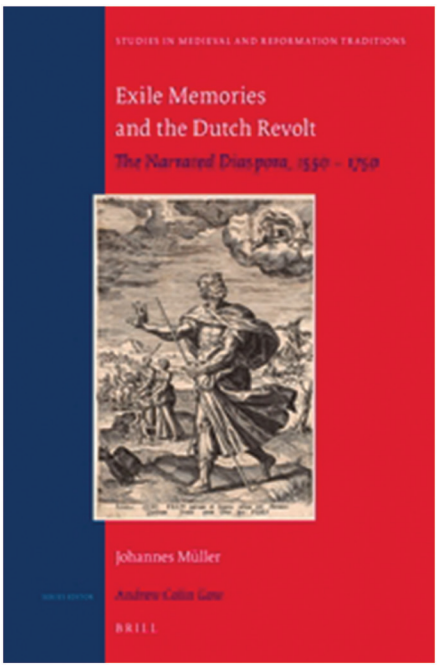
Review

Johannes Müller, *Exile Memories and the Dutch Revolt. The Narrated Diaspora, 1550-1750*, Leiden, Brill, 2016, 243 pp. ISBN 978-9-00431-166-4.



The Dutch Revolt produced one of the largest exile waves of the early modern period. As Alessandro Farnese's armies ploughed through the southern provinces in the 1580s, at least 60,000 Lutherans, Mennonites and Calvinists fled to Germany, England, and the nascent Dutch Republic. Whereas the socio-economic fortunes and religious beliefs of these exiles have been amply studied, Müller focuses on their memory culture. His core argument is that memories of persecution and flight proved foundational to the identity of the refugees, who continued to remember their exile for generations. Müller uncovered traces of Dutch exile memories well into the eighteenth century, thus countering the received wisdom that early modern migrants quickly integrated into their host societies and forgot about their homeland. Moreover, he argues that such memories were not the exclusive domain of exiles and their descendants, but were also adopted by Dutch, German, and English Protestants, for whom exile narratives gradually became part of their own identity.

Chapters 2 and 4 are by far the most compelling part of Müller's study, exploring the evolution of exile memory across generations. These chapters debunk the myth that exile was a one-way street that turned strangers into citizens, and presumably consigned memories of their homeland to oblivion. As Müller shows, the first generation of refugees in fact remembered their flight for decades, initially because it fueled hopes that once the fortunes of the Dutch Revolt would change, they could return to their homes in the south. Müller labels these narratives "hot memory": not only were stories of flight and persecution recounted by those who had first-hand experience of the events, exiles also used such memories to call for political action, in particular the reconquest of the south. In 1606,

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for example, the Antwerp exile Jacob Duym published his *Ghedenck-boeck*, a series of belligerent plays that showcased the persecutions and the treachery of the Spaniards to argue against a truce with Spain. The children and grandchildren of first-generation exiles, however, produced a "cold memory" that was devoid of political claims, but instead centered around identity: essentially, being descended from exiles conferred status on these families. In making these identity claims, descendants often reinterpreted their exile past to forge a mythical origin story of religious flight.

The reason exile narratives became so prominent and were sustained for generations, Müller argues, was because they were adopted by their host nations. This argument is explored most persuasively in Chapter 6, which takes us into the eighteenth century. English Puritans for instance admired the Dutch stranger churches because they practiced a form of Calvinism that struck closer to their ideals than the halfway house that was the Anglican Church. Moreover, the memory of exclusiveness and persecution became a template the Puritans could easily adopt to describe their own precarious situation. German Pietists in Frankfurt likewise borrowed the narrative of wandering pilgrims from the Reformed stranger churches, while descendants of Dutch exiles played a key role in emerging Pietist networks. It was surely no coincidence that William Penn, founder of the Pennsylvania colony, garnered support for his enterprise among former exile milieus in Frankfurt. This transnational interaction between exile memories is also evident in Chapter 5, which shows that southern exiles continued to travel along routes and exile centers of the initial refuge, just as they offered aid to persecuted brethren in Germany, citing their own past of persecution as the reason to help these suffering Protestants.

As such, this book offers important lessons for historians of early modern exile and migration, but for scholars of memory the read is less rewarding. Because Müller does not offer an explicit definition of memory, it often remains unclear whether the exile narratives he cites are actual evidence of an early modern understanding of the past, or simply part of a religious discourse that was prevalent throughout this period. The Protestant justifications for exile he discusses in Chapter 1, for example, also recur in Catholic publications and in Huguenot exile sermons after 1685, which probably points to a shared biblical outlook rather than the recycling of "exile memories". The same could be argued about the adoption of exile narratives by Puritans and Pietists, which were not necessarily influenced by exile memories, but by long-standing biblical tropes. Nevertheless, this is an important book for readers interested in the transnational and trans-generational aspects of the early modern exile experience.

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