

The Lucchese network and the Grande Boutique

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The career of Francesco Turrettini links the two cities. After his years with the Werdmüller in Zurich he founded in Geneva the *Grande Boutique*, a consortium of silk merchants and financiers whose capital rose from 18,000 to 100,000 *scudi* between 1594 and 1627.¹ The *Historisches Lexikon der Schweiz* regards his trajectory as the most eloquent example of how the refugees of the first Refuge originated international networks and introduced a pre-capitalist organization of the export textile industry.² The Lucchese families of Geneva, the Turrettini, Burlamacchi, Diodati, Micheli and Calandrini, were linked by marriage and partnership with their relatives in Lyon, Antwerp, Amsterdam, London and Zurich. They formed a diaspora in the modern sense: a group dispersed across several jurisdictions, bound together by kinship, confession and commerce, which used its dispersion to spread risk and to collect information.

The Locarnese families of Zurich were a smaller version of the same phenomenon. Their network was regional, extending from Zurich to Bergamo, Milan, Verona and Locarno, where some relatives had remained Catholic. Unlike the Lucchese, they did not become an international banking dynasty in the seventeenth century. Their capital remained invested in the Zurich putting-out system and, from the eighteenth century, in Zurich public institutions such as Leu & Co. The difference reflects both the size of the two groups and the different commercial environments of Geneva, a city on the routes between Lyon, Italy and the Rhine, and Zurich, whose trade was more closely bound to its own territory and to Lombardy.

Common misconception. The Protestant refugees of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries are frequently portrayed as the founders of Swiss industry and banking. Modern research, beginning with Walter Bodmer's study of 1946, has relativized their role. Reception policies were strongly determined by economic calculation, many refugee enterprises failed, and

native merchants were often the more important investors. The refugees' contribution lay in specific skills, international networks and organizational models, which were absorbed by local elites over several generations.³

1 The second Refuge in Switzerland

The revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685 drove about 150,000 Protestants from France. An estimated 60,000 passed through Switzerland. They were joined in 1687, the peak year, by Waldensians and in 1703 by about 3,000 Protestants from the Principality of Orange. The Reformed cantons had agreed shortly before the revocation on a quota for the distribution of refugees: Bern was to receive 50 per cent, Zurich 30 per cent, Basel 12 per cent and Schaffhausen 8 per cent. Communes and private persons were required to provide lodging and food, while the cantons set up special chambers for the refugees.⁴

The Swiss cantons did not encourage the establishment of refugee colonies in the way that Brandenburg did. The economic situation of the late seventeenth century was difficult, the territory was limited, the Catholic cantons had to be considered and France put pressure on Geneva. Most refugees therefore moved on to Germany after the Reformed cantons decided on a policy of deportation at the Diet of Baden in September 1693, which was implemented in the "great departure" of the spring of 1699. About 20,000 Huguenots settled permanently in Switzerland, mainly in the Bernese territories of Vaud. In Vaud more than 800 heads of family obtained a legal status between 1680 and 1720, which ranged from full communal citizenship (about 60 cases) to perpetual residence (about 400) and tolerated residence (about 230).⁵

2 Notes

1. Wikipedia, "Francesco Turrettini" (above). ↩
2. Tosato-Rigo, "Réfugiés protestants" (above), section "Influence des réfugiés". ↩
3. Tosato-Rigo, "Réfugiés protestants" (above), section "Historiographie", on Bodmer's study and the subsequent research; Mottu-Weber, "Soierie" (above), on the native merchants of Zurich. ↩
4. Tosato-Rigo, "Réfugiés protestants" (above), section "Le second Refuge": about 150,000 refugees from France, about 60,000 passing

through Switzerland, the distribution key among the Reformed cantons and the refugee chambers. ↩

5. Tosato-Rigo, "Réfugiés protestants" (above): deportation policy decided at the Diet of Baden in September 1693, "great departure" of 1699, about 20,000 permanent settlers and the figures for Vaud between 1680 and 1720. ↩

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