Fear, in the case of the Huguenots, seems to be a most obvious driving force in the making of an Atlantic refuge and the shaping of a Huguenot identity. In France, the persecution of *Ceux de la Religion Prétendue Réformée*, or French Calvinists, had started in the 1550s. It culminated with St. Bartholomew’s Night, on 23/24 August 1572: first in Paris, then all over France, thousands of Protestants were slaughtered in order to extirpate the Calvinist “heresy” and to suppress the opponents of the reigning house of the Valois and the “pretenders”, the Guise of Lorraine. Persecution and massacres were to shape the Huguenots’ identity from the beginning, as early master narratives such as Jean Crespin’s *Histoire des martyrs* (Geneva 1582 [1597, 1608, 1619]) illustrate. The trauma of persecution seemed to end in 1598, with the Edict of Nantes granting Protestants in France some fundamental religious, civic, economic and political rights.

Persecution resumed in the 1620s, when Cardinal Richelieu sought to deprive the Huguenots of their military strongholds and political power in France. Notwithstanding the fall of La Rochelle in 1628 and the Edict of Alès (1629), Huguenots were able to live peacefully in France, still enjoying most of the privileges that King Henry IV and the Edict of Nantes had granted them in 1598. From 1660, however, Louis XIV assumed full power over politics in France and slowly eroded the Protestants’ legal and religious status. The *Dragonnades*, from 1681 onwards, were followed by the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685, the Edict of Fontainebleau. The latter put an end to Protestantism in France and deprived French Calvinists of all rights granted in 1598. For many but not all Huguenots in France, the 1680s brought another trauma, of violence, torture, rape and massacres in Huguenot households, of flight, of the loss of relatives, of property, health and the homeland, and of the disruption of families.

Emigration from France and resettlement within Protestant Europe had already started during the second half of the sixteenth century. Between 1562 and 1628, an estimated 20,000 Protestants fled from France, some only temporarily, some for good. From the 1680s to the 1720s another 150,000 to 200,000 Huguenots left. They migrated to the Netherlands, Switzerland, England, Wales, Scotland, to some of the Protestant states within the Holy Roman
Empire, such as Brandenburg-Prussia, the Palatinate, the Landgraviate of Hesse-Kassel, Wurttemberg and Franconia, to Scandinavia, Ireland, the Americas and South Africa.¹

Once they had left France, fearing being captured and executed for high treason during their flight, as the Edict of Fontainebleau prohibited that Huguenot laypersons emigrated, French Protestants were quite unlikely to return to France:

\[\text{ [...] they will leave their new homes with difficulties; the remembrance of the past miseries and the present ease, fears of being treated as suspects & manifoldly hated for their religion and their flight from France, they will stay where they are now and where they enjoy ample freedom.}²\]

We do know, however, that persecution back in France did not hinder Huguenots from returning back home, if only temporarily in some cases.³

Fear of persecution did not come to an end in 1685. The vast majority of French Protestants, about 500,000, did not flee from France but chose to stay. Some converted and became devout Catholics, others, especially in the Cévennes and in Provence, continued to practice Protestantism and thus turned into Crypto-Calvinists.⁴ The latter were threatened by further dragonnades, forced

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² “[...] ils ne changeront de Domicile qu’avec peine, le souvenir des maux passés & la tranquilité présente, la crainte d’etre tourmentez comme suspects & doublement odieux par leur Religion & par le Refuge les retiendra dans les Lieux où ils vivent dans une pleine Liberté.” *State Papers of Queen Anne*, vol. xxxi, f. 56–80, Photostats at the Bodleian Library Oxford.
