Marion Brétéché, ***Les Compagnons de Mercure: Journalisme et politique dans l'Europe de Louis XIV*** (Dissertatie Université Paris-Sorbonne; Ceyzérieu: Champ Vallon, 2015, 356 pp., ISBN 979 1 02670 022 7).

Finally, French scholarship on French texts has moved outside the confines of France. This seems a strange comment to make when reviewing a book about such texts. But they were all published in the Low Countries, largely within the borders of the Dutch Republic. So many of the interventions associated with the French Enlightenment originated in the Dutch Republic – from the journalistic writings of the Huguenot refugees to the publishing enterprise of Marc Michel Rey – that one question becomes inevitable: would there have been an Enlightenment in France without the Dutch presses? Who would have published on political affairs during the heavily censored reign of Louis XIV? Who would have read the French translation of Locke's *Essay concerning Human Understanding* had it not been published in Amsterdam? It was prohibited in Paris. Without Rey, who would have published Rousseau? D'Holbach? *Le Traité des trois imposteurs*? Without 'Pierre Marteau', supposedly publishing in Cologne, who would have impiously challenged the French Church and developed pornography as an early form of the novel? The Dutch publishing houses invented 'Marteau'. He was a phony imprint used by various publishers, and with nearly five hundred French titles to his name, Marteau set the bar for the outrageous. To this day we do not know who wrote many of his titles.

The list of titles is long for the study of the origins and maturation of the French Enlightenment outside of France. Finally, we have a good general survey of the leading French figures at work in the Dutch Republic from roughly 1680 to 1720, in the period that many decades ago Paul Hazard called 'the crisis of the European mind'.

This new book by Marion Brétéché has performed a valuable service by reading vast quantities of the French journals and periodicals emanating from The Hague or Amsterdam, and finding in them a resolutely political message: opposition to the policies of Louis XIV. Anne-Marguerite Dunoyer turned up in The Hague in 1703 and within a few years her literary career was launched. Her first contribution, *Lettres historiques et galantes* (1707) claimed to be published by 'Pierre Marteau', and it helped introduce the spectatorial genre into the French language. Following *Lettres*, Dunoyer published *Quintessence des nouvelles historiques, politiques, morales et galantes* from 1711 to 1719 and it combined literary news with overt support for the allies' war against Louis XIV. Brétéché offers an extensive treatment of her writings and documents

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'the essential role' of the United Provinces in making Dunoyer's interventions possible (138).

There was no shortage of refugees out for vengeance against the French monarch and church. The political radical, pantheist and freemason, Jean Rousset de Missy, stepped into the template Dunoyer pioneered, and as a journalist and participant in the Revolution of 1747-1748 Rousset demonstrated the linkage that could be made between enlightened ideas and revolutionary action. For a fuller treatment see Margaret C. Jacob, *The Radical Enlightenment: Pantheists, Freemasons and Republicans* (London, 1981; reprinted 2006). His letters to his close friend, Prosper Marchand, reside at the University Library, Leiden, and they constitute an invaluable source for examining the intellectual universe inhabited by these angry exiles. Brétéché has made use of the largely unpublished accounts of these circles, but as she rightly points out, more can be done. Their story becomes even more complicated when we realize that some of these refugees acted as spies for various anti-French governments. Letters by Rousset turn up in Vienna and those of Guillaume de Lamberty survive in the papers of the secretary of state for foreign affairs in the British National Archives. Always the goals remained information, news, gossip – whatever would aid the Allied war effort. By far The Hague became the best center from which to keep an eye on all the participants in the War of the Spanish Succession. It is not accidental that the freethinker John Toland, in his role as spy for the Whig party, spent two years there.

Belles lettres are only part of the story of what the refugees accomplished. They also took on the task of writing histories of their era and particularly of English events. Jean Dumont and Jean Rousset de Missy wrote histories of current affairs while other refugees translated the writings of Locke and the English republicans into French. Taken as a whole the histories and translations gave well-educated Continental audiences an easy familiarity with the Revolution of 1688-1689 and the ensuing wars against Louis XIV.

The French Huguenot minister, Jacques Basnage, played a significant role in the ensuing diplomacy, and as the War of the Spanish Succession wound down, Basnage also acted as a go-between the French and Dutch governments. Brétéché makes extensive use of his voluminous correspondence archived in The Hague, Paris and London. He became in effect the eyes and ears of the Grand Pensionary, Heinsius, particularly at the congress at Utrecht that brought the war to its close. The French came to see him as a spy, a 'creature' of Heinsius. Yet Basnage, like so many of the refugees after the death of Louis XIV in 1715, thought a reconciliation between French Protestants and the new Regent might be possible.

Brétéché's book illustrates, as do few others, that the first stirrings of enlightened thought in the Francophone world cannot be separated from the international political setting, from the direct involvement of French Protestants in the creation of an oppositional political culture into which the

major *philosophes* like Voltaire and Montesquieu easily stepped. Their path against absolutism had been paved by the activities and writings of a dozen or more refugees ensconced safely in the Dutch Republic. This is a marvelous book that must be read by anyone with an interest in the early phase of the French Enlightenment, in book history, and not least, in the international diplomacy of the period.

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