

The Huguenots, Louis XIV and the Courts of Europe: from Westminster to Dresden

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Abstract

Huguenot courtiers were no less representative of the diaspora than Huguenot soldiers or craftsmen. Since courts were among the key institutions of early modern Europe, and Huguenots were refugees in search of employment, they were bound to seek posts at court. Protestantism did not lessen reverence for monarchy. The Huguenot court historiographer in Brandenburg, for example, Charles Ancillon from Metz, called the Elector Frederick III ‘a mortal God’.

Huguenots are often seen as craftsmen and merchants, particularly since Tessa Murdoch’s 1985 exhibition at the Victoria and Albert Museum, *The Quiet Conquest*, and her many subsequent publications; as soldiers, in books and articles by Matthew Glozier and David Onnekink¹; or as radical intellectuals, for example, by David van der Linden.² Robin Gwynn reminded the 2020 Society for French Historical Studies conference that in 1688 Huguenot preachers and publicists helped weaken Anglican royalism, and turn English opinion against James II.³

Indeed, Huguenots have often been considered hostile to monarchs and courts. The famous scholar Pierre Bayle complained in 1692 that many fellow-Huguenots shared ‘*un certain esprit Républicain*’ [a certain republican spirit].⁴ In 1712 Louis XIV’s foreign minister Jean-Baptiste Colbert, Marquis de Torcy told Queen Anne’s ambassador that Huguenots were ‘rebels, mutineers ... the worst enemies the King has’.⁵ Indeed in 1715 a Huguenot who had been imprisoned in the Bastille for

¹ M. Glozier and D. Onnekink, ed. *War, Religion and Service: Huguenot Soldiering 1685–1713* (London, 2007).

² D. van der Linden, *Experiencing Exile: Huguenot Refugees in the Dutch Republic, 1680–1700* (London, 2016).

³ R. Gwynn, ‘The Huguenots and the Fall of Louis XIV’, *H-France Salon*, vol. 12, no. 8, p. 90.

⁴ P. Bayle, *Avis important aux Réfugiés sur leur prochain retour en France* (Paris, 1692), p. 11.

⁵ P. Mansel, *King of the World: The Life of Louis XIV* (London, 2019), p. 426.

11 years, Constantin de Renneville, published a celebrated denunciation of the prison as a symbol of royal tyranny.⁶ Huguenots like Pierre Motteux, Abel Boyer and Paul de Rapin de Thoyras were among the first to publish English parliamentary proceedings.⁷

This article presents Huguenots from a different perspective. Many, particularly in the Netherlands, such as Pierre Jurieu, Charles Levier or Bernard Picart, were indeed radicals. However, other, equally representative Huguenots served as courtiers and royal officials. They had little choice, for by 1660 courts ruled most of the states of Europe, with the exceptions of the Netherlands, the city states of the Holy Roman Empire and the Swiss Confederation, Venice and Genoa. Rulers' households, generally with numbers ranging between one to three thousand, provided a range of well-paid positions, including furniture makers, painters and architects, doctors, chaplains and tutors, as well as court officials.⁸

The triumphant entries in 1660 of both Charles II and Louis XIV into their formerly rebellious capitals symbolised the victory of the court system. That year the King of Denmark, the most absolute monarch in Europe, was called by one Lutheran preacher, citing biblical texts, God on earth.⁹ Even in the Netherlands, in 1672 William III was appointed Stadholder in five provinces and Captain-General of the army and Admiral-General of the navy for life. He employed a large princely household and his courtiers helped run Dutch diplomacy and the Dutch army. In most of Europe, monarchy was almost as much part of daily life as Christianity, whose priests regularly reminded congregations of subjects' duty to obey 'the Lord's anointed'. Such was the importance of monarchy that European wars were fought partly or mainly on issues of dynastic succession: in the Palatinate after 1685; in England, Scotland and Ireland after 1688; and in the Spanish monarchy after 1700.¹⁰

⁶ C. de Renneville, *L'Inquisition française ou l'Histoire de la Bastille*, 6 vols. (Amsterdam, 1724), vol. I, p. iv. The work was dedicated to George I.

⁷ C. Littleton, 'Abel Boyer and other Huguenot Reporters of Parliament' in *Huguenot Networks 1560–1780. The Interactions and Impact of a Protestant Minority in Europe*, ed. V. Larminie (London, 2018), pp. 61–72.

⁸ For a general survey see *The Princely Courts of Europe 1500–1750*, ed. J. Adamson (London, 1999).

⁹ T.N. Isaksen, 'Anointing Absolutism', *The Court Historian*, 19/1 (June, 2014), p. 78.

¹⁰ cf. H. Scott, 'Dynastic Monarchy and International Rivalry during the Long Eighteenth Century' in *Hanover-Coburg-Gotha-Windsor*, ed. F.-L. Kroll and M. Munke (Berlin, 2015), pp. 33–55.

France

Although Huguenots had challenged the French monarchy in the sixteenth century, after the accession of Henri IV and the proclamation of the Edict of Nantes in 1598, many became subjects at least as loyal as Catholics; indeed, without the duty to obey a rival hierarchy of Pope, bishops and religious orders, often more so. Catholics, not Huguenots, assassinated Henri III in 1589 and Henri IV in 1610. During the Fronde in 1648–1652, when most of Catholic France, including the royal family, revolted against the King, Huguenots remained loyal. This was not only royalism but pragmatism: they regarded the King as their best defence against the French Catholic hierarchy. On 18 February 1658 in the Louvre, Louis XIV repeated his father's and grandfather's promises to enforce the Edict of Nantes, to a Huguenot delegation led by their deputy-general at his court, Henri de Massue, Marquis de Ruvigny.¹¹

In 1661 Louis XIV boasted to his ambassador in The Hague, the Comte d'Estrades, that he took '*comme principe de ma conduite et de mes actions celles de ce grand prince de qui j'ai l'honneur de descendre*' [as the principle of my conduct [to my Protestant subjects] and my actions those of this great prince from whom I have the honour to descend]: Henri IV. Louis also declared both to the Elector of Brandenburg, and to Charles II, '*sur ma parole royale*' [on my royal word] that Protestants in France lived on a footing of equality with his other subjects. This was not written simply to impress Protestant opinion abroad. He repeated these sentiments to his favourite *premier gentilhomme*, the Duc de Saint-Aignan, governor of Le Havre, in 1666: '*n'étant pas moins fidèles que mes autres sujets, il ne faut pas les traiter avec moins d'égards et de bontés*' [not being less loyal to me than my other subjects, they should not be treated with less respect or kindness.]¹² They were not penalised, like Catholics in the Netherlands or England, but enjoyed the protection of the crown. Toleration remained a distinguishing feature – by some considered a strength – of the French monarchy.

Protestantism was no barrier to Huguenots serving Louis XIV in person. Barthélemy d'Herwarth, his trusted banker, to whom he appealed for funds on the eve of the arrest of Nicolas Fouquet, superintendent of finance, in 1661 was Protestant.¹³ So were Jean Baptiste Tavernier, one

¹¹ Mansel, *King of the World*, p. 302.

¹² Louis XIV, *Oeuvres* (6 vols, Paris, 1806), vol. 5, p. 46, Louis XIV to Estrades, 25 August 1661; Bibliothèque de la Sorbonne Mss 1290, Louis XIV to Duc de Saint-Aignan, 1 April 1666.

¹³ Mansel, *King of the World*, pp 56, 115. For his family background, see E. Monson, 'The three Esthers: noblewomen of the Huguenot refuge', *HSJ* 27/1 (1998), pp. 1–19; V. Larminie, 'Exile and belonging: Philibert Herwarth', *HSJ* 28/4 (2006), pp. 509–23.

of Louis's favourite jewellers, Abraham Petitot his miniature-painter, and his portrait-painter Henri Testelin, as also two of his most trusted marshals, Henri de la Tour d'Auvergne, Vicomte de Turenne and Frédéric de Schomberg.¹⁴ Before as well as after Turenne's conversion to Catholicism in 1668, he was consulted on 'all important matters' in foreign policy and grand strategy; a Protestant enjoyed greater royal favour than any Catholic noble.¹⁵

Schomberg, the other Protestant marshal, born in Heidelberg in 1615, had served in the Dutch, English and Swedish armies before joining the French army. Naturalized French in 1664, he bought an estate outside Paris, and was made a Marshal in 1673. He often fought directly under Louis XIV, who wrote to '*mon cousin*' to express his particular satisfaction for Schomberg's services.¹⁶ His sons also served the King, occasionally advising their father to moderate his zeal in holding public Protestant services on campaign.¹⁷

The services of French Huguenots did not, however, stop Louis XIV revoking the Edict of Nantes on October 1685 and depriving them even of freedom of conscience.¹⁸ Louis XIV had a variety of motives: need to secure the support of the French clergy in his struggles with the Pope over church taxation and French diplomatic privileges in Rome; desire to impress the Pope, whom he considered pro-Austrian, and Catholic Europe, by a grand gesture of Catholic piety in competition with his rival the Emperor Leopold I, whose power and reputation had greatly increased since his recent victories over France's traditional ally the Ottoman Empire; even French officers joined his army. In addition the King's growing piety and the zeal of his second wife Madame de Maintenon, combined with the King's delusions about Huguenots' readiness to convert, may all have hastened his decision. The exact balance of motives is unfathomable.¹⁹

Even the Revocation, however, did not destroy some Huguenots' willingness to serve the French monarchy. In Paris the great Huguenot

¹⁴ For the Testelin family, see M. Prestwich, 'Protestant architects and artists in Paris, 1593–1661', *HSJ* 24/1 (1989), pp. 10–11.

¹⁵ Mansel, *King of the World*, p. 102.

¹⁶ M. Glozier, *Marshal Schomberg 1615–1690* (Brighton, 2005), pp. xviii, 3, 32, 62, 64, 73, 87, 101.

¹⁷ J. F. A. Kazner, *Leben Friederichs von Schomberg, oder Schoenburg* (2 vols, Mannheim, 1789), vol. 2, pp. 102, 105.

¹⁸ Mansel, *King of the World*, pp. 308–9. However he did allow Huguenots whom he had formerly favoured, such as the Ruvigny family and the daughter of Barthélemy d'Herwarth, to leave with some of their property: e.g. see Monson, 'The three Esthers', p. 11.

¹⁹ Mansel, *King of the World*, pp. 304–9.

banker Samuel Bernard, who converted to Catholicism at the last minute in November 1685, may have supplied the French government with 200 million *livres* during the war of the Spanish Succession, almost entirely from borrowing abroad, often from other Huguenots. Sometimes he charged 12 or 16 per cent interest.²⁰ In his memoirs Louis de Rouvroy, Duc de Saint-Simon described what he called the ‘prostitution’ of Louis XIV on 6 May 1708, deigning to show Bernard round the gardens of his private paradise of Marly – normally reserved to the court nobility. Eager for more favourable terms for his loans, the King dropped his normal reserve and poured out a flow of words, with the grace he knew so well how to use, to this former Huguenot.²¹

England

Meanwhile in England Charles II, despite his secret Catholic sympathies, welcomed Huguenots at his court. He helped the Foubert family, former royal equeries in Paris, to establish the leading riding school in London. Under James II, as in France before 1685, differences of religion did not prevent Huguenots serving an ardently Catholic monarch. The leading Huguenot Jacobite was Louis de Duras, Earl of Feversham. His mother was Elizabeth de La Tour d’Auvergne, from the great Protestant dynasty which had married into the House of Orange. She was sister of Turenne, whom James Duke of York had revered since serving in his army in the 1650s: Turenne’s conversion to Catholicism in 1668 may have triggered York’s in 1669. Feversham’s two brothers converted to Catholicism and became marshals of France. Louis de Duras, however, came to England at the invitation of the Duke of York, was naturalized in 1663, and raised to the peerage in 1673.²²

In 1680 he became lord chamberlain to the pious Catholic Queen Catherine of Braganza, with an apartment in her dower house Somerset House: she was obliged to employ Protestant officials by the Test Acts of 1673 and 1678. In 1682 he was also appointed a lord of the Bedchamber, and, despite his Protestantism, was present at Charles II’s deathbed conversion to Catholicism. In 1685 Feversham commanded James II’s forces against James, Duke of Monmouth. After his victory, he was rewarded with the colonelcy of the first troop of Life Guards. In 1688 he was a Protestant witness at the birth of the Prince of Wales.

James II, like Pierre Bayle and others, had originally considered the Huguenots riddled with ‘anti-Monarchicall principles’, as he told

²⁰ J. Saint-Germain, *Samuel Bernard, le banquier des rois* (Paris, 1960), pp. 145–55, 167–9.

²¹ Mansel, *King of the World*, p. 399.

²² R. Vigne, ‘Huguenots at the court of William and Mary’ in *1688: The Seaborne Alliance and Diplomatic Revolution*, ed. Charles Wilson (Greenwich, 1989), pp. 111–30.

his ambassador in Paris, Sir William Trumbull, in 1685. However he changed his mind: in April 1687 his Declaration of Indulgence, permitting non-Anglican worship, encouraged thousands to move to England.²³ In November 1688 Feversham was trusted enough to be appointed to command James II's forces against William III (Feversham's third cousin through the La Tour d'Auvergne). This Huguenot courtier general played a key role in events in England. Having advised James II not to 'think to fight the Prince of Orange', Feversham escorted him back from Salisbury to London.²⁴

For his part, James II, a few hours before his first flight on 11 December 1688, wrote to Feversham that he did not trust his troops to resist 'a foreign army and a poisoned nation'. That day Feversham disbanded James's army, to prevent more desertions to William III.²⁵

He spent the following four days protecting the Queen Dowager – to whom he was so devoted that some called him the King Dowager – at Somerset House, where she had summoned him 'to defend her from the rabble in case of danger'.²⁶ On 15 December Feversham, as colonel of the Life Guards (whom, unlike the rest of the army, he had not disbanded), on the orders of the provisional government of peers in London, went with coaches and 120 guards to Faversham in Kent, where the King had been arrested during his flight, 'with all speed to receive his commands and protect his person from insolence', and escorted the King back to London.²⁷

James II then sent Feversham on a mission to William III at Windsor, where he was arrested. On 21 December, three days after James II's final departure from London, he was released on the intercession of Catherine of Braganza. When asked by William III why she was so pensive, she had replied that she needed someone to keep bank at her evening game of bassett. His court duties, judged more important than his Jacobitism, secured Feversham's release. Even after the Queen's departure for Portugal in 1692, he continued to live in Somerset House, and to manage her skeleton household. He died there on 19 April 1709.

Somerset House in London fulfilled a function for Huguenots similar to the *château vieux* of Saint-Germain outside Paris for Jacobites. Both were

²³ S. Sowerby, *Making Toleration; the Repealers and the Glorious Revolution* (Cambridge, Mass., 2013), pp. 27, 63. I am grateful to Dr Andrew Barclay for this reference.

²⁴ R. Beddard, *A Kingdom without a King: The Journal of the Provisional Government in the Revolution of 1688* (Oxford, 1988), p. 184.

²⁵ J. S. Clarke, *The Life of James the Second, King of England etc. collected out of memoirs writ of his own hand*, (London, 1816), vol. 2, p. 250; J. Carswell, *The Descent on England. A Study of the English Revolution of 1688 and its European Background* (London, 1969), pp. 205, 209.

²⁶ Beddard, *Kingdom without King*, p. 81 (letter of 12 December 1688).

²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 50, 104.

secondary royal palaces with apartments allocated to foreign courtiers. Other Huguenots living in Somerset House included Feversham's nephew and heir, Armand de Bourbon Malauze, Marquis de Miremont, descended from a bastard line of the Bourbons, and his sister Charlotte de Bourbon. Like Schomberg, he had left France by special permission of Louis XIV.²⁸

At first Miremont had raised a regiment for King James II, but he switched sides on 11 December 1688. He later served William III in Savoy and in Flanders, sometimes as his ADC. William III often visited Miremont at his house in Brompton. Soon after the accession of Queen Anne, Miremont was made a major-general and given an Irish pension.²⁹ Miremont – who met Voltaire during his visit to London between 1726 and 1728 – died at his apartment in Somerset House on 23 February 1732. His last act, according to Lord Hervey, was to drink a toast ‘à la santé du roi et de la reine’ [to the health of the King and Queen].³⁰

While Feversham had been the leading Huguenot courtier of James II, Marshal Schomberg became the leading Huguenot courtier of William III, against whom he had fought in the 1670s. Schomberg had left France, with Louis XIV's permission, in 1686 for Portugal, for whose independence he had fought between 1662 and 1668. When forbidden to hold Protestant services in Lisbon, he moved to Brandenburg to serve the Elector Frederick William. While promising Louis XIV he would not serve against France (in order to keep his French pensions), he secretly transferred his loyalties to William and Mary. On 5 September 1687 he wrote that there was nothing he would not sacrifice, in order to see them ‘bien établis en Angleterre’ [well established in England].³¹

In September 1688 he joined William III's army. Considered the finest general of his age, half-English by birth and speaking English well, he served as second in command, sitting beside the Prince when he entered London on 18 December.³² As a reward for switching courts, four years after bidding farewell to Louis XIV in Versailles, Schomberg had been made a marshal and duke in England, colonel of two regiments, master-general of the Ordnance, and recipient of a salary of £10,000 a year and £100,000 compensation for his lost French estates. While English

²⁸ P. Rambaut, ‘Louis Duras Dufort, Earl of Feversham, a study of misplaced loyalty’, in *War, Religion and Service* ed. Glozier and Onnekink, pp. 47–58.

²⁹ D. Agnew, *Protestant Exiles from France chiefly in the Reign of Louis XIV* (London, 1886), vol. 2, pp. 416–17.

³⁰ Earl of Ilchester ed. *Lord Hervey and His Friends* (London, 1950), p. 146, Hervey to Stephen Fox, 4 November 1732.

³¹ H. Sidney, *Diary of the Times of Charles II*, (London, 1843), vol. 2, p. 268, Schomberg to Henry Sydney, Berlin 25 September 1687.

³² Glozier, *Marshal Schomberg*, pp 62, 88, 131.

nobles were obliged to stand, he was allowed to sit on the King's right at dinner.³³

On 1 July 1690, as he was trying to cross the Boyne to rally his troops, Schomberg, identifiable by his Garter ribbon, was shot dead by a French soldier. In a panegyric his chaplain M. de Luzancy, another Huguenot, praised his skills as a courtier: 'he had so acquainted himself with the secrets of Europe as to understand the management of all Courts and be as fit for the government as he proved afterwards for the camp'.³⁴

His sons continued to serve William III. But both died without male heirs. By coincidence, none of the leading Huguenot courtiers in England (Schomberg, Feversham, Miremont, Lifford, Galway, Gastigny) had male heirs who founded a dynasty, similar to the Huguenot business dynasties like Courtauld, Cazalet, Portal.³⁵ This may be one reason for their relative oblivion.

Another Huguenot courtier of William III was Henri de Ruvigny, whose father had been the Huguenot Deputy-General at Louis XIV's court, famous for his mastery of 'all the forms and court addresses' according to the diarist John Evelyn.³⁶ Like Feversham, they were Huguenot courtiers of James II, who allowed them to live and hold Protestant services in the Queen's House in Greenwich.³⁷ After 1689, however, Ruvigny would serve William III as faithfully as he had formerly served Louis XIV. For his services as commander-in-chief and lord justice in Ireland in the 1690's, he was made Earl of Galway and given large grants of land. William III's letters to Galway lament English xenophobia and confirm the friendship between the King and the courtier: 'it is not to be conceived how people here are set against the foreigners'; 'there is a spirit of ignorance and malice prevailing here beyond conception'; 'be always assured of my friendship ... you may always rely on my friendship'.³⁸ As a sign of William III's favour, after Parliament deprived Galway of his Irish lands, he was made colonel of the King's beloved regiment of Dutch foot guards.³⁹ William III's

³³ Carswell, *Descent*, p. 245; Vigne, *Huguenots*, p. 118.

³⁴ Glozier, *Marshal Schomberg*, p. 150.

³⁵ None of the last four married, perhaps because relative poverty made it difficult for them to find wives of equivalent rank.

³⁶ Agnew, *Protestant Exiles*, vol. 2, p. 336, Evelyn to Samuel Pepys, 4 October 1689.

³⁷ M. Léoutre, *Serving France, Ireland and England: Ruvigny, Earl of Galway 1648–1720* (London, 2018), p. 38; P. van der Merwe, *The Queen's House, Greenwich* (London, 2012), p. 76.

³⁸ P. Grimblot ed. *Letters of William III and Louis XIV and their Ministers*, (London, 1848), vol. 2, pp. 247, 334, 403, 429, William III to Galway, 27 January, 1 June 1699, 2 May, 15 August 1700.

³⁹ Agnew, *Protestant Exiles*, vol. 2, pp. 368, 370.

fondness for foreign courtiers can be explained by his family background (his great-grandmother was Louise de Coligny and he had Huguenot teachers) as well as their abilities. Much admired despite his defeat at Almanza in 1707, Lord Galway died unmarried in 1720, the last of the Huguenot *grands* in England, except for Lord Ligonier, a tutor and ADC to the Duke of Cumberland who was commander-in-chief of the British army between 1757 and 1759.⁴⁰

William III also employed Huguenot doctors and servants, and a Huguenot master of the buckhounds, Jacques de Gastigny, founder of La Providence, the French hospital now at Rochester.⁴¹ Like the King of Denmark and the Elector of Brandenburg, William III was also served by Huguenot diplomats: Francois Gaultier de Saint-Blancard had helped establish his alliance with Brandenburg in 1685.⁴² Jean de Robethon, one of his secretaries from 1698 to 1702 with an apartment at court, returned to London after 1710 as envoy from Hanover and helped ensure George I's smooth accession to the throne. After 1714, as 'His Majesty's Private Secretary for Hanover', he again had an apartment at Saint James's, where his influence infuriated Walpole and other English politicians.⁴³

The physical splendour of the English court was also enhanced by Huguenots. Daniel Marot, who had designed fêtes for the birth of Louis XIV's grandson the Duc de Bourgogne in 1682, engraved a print of William III's birthday ball in Het Loo in 1686. In England after 1694, he helped design the palaces and gardens at Hampton Court and Kensington, and interiors in the Louis XIV style for Ralph Montagu's two residences, Montagu House and Boughton. Ralph Montagu, former ambassador of Charles II to Louis XIV, was master of the Great Wardrobe in charge of furnishing the royal places, and employed Huguenots both in his own and the royal household: for example the painters Louis Chéron and Jean Baptiste Monnoyer (the latter had worked for Louis XIV); the Pelletier family of furniture makers, some of whose work is still in the Royal Collection. Pierre Silvestre, who had been one of William III's doctors, was head of Montagu's household.⁴⁴

⁴⁰ R. Vigne, 'The Good Lord Galway: The English and Irish Careers of Henri de Ruvigny' in *War, Religion and Service*, ed. Glozier and Onnekink, pp. 61–82; Agnew, *Protestant Exiles*, vol. 2, p. 317.

⁴¹ Vigne, *Huguenots*, p. 125.

⁴² Mansel, *King of the World*, pp. 313–14; M. Schaich, 'Information professionals: Huguenot diplomats in later Stuart London and their European context', in *Huguenot Networks*, ed. Larminie, pp. 75–91.

⁴³ Agnew, *Protestant Exiles*, vol. 2, 205–8; J. F. Chance, 'Jean de Robethon and the Robethon papers', *English Historical Review*, 49 (1898), pp. 55–70; A. Flick, 'Jean de Robethon, a contested figure behind the Throne', *HSJ*, 30/4 (2016), pp. 488–502.

⁴⁴ E.L. Furdell, *The Royal Doctors* (London, 2001), p. 204.

Like James II and William III, George II also appreciated Huguenot courtiers (George I will be discussed below), including another nephew of Lord Feversham, Frédéric Guillaume de la Rochefoucauld. He had served in the campaigns of the 1690s, was naturalized English on 20 September 1694, became Earl of Lifford, without a patent, on 19 July 1698, and a major-general in 1706. He died unmarried in 1748.⁴⁵ The great English memorialist, Lord Hervey, lamented George II's meanness to Lord Lifford and his sister, Lady Charlotte de Roucy.

These two people, born in France, having more religion than sense, left their native country on account of being Protestants; and being of great quality, and not in great circumstances, had, during four reigns, subsisted upon the scanty charity of the English Court: they were constantly – every night in the country, and three nights in the week in town – alone with the King and Queen for an hour or two before they went to bed, during which time the King walked about and talked to the brother of armies, or to the sister of genealogies, whilst the Queen knotted and yawned, till from yawning she came to nodding, and from nodding to snoring.

He called Lady Charlotte in particular ‘a martyr to the Court, though not to a Church’.⁴⁶ For his part, George II's son Frederick Prince of Wales employed as his principal painter and page of the Bedchamber the Huguenot Philippe Mercier, while his clock-maker and diamond merchant was another Huguenot, Pierre Dutens.⁴⁷

Celle and Hanover

George II's first language, before German, was French. His grandmother was a Huguenot, Eléonore Desmier d'Olbreuse, who had visited the court of Kassel in 1664. There George William Duke of Celle fell in love with her and married her morganatically, a marriage which in 1680 was recognised as a full dynastic union. Eléonore also organised advantageous marriages for her sisters: Angélique married Henry V

⁴⁵ GEC [George E. Cockayne], *Complete Peerage* (London 1910–1959), vol. 7, pp. 650–1.

⁴⁶ W. Brooks and P. J. Yarrow, ‘Three Huguenots at the English Court: Louis de Durfort and his Nieces, Mlle de Malauze, a correspondent of Elisabeth Charlotte, Duchesse d'Orléans, and Mlle de Roye, governess to the royal children’, *Seventeenth-Century French Studies*, 22 (2000), pp. 181–93; Earl of Ilchester, *Lord Hervey*, p. 169, Hervey to Mrs Clayton, 31 July 1733. These Huguenot courtiers are not mentioned in Andrew C. Thompson, *George II: King and Elector* (New Haven, CT, 2011).

⁴⁷ <http://courtofficers.ctsdh.luc.edu/> R. Bucholz, ‘The Database of Court Officers 1660–1837’, sub. *Frederick, Prince of Wales* [accessed 10 February 2021]. Some of Mercier's paintings are still in the Royal Collection.

Prince Reuss of Plauen; Marie became the wife of Olivier de Beaulieu-Marconnay (1660–1751), who founded a courtier dynasty in Hanover and Oldenburg. The Celle court, Eléonore's sister-in-law Sophia of Hanover complained, 'is entirely Frenchified' [*ganz verfranzt*]. There were Huguenot ladies in waiting, chamberlains, huntsmen, pages, chaplains and doctors. Three were especially prominent: from 1682 to 1702 the famous playwright Samuel Chappuzeau taught the Duke's pages. His surgeon Jean de Lestocq dined with the Duke once a month. Armand de Lescours, as *Oberhofmarschall*, ran the kitchens.⁴⁸

Madame, Duchesse d'Orléans compared Eléonore d'Olbreuse to mouse droppings, since she was not of royal birth.⁴⁹ Nonetheless, her daughter Sophia Dorothea, as an heiress, was a desirable bride and was married to her first cousin George Louis of Hanover in 1682. The marriage was not a success, however. Two children were born – George Augustus, the future George II, in 1683, and Sophia Charlotte in 1687 (later Queen Consort in Prussia) but in 1694 Sophia Dorothea's plan to elope with Count von Königsmarck ended in his murder and the dissolution of the marriage. Sophia Dorothea was forbidden to see her children again and imprisoned in Schloss Ahlden. After her death 32 years later in 1726, George I did not allow mourning in Hanover or London, and was furious that his daughter's court in Berlin observed it.⁵⁰

George I not only married a half-Huguenot wife, but also employed Huguenots at his court.⁵¹ Dr J. T. Desaguliers, a Huguenot from La Rochelle, became a preacher and lecturer in experimental philosophy to George I and George II, and later chaplain to Frederick Prince of Wales: his son Thomas, as chief fire officer of His Majesty's Royal Laboratory, supervised the fireworks for the peace celebration of 1749, and was 18 years an equerry to George III.⁵² Claude Amyand became sergeant surgeon to the King; Louis Barbar was appointed his gentleman armourer in 1717. Another Huguenot, Louis Rémy de la Fosse, helped

⁴⁸ Andreas Flick, 'The Court at Celle is entirely French: Huguenot soldiers in the duchy of Brunswick Lunenburg' in *War, Religion and Service*, eds. Glozier and Onnekink, pp. 195–211. Showing Huguenots' continued affinity with courts, the descendant of a Huguenot guards officer, Karl Otto von Malortie, published a handbook on how to run a modern court: *Der Hof-Marschall: Handbuch zur Einrichtung und Führung eines Hofhalts* (Hanover, 1846).

⁴⁹ Thompson, *George II*, p. 16.

⁵⁰ R. Hatton, *George I, Elector and King* (London, 1978), pp. 50–60.

⁵¹ *Ibid.* pp. 47, 97. 287.

⁵² A.T. Carpenter, 'J. T. Desaguliers, an 18th century experimental philosopher and freemason', *Huguenot Society Journal*, 30 (2016), pp. 503–18; 'Thomas Desaguliers, officer and equerry', *HSJ*, 33 (2020), pp. 27–41; see also part 2 of this article in this issue of the *HSJ*.

build George I's hunting palace at G hrde near Hanover from 1705, and designed palaces for other German princes at Darmstadt and Mannheim. In the century after 1688 the Huguenot court architects, Paul du Ry and his grandson Simon, designed museums, palaces, barracks and an opera house in Kassel for the Landgraf of Hessen Kassel.⁵³

Brandenburg

In England Huguenots served a parliamentary monarch, in Brandenburg a ruler more absolute than Louis XIV. The Elector Frederick William I welcomed them by the edict of Potsdam in November 1685, partly because they were Calvinists like himself, and most of his subjects were Lutheran. He is said to have regarded them as a second family no less dear than his own.⁵⁴ Perhaps 20,000 settled in his dominions: by 1698 a quarter of the population of his capital Berlin, around 7,500, was Huguenot. Protected by successive electors and kings, for the next hundred years they were allowed their own laws, churches, hospitals and schools.⁵⁵ This influx of French talent, in addition to the effectiveness of its dynasty, army and administration, helps explain why Brandenburg-Prussia soon surpassed rivals with smaller or non-existent Huguenot populations, like Hanover, Saxony, and Bavaria.

The court showed a particular affinity with Huguenots. A Huguenot congregation was allowed to use the chapel of the Berlin Schloss under Jacques Abbadie, author of panegyrics of the Elector of Brandenburg (1684) and Mary II (1695). In 1687 the Elector formed two companies of *mousquetaires*, modelled on Louis XIV's musketeers but composed entirely of Huguenot officers (later the Elector also established his own units of *gardes du corps* and Swiss guards). Soon about 15 per cent or more of his officer corps, 600 officers, were of French origin, often with advantages of pay and conditions of service over Brandenburgers. Jean de Forcade, an officer in the Elector's *garde du corps*, later became commander of the 23rd infantry regiment and of the Royal Residence in Berlin, a founder of Prussian drill, confidante of Frederick William I and from 1718 to 1729 President of the Grand Directoire, responsible for all Huguenot affairs in the kingdom.⁵⁶ The splendour of the court of Berlin – which enjoyed 30 palaces and hunting lodges in and around the city, more

⁵³ D. Watkin and T. Mellinghoff, *German Architecture and the Classical Ideal* (London, 1987), p. 44.

⁵⁴ Charles Chambeau, *Notices historiques sur le coll ge royal fran ais de Berlin* (Berlin, 1864), p. 3n.

⁵⁵ L. and M. Frey, *Frederick I: The Man and his Times* (Boulder, 1984), pp. 119, 121–6.

⁵⁶ H. Schnitter, 'The Refugees in the Army of Brandenburg-Prussia' in *War, Religion and Service*, ed. Glozier and Onnekink, pp. 145–59.

than any other German dynasty – is recorded in a book of engravings by another Huguenot, published in Augsburg in 1733: *Vuës des palais et maisons de plaisance de S. M. le roi de Prusse, dessinées et gravées par J. B. Broebes*.

Another Huguenot, Charles Ancillon, who served the Elector as director of the Académie des Nobles and historiographer, described the Elector of Brandenburg as ‘*un dieu mortel, portant la marque de l’image de Dieu*’ [a mortal God, with the mark of the image of God]. He was called ‘*divus*’ in inscriptions, which Louis XIV was not.⁵⁷ Ancillon took part in the negotiations which led to the Elector’s assumption in 1701 of the title ‘King in Prussia’, which was then commemorated by the figure of fortune alighting on the Fortunaportal of the Stadtschloss in Potsdam, designed by another Huguenot, the architect Jean de Bodt. De Bodt also built the Arsenal, and part of the Schloss in Berlin.⁵⁸ In 1699 Ancillon replaced his uncle as judge of all the French refugees in Brandenburg. Ancillon founded a dynasty of courtiers. His great-grandson Friedrich Ancillon, tutor to Frederick William III’s sons, would be an advocate of absolutism against parliamentary monarchy, as well as of war with France.⁵⁹

Like many Hohenzollerns, Frederick I’s grandson Frederick II had a Huguenot tutor, Jacques Egide Duhan de Jandun, and a Huguenot governess, Madame de Roucoulle, whom he regarded as a second mother. Both helped teach him to love the French language and French literature.⁶⁰ Duhan de Jandun also found him French clothes and French books, which had to be hidden from his father – although he too had been brought up by Madame de Roucoulle. Another Huguenot, his librarian Charles Etienne Jordan, corrected his French style, while Henri de la Motte Fouqué was one of his favourite generals. A Huguenot descendant, Carl von Gontard, built his grandest palace the Neues Palais between 1763 and 1769 and the Marble Palace (1787–1790) in Potsdam, and the Royal Library and the French church (now the Huguenot museum) in Berlin. Thus the Berlin court was even more ‘*verfranzt*’ than that of Celle. Frederick II’s ally Catherine II of Russia had also been educated by Huguenots. In Stettin after 1729 two Huguenots, Madeleine Cardel

⁵⁷ *Histoire de l’établissement des François réfugiés dans les états de son altesse elettorale de Brandebourg* (Berlin, 1690), unpaginated dedicatory epistle.

⁵⁸ S. Smart and K. Friedrich, *The Cultivation of Monarchy and the Rise of Berlin* (London, 2017), pp. 66, 151n.

⁵⁹ C. Clark, *The Iron Kingdom; the Rise and Downfall of Prussia 1600–1947* (London, 2006), pp. 362, 402.

⁶⁰ T. Blanning, *Frederick the Great*, (London, 2015), p. 31; Jens Häselser, ‘Entre la France et le Brandebourg, la République des Lettres’, in G. Braun ed. *Les états allemands et les Huguenots* (Munich, 2007), pp. 231–9.

and her sister Elizabeth taught Princess Sophie of Anhalt-Zerbst, as she then was, to write and speak good French and to dance well.⁶¹

In 1697 Augustus the Strong, Elector of Saxony had converted from Lutheranism to Catholicism in order to be elected King of Poland and Grand Duke of Lithuania. Nevertheless, like James II, he employed Huguenots. Jean de Bodt, for example, left Berlin for Dresden, became Director of Military Buildings and tutored Augustus the Strong's sons. Another Huguenot architect, Zacharias Longuelune helped design Palais Bruhl and the Japanisches Palais in Dresden and the palace of Pillnitz outside it.⁶²

Conclusion

Huguenots' success as courtiers, like their successes as writers or soldiers, shows that northern Europe could function as an international system. Daniel Marot, Schomberg, the La Rochefoucauld, Jean de Bodt, moved from court to court with ease. Huguenot tutors, doctors, chaplains and governesses helped reinforce French as the language of Europe, used at least as easily as their native Dutch or German by William III, George I and George II, Frederick II and Catherine II, and many more monarchs and princes outside France.

The Huguenots' role demonstrated courts' taste for diversity, also apparent in their appreciation of foreign guards, marriages and fashions; of French cuisine, dances and comedies; and of Italian music and opera; and in the regular exchange of grandiose embassies. A monarchy could provide both a focus for national feeling and a market for foreign talent. Anglican bishops preferred French Protestants to English non-conformists, Prussian kings preferred them to German Lutherans. The Duke of Celle chose Eléonore d'Olbreuse, over better-born German princesses.

The prominence at foreign courts of Huguenots like the Duke of Schomberg, Lord Feversham, General de Forcade, Eléonore d'Olbreuse and Madame de Roucoulle, Daniel Marot and Jean de Bodt, also shows that their careers could be advanced by changing countries. Exiles, driven by necessity and personal beliefs, could be considered more reliable and useful than locals. As Daniel Defoe wrote of William III in *The True-Born Englishman* (1701): 'The foreigners have faithfully obeyed him./ None but Englishmen have e'er betrayed him.' In London in the succession

⁶¹ K. S. Anthony tr. *Memoirs of Catherine the Great* (New York and London, 1927), pp. 1–4. The future George IV and William IV of Great Britain also had Huguenot tutors, John and Henry Majendie.

⁶² M. Espagne, 'La culture française à Dresde' in *Splendeurs de la Cour de Saxe. Dresde à Versailles*, exhibition catalogue (Paris, 2004), pp. 122, 263. Information on Jean de Bodt kindly communicated by Maureen Cassidy Geiger.

crisis of 1714–15, some Huguenots were organised by the Secretary of State James Stanhope in a private association to help defend George I's throne.⁶³

Frederick II's sister Wilhelmina, Margravine of Bayreuth confirms that Huguenots' loyalty was part of their appeal to rulers. Her doctor from 1738, was a Huguenot called Daniel de Superville. Born in Rotterdam in 1696, he had, she wrote in her memoirs, '*infiniment d'esprit, une lecture prodigieuse ... il ne demandait pas mieux que de consacrer sa vie au Margrave et à moi*' [infinite intelligence, enormous knowledge ... he asked for nothing better than to devote his life to the Margrave and myself].⁶⁴ He later became founder and vice chancellor of the University of Erlangen (a centre of Huguenot settlement). Huguenots were not only able and well educated, but often – spurred by relative poverty and lack of local ties – more devoted than local subjects, and so more useful to their new masters. Similar patterns of success in serving foreign rulers could be observed among other exile groups, such as the Huguenots' adversaries the Jacobites and, a century later, French émigrés.

Finally, if Louis XIV had not revoked the edict of Nantes, how differently Europe might have developed. Retaining its economic and scientific leads, France would have remained richer and more victorious. London would not have overtaken Paris as early as it did; the Enlightenment might have been less radical. Reinforced by loyal Protestant subjects rather than opposed by a hostile Protestant diaspora, and able to pay lower interest rates to its creditors, the French monarchy might have remained as resilient as its rivals in Britain, Prussia and Austria. The French revolution might have taken a very different course.

⁶³ W. S. Churchill, *Marlborough: his Life and Times* (London, 1947), vol. 2, p. 1001.

⁶⁴ Wilhelmine, Margravine de Bayreuth, *Mémoires de ma vie* (Paris, 1967), pp. 356–7.