Exiles-Migrants and Reconciliation in the Spanish Low Countries after the Peace of Arras (1579)

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ABSTRACT: This article contributes to the assessment of the management of migrants at the end of the 16th century as part of the challenge, by both central and municipal authorities, for ending the civil war in the Spanish Low Countries. In particular, it questions to what extent experiences of exiles, returnees and migrants presented a challenge for families, economic regulation and public order in the French-speaking reconciled provinces (Hainaut, Artois and the Walloon Flanders), in the new framework of the pacification and religious normalization. It focuses on how did the towns, when confronted with various forms of mobility, attempt to apply the practice of reconciliation. On the one hand, the general policy of reconciliation tried to build a post bellum society under the Roman Catholic faith and the King's sovereignty, not only by excluding those who refused to recant in order to conform to the rules of the pacification, but also by forgiving and reincorporating the migrants who crossed confessional boundaries. Then, it considers how, at their level, the municipal authorities had to take various patterns of migration into account, in particular those that connected most of the towns of the Union of Arras to the Protestant Refuge in England and the Dutch Republic, reducing the importance of the migrants' religious status in their selection criteria. Finally, theses practices opened a space for discussion and a shy civic toleration between the Catholic aldermen, the ex-Calvinists who had chosen official reconciliation, and the textile workers migrants while still being accommodated and welcomed into the exile Protestant Churches, relegating the debate about personal confessional practices and religion from public space to the family sphere.

KEYWORDS: Pacification; Dutch Revolt; Pardon; Exile; Returnees; Migrations; Reintegration.

RESUMEN: *Exiliados-migrantes y reconciliación en los Países Bajos después de la Paz de Arras (1579).*- Este artículo tiene como objetivo entender la gestión de los emigrantes a finales del siglo XVI como parte del objetivo de terminar la guerra civil en los Países Bajos Españoles al que se enfrentaron tanto autoridades centrales como locales. En concreto, ese texto plantea hasta qué punto las experiencias de exilio, retorno y migración representaron un desafío para las familias que lo sufrieron y para la regulación económica y el orden público en las provincias de habla francesa reconciliadas con el monarca (Hainaut, Artois y la Flandes Valona) en el marco de la pacificación y normalización religiosa. El análisis se concentra en cómo las ciudades intentan poner en práctica la reconciliación a la hora de hacer frente a varias formas de movilidad. Por un lado, la política general de reconciliación intentó construir una sociedad de postguerra en torno al catolicismo romano y la soberanía del rey, no solamente excluyendo a aquellos que se negaron a retractarse para acogerse a la política de pacificación, sino también perdonando y reincorporando a los emigrantes que cruzaban las fronteras confesionales. Por otro lado, las autoridades municipales tuvieron que tener en cuenta varias pautas migratorias a la hora de aplicar la reconciliación, en particular las que conectaban la mayor parte de las ciudades de la Unión de Arrás con el refugio protestante en Inglaterra y las Provincias Unidas. De esta forma redujeron considerablemente la importancia del status religioso de los emigrantes y los criterios de selección que les permitían incorporarse a la sociedad. Por último, estas prácticas abrieron un espacio para la negociación

de una modesta tolerancia cívica entre ediles católicos, ex-calvinistas que habían optado por la reconciliación oficial y los trabajadores textiles que seguían practicando su religión en las iglesias protestantes del exilio, relegando el debate sobre las prácticas confesionales personales y religión del espacio público a la esfera familiar.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Pacificación; Revuelta de los Países Bajos; Política de Perdón; Exilio; Retornados; Migración; Reintegración.

At the end of the 16th century, the Spanish Low Countries experienced new challenges for restoring a long-lasting peace and for putting into practice new ways of reconciliation. The Protestant revolt which began in 1566 had been harshly put down by the Council of Troubles. But the punishment turned into a civil war during the decade of 1570 that lead to the collapse of King Philip II's authority in most of his 17 provinces (Parker, 1990). With the signing of the Union of Arras in January 1579, the deputies of the provinces of Artois, Walloon Flanders and Hainaut laid the foundations of a new deal with the King of Spain for ending the civil conflict. They advocated an official reconciliation based upon the exclusiveness of Catholicism, the acknowledgment of King Philip's authority in return for the departure of the Spanish garrisons and the confirmation of local privileges (Ruiz Ibáñez and Sabatini, 2009). The deal was brokered with Alexander Farnese as King Philip's representative, and the Peace of Arras was signed in May 1579.

One of the challenges of reconciliation was the management of migrants. Unlike the previous Pacification of Ghent (1576), which planned a global or "secular" return of the refugees and exiles, the reconciliation policy involved some major changes in who was not allowed to remain in the reconciled provinces and who was given permission to return in relation to the clarification on the confessional boundaries as defined by the Peace of Arras (Stensland, 2012: 89-90; Janssen, 2014: 161-164; Junot and Soen, forthcoming). The new religious framework confirmed that Calvinism lost its last chance of being accepted in the provinces that had set up the reconciliation with King Philip II on an exclusively Catholic basis. This change was strengthened by Farnese's military action against the rebel towns of Flanders and Brabant between 1581 and 1587. When Farnese died in 1592, the Catholic pacification pattern adopted in 1579 was successfully extended to the whole southern provinces of the Spanish Low Countries. From then on, the provinces reconciled with the Hispanic Monarchy were surrounded either by Protestant states (England) or by tolerant states (the Dutch Republic or "rebel provinces", the kingdom of France under the rule of the *Edit de Nantes*, and the Holy Empire) that more or less guaranteed the legal coexistence with the confessional minorities. The fighting spirit of an exclusive Catholicism in the wake of the Tridentine Reformation permeated the society of the reconciled Low Countries (Lottin, 2013; Pollman, 2011). And this impacted the relations with the neighbouring countries, where refugee communities had been established since the beginning of the Dutch Revolt (Esser, 1996; Frijhoff, 1998; Schilling, 1972; Spicer, 1997). Therefore, the interactions between residents of the Spanish Low Countries, returnees and exiles of different religious beliefs on both sides of the boundaries of the reconciled provinces, might put to the test the process of reconciliation.

The manufacturing towns of the provinces that were signatories of the Peace of Arras right from the start constitute a case study for analyzing the social and civic normalization after the civil war on a local level. While they had been the epicenter of the 1566 iconoclast crisis, these towns became a laboratory for the re-catholicization process, with the new civic cohesion, familial relationships and the economic recovery confronting various forms of exiles and refugees. First, the text defines the general policy of reconciliation and its local consequences as forgiveness, return home or emigration. Then, it considers how, at their level, the municipal authorities had to take into account various patterns of migration. Finally, it shows how the consideration about migrants and returnees could constitute a shy civic tolerance and a source of family dissentions.

POLICY OF RECONCILIATION: FROM THE SOVEREIGN'S PARDON TO THE RETURN HOME

Amnesty and amnesia: the general and local uses of pardon in the 1570's

The reconciliation policy required forgiveness of the acts connected with the religious troubles. This duty of forgiveness constitutes an important aspect of the moral economics of peace in the pacification laws (De Waele and Martens, 2015). In 1570 and especially 1574, the first attempts at a general pardon, on King Philip II's initiative, granted reconciliation only to those who had lived according to the teachings of the Catholic Church during their exile. In 1576, when the States General signed the Pacification of Ghent without the sovereign's consent, the provincial deputies managed to include all cross-confessional offences of any kind as well as acts of rebellion against the King of Spain (Goosens, 1997: 114-125; Soen, 2012a; Vrolijk and De Schepper, 2004). As a consequence, all private property confiscated since the beginning of the troubles had to be returned to its owner, and all judicial sentences had to be revoked. One measure taken to enforce

the pardon was the destruction and the purge of all kinds of archives that related the first stage of the Dutch Revolt (1566-1567). At local level, because of their judicial jurisdiction, both the prince's officers and municipal authorities held these archives of repression. The destruction of registers of criminal sentences took effect under their supervision. And where it was necessary to keep documents, the entries of the Protestants' activities during the troubles were erased, crossed out or had fake mentions added to them (Junot, 2012b). This first stage of the reincorporation of exiles was managed concurrently both by the King of Spain and his Governor General in the Low Countries, and the States Provincial and General, passing over the issue of religious freedom. Nevertheless, the climate of civil war compromised the opportunity to return safely, while Don Juan, King Philip's representative in 1577-1578, gave a Catholic interpretation to the pacification in the few provinces under his control.

A second stage of troubles occurred in 1578-1579, when the provinces of Artois, Walloon Flanders and Hainaut (caesura) began to negotiate a more stable reconciliation with Philip II, coming to an agreement on the protection of the monopoly of the Catholic church. This attempt by the local Catholic elites to negotiate with the King frightened the local Protestants, freshly returned from exile. The latter tried to regain control of municipal institutions by force, as they had done previously in 1566. But this time, they were defeated by a forceful reaction from the Catholic burghers in Arras, Lille or Valenciennes (Duquenne, 2010; Junot, 2009: 95-100). The Catholic aldermen put down the uprising with the aid of the local militia, while at the same time enforcing a policy of amnesia: it was forbidden for inhabitants to blame one another for the ongoing riots, and the new rules for the civic militia threatened with death the burghers who debated religion or quarreled, to avoid a greater division within the society (Junot, 2015: 41-44). The aldermen decided to keep order and concord first within the civic community because they wished to succeed in signing the reconciliation with the Hispanic Monarchy. But, as soon as the peace was concluded in 1579, they sentenced to banishment all the local leaders and the active members of the Calvinist party, particularly in Lille where around 300 people were expelled (Lottin, 2000). This wave of repression differed from the action of the Council of Troubles ten years previously which had punished the sedition by death. The purge of 1579-1582 allowed for a greater consensus within the society, contrary to the terror the Council of Troubles had inspired. The urban authorities who were supporters of the Union of Arras had successfully used the promise of a pardon to ensure the local success of a Catholic restoration.

Extending a hand to rebels and exiles: the individual reconciliation process

The *clementia principis*, in accordance with neo-stoicism, required the prince to show forgiveness and mercy, gentleness and justice in a context of civil war. Moreover,

these political virtues secured the love and obedience of his subjects for the prince as well as serving his own glory. So the monarch could show mercy: it was a sign that his sovereignty had been restored (Brière, 2011: 35-38; De Waele, 1993). The prince of Parma, Alexander Farnese, Governor General of the Low Countries after the death of Don Juan in 1578, promoted both collective and individual reconciliation in the name of King Philip II.

The individual reconciliation policy allowed exiles or inhabitants in enemy territory to return to the pacified provinces of the Union of Arras. The process was fairly easy: anybody could beg for mercy by sending a request to the governor general. It was then carefully examined by the Secret Council, the most important government council in the Spanish Low Countries. The petitioner was the object of an in-depth investigation. The members of the Secret Council set up an inquiry and asked for testimonies of his good faith from the aldermen or from the priest of the native place, but if the latter was still in a rebel province, they would question fellow citizens who were refugees in the reconciled provinces, in order to test the sincerity of the request. The Secret Council would then issue or deny the letter of reconciliation to the petitioner[1]. In that way, Farnese tended to favour a close collaboration between the Secret Council, the municipal and provincial justices, and the exiled loyalists, as a means to put the sincerity of the local elites regarding the Peace of Arras to the test. The lack of a special central administration responsible for the registration or examination of the reconciliations (as noticed by Pollmann, 2011: 129) avoided remembering the Council of Troubles and made the local justices partners in the process.

The purpose of the letter of reconciliation was to reestablish the link between the King and his subject. On the one hand, the King reaffirmed his sovereignty and his mercy, and gave the petitioner his protection and permission to re-join the community of faithful subjects, in return for "the forgiveness of bad things". The promise of burying the past was in the wake of the previous experiences of the collective pardon which had been granted by Philip II in 1574 and by the States General in 1576. On the other hand, the beneficiary had to promise he would live under the "old Catholic faith", carrying out the duties of confession and communion, and he would refuse to support the prince of Orange or other heretics. He benefited from the act of reconciliation and from the restitution of his properties as soon as he returned to a territory under the King's obedience that adhered to the Union of Arras. But in practice, at the beginning of the 1580's, Farnese was authorizing people to stay either in neutral places in France or in the Holy Roman Empire, not far from the border, or in places under the rebels' control in the secessionist provinces of the Low Countries. It was a way of enlisting partisans among the enemy while Farnese organized the re-conquest of the most important cities of Flanders and Brabant in 1584-1585 (Janssen, 2014: 136-138; Junot, 2012b). The letters of reconciliation expressed the wish for reiterating and asserting the King's sovereignty far beyond the Union of Arras, to in-

clude the rebellious provinces where the States General had deposed Philip II in 1581.

The new management of migrations by Alexander Farnese

The reconciliation policy launched by the prince of Parma involved a management of displaced populations which concerned both returns and departures. From 1581, when Farnese besieged and took the city of Tournai, until 1585 with the conquest of Antwerp, he carried out the reincorporation of 70 or so towns, in accordance with the rules of the Peace of Arras (Soen, 2012b). Each time, Farnese gave their Protestant inhabitants the option to stay for a specified period of time, on condition that they not cause trouble or public scandal and that they decide to convert to Catholicism or not. If they did not want to recant, they were given permission to leave within the allotted time limit and without confiscation of their possessions. Ultimately, their "genuine" incorporation or exclusion from the Tridentine and reconciled society was at stake. Farnese and King Philip II were hopeful that this time limit could be used for careful consideration by those involved, and finally would encourage the abdication of heretic belief and the conversion to Catholicism, or if not, legal emigration. The provisional right to emigrate became a binding instrument of pacification handled by Farnese, a way of purging the society of disloyal or dissident elements without the violence that had prevailed in the times of the Council of Troubles (De Waele, 2002; Goosens, 1997: 125).

The civil war and the various waves of exodus of people who left the Low Countries for England, the Dutch Republic or the German towns caused depopulation inside the reconciled provinces. The global volume of emigrants (whether Protestant or Catholic) during the last third of the 16th century, is estimated to be 100,000-150,000 persons (Briels, 1985: 80, 359; Janssen, 2014: 3). Farnese's reconciliation policy took place in the context of growing economic competition from the Dutch Republic from the 1580's onwards. The number of migrants was of crucial importance. The emigration that Farnese temporarily allowed was acceptable only if people started to move back to the reconciled provinces as well. At the end of the four-years time limit granted for the reconciliation of Antwerp in 1585, half of the inhabitants, i.e. 40,000 people, left the city, most of the for the Dutch Republic. The Governor General was very attentive to the economic and demographic conditions, because he had to meet the expectations of the towns and the States Provincial of the Union of Arras: the success of the political reconciliation between the King and his subjects also depended on economic recovery. That is why Farnese promoted a repopulation policy after each conquest, for example, by calling on French farmers cultivate the fields of Flanders again (Junot, 2012c).

This pattern of migrations, which associated the authorized emigration of the non-reconcilable individuals with the influx of Catholic foreigners along with the return of reconciled people, reflected the policy of the Hispanic Monarchy whose aim was to insure the pacification of its Low Countries. The local authorities were put in charge of this policy but, in practice, confronted a more complicated reality.

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT VARIOUS PATTERNS OF MIGRATION AT THE LEVEL OF URBAN AUTHORITY

The comings and goings of refugees and exiles: the Catholic case

Various patterns of migration at the time of reconciliation coexisted and needed to be accounted for by the municipal authorities. The war or religious refugees represented the most visible side of the migrations during the Dutch Revolt. If Protestants left the provinces under the King of Spain's sovereignty in several waves of departures (especially at the time of the Council of Troubles, at the beginning of the 1580's, and later on), the Spanish Low Countries became in parallel a place of refuge for the Catholics who were persecuted in their own countries. The English, Scottish and Irish recusants, followed by some loyalist Dutch from the 1570's onwards, and finally the radical French members of the Ligue at the end of the 1590's, found a Promised Land under King Philip II's protection in the Low Countries (Descimon and Ruiz Ibáñez, 2005; Junot and Kervyn, 2015).

The Catholic refugees settled in various towns where they were granted permission to open religious and educational institutions under the patronage of the King and with his financial support (De Frenne, 2010). The host towns were also called upon to help the newcomers with money and premises. The specific institutions for the English refugees in the towns of Artois and Walloon Flanders gave them greater visibility for the local authorities, unlike the French Ligueurs in exile who depended on the temporary interest they could provide the King of Spain during the war between France and the Hispanic Monarchy (1595-1598). The English college and seminary of the University of Douai, from 1568 onwards, and the English Jesuit college which was opened in Saint-Omer in 1593, took in, each year, hundreds of pupils who were smuggled out of the British Isles. These exiles became the clients of the Hispanic Monarchy and their network of institutions in the reconciled Low Countries, an operations' center for the re-catholicization of England, by training priests-to-be and Catholic elites before sending them secretly back home. Facing the returnees who benefited from the pacification of the 1570's to reintegrate in strict secrecy the Spanish Low Countries, the foreign Catholic exiles constituted the visible side of the migrations which strengthened King Philip II as *miles Christi*.

Working interurban migrations and the Protestant Refuge

Since the late Middle Ages, the Southern Low Countries made up an important textile manufacturing area

which was specialized in woollen weaving around Bethune (caesura), Armentières, Lille, Tournai, Valenciennes and other smaller rural or urban centres (Du Plessis, 1997; Van der Wee, 2003). The towns acknowledged the skill of their textile workers and formed an urban network which was protected by their economic and commercial privileges. The migratory routes of woollen weavers used this network, from countryside to town or from town to town according to the local needs in terms of workforce and wages (Stabel, 1997). In the second half of the 16th century, the rise of new draperies developed a second network in the towns of England (London, Norwich), Holland (Leiden) and the Holy Empire (Cologne, Frankenthal) (Martin, 1997). The migrations between the Southern Low Countries and these new manufacturing centres increased from the 1560's onwards with the Dutch Revolt and the constitution of the Protestant communities in exile. The Walloon refugees who were fleeing both the repression of the Council of Troubles and the economic slump in their native towns, founded in Anglican England a community framework with their own faith, ministers and French speaking church, but they found also a demand to develop woollen weaving (Spicer, 1997).

The migratory relations among English, Dutch and Walloon towns continued after the setting up of the Union of Arras, thanks to the maintaining of both familial and professional links and continuing departures, despite suspicions concerning people going to a 'rebel', 'enemy' or 'heretic' country. The relations between the Hispanic Monarchy and England got worse from the 1580's onwards, until the signing of the English-Spanish Peace in 1604. After the episode of the Spanish Armada, King Philip II ordered in 1589 the confiscation of properties for all his non reconciled subjects living in Queen Elizabeth's kingdom and forbade the importing of English draperies to protect the interests of the textile manufactures of the Low Countries. The measures did not stop the migration: at the same time, weavers from Valenciennes continued to people the Calvinist Walloon community of Canterbury where the registers of marriage record their presence until the middle of the 17th century (Hovenden, 1894).

The migrants' motivations are manifold (Frijhoff, 1998; Lucassen and De Vries, 2001: 24). But they touched on the link between subject and king, believer and faith, individual and family, worker and professional network or community. Of course religious motivations have to be taken into account to understand the permanence of the communities in exile for decades. The prohibition of the exercise of Calvinism, even in private, in the provinces of the Union of Arras since 1579 account for this. As late as 1618, a weaver of wool who had just arrived in Amiens said he had left Valenciennes for France because he belonged to the Reformed church[2]. But the confessional reason cannot be detached from the economic situation and the local conditions of the woollen manufacturing industry in the departure towns. Labour opportunities play an undeniable part in these transfers. The emigration of the wool weavers from Valenciennes at the end of the 16th century and the beginning of the following century, was

correlated with the decline of the local drapery and the development of the linen manufacture by skilled refugees coming from Cambrai (Junot, 2009: 162-179). At the same time, the rise of the new drapery in Leiden depended on an immigration stream from the reconciled Low Countries, and a part of the exiles who had settled in England in the 1560's-1570's moved to the Dutch Republic in the 1590's. There was a textile-worker migration system based on a human chain attracted by the relatively high wage level in the Dutch Republic and based on the recruitment policy of the city (Lucassen and De Vries, 2001). In a search for a better life, weavers and craftsmen travelled making use of the interconnected links of family circle and manufacturing networks between the reconciled provinces and the Protestant Refuge abroad.

Temporary migrations of textile workers

The departures for England and the Dutch Republic and the settlement away from the Low Countries did not systematically have a lasting character. Many workers continued to move back and forth between manufacturing centres, crossing confessional and political borders despite the legal restrictions which prevailed until peace or truce were concluded between the Hispanic Monarchy and its enemies (1598-1609). Back home, they were sometimes questioned by the aldermen about their journey, as developed in both questioning and sentences of the 1590's criminal registers of Valenciennes.[3]

Their individual stories had a lot in common: a short stay in England or the Dutch Republic, a short duration of labour (which matched the short cloth manufacturing process), the previous settlement of blood relatives abroad, the attending of Protestant churches on site. In 1590, a lace-maker, Daniel Piètre, left Valenciennes for London where he was born in exile around 1570 after his father had been banished by the Council of Troubles. The family had benefitted from the general pardon of 1574 to return to Valenciennes, where the young boy had attended Catholic school and learned his craft. After marrying a fellow countrywoman in the Calvinist church of London in 1590, Daniel left London again for Leiden, in the Dutch Republic, where he stayed with family, worked and confirmed his Calvinist commitment. After residing there for one and a half years, he returned to the Catholic Low Countries.[4] The same year, the aldermen also investigated the movements of Jean Delevigne, a weaver of Tournai who occasionally worked in Lille and went to England in 1582 for three months because he was suspected of being a messenger between the Calvinist refugees and their relatives in the reconciled Low Countries.[5] A certain Pierre De Lalloeu, a wool worker, also aroused suspicion in 1591 because he had stayed only five weeks in England in 1583 to "see his sister".[6] Another weaver of Valenciennes, who had to leave town because of a conviction for homicide in 1598, went to Arras and then to Lille where he worked for a few months. He later crossed the Channel with an inhabitant of Lille who was on his way back to the Walloon community of Norwich, and he reached Eng-

land to join his son, who had settled there six years earlier and was married to an English woman. In Norwich, he worked as a weaver for eight months, and attended church in the Anglican faith, where he noticed to his amazement that the bishop was married. Back at Valenciennes in 1601, he was arrested for residing in "an enemy country where there is exercise of reprobate religion" and for returning without letters of remission.[7]

The migration patterns of textile workers in late 16th-century Western Europe tested confessional and political borders. In addition to permanent migrations from the Spanish Low Countries to England or to the Dutch Republic, these different manufacturing areas were connected by a system of circular and temporary migrations by workers who could be hosted by relatives and find a job market, a marriage market, or a place of religious dissidence and political struggle against the Hispanic Monarchy (Junot, 2012a). That is why this pattern of crossing borders worried the urban authorities of the reconciled Low Countries who placed these returned textile workers under close surveillance.

TENSIONS IN A RECONCILED SOCIETY: MUNICIPAL REPRESSION, SOCIAL CONTROL, FAMILY DISSENSIONS

Tolerating mobility from or for England and the Dutch Republic

These various patterns of mobility were a cause for concern for urban authorities who attempted to regulate and control the migrants, in particular the returnees who could be prospective heretics, cause scandal and reawaken Calvinist sentiment within the reconciled society.

The textile workers' circular migrations via England or the Dutch Republic could not be prevented by the municipal authorities. It was a minor concern to accept the departures and returns of workers who could not have the same religious practices when they lived in England, where Catholic worship was officially forbidden. The aldermen of the Low Countries knew very well that the migrants were welcomed in the Walloon and Flemish exile communities, within a Calvinist frame. They considered the acceptance of these circular migrations –with the attendant risk of Calvinist resurgence–, to be an internal economic matter. As guardians of the common good and guarantors of urban prosperity, the aldermen were in charge of charity, public order (in the revised framework of the reconciliation with the King and the Catholic revival) and the regulation of guilds. The textile workers' migration system was a means of regulation for the urban job market and for access to poor relief, under municipal control (Junot, 2012a). It worked as an adjustment mechanism for the local labour demand and relieved the finances of the *Bourse des Pauvres* or *Aumône générale* which helped the poor workers in times of recession and when wage cuts hit the textile manufacturing industry. Conversely, the woolen drapery found additional weavers thanks to the returns during the more prosperous periods.

The itinerant workers who frequented the Calvinist exile communities escaped the repressive legislation against rebels and non-reconciled people. They were not on the run like exiles but on the way to "a better life". Too poor to own anything that could be confiscated in the Low Countries, they did not ask for passports or safe-conducts from the central authorities as merchants used to do (Moatti and Kaiser, 2007). They were inconspicuous for most of the administrations of the Hispanic Monarchy. In fact, they could only be identified by neighbors and family back home when alderman investigated them.

Moderating repressive measures against suspected heretics

Aldermen compiled information constitutive of a migrant's social identity such as parents' names, place of birth, skills and guild affiliations, name and address of last employer and landlord, reasons for departure, stages of travel, and wages earned, in order to drive out vagrants, offenders and mouths to feed. They were particularly watchful for returning migrants from Protestant areas. Hence, the interrogations were focused on reconstructing their itineraries, measuring their periods of residence, identifying the contacts and compatriots they had met, and sounding out their personal beliefs and religious practices as refugees. Such inquiries show a concern that temporary migrants could have messengers between exile communities and their native towns, passing on letters or oral recommendations. The investigation of potential suspects was useful to avoid the spread of dissent and the revival of Calvinism in the reconciled provinces that had been implicated in the Protestant revolt.

The municipal authorities were more intent on learning about migration patterns than on persecuting suspected migrants. Their sentences reflected a range of options according to profile type: foreigner or native, temporary migrant or long-term exile. The cloth merchant Michel Dubois was arrested in 1592 at an inn in Valenciennes for having declared that he "could make holy water himself". The scandalous words incited the aldermen to reconstruct his migratory past. The suspect had left his native town of Maubeuge in Hainaut for London in 1582, "not for the new religion", as he said, but because of the high cost of living. He declared that he had married a French woman in London, that he had been a resident of Calais in France since 1589, and maintained that he was a Roman Catholic. Even if the aldermen had serious doubts about his sincerity and suspected him of being a heretic, the suspect was not sentenced harshly and he was expelled from the town: he was a foreigner just passing through Valenciennes.[8] Another temporary migrant, Daniel Piètre, had returned to Valenciennes in 1592 after having lived two years in London and Leiden where he had regularly frequented the Calvinist Church. Upon his return, in answer to the aldermen' questions, he denied having taken any oath to oppose the Roman Catholic Church or having tak-

en up arms against the Spanish Monarchy when he stayed in the Dutch Republic: he could not have done so because, as a foreigner, he had been excluded from the local civic militia. Nevertheless, he risked incurring the death penalty for crimes against God and the royal laws. The aldermen advised him to plead "debauchery", "immoral persuasion" and "pressure" as an apology for leaving and participating in the Last Supper, and to renounce his heresy. His subsequent sentence required him to stay in Valenciennes for one year, during which he was to receive communion and to go to confession every month. The aldermen showed leniency. Piètre was reincorporated into both the civic society and Catholic community. With a blazing torch, he officially renounced his heresy in the aldermen's chapel, and then he was led to the scaffold in the town square where he begged "God, the King and Justice for mercy", kissing the sword of justice. Piètre expressed repentance publicly. Heresy was in fact rarely punished at the end of the 16th century, except in cases involving public scandal, public preaching, and repeated offences after a first reconciliation. In 1599, the bishop of Arras ordered a parish priest of Valenciennes to baptize the 8-year old son of Augustin Barré in the Roman Catholic Church. A huge crowd gathered for the christening: the boy had been born in England in the Calvinist Walloon community of Canterbury where his parents had gotten married in 1589[9]. The ceremony demonstrated the success of the spiritual reintegration of long-term exiles. The positive publicity of the reconciliation ceremonies during the 1580's and 1590's took precedence over the severity of capital punishment or collective banishment (Pollmann, 2011: 129-131). By way of an exception, the last person sentenced to death for obstinate Calvinism had been burnt in Valenciennes in 1593.

The aldermen were rather pragmatic and selective in the implementation of repressive policies against heretics. The trade towns of the Low Countries used to be more or less tolerant of non-Catholic foreign merchants because of the economic requirements, connecting the freedom of worship with the commercial permissiveness (Goosens, 1997: 127; Marnef, 1995; Trivellato, Halevi and Antunes, 2014).

The "Prodigal Son" and intergenerational dissentions

Most of the judicial sentencing linked with "heretic migrants" referred to the biblical Parable of the Prodigal Son, who received permission to return home after having lived in a wastefully extravagant way. The moralistic story was used in the individual story telling of reconciliation between the town and its returnees: because the migrant returned home with the intention of repenting, his native community, as a paternal figure, could welcome him back.

But the investigation concerning Daniel Piètre also reveals that the re-catholicization of the society and the reception of the reconciliated within families that had experimented cross-confessional changes could produce familial dissent. Daniel's father, Alexander, was involved

in the 1566 revolt of Valenciennes as an iconoclast and had to flee from the repression of the Council of Troubles. His son was born in London and was baptized there in the Calvinist Church. After King Philip II's general pardon of 1574, the father went back home, and presented himself to the aldermen – but he did not present his three-year old son to the Catholic Church on that occasion – and his name did not appear in the sentences against seditious people during the troubles that preceded the adhesion to the Union of Arras. The reconciliation of Alexander Piètre seems to be sincere and his son received a Catholic education. A disagreement between the father and his son explains Daniel's departure in 1590. The son left without his father's permission. He was engaged to a young girl and the banns were published in their parish. Apparently, the father did not agree with his son's choice ("a poor girl") and refused to give him cloth to get dressed up (because "he cost him a lot"). So the fiancés solemnized the marriage in the London Calvinist Church. The familial dispute may reveal an intergenerational split on the subject of confessional identity and conversion choice (Duke, 2009; Marnef, 2001). The first generation of returnees who had experienced the 1566 iconoclasm, the harsh repression of the Council of Troubles and the massive waves of exile, and who afterwards had benefited from the reconciliation policies of the 1570's, could consider Calvinism as a bygone age, a memory best forgotten in the reconciled society. However the younger generation of the 1580'-1590's could find in the experience of the Protestant Refuge a future in terms of work, wages, marriage or family, with or without parental consent. And sometimes, the parents' blunt refusal was clearly mentioned in the exile community's marriage register. Such familial dissent could not be revealed in the reconciled Low Countries without causing trouble and a judicial investigation (such as Piètre's case), but was considered a virtue and an additional commitment among Protestant refugees (Janssen, 2009). A certain Vincent Nerin arrived in England in 1582 and married a young widow, Catherine Desplu, a member of the Walloon Church of Southampton. The newly-weds both came from Valenciennes where their relatives still lived, but the husband's mother did not give her consent "out of hatred for (Calvinist) Religion" (The Huguenot Society of London, 1890: 88). A return to the reconciled Low Countries was not, in their case, an opportunity to be seized, and the couple stayed in Southampton before going to Amiens in France at the beginning of the 17th century.

CONCLUSION

Reconciliation with the King, pacification after the civil wars and religious normalization were tested at local level. The wide range of individual experiences of exiles, returnees and migrants presented a challenge for families, economic regulation and public order in the reconciled provinces of the Spanish Low Countries. The legal framework defined in the chaotic pacification process of the 1570's remained flexible and allowed municipal authori-

ties to assess who could be reconciled according to the various criteria. With the Union and the Peace of Arras, the municipal elites wished to build a post bellum society under the Roman Catholic faith and the King's sovereignty, and not only by excluding those who refused to recant in order to conform to the rules of the pacification. They also succeeded in reincorporating migrants who crossed confessional boundaries, within the individual and collective processes of reconciliation initiated by Governor General Farnese in the 1580's. At an urban level, the local authorities managed to adapt their intolerance and prohibition of Protestantism to the migrations that connected most of the towns of the Union of Arras to the Protestant Refuge in England and the Dutch Republic. The selection criteria reduced the importance of the migrants' religious status and supposed religious practices to avoid a source of scandal. Thus intolerance in the reconciled Low Countries was not a monolithic model, nor was the toleration in the Dutch Republic (Po-Chia Hsia and van Nierop, 2002). On the one hand, it opened a space for discussion and toleration between the Catholic aldermen, the ex-Calvinists who had chosen official reconciliation, and migrants – in particular the textile workers – while still being accommodated and welcomed into the exile Protestant Churches. On the other hand, the debate about personal confessional practices and religion disappeared from public space, and the judicial procedure converted the potential heretic into an immoral being. Henceforth the exile experience and individual practices with respect to a dissident religion would become a controversial matter inside the family circle, between generations with different views of the long-term civil war.

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NOTES

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http://www.univ-valenciennes.fr/CALHISTE/membres/junot_yves

1 Archives Générales du Royaume, Brussels, Conseil Privé espagnol, 1420.
2 Archives Municipales, Amiens, FF 1301, f. 3 : "Tristan Mangon, natif de Valenciennes, du mestier de burailler, a déclaré qu'il est venu en ceste ville puis ung mois pour travailler dudict mestier et est sorty dudict lieu pour raison qu'il est de la religion prétendue réformée", July 1618.
3 Archives Municipales, Valenciennes [AMV], FF1 10 (1590-1593) and 11 (1600-1602).
4 AMV, FF1 10 f. 157, 160, 164, 165, 183, 187.
5 AMV, FF1 10, f. 156r°.
6 AMV, FF1 10, f. 82r°.
7 AMV, FF1 11, f. 68-70, 81.
8 AMV, FF1 10, f°101.
9 AMV, parish Saint-Jacques baptismal register (1596-1616): 22th of March 1599; for the marriage contract on the 02nd of May 1589, Canterbury, see Hovenden, 1894.

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