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'I AM CONTENTED TO DIE'

The letters from prison of the Waldensian Sebastian Bazan (d. 1623) and the Anti-Jacobite narratives of the Reformed martyrs of Piedmont*

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Of the various “heresies” that emerged in the twelfth century, Waldensianism was the only one that lived on, unbowed, into the sixteenth century, finally becoming part of the Protestant Reformation. For centuries, the Waldensians upheld their faith and piety in the face of extreme hardship and exclusion. Their unflinching constancy is clearly rendered by an image caption on the inside cover of Jean Léger’s *Histoire Générale des Vaudois* (1669): *Tritantur mallei, remanet incus* (the hammers may hit, but the anvil remains), a clever reference to the common metaphor of the inquisitor as the *malleus haereticorum*. During the brutal slaughter of Waldensians in the southern Italian region of Calabria in 1561, the seemingly impassive attitude of fathers at the sight of their children dying was deplored by the Catholic Neapolitan author, Tommaso Costo (c.1545–c.1613). Costo’s disapproving comments brought an indignant response from the talented English translator of Voltaire’s *Lettres sur les Anglois*, John Lockman (1698–1771), in his *History of the Cruel Sufferings of the Protestants, and Others, by Popish Persecutions* (1760) and in his sympathetic treatment of the memoirs of Freemason John Coustos (1703–1746), whose purported stoical martyrdom at the hands of the Portuguese Inquisition fitted the usual pattern of Protestant martyrologies.¹

In this chapter, I would like to investigate such conflicting emotional rhetorics running through competing narratives of Waldensian martyrdom and marginalization. In doing so, I will focus in particular on the little-known story of Sebastian (or Sebastiano) Bazan (or Basan), an adoptive son of the Waldensian valleys, and the moving letters he wrote while in prison in Turin.² The Inquisitors initially tried to

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persuade him to abjure by using mild and flattering words, and even expressions of affection. Their efforts were to no avail, however, as he protested strongly against the violence inflicted on the Christian Religion in his person. When he was executed on 23 November 1623, he went to his death singing the hymn of Simeon, and multiple witnesses reported that many onlookers, some of high rank, wept openly as his voice was stifled by the flames. Bazan's prison letters are revealing of the emotional tactics employed by the Inquisition.³ Conversely, in the second part of the chapter, I will show how these narratives of Waldensian exclusion were used as part of a political top-down strategy to fan anti-Catholic intolerance among the 'mobs' in England, by playing on their deep-rooted fears and inherent xenophobia. Indeed, the adjective most frequently used to describe Catholics in eighteenth-century England was 'outlandish', to be understood quite literally as foreign.⁴

In 1696, Girolamo Albrizzi published an album in Venice with the effective yet vague title *Teatro della crudeltà* (Theatre of Cruelty). It comprised 104 etchings by the Dutch Mennonite painter-poet Jan Luyken (1649–1712)⁵ and reproduced a publication in French—apparently no longer extant but that probably first appeared in Amsterdam—entitled *Théâtre des martyrs depuis la mort de J. Christ jusqu'à présent* (Theatre of martyrs, from the death of Jesus Christ to today). The captions accompanying the illustrations in the Dutch booklet were dropped in the Italian edition, obscuring the significance of the images and effectively turning the work into an academic treatment of the theme of cruelty. The etchings did however have a very specific history and content, and I mention them here because a number of them relate to the Waldensians, and given the paucity of surviving Waldensian iconography, they are of particular importance.

The 104 etchings in the *Teatro della crudeltà* had originally been commissioned for a richly illustrated edition, published in Amsterdam in 1685, *Het Bloedig Tooneel of Martelaers Spiegel der Doopesgesinde of Weereeloose Christenen* (The Bloody Theatre or The Martyrs' Mirror of Anabaptists or Defenseless Christians, first edition Dordrecht 1660), an Anabaptist martyrology by the Mennonite minister Johan Tieleman van Braght. This work significantly only covered persecutions of the Waldensians (though they were identified with the Albigensians and other heretical groups) that occurred before they joined the Reformed Church. Subsequent persecutions are not mentioned at all, despite being very well-known and equally dramatic. The overarching goal of the author of *Het Bloedig Tooneel* was in fact to bring the Waldensians back into the nonconformist Protestant fold. He wanted to portray them as an important dissident voice as, in his view, they represented the true Reformation, which had always been persecuted and could not be identified with the ecclesiastical reform of Luther and other reformers.

Luyken did, nevertheless, have occasion to illustrate elsewhere some of the vicissitudes of the Waldensians in the seventeenth century. One such illustration (Figure 7.1) found its way into an expanded (and extant) version of the *Théâtre des Martyrs* that also featured eleven other etchings by Luyken,⁶ originally made to illustrate the

FIGURE 7.1 Jan Luyken, *Glorieuse Rentrée* (1689): the Waldensians' departure from Prangins in Switzerland, etching, first published in Johann L. Gottfried's *Historische Kronyck*, 3 vols (Leiden, 1698–1700), 3:1263. Special Collections, University of Amsterdam, OTM: KF 61–3836.

Dutch translation (by Simon de Vries) of Johann L. Gottfried's *Historische Kronyck*, a universal history in three folio volumes published in Leiden between 1698 and 1700. The Dutch translation, which covered events through to 1697 (the original edition, published in Frankfurt in 1633, did not go beyond 1619), briefly dealt with the expulsion of the Waldensians from the Piedmontese valleys in 1686 and their 'glorious repatriation' (*Glorieuse Rentrée*) in 1689, an event that, as we shall see presently, attracted a great deal of attention in the Protestant world, particularly in Holland and England. Luyken's etching depicted the Waldensians' departure from Prangins in Switzerland, a small town on the shores of Lac Léman (Lake Geneva), as they set out to 'reconquer' the valleys of their birthplace, led by Henri Arnaud (1641–1721), the Waldensian pastor turned soldier. It is the only contemporary rendering of this famous episode in Waldensian history to have come to light to date.

Another publishing initiative in which Luyken dealt with the Waldensians deserves mention. In 1700, he was asked by a Utrecht publisher named H. Ribbius to illustrate his planned new edition of Marc Zuerius van Boxhorn's *Nederlandsche Historie*, first published in Leiden in 1644. It was a history of the Church in the Low Countries to the time of Charles V, and amounted effectively to a survey of the early forbears of the religious dissidence that led to the joining of the Reformation. It included accounts of the many occasions when the ecclesiastical authorities violently repressed manifestations of heterodoxy and

used the Waldensians as a convenient category with which to describe all religious dissent. More specifically, the three etchings expressly devoted to the Waldensians by Luyken relate to instances of religious repression, including the infamous 'Vauderie d'Arras' of 1459–1460 that targeted individuals in fifteenth-century Flanders who were judged Waldensians by the authorities and public opinion, and led to the trials of thirty-four persons and execution of twelve (Figure 7.2). As Enea Balmas acutely observed in a pioneering article published in 1977, notwithstanding a number of obvious imprecisions (for instance, the confusion between Waldensians and Albigensians, and the identification of 'vauderie' with witchcraft, which was commonplace in the fifteenth century) and anachronisms (Luyken's medieval Waldensians are dressed a little like

FIGURE 7.2 Jan Luyken. *The public display of Deniselle Grenier and five others (one of them dead) accused of having taken part in devil worship in a witches' Sabbath, an episode of the Vauderie d'Arras (1459–60)*, etching, first published in the Ribbuis edition of Marc Zuerius van Boxhorn's *Nederlandsche Historie* (Utrecht, 1700), 69. Special Collections, University of Amsterdam, OTM: O 61–8052.

seventeenth-century peasants), Luyken's depictions of the Waldensians convey an impulse of sympathy, feeling, and ideological affinity. Such an emotional response must have prompted Luyken to salute those distant, anonymous witnesses and victims of Catholic repression as heroes and brothers in faith.⁷

However, the etchings do not just reflect Luyken's emotional involvement in the events (Balmas's 'impresa d'amore'). By markedly highlighting violence, their chief goal was to further the intent of authors and editors keen on encouraging readers to empathize with the victims and recoil from the persecutors. In a similar fashion, a Dutch leaflet from the same period graphically conjures up the horror of the Pasque Piemontesi (*Pâques vaudoises*), a series of massacres perpetrated against Waldensians by Savoyard troops in the Duchy of Savoy at the eve of Easter 1655, with an allegorical portrait of weeping Religion (Figure 7.3): the dreadful sight of a heap of mutilated adults and children flung into mountain ravines reduces the winged and veiled female figure to tears. Religion is clearly understood to be the Reformed faith, as suggested by the open Bible on her lap, and by subsequent iconographic testimony. The dreadful plight of a small valley community thus came to be emblematic of the numerous European episodes of dispersal and exclusion, and its representation a not always disinterested instrument for promoting the emotional identification of readers with the victims.⁸

In this regard, it is significant that the most impressive and frightening set of iconographic works about the Waldensians (some thirty etchings) illustrates the chronicle of the 1655 massacres reported in *The History of the Evangelical Churches of the Valleys of Piedmont*. This was published by Samuel Morland (1625–1695) in 1658, a few months after concluding his diplomatic mission in Piedmont and Geneva. The images (which would be used, together with others, by the Waldensian pastor and historian Jean Léger in his *Histoire générale des églises evangeliques des vallées de Piemont, ou Vaudoises*, 1699) are gruesomely appalling, attesting to the brutal violence that was also meted out to women, children, and even fetuses (Figure 7.4).

Morland had been dispatched to Piedmont by Oliver Cromwell to act as a political mediator in an effort to put a stop to the violent repression of the Waldensians in the lands of the duchy and to deliver donations collected in England to those who had survived. Cromwell's secretary of state, John Thurloe, had then asked Morland to draw up a report on the recent events affecting the Waldensians, to further the Lord Protector's ambitious design to unite all of Europe's Protestants under his protection. Interestingly, some time later, after the political set-up changed, the author anxiously tried to track down every available copy of his work to remove the ill-judged dedication to Cromwell.

On the same page where he noted that 'one of the most diabolical and unsufferable cruelties committed by the priests and missionary monks against the Protestants is that of stealing away their children', Morland recounted the tragic fate of 'one Mr. Sebastian Bazan'. Bazan had died in 1623 in Turin, 'singing the praises of God in the midst of the flames', to where he had been sent by the Inquisition after fifteen months of physical torture and deceitful psychological allurements.⁹

FIGURE 7.3 *Religion in Tears* [*Voy la Religion qui pleure incessamment qu'on répand sans pitié le sang de l'innocent*], c.1663, engraving (attributed to Crispijn de Passe the Younger, in Frederik Muller, *De Nederlandsche geschiedenis in platen*). Bound with the copy of Jean Léger, *Histoire Générale des Églises évangéliques des Vallées de Piémont ou Vaudoises* (n.p., 1669), part 1, 303f. Biblioteca della Società di Studi Valdese, Torre Pellice, Fondo Antichi SSV 126.2, carta a1v; Inv. 18156.

During the French occupation of Piedmont from 1536 to 1559, some of the country's towns had pastors of the Waldensian faith. One of these towns was Pancalieri, where there lived a wealthy family named Bazan, who were converts to the Waldensian creed. The Bazans—Sebastian, his two brothers and their respective families, and their elderly mother—left Pancalieri in the early seventeenth century after liberty of conscience was prohibited and made their home in La Tour, in the Waldensian valley of Luserna. They already knew La Tour, because Sebastian, the eldest son, had previously spent a few years there receiving a religious education.¹⁰ Pierre Gilles (1571–1646), the Vaudois historian, who was a close friend of Sebastian, says:

FIGURE 7.4 *Piedmontese Easter (1655): the impaling and roasting on a spit of a Waldensian virgin, the 10-year old daughter of a Moyses Long of Bobio, etching, in Samuel Morland, *History of the Evangelical Churches of the Valleys of Piemont* (London: 1658), 350. Biblioteca della Società di Studi Valdesi, Torre Pellice, Fondo Meille, 16.*

He was a very zealous defender of the Protestant religion, a man of sincerity, and an enemy of all vice, so that the enemies of virtue and of truth could not easily endure him; but for the rest, he was a man held in great and universal esteem, and of good reputation.¹¹

On 26 April 1622, he had to go to Carmagnola on urgent business. The monks of Carmagnola soon found out that he was there and, considering him a heretic, quickly arranged for a group of armed men to surround the inn where he was lodging. Bazan was seized and tied up, before being taken first to the local jail and then to the prisons of the Senate in Turin. He remained there for several months, during which his friends did everything they could to secure his release. Independently written but essentially matching reconstructions of Bazan's variable state of mind during his time in prison—gratitude towards friends who were trying to mobilize influential figures to intercede with the duke; hope in the duke's munificence, as he was often reluctant to accept papist interference; concern that his wife should continue to receive the support and affection of friends; a placid filial acceptance of divine will, whatever it might be—circulated widely in Protestant Europe. Besides the account written by his friend Gilles, which in 1644 found its way into the *Histoire ecclesiastique des Églises Reformées* (1644), the year 1624 had seen the publication, soon after the execution, of an

octavo booklet (with no indication of either the place or the printer) entitled *Récit véritable de la mort d'un fidèle martyr, brusié vif à Turin, pour la confession de l'Evangile*. In the same year in The Hague, the printer Aert Meuris produced a Dutch version, *Waerachtich verhael, van de Doodt van Sebastiaen Basan*.

The suffering Bazan endured in detention and the uncertainty about how long it would last, were soothed by the comfort of close friends and brothers in the Reformed faith. On 14 July 1622, Sebastian wrote to Gilles:

What favors God has granted me in your letters and your prayers; for every good thing comes to us from God, even the blessing of friendship, and it is He who endows his own with strength and hopefulness in their trials, such as our adversaries cannot credit, who accordingly seek to make us yield by long imprisonments, and by perpetually urging us to abjure; but I am assured that the Lord will never forsake me, and will sustain me to the end. Be so good as to visit my family, and exhort my wife to remain constant in the fear of God. She has need to be affectionately admonished, and gently remonstrated with, which you know better how to do than I to write about it... May God work with His own hand to bring us to perfection, that resting on His holy promises, we may triumph gloriously with our Captain, Jesus Christ, in His glorious heavenly Kingdom.¹²

Other letters, copies of which are in the Archives Tronchin at the Bibliothèque de Genève, even though they do not feature in extant published accounts of Bazan's imprisonment, were addressed to an eminent physician named Jean-Vincent Gosio (or Goz, d. c.1650). Born in Dronero, according to Gilles he distinguished himself by his abnegation during the terrible plague epidemic of 1630, when many Pignerol families and a number of senior officers from the French occupation army travelled to La Tour to seek his medical assistance. One of the three daughters who survived him, Marguerite, married François Arnaud d'Embrun around 1640, and from their union came the above-mentioned Waldensian pastor and leader Henri Arnaud. Although Gosio was forced into exile on several occasions together with his brother Jean Baptiste (a doctor in law *in utroque iure*) for having represented issues of conscience of members of the Reformed Church against the intolerant policies of the Savoyard dukes, he enjoyed widespread respect and consideration among the most authoritative exponents of both confessional communities. It is no surprise, then, that Bazan placed trust in his influence and powers of intercession, as can be evinced from the following excerpts from the Geneva letters:

Most magnificent lord,

I was extremely happy to receive a letter from your lordship, and greatly consoled in seeing the great pains you are taking for my wellbeing. May

the Almighty Lord be infinitely thanked, he who is never neglectful of those who trust in his promises because they are infallible and certain. And I aspire to them with all my heart, that Jesus Christ may give me the strength to withstand all the assaults I am to receive and for which I am preparing. In the meantime I beg of you to assist me through prayer, as I know you will, and to do so continually. I have not yet been examined, I will wait and see how things go and place my hope in the Lord Almighty that everything will go well, because the servants of the Lord will be filled with every blessing... Turin, 15 May.

The most affectionate servant and brother of your lordship,
Sebastiano Bazano

My magnificent lord,

... I have thanked and thank the Lord who is always beside me, consoling me in the midst of my tribulations. I am not yet, at the moment, at the beginning of anything. I have had a plea sent to the senate and they have ordered that I be examined... but they continue to postpone one day after another... Therefore let us allow the boat to be steered by He who has everything in hand, in the certainty that by his grace it shall be led to the desired place of salvation... I am readying myself for lengthy forbearance: in the meantime, pray to the Almighty Lord that he might grant me it, as I know you will do and do. I beg you to convey my entreaties to your brother, to Messer Pietro Gilli, to my godfather Messer Stefano Bastia and... to all brothers in Jesus Christ, that they might pray to the Lord Almighty for we prisoners of the Lord.

Turin, 26 May

The most affectionate servant and brother of your lordship,
Sebastiano Bazano

My most magnificent and honourable lord,

On the occasion of Monsignor de La Fara's presence in Turin, I thought to beg you to intercede with him on my behalf... it is necessary to do so as soon as possible before I am consumed by expense... and do so secretly... I have had pleas delivered to the senate, but I have never been heard. Recently, I secured from His Highness a decree instructing the senate that I should quickly receive justice. The said entreaty was conveyed by the Lord Count [of Luserna] to the Lord President [of the Senate] [Bartolomeo] Marrone, who has never wished to see to it that this order be carried out. Therefore I can only commend myself to God that he might assist and fortify me... Senate prisons, 17 June.

The most affectionate servant of your lordship,
Sebastiano Bazano

My magnificent lord,

As nothing good has been done to date... I beg you... to write again to the lord count of Luserna, thanking him for his good offices so far, and entreating him to call once more for action... and that everything be done praying duly to the Lord Almighty to intervene with his holy hand, without which all help is vain... Turin, 19 June 1622.

The most affectionate servant of your lordship,
Sebastiano Bazano

My magnificent lord,

I see clearly how much you love me... The most illustrious lord Count of Luserna has obtained a decree from His Highness that I should quickly receive justice, and the said entreaty has been placed in the hands of the Lord President Marrone by the hands of the above-named Lord Count, and this morning he has sent me a message informing me that he has spoken to the above-named Lord President, and that he has replied that it will be discussed in senate... May it be God's wish that this be so... May the Lord keep you all in his holy grace. Turin, senate prisons, 21 June.

The most affectionate servant of your lordship,
Sebastiano Bazano.¹³

When he wrote these letters, Sebastian entertained some hope that his case would go before the duke of Savoy, from whom he had cause to expect justice. This did not happen, and instead the Senate of Turin ordered him to be handed over to the Inquisition for examination. This duly occurred on 22 August, when he was transferred to the dungeons of the Holy Office. Although Sebastian's fate was essentially already sealed, his friends still had some hope of saving him and urgently appealed for his release. On 15 February 1623, François de Bonne, duc de Lesdiguières and Constable of France (1543–1626) wrote to the duke of Savoy, who was under obligations to him, asking for Bazan's release:

I have been accustomed to address my supplications to your highness, certain beforehand of not being refused. I request of your highness the life and liberty of one called Sebastian Bazan, detained in the prisons of your city of Turin. He is a man with whom no fault can be found, except as to his religious opinions; and if those who profess the same religion with him ought to be punished with death, then great Christian princes, and even your highness yourself, will have great difficulty in repeopling your dominions. The King of France has granted peace throughout all his kingdom to those of that religion, and I boldly counsel your highness, as your very humble servant, to take the same way. It is the surest means of firmly establishing tranquillity within your dominions.¹⁴

Lesdiguières wrote to the duke a second time, and other prominent figures interceded on Sebastian's behalf. The duke's inclination was to show clemency

and demanded that the Inquisition should free Bazan. But, feigning humility and regret, the Inquisitors replied that the case had been referred to the Pope for his final decision and that they no longer had a say in the matter. Consequently, they dared not release Bazan. The reference to the wishes of Rome might simply have been a trick to confound the duke, who was constrained to desist.

Finally, on 22 November 1623, Sebastian was informed by the officers of the Inquisition that the Holy Office's judgement had been confirmed by Rome, and that he would be burned alive the following day. 'I am contented to die,' he said, calmly and bravely, 'since it is the will of God, and will be, I trust, for his glory. But as for men, they have pronounced an unjust sentence, and they will soon have to give an account of it'.¹⁵ The Inquisitors may have shrugged off his words at the time but had cause to remember them that very same night (or two or three days later, according to other reports), when the Chief Inquisitor, who had passed sentence on Bazan died suddenly despite having seemed to be perfectly healthy. The next day, on 23 November, Bazan was led out to the public square in Turin for execution. His hands had been bound and a gag put in his mouth so he could not talk to the assembled crowd. Many people were familiar with his case and were sympathetic towards him. Just as he was climbing on to the pile, his gag slipped out of his mouth, and he exclaimed in a loud voice: 'People, it is not for a crime that I am brought hither to die; it is for having chosen to conform myself to the Word of God, and for maintaining His truth in opposition to error.'¹⁶ This drew a collective sob from the crowd, an evident sign of their sympathy. Seeing this, the Inquisitors quickly tried to silence him by ordering the executioner to light the pile straight away. But Sebastian's voice rang out clearly from the smoke and fire enveloping him, as he sang the hymn of Theodore Beza (a touching version of the words of Simeon upon beholding the infant Saviour: Luke 2:29–30), which the Waldensians were accustomed to sing after celebrating the Lord's Supper:

Laisse-moi désormais,
Seigneur, aller en paix,
Car selon ta promesse,
Tu fais voir à mes yeux
Le saint glorieux
Que j'attendais sans cesse.¹⁷

Lord, now you are letting your servant
depart in peace,
according to your word;
for my eyes have seen your salvation. [ESV Bible]

As the crowd looked on in tears, thick smoke rose into the air, gradually stifling Sebastian's voice, until it fell silent as the fire consumed him.

In compiling his *History of the Cruel Sufferings of the Protestants*, John Lockman drew on various occasions on the highly popular *History of the Reformation of the Church of England*, by the Latitudinarian prelate Gilbert Burnet (1643–1715), who had written it to confute the representation of the English Reformation as a mere political expedient on the part of a corrupt sovereign. For this view had been advanced once again in a recent French translation of the *De origine et progressu schismatis Anglicani libri tres* by Nicholas Sanders (1585).¹⁸ Curiously, Burnet had described the dramatic vicissitudes of the Waldensians in very vivid terms, in order to reinforce consensus for the Orangist cause.

Unwelcome at court because of his preaching and anti-Catholic writings, Burnet obtained permission in 1685 to travel to the continent. After an initial sojourn in Paris, he travelled in Italy, southern France, and Switzerland, before then going to Utrecht. Finally, at the invitation of the princes of Orange, he settled in The Hague.¹⁹ He gave a detailed account of his travels in several letters addressed to Robert Boyle, which were published in book form in Rotterdam in 1686 by Abraham Acher (c.1653–1743). Acher was a Huguenot from Dieppe, who took refuge in the Low Countries, and the publisher of many writings by the leading Huguenot theologian Pierre Jurieu (including *L'accomplissement des prophéties*, the *Traité de l'unité de l'église*, the *Traité de la nature et de la grâce*). The account of Burnet's travels included the brutal violence sparked by the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, which he witnessed at first hand; in the last of his letters, dated in Nijmegen on 20 May 1686, Burnet expressed his shock at the massacres he had seen:

I do not think that in any age there ever was such a violation of all that is Sacred, either with relation to God or Man... I do not see that the French King is to be so much blamed in this matter as his Religion is, which, without question, obligeth him to extirpate Hereticks, and not to keep his Faith to them: so that instead of censuring him, I must only lament his being bred up in a Religion that doth certainly obligeth him to devest himself of Humanity, and to violate his faith, whensoever the cause of his Church and Religion requireth it.²⁰

'What I saw and knew there at first hand', he added with dismay, 'confirmed everything learned from books of cruelty of religion', a revealing clue that he was aware of the importance of earlier representations of Catholic violence, like those of Morland or Léger, or even the *Récit véritable*, in shaping perceptions of contemporary events.²¹ He prefaced his considerations by affirming that he could offer detailed testimony of numerous episodes of cruel violence, 'that are so much beyond all the common measures of barbarity and cruelty', but held back from providing them out of fear of exposing to even greater peril those 'that are yet in the power of their enemies'.

Two years later, Abraham Acher printed in a very small 16mo book format, anonymously and in French, the *Histoire de la persécution des Valées de Piémont*,²²

a careful account of the extermination and deportation to Switzerland of Reformed Piedmontese in the late 1680s, commonly attributed to Burnet.²³ Reneging on reiterated formal commitments (*'ne sont pas de simples tolerances, mais des concessions perpetuelles'*²⁴) made to the loyal Reformed communities of the Waldensian valleys,²⁵ a French-Piedmontese army had been sent in April 1686 to quell the resistance of anyone who did not accept the choice of conversion or exile. The result was a massacre of over one thousand Waldensians and the imprisonment of over 8,500 survivors (*'Il n'y eut jamais de persecution ni plus injuste ni plus violente'*²⁶). The text forcefully describes the Savoyard deceitful pretence to achieve peace and display clemency,²⁷ the massacre of children, women, and the elderly,²⁸ the dreadful conditions of imprisonment, the removal of minors from their loved ones, the sufferings of deportation and the desperate arrival of survivors in Geneva, where many found 'the end of their life at the beginning of their freedom' (*la fin de leur vie dans le commencement de leur liberté*)²⁹:

Those that arrived first went to meet those that came after, to inform themselves concerning their kinsfolks and acquaintances of who they had heard no news since the reddition of the valleys. A father enquired after his child, and a child after his father, a husband sought for his wife, and a wife for her husband, and every one endeavoured to hear some news of their friends and neighbours; but as this was to very little purpose, since the most part were dead in prison, it made a spectacle so sad and dismal, that all that stood by, were dissolved in tears, whilst these poor miserable creatures, being oppressed, and overwhelmed with the excess of their grief, were not able any longer to lament themselves, or so much to complain.³⁰

In Protestant Europe, rife with millenaristic expectations and serious concerns about shaky dynastic and political set-ups, a lively campaign began to denounce the murders of the Waldensians and offer solidarity to the victims. This was not limited to the immediate aftermath of events.³¹ In England in particular, as had already been the case under Cromwell, the fate of the Waldensians acquired a strategic symbolic importance, as arguments were being woven to corroborate the thesis of the legitimacy and providentiality of the exclusive Protestant succession to the throne. Burnet, a first-hand witness of the tragic events on the continent in 1686, was certainly one of the most hardworking facilitators of this sophisticated ideological weaponry, and he was immediately rewarded by King William with the bishopric of Salisbury.

Both Burnet and then Lockman celebrated the Italian Reformed communities prevalently for domestic purposes, one immediately before the Glorious Revolution (to which, for the purposes of reciprocal legitimation, the *Glorieuse Rentrée* of the Waldensian exiles to their valleys was promptly compared), and the other on the emotional wave of the Jacobite rebellions.³²

Their aim was to foment anti-Catholic sentiment in order to seal a political-constitutional arrangement based on the exclusion of members of one confessional group, the Catholics (and with them, the anti-Trinitarians and atheists), from succession to the throne or eligibility for public office. The reiterated denunciation in the *Histoire* that Vittorio Amedeo II had abrogated edicts that were not '*simples tolerances, mais des concessions perpetuelles*', was aimed in fact at rooting the conviction that one could not expect a Catholic sovereign to honour pacts. Little did it matter that, in 1687, James II had issued, solely on his own authority, a Declaration of Indulgence that introduced what John Miller described as 'the most complete toleration England had ever known',³³ after over twenty years in which the repressive measures adopted against religious dissent in England had been much more burdensome than the restrictions to which the Huguenots were subjected in France (and in fact France was looked to in those years as a model of limited tolerance to be imitated). The *Histoire de la persécution des Valées de Piémont* was thus in large part a justification of the resistance to the arbitrary government of James II and of the legitimate succession of William of Orange. The return of several hundred Waldensians to their Piedmontese valleys in 1689, made possible by changes in the duke's alliances and by English support, strengthened the conviction of many Protestants, in England, Holland, and Ireland, that God supported their cause in Europe through the providential action of William. No differently, in 1692, the English translation of Boyer's apocalyptic interpretation of Waldensian events (*The History of the Vaudois*), significantly dedicated to William, served as legitimation of the revolutionary new set-up in Ireland that reinforced the dominion of the Protestant elites over the Catholic majority of the population.³⁴

The so-called Toleration Act of 1689 certainly put an end to the oppression, imprisonment, and financial ruin of Trinitarian Protestant dissidents, but notably excluded anti-Trinitarians and Catholics from its benefits. Despite all the early and very influential English debates on tolerance, much admired by Voltaire, it would not be until 1778 that the terms of the Toleration Act were extended to English Catholics, and not until the nineteenth century that they were emancipated.³⁵ As John Marshall (an eminent scholar of Locke and of contemporary debates about tolerance) stresses, the indignation aroused by Catholic violence against the Waldensians did not prompt a similar censure of anti-Catholic violence and discrimination in England and especially in Ireland. On the contrary, it provided further justification for anti-Catholic persecution. The warnings issued by William Penn, the Quaker leader disliked by Burnet, to the effect that those who deplored the ferocity displayed by the king of France against 'his peaceable subjects' should not neglect to look also at what was happening at home ('look at home upon greater cruelties') went largely unheard.³⁶

It is likewise significant that Burnet was a zealous supporter of the Test Acts of 1673 and 1678, which had barred Catholics from access to public office and

parliamentary seats. And he was the one who translated the letter of intent (*Letter to Stewart*) written by the Dutch diplomat Gaspar Fagel, which declared William of Orange's commitment to preserving full freedom of conscience for all English subjects, Protestant and Catholic, while at the same time reaffirming the determination to exclude Catholics from all public office:

Those Laws remain still in their full vigour by which the Roman Catholics are shut out of both Houses of Parliament, and out of all public employments; ecclesiastical, civil and military: as likewise all those others, which confirm the Protestant Religion and which secure it against all the attempts of the Roman Catholics.³⁷

Furthermore, towards the end of the 1690s, Burnet's religious intolerance would grow further when he began associating English Socinians with intellectual and sexual libertinism, and advocating their repression.³⁸

Anti-Catholicism ultimately shaped the British Protestant emotional community far beyond the merely political aims of the anti-popish propaganda actors. For instance, the introduction of the Catholic Relief Act in 1778 sparked a wave of protest that soon degenerated into the most violent city riots in British history; when Catholic emancipation was eventually granted in 1829, it was contested most vociferously by less literate people, mainly women. In his *Commentaire philosophique sur ces paroles de Jésus-Christ: 'Contrains-les d'entrer'* (1686), Pierre Bayle pointedly observed that erecting fences, however small, entails remaining bound to an ideology that would always permit the erecting of other such fences (*'On ne peut avoir de bonnes raisons pour tolerer une secte, si elles ne sont pas bonnes pour en tolerer une autre'*). It has long been noted that the Glorious Revolution meant that the exclusionary legislation against English Catholics was infrequently applied, and only to a very limited extent, essentially continuing to exist *in terrorem*. Nonetheless, an investigation of the emotional history of the confessional conflicts in late-Stuart and Hanoverian England cannot neglect the emotions felt by Catholics about the objective precariousness of their status and uncertainty regarding their rights.

Notes

- 1 John Lockman, *A History of the Cruel Sufferings of the Protestants, and Others, by Popish Persecutions, in Various Countries* (Dublin, 1763 [London, 1760]); *The Sufferings of John Coustos for Freemasonry and for His Refusing to Turn Roman Catholic in the Inquisition at Lisbon* (London, 1746). See Giovanni Tarantino, "The Mysteries of Popery Unveiled: Affective Language in John Coustos' and Anthony Gavin's Accounts of the Inquisition," in *Spaces for Feeling: Emotions and Sociabilities in Britain, 1650–1850*, ed. Susan Broomhall (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2015), 35–51.
- 2 Copies of Balzan's unpublished letters are housed in Bibliothèque de Genève, Arch. Tronchin 145, fols. 2–4, 'écrit sur la captivité et la mort de Sebastiano Basano, Vaudois, et copie de 5 lettres en italien écrite par Basano emprisonné'—1623.

- 3 See Vincenzo Lavenia, "L'Inquisizione del Duca: I Domenicani e il Sant'Uffizio in Piemonte nella prima età moderna," in *I domenicani e l'Inquisizione romana*, ed. Carlo Longo (Rome: Istituto Storico Domenicano, 2008), 415–76.
- 4 Colin Haydon, *Anti-Catholicism in Eighteenth-Century England, c.1714–80: A Political and Social Study* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1993), 27.
- 5 *Il teatro della crudeltà praticata nelli più severi tormenti del mondo* (Venice, 1696).
- 6 See Enea Balmas, "Jan Luyken e il suo Théâtre des Martyrs," *Bollettino Società Studi Valdesi* 141–142 (1977): 3–44. See also Enea Balmas, *Le incisioni 'valdesi' di Jan Luyken* (Torre Pellice: Società di Studi Valdesi, s.a. [c.1977]).
- 7 Balmas, "Jan Luyken e il suo Théâtre des Martyrs," 23.
- 8 See Giovanni Tarantino, "Mapping Religion (and Emotions) in the Protestant Valleys of Piedmont," *ASDIWAL* 9 (2014): 91–105; Giovanni Tarantino, "Religion and Spirituality," in Katie Barclay, David Lemmings, and Claire Walker, eds, *A Cultural History of the Emotions in the Baroque and Enlightenment Age (1600–1780)* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2019), 35–51. See also Judith Pollman, *Memory in Early Modern Europe, 1500–1800* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 159–85.
- 9 Samuel Morland, *History of the Evangelical Churches of the Valleys of Piemont* (London, 1658), 277.
- 10 See Pierre Gilles, *Histoire ecclésiastique des Églises Reformées recueillies en quelques Vallées de Piedmont, autrefois appelées Églises Vaudoises de l'an 1160 au 1643* (Geneva, 1644), 426–31; *Récit véritable de la mort d'un fidèle martyr, brûlé vif à Turin, pour la confession de l'Evangile* (n. p., 1624); *Waerachtich verhael, van de Doodt van Sebastiaen Basan ... constant Martelaer levendich verbrandt tot Turim, om de belijdenisse van 't Euangelie* (The Hague, 1624); *Sketches of the Waldenses* (London: The Religious Tract Society, 1846), 121–23; Alexander Hislop, *The Red Republic; or, Scarlet-Coloured Beast of the Apocalypse: Being An Inquiry into the Period of the Prophesying of the Two Witnesses, and the Character of the Beast That Kills Them* (Edinburgh, 1849), 44; Alexis Muston, *Israel of the Alps* (or. *L'Israël des Alpes: première histoire complète des Vaudois du Piémont et de leurs colonies*, 4 vols, Paris, 1851), transl. by John Montgomery (London, 1875), 1:219–22; James D. McCabe Jr, *Cross and Crown, or, The Sufferings and Triumphs of the Heroic Men and Women Who Were Persecuted for the Religion of Jesus Christ* (Cincinnati, Ohio, Memphis, Tenn., and Atlanta, GA, 1874), 167–74; Giovanni Jalla, "La Riforma in Piemonte negli anni 1620–1623," *Bulletin de la Société d'histoire vaudoise* 60 (1933): 5–61 (35–39) (reissued in book format as Giovanni Jalla, *Storia della Riforma Religiosa in Piemonte durante i regni di Carlo Emanuele I e Vittorio Amedeo I (1580–1637)*, vol. 2 (Torre Pellice: Libreria Editrice Claudiana, 1936)).
- 11 Gilles, *Histoire ecclésiastique*, 427, quoted in translation in Muston, *Israel of the Alps*, 1:219.
- 12 Gilles, *Histoire ecclésiastique*, 428, quoted in translation in McCabe Jr, *Cross and Crown*, 168–69.
- 13 Bibliothèque de Genève, Arch. Tronchin 145, fols. 2–4, translation mine.
- 14 Gilles, *Histoire ecclésiastique*, 429–30, quoted in translation in McCabe Jr, *Cross and Crown*, 171.
- 15 Gilles, *Histoire ecclésiastique*, 431, turned into direct discourse and quoted in translation in Muston, *Israel of the Alps*, 1:219.
- 16 As quoted in Muston, *Israel of the Alps*, 1:222.
- 17 I am mostly following Muston's enthralling dramatized narrative here (Gilles simply recounts that the upset onlookers thought he had sung the hymn of Simeon). Alexis Muston (1810–1888), a Waldensian pastor, was one of the founders and the first honorary president of the Société d'Histoire Vaudoise. *L'Israël des Alpes* proved extremely successful, and, translated into English, German, and Danish, was the chief reference source for Waldensian culture and legacy throughout the nineteenth century. See *Héritage(s). Formazione e trasmissione della cultura valdese*, ed. Daniele Jalla (Turin: Claudiana, 2009), 399.

- 18 Many years after the publication of the first two volumes of the *History* (1679 and 1681), and following the peace of Utrecht in 1713—which many Whigs suspected concealed a secret commitment to put the Stuarts back on the throne—Burnet began work on a third volume, pre-announcing it with an introduction that warned of the cruelty and slavery intrinsic to the Catholic faith. He told readers that there was a plan, ‘very probably suggested by King Philip and some of his Spaniards’, to set up a tribunal of the Inquisition in England.
- 19 For more on Burnet’s travels, see Franco Venturi, “L’Italia fuori dell’Italia,” in *Storia d’Italia*, vol. 3, *Dal primo Settecento all’Unità* (Turin: Einaudi, 1973), 990–96 and Michaela Valente, *Contro l’Inquisizione. Il dibattito europeo, secc. XVI–XVIII* (Turin: Claudiana, 2009), 108–11.
- 20 *Some Letters, Containing An Account of What Seemed Most Remarkable in Switzerland, Italy, &c. Written by Gilbert Burnet, D.D. to T.H.R.B.* (Rotterdam, 1686), 255–57.
- 21 See John Marshall, *John Locke, Toleration and Early Enlightenment Culture: Religious Intolerance and Arguments for Religious Tolerance in Early Modern and ‘Early Enlightenment’ Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 56.
- 22 *Histoire de la persécution des Valées de Piémont, contenant ce qui s’est passé dans la dissipation des Eglises et des habitants de ces Valées, arrivée en l’an 1686* (Rotterdam, 1688). The *Histoire* was reprinted in quarto the year after by Acher himself.
- 23 See, for example, William Thomas Lowndes, *The Bibliographer’s Manual of English Literature*, vol. 4, P–Sim (London, 1834); Marshall, *John Locke, Toleration and Early Enlightenment Culture*, 56; Benjamin J. Kaplan, *Divided by Faith: Religious Conflict and the Practice of Toleration in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007), 337. The *Histoire de la persécution des Valées de Piémont* has not infrequently been attributed to Jurieu as well. And in truth, the justification of armed resistance by the Waldensians (‘justifier la conduite que les Vaudois ont tenue ... est proprement du sujet de cette relation’) perhaps fits with Jurieu’s apocalyptic views—which placed him in opposition to Bayle—more than with post-revolutionary Orangist propaganda. However, in his writings in exile, Burnet had repeatedly sustained the legitimacy of active resistance against an arbitrary government, to the point that the Catholic Pierre Paulian did not hesitate to describe him as the ‘Jurieu d’Angleterre’. See Marshall, *John Locke, Toleration and Early Enlightenment*, 86.
- 24 *Histoire de la persécution des Valées de Piémont*, 19.
- 25 On the gradual symbolic and cartographic appropriation of territory by the Waldensian valley-dwellers, see the studies of Marco Fratini, “La ‘Carta delle tre valli di Piemonte’ di Valerio Grosso e la sua diffusione europea fra Sei e Ottocento,” *Bollettino della Società di Studi Valdesi* 189 (2001): 47–73 and “Una frontiera confessionale. La territorializzazione dei valdesi del Piemonte nella cartografia del Seicento,” in *Confini e frontiere nell’età moderna*, ed. Alessandro Pastore (Milan: FrancoAngeli, 2007) 127–43. See also Tarantino, “Mapping Religion (and Emotions) in the Protestant Valleys of Piedmont.”
- 26 *Histoire de la persécution*, 118.
- 27 ‘On aura sujet de s’estonner de la facilité avec laquelle les Vaudois se laissoient si souvent tromper’, *Histoire de la persécution*, 73.
- 28 *Histoire de la persécution*, 55, 77, 80.
- 29 *Histoire de la persécution*, 113.
- 30 *Histoire de la persécution*, 113–14.
- 31 In 1699 the popular preacher Nicholas Brady warned his parishioners not to place the usual English aversion to everything foreign before solidarity with the Waldensian brothers: ‘Let none (I intreat you) of those little prejudices, which are apt to affect mean spirits and vulgar understandings, prevail with persons of ability and sense, to shut up their bowels of compassion from them: Let us not so far remember that they are *foreigners*, a word that sounds harshly in English ears, as to forget that they are Christians and Protestants’, *A Sermon Preach’d at the Parish-Church of Richmond in*

- Surry: *April the 5th, 1699. Being the Day Appointed for a Publick Humiliation and Collection for the Vaudois* (London, 1699), 19. For more on the circumstances that led, in 1699, to the start of a new campaign of solidarity in England towards the Waldensians (following a decree expelling Waldensians of French origin proclaimed by Vittorio Amedeo of Savoy), see Sugiko Nishikawa, *English Attitudes toward Continental Protestants with Particular Reference to Church Briefs c.1680–1740* (PhD Diss., University of London, 1998), 49ff.
- 32 Although he only published it in 1760, immediately after the English conquest of Quebec, Lockman worked on compiling the *History of the Cruel Sufferings of the Protestants* in the same months in which he was preparing (and perhaps also translating from a French original) the memoirs of Coustos for publication. See Giovanni Tarantino, "Gli eccidi dei valdesi nella propaganda anti-giacobita di Gilbert Burnet e John Lockman," *Bollettino della Società di Studi Valdesi* 215 (2014): 73–102.
- 33 John Miller, "James II and Toleration," in *By Force or By Default? The Revolution of 1688–1689*, ed. Eveline Cruickshanks (Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers Ltd, 1989), 19.
- 34 Marshall, *John Locke, Toleration and Early Enlightenment*, 89.
- 35 Both legislative innovations were followed by disorder in the streets. The protests against the passage of the *Catholic Relief Act* through Parliament in 1778 turned into the most prolonged urban riots in British history (with over 1,000 deaths). One extraordinary witness of it all was Ignatius Sancho, born a slave, who in one of his letters took note, with a certain irony, of the 'worse than Negro barbarity of the populace'. And he added, as an ex-Catholic who had converted to Anglicanism and was tempted by Methodism: 'I am forced to own, that I am for universal toleration. Let us convert by our example, and conquer by our meekness and brotherly love!' See Ignatius Sancho, *Letters of the Late Ignatius Sancho, An African*, with an introduction and notes by Vincent Carretta (New York: Penguin Books, 1998), 219–20.
- 36 Marshall, *John Locke, Toleration and Early Enlightenment*, 95.
- 37 *A Letter, Writ by Mijm Heer Fagel (Pensioner of Holland) to Mr. James Stewart (Advocate); Giving an Account of the Prince and Princess of Orange's Thoughts Concerning the Repeal of the Test, and the Penal Laws* (n.p., 1688).
- 38 Marshall, *John Locke, Toleration and Early Enlightenment*, 137, 717–18.

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