exemplary tale of perseverance from a book written by the refugee minister Jacques Pineton de Chambrun, who in 1687 published his autobiography under the title *Les larmes de Jacques Pineton de Chambrun*.

55 E. Bourlier (ed.), *Livre Synodal contenant les articles résolus dans les Synodes des Eglises Wallonnes des Pays-Bas*, vol. 2 (The Hague: 1896–1904), 48.

56 Michel Nicolas, “Appel d’un historien du XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle demandant des matériaux pour une histoire des protestants de France, sous les règnes de Henri IV, Louis XIII et Louis XIV,” *BSHPF* 7 (1859), 274–90; Van Deijk, “Benoist, historiographer and politician,” 62, n. 33.

57 Benoist, *Histoire de l’Edit de Nantes*, vol. 3, preface, sig. \*\*\*\*2.

58 Gaultier, *Histoire apologétique*, 1: 251–53; Benoist, *Histoire de l’Edit de Nantes*, 4: 511–12. For the 1681 edict, see: Pilatte, *Receuil des édits*, 88–90.



FIGURE 13.3 *Jan Luyken, The whipping of Louis de Neuville in Orange, engraving from Elie Benoist, *Historie der Gereformeerde Kerken van Vrankryk (Amsterdam: 1696)*, vol. 2.*

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Besides an account of his conversion to Catholicism in the wake of the Revocation and subsequent repentance in Geneva, the book also gave a detailed chronology of the persecutions that had taken place in the principality of Orange, where Chambrun had preached since 1658.<sup>59</sup> The episode that caught Benoist's eye was that of Louis de Villeneuve, a nine-year-old boy who had been accused in 1663 of urinating in a bottle of wine used during Mass at the Capuchin chapel of Orange. After two months in prison, the boy was released, though not before a public whipping on Sunday morning, which

59 Jacques Pineton de Chambrun, *Les larmes de Jacques Pineton de Chambrun, qui contiennent les Persecutions arrivées aux Eglises de la Principauté d'Orange, depuis l'an 1660* (The Hague: 1687). On Chambrun, see: Amanda Eurich, "Les occupations françaises de la principauté d'Orange entre 1660 et 1685: Controverse religieuse, tolérance et les écrits de Jacques Pineton de Chambrun," in *Entre calvinistes et catholiques: Les relations religieuses entre la France et les Pays-Bas du Nord, XVIIe–XVIIIe siècles*, (ed.) Yves Krumenacker (Rennes: 2010), 259–73.

prompted Pineton to canonize Louis as a martyr for the Huguenot cause (see figure 13.3). “I have regarded him all my life as an illustrious confessor,” he observed.<sup>60</sup> This was probably the reason why Benoist included the episode in his book, as he argued that Louis’ tribulations clearly demonstrated the “inhuman” treatment of French Protestants. Not even the children were spared.<sup>61</sup>

Benoist’s account of enduring victimhood struck a chord with refugees throughout the Huguenot diaspora. They framed their own experiences within the larger narrative of suffering provided by the *Histoire de l’Edit de Nantes*. Some readers wrote letters to Benoist, responding to his complaint in 1695 that he lacked detailed reports on the suffering of individual Huguenots. Among these letter-writers was Jacques de Barjac, marquis de Roche-gude, who had been banished to Switzerland in 1688. De Roche-gude had clearly read the *Histoire de l’Edit de Nantes* as a martyrology, as he sent Benoist an account of his own sufferings, which, he hoped, “would contribute something to the edification of the Church.” The marquis explained that because of his refusal to convert to Catholicism he had been thrown into prison. Yet despite frequent maltreatment, sickness, and regular pressure from priests he had held on to his Protestant beliefs.<sup>62</sup>

Refugee pastor François Bancelin likewise related his experiences as a tale of victimhood. Writing to Benoist from Berlin, he recalled that only three months after his confirmation as fifth minister of Metz in 1662, the authorities had forbidden him to preach, on the grounds that there had never been more than four ministers. The consistory protested that French law did not restrain the number of ministers preaching in Protestant temples, but in 1663 the king formally fixed the maximum at four ministers. Bancelin was forced to leave Metz, until in 1669 the death of his father-in-law, pastor Paul Ferry, paved the way for his return.<sup>63</sup> Bancelin consciously placed these experiences within the legal narrative of the *Histoire de l’Edit de Nantes*. Having read the book, he argued that events in Metz provided another fine example of the judicial campaign against the Huguenots prior to the Revocation, because he had been deposed on the basis of laws invented to undermine Protestant liberties. He therefore hoped that Benoist would “take from this little story that I have just

60 Chambrun, *Larmes de Pineton de Chambrun*, 5–6.

61 Benoist, *Histoire de l’Edit de Nantes*, 5: 920.

62 De Roche-gude to Benoist, Vevey, 18 April 1698, BGE, Court 48, fols. 5–6. On De Roche-gude, see E. Jaccard, *Le marquis de Roche-gude et les protestants sur les galères* (Lausanne: 1898).

63 Bancelin to Benoist, Berlin, 23 October 1697, BGE, Court 48, fols. 8r–9r. See also Maurice Thirion, *Etude sur l’histoire du protestantisme à Metz et dans le Pays messin* (Nancy: 1884), 254–58 and 459–63.

told you whatever you shall deem appropriate, to show the injustices committed against me, as well as against the Church of Metz.” Bancelin even included a copy of the ordinance issued against him in 1662, which, he suggested, could be added to the compendium of legal documents.<sup>64</sup>

Finally, the Huguenot merchant Jacques Barbaud, who had fled from La Rochelle to the Dutch city of Kampen in 1687, forwarded Benoist a memoir written by a refugee officer called Delbecque. The memoir recounted Delbecque’s life and subsequent escape to the Dutch Republic—he had also settled in Kampen—as well as the sufferings of his son, who had died in a French prison because he refused to convert. The son’s letters from prison and the father’s replies certainly merited publication, Barbaud argued, as he agreed with Benoist that “other confessors, or those who have extraordinarily suffered during the persecutions, had not taken care to put in order all the tribulations, sorrows and sufferings that have happened to them.”<sup>65</sup> The *Histoire de l’Edit de Nantes*, in sum, defined Huguenot suffering in two complementary ways. On the one hand, Benoist deconstructed the long-term campaign of the French state to undermine French Protestantism, detailing the many laws and court procedures that had targeted Huguenot communities. On the other, he illustrated his narrative with touching examples of suffering Huguenots, whom he proudly labeled “confessors.”

## 6 Conclusion

Stories of martyrdom and suffering circulated widely in the Huguenot diaspora, as refugees all had their own account of the persecutions they had suffered in France and their subsequent escape abroad. These stories only became known on a wider scale, however, through the efforts of refugee pastors, who selected and publicized in printed histories the most gruesome episodes of suffering. Ministers such as Jacques Pineton de Chambrun and François Gaultier de Saint-Blancard documented the fate of their former communities on the basis of eyewitness accounts and their own memory, consciously presenting their readers with stories of persecution to hammer home the message that Protestants were the innocent victims of Catholic fanaticism. Refugee ministers also functioned as go-betweens in networks of correspondence that

64 Bancelin to Benoist, Berlin, 23 October 1697, BGE, Court 48, fols. 9r-v.

65 Barbaud to Benoist, Kampen, March 1696, BGE, Court 48, fol. 11r. On Barbaud, see Elisabeth Forlacroix, *L’Église Réformée de La Rochelle face à la Révocation*, vol. 2 (PhD diss., Université de Montpellier III: 1996), 50–51.

stretched across the Huguenot world, as they collected letters and memoirs from their brethren in France, publishing epistolary bestsellers on the fate of the galley slaves, or forwarding accounts to Jurieu for inclusion in his *Lettres pastorales*. Elie Benoist came toward the end of this process. Although he collected some material himself, he mostly exploited the histories of other refugee ministers to illustrate the campaign against the Protestant churches in France in his *Histoire de l'Edit de Nantes*. However different their aims may have been, what united all these ministers was the sifting of individual stories to construct a narrative of Huguenot victimhood. It was this story that would mark Huguenot identity from the Revocation until the late 20th century, as stories of persecution and suffering became the main focus of histories dealing with the Refuge. Yet as scholars are nowadays deconstructing Huguenot histories of suffering and martyrdom, they are also setting a clear research agenda for the future: to explore exile histories throughout the Huguenot diaspora; to compare them to those of other refugee waves, including Catholics; and to use them as a point of entry to understand the formation of refugee identities in early modern Europe.