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*Published in:*  
Religious and National Discourses

*DOI:*  
[10.1515/9783111039633-003](https://doi.org/10.1515/9783111039633-003)

Published: 07/08/2023

*Document Version*  
Final published version

*Document License*  
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[Link to publication](#)

*Please cite the original version:*

Lindberg, S. (2023). Francophone Calvinists in 18th Century German-Speaking Europe: On Charles Étienne Jordan, Mathurin Veyssière la Croze and Éléazar de Mauvillon. In *Religious and National Discourses: Contradictory Belonging, Minorities, Marginality and Centrality* (pp. 37-55). De Gruyter.  
<https://doi.org/10.1515/9783111039633-003>

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Svante Lindberg

# Francophone Calvinists in 18<sup>th</sup> Century German-Speaking Europe

On Charles Étienne Jordan, Mathurin Veyssière la Croze and  
Éléazar de Mauvillon

In 2017, the 500th anniversary of the Reformation was celebrated. Its transformative effects on European society were recognised in a variety of ways, both in the tourism industry and in academic life. In this study, I will focus on Calvinism in 18<sup>th</sup> century Europe, especially with regard to the question of French-speaking Huguenots – many of whom were exiled to the German-speaking region of Europe as a result of religious persecution in France<sup>1</sup> – as well as the phenomenon of cosmopolitanism. Furthermore, the study is to be seen as part of the ongoing discussion on world literatures, as the three authors in question – Charles Étienne Jordan (1700–1745), Mathurin Veyssière la Croze (1661–1739) and Éléazar de Mauvillon (1712–1779) – wrote literature for audiences beyond the borders of their country of residence. Jordan was born in Prussia, whereas La Croze, his teacher in Berlin, was born in the French city of Nantes. The latter would later become an important member of the Prussian capital’s French-speaking intelligentsia. De Mauvillon was born in France, but emigrated to Prussia and later moved to Kassel and Braunschweig. The decision to study these intellectuals was based on my aim of discussing first and second-generation immigrants in the German-speaking region, as well as that of providing an opportunity to examine the French language as both an immigrant (minority) language and the cosmopolitan language of this period. This is why the writers examined in this article can also be regarded as examples of cultural agents who participated in contradictory discourses. These discourses are the voices of minority and majority groups, and in the intersection

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<sup>1</sup> In 1598 Henry IV had inaugurated a period of relative religious toleration in France. The Edict of Nantes guaranteed the protection of Protestants in different ways: “With the beginning of a new era of toleration, the minority population of French Protestants was granted the basic rights to follow the teachings of Calvin and to worship in Reformed temples, along with the right to participate in professions, be admitted to schools and public hospitals without prejudice, and hold public office” (Sample Wilson 2011: 10). This changed during the reign of Louis XVI, and in 1685 Protestants “were forced to abjure their Calvinist faith and unite with the Catholic church” (Sample Wilson 2011: 11).

between margin, cosmopolis and nation, they express different ways of cultural belonging. Having said this, it is also important to examine the cultural reality and the ways that ideas and books were circulated in 18<sup>th</sup> century Europe. Contrary to the idea of a “national” book market that is often assumed to have existed at that time, the situation as far as intellectual and linguistic circulation was concerned was in fact somewhat different. As Jeffrey Friedman (2012: 1) states, “books have not been as respectful to national borders as the historians who study them [...]” And as far as the movement of books is concerned, Friedman says that their distribution “cannot be folded neatly into the geography of nations, let alone that of states” (Friedman 2012: 1). He also describes a situation in Germany “where international and national typographical styles and French and German literature mingled promiscuously in the bookshops” (Friedman 2012: 2). As for the role of the French language during this period, the vehicle of cosmopolitanism was central to book publishing: “With the aid of Huguenot refugees, who had taken up residence in many of the Protestant states of Europe following the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, French-language publishing firms flourished along the borders of the French kingdom, from Amsterdam to Geneva” (Friedman 2012: 5).

This means that studying the relationship between languages (French and German) during this period also needs to be done from an “archaeological” perspective, and not only from the point of view of cultural or political power relations. The latter perspective is something that we are used to adopting in contemporary postcolonial studies, whereas the former relies more on a Foucauldian point of view. In this context, it is appropriate to remember Foucault’s distinction between archaeology and genealogy:

[...] if archaeology addresses a level at which differences and similarities are determined, a level where things are simply organized to produce manageable forms of knowledge, the stakes are much higher for genealogy. Genealogy deals with precisely the same substrata of knowledge and culture, but Foucault now describes it as a level where the grounds of the true and the false come to be distinguished via mechanisms of power (O’Farrell 2007–2021).

Jean Bessière (2012: 34) adopts a Foucauldian archaeological way of examining French writing in Europe during this period and describes this writing as one of many *writing practices* that coexisted with other European writing practices. The authors studied in this article are thus part of an already existing pattern of cultural and literary circulation. However, this is a research area that has in many ways remained unexplored. According to Gretchanaiia, Stroev and Viollet (2012: 13), French writing in Europe is a research field that is, in many ways, a new or revitalised one. It is also a topic of particular importance in today’s European

reality: “La littérature européenne d’expression française offre une image de l’Europe perçue en tant que fondatrice d’une société qui, depuis le XVIIIe siècle, s’établit au-delà des barrières nationales” [French-language European literature presents an image of Europe as the founder of a society that, since the 18<sup>th</sup> century, has extended beyond national barriers.] (Gretchanaia/Stroev/Viollet 2012: 13).<sup>2</sup>

This writing is also characterised by its diversity: “Les écrits en question concernent plusieurs domaines de la production écrite: poésie, romans, théâtre, mémoires, journaux personnels, correspondances, ouvrages philosophiques et historiques, périodiques” [The writings in question concern several areas of written production: poetry, novels, theatre, memoirs, diaries, correspondence, philosophical and historical works, periodicals.] (Gretchanaia/Stroev/Viollet 2012: 13). By also adopting a more contemporary literary theoretical point of view, I will nevertheless argue that some contemporary literary theories on migration can shed light on the 18<sup>th</sup> century cosmopolites studied here. In *Les passages obligés de l’écriture migrante* (2005), Simon Harel talks about post-exile in his studies on contemporary immigrant literature. This is seen as a condition that ensues after the actual exile phase, when the migrant has adapted and established themselves in the new country. Cultural elements from the old country blend together with the culture of the new country, enriching the latter, and the two cultures exist side by side.

Another point of view is the one represented by Bertrand Van Ruymbeke (2016) in his discussion of the terms diaspora and *refuge* (haven). Van Ruymbeke noted that the latter is the most relevant term for describing French Huguenots in exile. This is because the notion refers to a kind of fresh start in a location defined by a strong sense of “here and now”, rather than to a position within a diaspora, i.e. a location on the outskirts of a centre – in this case the old homeland of France. Van Ruymbeke emphasises that it is the new country (North America in his studies), one that has offered shelter to refugees, that will be regarded as the motherland, and not the old one. Both Harel’s concept of *post-exile* and Van Ruymbeke’s use of *refuge* underscore the new country at the expense of a nostalgic retrospective envisioning of the old one. The first concept signals a temporal distancing whereas the second one refers to a spatial distancing, to *another* space. While both theories deal with time and space, it is crucial to bring in a third dimension, i.e. the subjective agent. Here it is relevant to refer to the notion of *cultural go-betweens* proposed by the Franco-Indian cultural studies researcher, Kapil Raj (2009). These are individuals who are culturally competent on several levels and who serve as translators of culture. Cultural power relations can be

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2 All translations from French to English are made by the author of the article.

studied in many ways, one of which is the point of view of “cultural ecology”, a subject that Alexander Beecroft discusses in *An Ecology of World Literature* (2015) in connection with the research field of world literature. This book studies the systems of cultural balance, or the ecology of literary expression in different cultural and historical surroundings, and identifies a number of types of conditions, i.e. epichoric, panchoric cosmopolitan, vernacular, national and global literatures. As far as cosmopolitan literatures are concerned, Beecroft (2015: 34) states: “Cosmopolitan ecologies are found wherever a single literary language is used over a large territorial range and through long periods of time. Cosmopolitan literatures, almost by definition, represent themselves as universal, and yet their very reach often brings them in touch with rival cosmopolitanisms.” On the other side, there are national literatures, a sort of opposite pole:

The national literary ecology emerges out of the vernacular literary ecology of Europe, together with the emergence of nationalism per se. Since the notion of the nation-state rests on the claim (only loosely connected with reality) that each nation speaks a single language, and is represented by a single polity, the national-literature ecology does the same. (Beecroft 2015: 35).

The authors examined here can be found in this border zone between cosmopolis and nation, between universal French and emerging German. They are subjective agents in positions that are unstable and dynamic, and they “situate and navigate *themselves*” within a fluid literary system (McDonald & Suleiman Rubin, 2010b, x).

My focus will be on cultural mediation, on the way the examined texts take part in this mediation and on the authors as cultural go-betweens. In fact, the text material itself bears witness to this mediation. In the part dedicated to Jordan, I rely to a great extent on Jens Häselser’s book on this author, *Ein Wanderer zwischen den Welten Charles Étienne Jordan* (1993). The most important source of my comments on La Croze is Jordan’s book about him, *Histoire de la vie et des ouvrages de Monsieur La Croze* (1741). The third part of my study deals with de Mauvillon’s biography *Histoire de Gustave-Adolphe Roi de Suède* (1764), where I analyse the author’s own comments about cultural differences between the Nordic countries and continental Europe, and about Protestantism. On the one hand, I will consider the extent to which this mediation can be seen as both a power relationship and as an act of negotiation between a minority and a majority. This type of focus is often not only used in colonial/postcolonial studies, but also in the study of migration and minority literatures. In his book on minority literature, Francois Paré (1972) writes about literatures of exiguity, a sort of writing from a distance. However, this condition is often still seen in a hierarchical and

territorial context in relationship with a centre. Lise Gauvin (2003: 38) describes this condition in the following way:

On pourrait dire de ces littératures qu'elles voyagent peu, que leur importance à l'échelle mondiale est inversement proportionnelle à leur impact dans leur société d'origine. Mais là encore, l'exiguïté suppose un comparant plus large, plus étendu, plus expansionniste. Ces littératures sont encore nommées par référence à une hiérarchie. Aussi séduisant qu'il soit, ce modèle me semble risqué, puisqu'il repose sur une conception territoriale de la littérature.

[One could say of these literatures that they travel little, that their importance on a global scale is inversely proportional to their impact in their society of origin. But here again, smallness presupposes a broader, more extensive, more expansionist comparison. These literatures are still named by reference to a hierarchy. As attractive as it is, this model seems risky to me, since it is based on a territorial conception of literature.]

The other way of looking upon French-language writing in Europe is to study it from a culturally archaeological perspective, i.e. as the expression of the coexistence of languages and cultures within a given cultural context. Jean Bessière (2012: 29-35) points out that there is French-language European writing that does not easily fit into an analysis that studies it from a genealogical and power-related perspective. Instead, this writing should be viewed as archaeological evidence of a cultural expression in different European countries that are not necessarily regarded as “Francophone”. This Francophone writing is part of a specific “plurality” of History and has its own (often little-explored) archives (Bessière 2012: 34). The main question under consideration here is if the examined authors and the texts are suitable for a modern, colonial/postcolonial, migrant literature analysis or if it is more appropriate to examine them from the cultural-archaeological analysis proposed by Bessière. Do the texts provide material for genealogical and/or archaeological study?

## 1 Cultural contextualisation

In order to provide a framework of religious history and the history of mentalities, I will start by referring to an article by the German historian Gerlinde Strohmeier-Wiederanders (2017: 35–41) concerning conflicts of faith in Berlin and Brandenburg in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The Brandenburg electorate had been a supporter of Calvinism since Johan Sigismund came to power in 1608 and subsequently converted to Calvinism in 1613. His successor George Wilhelm also advocated a form of neutrality policy, while the successor Crown Prince Frederick Wilhelm (1620–1688), sometimes referred to as the Great Elector, represented a type of tolerant but centralised absolutism. He ruled over a multifaceted kingdom that not only

included Brandenburg, but also areas such as Westphalia and Niederrhein. Here, many different variants of the Christian religion were practiced, which is why tolerance out of practical necessity became a key concept. Although peaceful religious coexistence was a central political issue, there were other issues to consider during this period in history, in particular the problem of Brandenburg-Prussia's depopulation as a result of the Thirty Years' War. Thus, Frederick Wilhelm issued a number of "tolerance edicts" that encouraged immigration. In 1671, Brandenburg-Prussia received 50 Jewish families who had been expelled from Vienna. Later on, the Edict of Potsdam (1685) enabled the reception of 20,000 French Huguenots who had suffered severe persecution in France after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes that same year. The French Protestant immigrants who arrived in Berlin and Prussia brought with them their education and professional knowledge, which contributed significantly to Prussia's rapid development and prosperity. At Frederick the Great's court, French was spoken and the prince himself, having received his education in this language, spoke it better than German. He also preferred French literature to German literature. All this transformed Prussia into a region that was in many ways prepared for the French-speaking immigration. According to Strohmeier-Wiederanders (2017: 41), one can talk about a significant cultural transfer from France to Brandenburg-Prussia. This consisted, among other things, of new types of craftsmanship, trade, scientific activities and culinary knowledge being introduced into the German-speaking region. The domain of science is particularly interesting, and out of 37 members of the Academy of Sciences in Berlin (founded in 1700), eight had their origins in the French-speaking colony. According to Strohmeier-Wiederanders, although the 17th century had been characterised by religious conflict, a new trend towards greater tolerance emerged, one that coexisted with the centralisation of state power. Two additional forces contributed to reinforcing this smooth process towards cohabitation. The first was the spread of the religious movement of Pietism. This version of Christianity emphasised the importance of emotion in religious experience. In his book on early German Pietism, F. Ernest Stoeffler (1973) describes this movement's motivation as having been characterised by:

[t]he need for, and the possibility of, an authentic and vitally significant experience of God on the part of individual Christians (the religious life as a life of love for God and man, which is marked by social sensitivity and ethical concern [...]). Moreover, the church is looked upon "as a community of God's people, which must ever be renewed through the transformation of individuals, and which necessarily transcends all organizationally required boundaries [...]. (Stoeffler 1973: ix).

If individualism and social awareness are central to Pietism, a second factor that led to increased tolerance was the European Enlightenment. Though a French

phenomenon, this movement quickly became a European mission. Ira Wade (1971: xiii) describes the content and dynamics of these ideas and refers to certain typical aspects: “their romantic tendencies; the foreign influences, particularly England, upon them, and their influence in Europe as a whole”. Wade continues: “[...] the desire to pass from the factual, positivistic level to a higher synthesis, in short, from the analytic to the organic, is everywhere visible” (Wade 1971: xiii).

In the scholarship of the time there is also a wish to “give to the movement a European, even a ‘Western Civilization’ scope, rather than a French perspective” (Wade 1971: xiii). According to Strohmeier-Wiederanders (2017), the combined presence of Pietism and Enlightenment ideas caused one to question the strength of both reason and revelation. The author argues that a process was set in motion whereby reason and tolerance were to gain in importance at the expense of religious orthodoxy, which paved the way for a more pluralistic openness.

The role of the Huguenots in Berlin-Brandenburg can be examined in the light of recent theories on the spread of science and scientific knowledge. This question has been studied by, among others, Kapil Raj (2013), who identified two trends that represent the distinction between power relation and archaeology that I brought up at the beginning of this article. On the one hand, there is the binary centre/periphery model, or the rift between metropolitan versus colonial realities. On the other hand, one can identify a more irregular means of transfer. Raj (2013: 343) argues that the way we view the transmission of knowledge and the very notion of science itself should be reconsidered so “that by science we understand not free-floating ideas, but the production of knowledge, practices, instruments, techniques and services; and by circulation we understand not the ‘dissemination’, ‘transmission’ or ‘communication’ of ideas, but the processes of encounter, power and resistance, negotiation, and reconfiguration that occur in cross-cultural interaction[...]”. As one can see, Raj emphasises the transformative dimension of circulation in his study of cultural transfer, at the expense of a model that underscores the hierarchy of knowledge that exists between a centre and a periphery.

## 2 Charles Étienne Jordan’s life and works

Charles Étienne Jordan can be seen as an illuminating example of a person who took part in the kind of transformative cultural exchange that Raj refers to in his study. An interesting insight into Jordan’s life and into the Berlin of the first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, a time of transition, is provided by Jens Häselser in *Ein Wanderer zwischen den Welten. Charles Étienne Jordan* (1993). The following part of

my study describes Jordan's life and work, and is mainly based on Häselers book. Häseler describes Jordan, a prominent Huguenot in Berlin, as a transgressor of frontiers, not only between the worlds of French and German, but also between different French-speaking environments in Berlin. This was especially the case in, on the one hand, the French-speaking Huguenot colony, and on the other, the court of Frederick the Great. As a result, Jordan performed in several cultural arenas within Prussia. Born in Berlin as the son of the merchant Charles Jordan, an immigrant French Huguenot, he enrolled as a student at the University of Geneva, one of the leading Calvinist universities of the time, in 1718. He was to stay there for only two years before returning to Berlin, where he gradually gained access to the highest theological circles of his time. After graduating in theology, he became a pastor in the Uckermark region north of the German capital, an area characterised by the religious practice of the Huguenots. Living a fairly isolated life in the Prussian countryside, he was obliged to pursue his spiritual and intellectual development in his spare time. According to Häseler (1993), this was typical of this generation of theologians who served in the country. Correspondence was a way of promoting intellectual development, and Jordan devoted a large amount of time to this activity. The contact between Jordan and reformed scholars in Berlin, as well as his international correspondence, were crucial for the theologian's intellectual development. One of his contacts was the French writer Jean-Pierre Nicéron, with whom he planned to write a European history of science. He wanted to include a wide range of knowledge in the planned volume, i.e. encyclopaedic knowledge in the fields of science, book publishing, philosophy and church history. According to Häseler (1993), Jordan can be inserted into a Protestant tradition with a strong historiographic focus. Häseler also sees Jordan and his works as an example of a tendency in the evolution of European intellectual life where language and nation (in the case of French) were gradually separated. This movement led from a strictly France-centred focal point towards a more pluralistic, cosmopolitan worldview that nevertheless continued to use the French language as its tool for expression. This view is confirmed by other researchers working on the phenomenon of French Enlightenment thought in Europe (see Wade 1971).

Jordan was to write two kinds of work: philological and textual bibliographies, and biographies of historical personalities. One of his aims was to show how the style of French humanist poets in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, especially those belonging to the group known as *la Pléiade* (e.g. Pierre de Ronsard and Joachim Du Bellay) continued to have a far-reaching influence, 200 years later, on both the French language and on the literary style and tastes of many Huguenots living as far away as Berlin. He thus wanted to show how the stylistic principles of the 16th

century survived in the Berlin of the 18th century. In 1741, Jordan published his biography of his former teacher in Berlin, Mathurin Veyssière La Croze. From his location of exile in Berlin, this Huguenot had written a French literary history that had become a sort of standard reference. Through his literary and biographical works, and through his good contacts among the reformed theologians in Berlin, Jordan gradually became an important person, not only in Berlin's Calvinistic circles, but also in the European *République des lettres*. His career expanded and transformed itself, and he went from being a theologian to becoming an educated humanist.

After his wife's death in 1732, Jordan undertook a European educational journey that had Paris as its main destination. Examining this from the point of view of the ideas of refuge and diaspora developed by Bertrand Van Ruymbeke (see *supra*), some interesting observations can be made. The journey had as its destination the country where Jordan's "native language" was spoken. France, however, was a country that he had never visited before. After arriving in the French capital, he met with scholars such as Voltaire, and visited theatres and museums. It is very interesting to observe Jordan's experience of alienation in Catholic France. Although he was impressed and influenced by the cultural and intellectual life, he did not feel at home in what should have been his "native" land. Häselser (1993) is not writing a story of a homecoming, but rather a story of cultural and religious self-understanding. Jordan's reactions were quite different in the next country he visited, England. His encounter with the country across the channel made him write that he was happy to feel stable Protestant soil under his feet once again (Häselser 1993: 84). During his visit to Oxford, he was also impressed by the teaching methods at the university, especially by the fact that the country's own language was used in teaching and in the dialogue between students and teachers. For Jordan, the previously discussed trip "back" to France did not work as a return from a state of diaspora to an abandoned centre. His encounter with France should be seen in the context of the resistance, negotiation and reconfiguration that Raj (1993) referred to rather than as a return to a place of origin. It also illustrates a condition beyond that of dominated and dominating cultures, as described by Pascale Casanova in her influential book *The World Republic of Letters* (2004 [1999]).<sup>3</sup> McDonald and Suleiman Rubin (2010b: xvii) refer to Casanova's idea in their discussion of the transnational dimension of writing:

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3 Pascale Casanova (1999): *La république mondiale des lettres*. Paris: Seuil (The World Republic of Letters [2004]. Translated by M.B. Debevoise. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press).

Expanding Bourdieu's views about "dominant" and "dominated" poles in the literary field to the world stage, Casanova proposes what she calls a "dual historicization": a writer's work, in her view, must be seen both in terms of the place it occupies in its "native" (national) literary space and in terms of the space occupied by the native's native literature in a larger world system. (McDonald/Suleiman Rubin 2010b: xvii)

Viewed through this dual historical perspective, Jordan is both a representative of a German literary condition where the coexistence of French and German was a natural thing at the time, and an example of French writing "in exile" in Germany (if seen from the French point of view).

The trip to France and England was a turning point in Jordan's life and confirmed his transformation from theologian to educated humanist. But this career change was not accomplished without friction and effort. He initially made a living as a private teacher while he completed and published an account of his trip to France and England, *Histoire d'un voyage littéraire, fait en 1733 en France, en Angleterre, et en Hollande* in 1735. Furthermore, he was in contact with La Croze until the latter died in 1739. It was when Jordan became *homme de compagnie* [companion, conversational partner] and later secretary to Crown Prince Frederick (later Frederick the Great) that his career gathered fresh momentum. One of his first assignments was to translate moral philosophy texts into French that had been written by the German philosopher Christian Wolff. In addition, Jordan's new employer assigned him two other main tasks: engaging in cultivated conversation in French and acquiring books. The latter task meant searching for and buying French literary texts and bringing them to Prussia for the purpose of informing his patron's taste. When it came to questions concerning French literature, there was one writer above all others who had a great influence on Frederick: Voltaire. The French philosopher's stay as Frederick's guest from 1751 to 1753, in Berlin and at Sanssouci in Potsdam, is well-known.

As previously discussed, Jordan's role as a border crosser is complex. His function as a cultural and literary mediator does not only apply to French and German cultures, but can also be seen in his contacts among different French-speaking groups in Berlin. He belonged to both the city's learned francophone circles and the court's French-speaking milieu.

For example, the second part of Jens Häselser's book presents Jordan as an intercultural contact person within the court. Häselser describes his role as a mediator between Voltaire and Frederick, his participation in the reorganisation of the Berlin Academy of Sciences, which was carried out according to the French model, and his lack of enthusiasm for Frederick's war project. Jordan's efforts were made possible by his familiarity with the spiritual and intellectual life in Prussia at the beginning of Frederick the Great's reign. However, the next phase

of Jordan's development was characterised by a certain degree of distance from court activities. He eventually switched his focus towards his own studies and to expanding his own library, and also devoted himself to strengthening contacts with Berlin's French-speaking colony. Furthermore, he wanted to spend more time in the scholarly French-speaking circles outside the court. His educational background in the field of theology again came to the fore in his farewell letter to Frederick, where he addressed religion's importance for culture. According to Häselser (1993), Jordan's contribution to early Prussian cultural life was of great value. It was to his credit that the Protestant educational ideal was introduced at the Prussian court.

According to Häselser's biography, one can conclude that Jordan is a clear example of the French cultural influence of the Huguenots in Prussia and of a person who started something new in the country that his parents had emigrated to. He is also an example of the transformation at work in cultural exchange, since his French origin was a way of enriching the cultural life of his new country, and because Jordan managed to be accepted into several circles in the Prussian capital. This process of transformation is closely linked to subjective agency. Jordan is someone who produces knowledge of and for Prussia's French-language Huguenots. He is also someone who is in a position of negotiation between French and German, as well as between different levels of Frenchness in Berlin. If Jordan is in many respects a mediator, the question of the hierarchies of language and the fact that there is a discrepancy between language and territory (he is a French speaker living outside of France) adds to this complexity. This is a question that can be examined from the "Global French" perspective introduced by McDonald & Suleiman Rubin (2010a). If one regards Jordan through the lens of world literature, he should be seen as an individual participating in a dual historicisation rather than as an example of the close relationship between literature/language and nation. In his case the territorial/hierarchical point of view is less important, whereas Kapil Raj's idea of cultural expression as the result of encounters and reconfiguration (in an already plurilingual environment) provides a more relevant point of view.

### **3 Mathurin Veyssière La Croze as seen by Charles Étienne Jordan**

In the following section, which deals with Jordan's teacher Mathurin Veyssière La Croze, the idea of reconfiguration will be illustrated further. The written

documentation of the life and works of an intellectual can be seen as examples of reconfiguration/reformulation in the process of cultural transfer and cultural implementation as described by Raj. Jordan's book on the French-Prussian intellectual La Croze is an example of the deterritorialisation of French erudition in circumstances similar to those found in the literature of exiguity developed by Francois Paré (1972). I will focus on some aspects of La Croze's life and work as they appear in Jordan's book *Histoire de la vie et des ouvrages de Monsieur La Croze* (1741) and also consider the text as a way of establishing La Croze as a significant cultural personality in his new home country. In this biography, a Jordan often adopts the I perspective, which gives the text the form of an autobiography – this is spite of the fact that it should really be regarded as a “biography.”<sup>4</sup> Jordan starts out by saying that La Croze is “un des membres les plus distingués de la République des Lettres que le siècle ait produit” [(...) one of the most distinguished members of the Republic of Letters that the century has produced.] (Jordan 1741: 2), thus commencing his mission of not only situating his protagonist within the local cultural life, but also within a cosmopolitan context. As far as reconfiguration is concerned, one can say that La Croze's life is an example of this, as he was someone who reconfigured, who changed his religious affiliation and transformed himself into an important intellectual in his new country. Jordan's biography is another example of reconfiguration, as it reformulates La Croze's life in written form.

Jordan's book informs us that La Croze was born in Nantes in 1661 and had started his career as a French Benedictine historian and orientalist, though he later converted to Protestantism. He showed an interest in learning early on and eventually became an avid scholar. Travel was another one of his interests, and he visited the French Antilles in his youth. From La Croze's native Nantes, the reader can follow the protagonist's relocations: first to the learned centre of the Abbaye de St.-Germain-des-Prés in Paris and then to Basel, as well as his meeting in the latter with several prominent Protestant personalities. This led to La Croze's conversion to the Reformed religion. As mentioned above, the book is in many parts written in the style of a conventional autobiography. However, it also seems to have educational and pedagogical ambitions, since it often presents the

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<sup>4</sup> Jordan's book was written before the emergence of what is sometimes called formal autobiography. At this time, the border between fiction and reality was not so strict as we know it to be today. Jordan's book can be regarded as a “biography” in the same way as, for example, Voltaire's biography of Charles XII. One interesting thing is that Jordan's book contains parts that were written in the third-person singular and others that were written in the first-person singular. See for example Murray Kendall 2000.

main character as a sort of learned role model. Jordan talks about how La Croze then proceeded from Basel to Berlin, where he became Royal Librarian and a specialist in Armenian languages at the University of Berlin. La Croze completed his dictionary of Latin and Slavonic languages, and later went on to write a dictionary of these languages in Egypt. The reader also learns a great deal about another important book written by La Croze, his history of Christianity in India (1724), and about the positive reception of this book by learned critics. It was written in French but later translated into German. As Jordan's book on La Croze has a didactic strain, the reader is also provided with in-depth details on La Croze's research.<sup>5</sup> For example, in the chapter called *Remarques de Mr La Croze*, we learn how the protagonists reflected on different ways of thinking, a sort of meditation on mentalities and how they change over time. The goal was to demonstrate cultural relativism, and this part of the text ends with a sentence about tolerance: "Le plus dangereux de tous les préjugés est de croire qu'on n'en a point" [The most dangerous of all the prejudices is to believe that one has none.] (Jordan 1741: 337). Jordan's book has a mediating and a culturally consolidating function. In writing his text, he reconfigured the life and work of an important agent from that time in the arena of Prussian cultural life. The text also provides documentation on the life of a first generation member of learned Calvinists in Berlin, which also talks about his participation in inclusive discourse.

## 4 On Éléazar de Mauvillon

As far as Éléazar de Mauvillon – the third author that this article examines – is concerned, the topics of mediation and cultural transfer are also important. Active mainly in Braunschweig and Kassel, he was a cultural mediator in several ways. To start, he was a teacher of French, which meant that he mediated between this language and German. Another thing that qualifies him as a cultural mediator was his contact with the Finland-Swedish politician and intellectual Johan Arckenholtz (1695–1777). After a political career in Sweden, Arckenholtz made extensive journeys throughout continental Europe and lived there for long periods of time (see Jacobson). The Protestant point of view appears in de Mauvillon's writing, as is also the case in his biography of the Swedish king Gustavus

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<sup>5</sup> On Page 155, the reader is informed about La Croze's philosophical explanations of concepts, such as "Définitions", "Demandes" and "Axiomes". Another example is the chapter "Remarques de Mr La Croze", where Jordan has La Croze reflect on changes in mentality over the centuries, which is a form of cultural relativism.

II Adolphus. The contact between de Mauvillon and Arckenholtz mainly concerned de Mauvillon's preparation for and writing of this biography, which was completed in 1764. The choice to write about the Protestant monarch is already telling, but one can also see indirect references to Protestantism in the footnotes. Here, if we regard Arckenholtz as a fellow Protestant in the North, it is interesting to see that there are many references to this Nordic colleague. Arckenholtz appears to have provided the Franco-German author with facts and cultural knowledge about Swedish, and more generally, Nordic societies, as when reading the text we witness examples of concrete cultural transfer.

The reading also provides insight into the cultural differences and intercultural attitudes of the era in question. De Mauvillon often regarded Gustavus II Adolphus as a role model and a moral example. In the eyes of de Mauvillon, the king represented Christian, presumably Protestant, virtues: "Gustave se comporte en Prince chrétien [...]" [Gustavus behaves like a Christian king] (de Mauvillon 1764: 246). The sovereign is sometimes also given a symbolic function, as he is seen as someone who to a certain degree advocates for equality, and is also enlightened, liberated and peace-loving. He is both a king and philosopher, as well as a person who enters into open and honest dialogue with his friends and subjects. Furthermore, he is someone who sees war as an evil (de Mauvillon 1764: 213), and can also be credited with bringing Sweden closer to continental Europe. According to de Mauvillon, this is a political endeavour that can be achieved with a certain type of leadership, and the Swedish king is able to fulfil this role. It is through the moral and political genius of its sovereign that Sweden becomes more European. According to the author, the king's very being has great influence on the Swedish people and his role as a pedagogical role model is unquestioned. De Mauvillon writes, among other things, that the king knows how to unite his own genius and strategic talent with the notorious courage of the Swedish people, which means that the country can make the most of its potential and achieve the same level of civilisation as other European countries (de Mauvillon 1764: 280).

It is interesting to consider the combination of religious and strategic motivation that de Mauvillon includes in his description of the king's personality, a complexity that continues to interest contemporary researchers. Thus, Clark A. Fredrickson (2011: 2) writes about the Swedish king: "A farewell speech at Stockholm on May 30, 1630 indicates that Gustavus Adolphus wanted to defend Protestantism, and although a deeply religious man, some scholars have questioned his underlying motives. The three primary motives often studied are: political, economic and military". In de Mauvillon's book, the king's religiosity is underscored over and over again; he is a man who has a strong connection with the

great truths of religion, one who puts his trust in God and respects the commandments of the Christian faith (de Mauvillon 1764: 304).

In addition to reproducing historical events, de Mauvillon also goes into some detail about the Swedes' experiences in the German-speaking region during the Thirty Years' War. As previously mentioned, his depiction of the king is often idealised. There is also a similar tendency to simplify the portrayal of the Swedish soldiers, who are, for example, portrayed as hardened and fearless Northerners accustomed to cold climates (de Mauvillon 1764: 415). As we can see, the complexity of the king's goals and the role of religion are also discussed in recent research. One example is Pärtel Piirimäe (2002: 500, referred to by Fredrickson [2011: 3]), who claims that Sweden did not wage war in a traditional way, i.e. for reasons of self-defence or aggression, for example, but used a theological justification that was meant to gain public support. As a result, Gustavus Adolphus was able to present a religious case for going to war that helped establish his strong military and public support.<sup>6</sup>

Whereas Jordan and La Croze can be seen as mediators between French and German, and between several levels within these cultural spheres, de Mauvillon's importance in this context can be regarded as an example of an international cosmopolite whose writing contains a considerable religious undertone. In his work on the Swedish king, he writes in French about international political issues, but also about a Protestant hero who is characterised by his high degree of tolerance. He also gives us a practical example of cultural transfer between the Nordic countries and continental Europe. His contact with Arckenholtz provides examples of two migrants who actively participated in cultural exchange in the cosmopolitan cultural arena.

## 5 Final remarks

The main purpose of this article was to investigate the life and work of three Francophone cultural mediators in 18<sup>th</sup> century Prussia in order to see if a selection of texts on and by them were suitable for genealogical or archaeological readings. Could the examined writing be regarded as the expression of cultural/linguistic power relations in the sense that we are used to examining things from a

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<sup>6</sup> Piirimäe Pärtel (2002), "Just War in Theory and Practice: The Legitimation of Swedish Intervention in the Thirty Years War." In: *The Historical Journal*, 45 (3), 500. Referred to by Fredrickson (2011: 3).

contemporary postcolonial or migrant literature point of view, or was it rather to be understood as the expression of a natural coexistence of languages, one where the frictional aspects played a minor role? The aspect of cosmopolitanism also played an important role in the investigation, as the French language was a powerful means of cultural communication during the European 18th century.

The topics of marginalisation and centralisation provided an important framework for the discussion, since the authors that were studied can be seen as belonging to marginal groups that, over the same period, became increasingly important as cultural agents in their new countries. However, this marginal condition has little visibility in the texts that were studied. When one examines them from the point of view of contemporary literary studies, where exile, migration and multilingualism are important issues, one is struck by the effortless use of the French language and by the lack of comments about the X. This is something that needs to take the cultural reality of that period into consideration in order to be understood.

Rebecca L. Walkowitz (2015: 12) writes about the coexistence of languages and the phenomenon of pre-emptive translation: “Preemptive translation, or the division of writing and speaking languages, was the expectation until the late eighteenth century, which inaugurates the era of national languages and literary traditions.” This seems to be relevant for each of the authors that were the focus of this study. Language seems to be used as a means of communication, and little is said about language barriers or cultural differences. Jordan and La Croze are examples of cultural go-betweens in Kapil Raj’s sense, while at the same time they contributed to the Prussian nation’s emergence, as the state also sought to strengthen itself through cultural means. Here they serve as important mediators, which one can see, for example, in the case of Jordan, who had an active role in the renewal of Berlin’s scientific institutions.

If one considers Bertrand van Ruymbeke’s terminology of *refuge* and *diaspora*, these authors lived their lives in what should be regarded as a *refuge* rather than in a diasporic condition, as both identified with their new country. These immigrants were certainly part of a minority group, but through the French language they became representatives of a cosmopolitan relationship with the world and formed part of a greater whole. Their cultural deeds were of an eminently practical nature. Jordan contributed through his work at Frederick’s court and within the Berlin colony to the internationalisation and cultural strengthening of Prussia. La Croze, who wrote a large number of dictionaries and who had had a brilliant academic career in Berlin, contributed in a very practical way to scientific development and scholarship in his new country. The encyclopaedic ideals that we recognise from the Renaissance seem to live on in their work. De

Mauvillon, being a linguist and a writer of historic texts, represented the same evolution from a minority position into that of a cosmopolitan erudite.

The documents that were used for this study provided information on the cultural mediation that the authors took part in and showed how they were involved in the emerging Prussian state's inclusive discourse. Again, on the textual level, little could be found with regard to cultural conflict or any tensions in the use of French and German. There is also little evidence of the competing (cultural) cosmopolitanisms that Alexander Beecroft (2015) referred to. In Häselers' text on Jordan, little is said about the German language and its relationship with French. On the other hand, Jordan's command of French is a qualification that opens doors for him, both at the national and international level. In the same way, language proficiency is given little attention in Jordan's book on La Croze, who seems to be moving effortlessly between France, Switzerland and Germany without being hindered by any linguistic borders. De Mauvillon's biography is the text that shows a certain degree of intercultural awareness, as the author refers to and reflects upon differences between Nordic and other European cultures. If there are different cosmopolitanisms, then they are more of a religious nature than of a linguistic/cultural one. The adherence to Protestantism is a recurrent topic, whereas linguistic belonging is much less talked about. This means that the texts that were the focus of this study are better suited for being examined as cultural practices that could be analysed from an archaeological point of view, than as evidence of cultural power relations.

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