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Ames, Caton, and Furlly: Three Quaker Missionaries in Holland and North Germany in the Late Seventeenth Century

Introduction

In the second half of the seventeenth century William Caton (1636–1665), William Ames (died 1662), and Benjamin Furlly (1636–1714) were among the first Quaker missionaries to travel to Holland and Northern Germany.¹ In spite of hopeful beginnings in 1656 Quakerism never managed to gain a foothold on the Continent as it did in England and in North America. There were nevertheless efforts to found local Quaker meetings, to build meeting houses, and to establish Quarterly and Yearly Meetings. With an Amsterdam Yearly Meeting and with its three monthly meetings in Friesland, Rotterdam, and Amsterdam, the English Quakers sought to apply an administrative structure adapted from English conditions, where Quakerism had to maintain itself under quite different circumstances. By 1727 nearly all the Dutch Quaker meetings had dwindled, and in the period of Quietism during the eighteenth century neither the Quakers in Holland nor those in Germany managed to attract the majority of German Pietists.

A look at the missionary travels of Ames and Caton is important to obtain a more complete picture of how the English Quakers tried to gain access to foreign societies, cultures, and religions. Their journeys took place during the 1650s and 1660s. Between their journeys they usually returned to England to recover, to report to their local meetings, and to prepare for the next tour. The journeys of Ames were:

- 1st journey 1656: Amsterdam, Utrecht, Rotterdam, Haarlem, Alkmaar
- 2nd journey 1657: Amsterdam, Zutphen, Rhineland, the Palatinate
- 3rd journey 1658: Amsterdam, South Holland
- 4th journey 1660: Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Haarlem, Leiden, the Rhineland, Bohemia, Frankfurt, Danzig
- 5th journey 1662: Amsterdam

¹ Research for this paper was funded by Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre, Birmingham, through the E. Koch Fellowship, which enabled me to work in The Library Friends House (LSF), and the British Library, both in London, U.K.

THREE QUAKER MISSIONARIES

The journeys of Caton were:

1st journey 1655: Flushing, Middelburg, Rotterdam

2nd journey 1656/57: Amsterdam, Utrecht, Zutphen, Leiden, The Hague

3rd journey 1659: Rotterdam, Amsterdam

4th journey 1660/61: Haarlem, Amsterdam, Friesland, Utrecht, Rotterdam

5th journey 1661/62: Rotterdam, Amsterdam, the Rhineland

6th journey 1663: Amsterdam

7th journey 1664: Amsterdam, Friesland, Rotterdam, Alkmaar, Moordrecht, Haarlem, Friesland

William Ames' and William Caton's Travels to Holland

William Caton and John Stubbs (1618–1674) were the first Quaker missionaries to sail to Holland. Caton was nineteen when he undertook this travel, and Stubbs, who was 37 years old, was twelve years his senior. At the age of fourteen Caton went to live in Swarthmoor Hall (Ulverston in Lancashire), the home of his distant relative Margaret Fell (1614–1702).² There, he became the schoolmate and companion of her son George (born ca. 1638) and the tutor to her other children. Caton's convincement took place in 1652, and two years afterwards he left Swarthmoor for missionary work in England and in Continental Europe. In October or November 1655 Caton and Stubbs landed at Flushing (Vlissingen, Province of Zeeland), went as far as Rotterdam, but did not stay there for long. Not knowing the Dutch language posed a considerable handicap to them since they had to make use of interpreters who were not always reliable. Discouraged, both left Holland to go back to England. Another Quaker missionary, William Ames, stayed in Holland for a longer time, going as far as Amsterdam, where he worked for quite a while.

Like many early Quakers, Ames had once been a soldier in the King's army, which was said by many to be "*the most debauched and wicked crew upon earth*".³ He remained an officer after his conversion to Mennonitism,

² A biography and comprehensive bibliography of Fell can be found in Bernet, C.: *Margaret Fell*. In: *Biographisch-bibliographisches Kirchenlexikon*, XX, 2002, 499-503. For Caton's early life see Kunze, B.: *Margaret Fell and the Rise of Quakerism*, Stanford 1994, 49/50 and the entry in the DQB (Dictionary of Quaker Biography, LSF).

³ Skidmore, G.: *William Ames*. In: *Dear Friends and Bretheren. 25 Short Biographies of Quaker Men*, Reading 2000, 1-2. For Ames see also Seidensticker, O.: *William Penn's Travels in Holland and Germany in 1677*. In: PMHB, II, 3, 1878, 237-282, 239/240; *Life of William Ames*. In: Friends' Library, XI, Philadelphia 1847, 475-477; Sutter, C.:

but joined the Parliamentary army then in Ireland. He became a member and later a minister and an elder of the Mennonite Church. In 1655 Ames joined the Quaker movement after a dispute with the Quakers Francis Howgill and Edward Burrough. In order to meet the Baptists and discuss theological matters with them, both went to Waterford (Ireland), where Ames was already residing. Among the Quakers Ames soon proved himself a capable and successful preacher. Apparently, he had had a special leading to go to Holland, because he was acquainted with the language, having been in the navy under Prince Rupert, on whose own ship there were many Dutch. Ames arrived in the spring of 1656 and was able to speak fluent Dutch in meetings, which made it possible for him to bring about several vital conversions. In a letter to Fell he wrote that in Amsterdam several had understood his testimony, among them Jan Willemszoon and Judith Zinspenning, the parents of the famous Quaker historian William Sewel. This family belonged to a Flemish Mennonite group. Later Sewel described how, as a youth, he had heard Ames preaching poignantly and energetically about the *true light*, already central to Quaker teaching. He was so impressed by Ames' words that, although Sewel did not understand their true meaning at the time, he recalled them time and again.⁴

Ames travelled a great deal in Holland. In 1656 in Utrecht he won converts who then became the nucleus of a Quaker meeting, which later failed to thrive. During his visit one year later Caton complained that "*when the magistrates and priests came to understand how that the truth seemed to get some entrance in that place, their enmity began to increase against it, and they gave forth an order that those that entertained us, and had meetings at their houses, should [be] turned out of the city [...]*".⁵

In Rotterdam the Quakers also met with considerable opposition largely due to the fact that before any English Quaker missionary had come to Holland, the precursors of Friends, called the "half-baked Quakers", had made themselves hated and ridiculous.⁶ In April 1657 Ames and Stubbs got into serious trouble in Amsterdam.⁷ The Dutch Reformed Consistory was

Friedrichstadt an der Eider. Dissertation Thesis, Chicago 1982; the entry about Ames in the DQB; Neef, C.: *William Ames*. In: *Mennonite Encyclopedia*, I, 1955, 88-89; and PH TP, XXV, 1956.

⁴ Sewel, *Histori van de Quakers*, Amsterdam 1717, 247. This passage was omitted in the New York edition, 1844, I, 253, as well as in the German edition, London 1742.

⁵ Caton, W.: *Journal*, London 1839, 66. Caton's Journal was one of the earliest Quaker journals published (1689).

⁶ Hull, W.: *Benjamin Furlly and Quakerism in Rotterdam*, Lancaster 1941, 183-193.

⁷ Hull, *Rise of Quakerism*, Swarthmore 1938, 32.

THREE QUAKER MISSIONARIES

informed that some Quakers had held meetings in a given house on Sundays and Fridays. Two members of the Consistory were then ordered to gather information for the purpose of submitting a complaint to the mayor. The Quakers were charged with, among other things, posting an “abominable cartoon” of the English church. An investigation by the public prosecutor was ordered. The outcome was that the magistrates, before whom William Ames and Humble Thatcher, another English Friend, appeared, could find no evidence for this charge, other than their refusal to remove their hats in court. They were nevertheless banished from the city within a day. It is obvious that the conduct of the magistrates had been influenced by rumours that James Nayler’s entry into Bristol was seen as a sign of the Second Coming.⁸ Both Quakers refused to leave and were sent to prison. After four days they were summoned again to appear before the magistrates, but they refused to go. Finally, after two more days, they were escorted out of Amsterdam by armed guard and threatened with harsh punishment should they come back to the city. But Ames was apparently not afraid of punishment because he was back in Amsterdam that same year, this time taking Caton with him as his replacement. The latter arrived in Holland for the second time in September 1656. This time he was able to make himself understood through the help of an interpreter, Humble Thatcher, who had accompanied him on many of his journeys. Speaking about his experiences in Amsterdam, Caton says “*Most commonly, when my service was over in the country, I returned again to the city of Amsterdam, which was a place of great concernment, and where there was more constant service than in other parts in the country, in due time there was an addition to Friends [...] and the goodness and mercy of the Lord abounded much to the remnant that were there gathered. Howbeit, sometimes the rude multitude was tumultuous and troublesome at our meetings*”.⁹ In spite of persecution, Quakerism was thriving in Amsterdam, and meetings attended by a varying number of “common people” from twenty to a hundred or more were held four times a week.

Although in 1657 Ames and Caton travelled together in the eastern part of the country, there is no proof that a Quaker meeting actually came into existence in that region. Caton resumed his work in Amsterdam and began debates with Jews.¹⁰ First he spoke of them as a high, lofty, proud, and con-

⁸ Sewel, *Histori van de Quakers*, 1717, 205.

⁹ Caton, *Journal*, 1839, 67.

¹⁰ For ongoing research on early Quaker – Jewish relations see Kunze, *Margaret Fell*, 1994, 211–228; Coudert, A. P.: *Henry More, the Kabbalah, and the Quakers*. In: Ashcraft, R.;

ceited people.¹¹ But just eight months later he wrote to Fell about his interviews with people who were probably Portuguese Jews: "*As touching the Jewes it is noe marvell if thou be sensible of something Among them, for J beleeeue there is A sparke in many of their bosomes, which in processe of time may kindle to A burning flame [...]*".¹² At the same time Ames wrote to Fell that "*theare is a Jew at amsterdam that by the Jews is Cast out because he owneth no other teacher but the light*".¹³ It might well be that this Jew was Baruch Spinoza.¹⁴ He was 24 years of age at this time and had just been condemned by the Jews of Amsterdam as a heretic and excommunicated.

In Leiden, Caton established a Quaker meeting. Staying in the house of a Baptist woman, whose husband was a Catholic, he was able to preach to many people, especially Baptists and Catholics where he met with considerable opposition. This time his missionary journey to Holland ended in disaster. Caton and Thatcher were arrested because they had been interrupting the services in some of the churches in Middelburg (Zeeland). Caton wrote in his journal that the city "*seemed to be as in uproar*" and that the mob would have torn them to pieces. For their protection they were escorted by soldiers to a ship and sent back to England.¹⁵ Confined to an open, cold room without bed covering, they suffered terribly on this ship. In London Caton was forced to remain in bed in order to recover, but he soon returned to Holland.

Ames' third journey to Holland occurred in 1658. During his travels he fell into trouble in South Holland.¹⁶ It was chiefly the clergy and not the civil authorities who most violently sought to eradicate "*these seductive people*", as the Presbytery of Gouda called the Quakers. The civil government was reluctant to persecute the Quakers since the general policy was that of religious tolerance to foreign citizens. The charges which they brought were for such practices as refusing to remove their hats and inciting mobs to

Kroll, R.; Zagorin, P. (Ed.): *Philosophy, Science, and Religion in England (1640–1700)*, Cambridge 1992, 31–67; and also the excellent study by Coudert, A. P.: *The Impact of the Kabbalah in the Seventeenth Century. The Life and Thought of Francis Mercury van Helmont*, Leiden 1999.

¹¹ LSF, Caton MSS, 31–33, letter to M. Fell, 11th of September 1657.

¹² Ibid, 35.

¹³ LSF, Swarthmore MSS, IV, 28v.

¹⁴ Popkin, R. H.: *Spinoza's Relations with the Quakers in Amsterdam*. In: *Quaker History*, 1984, LXXIII, 1, 14–28, here 25/26.

¹⁵ Caton, *Journal*, 1839, 57/58.

¹⁶ Hull, *Rise of Quakerism*, 1938, 46–50.

breaches of the peace. The charge of refusing to take an oath in the court or to pledge allegiance to the government was not pursued in Holland. William the Silent (William I, Prince of Orange, 1533–1584) had instructed the magistrates of Middelburg as early as 1577 that the “yea” of the Mennonites must be received by the magistrates in place of an oath.

In Moordrecht, a little town near Gouda, in fact the preachers themselves so incited the mob that Ames and Maerten Maertensen were repeatedly insulted. They were finally committed to a Rotterdam madhouse where they spent a few weeks in horrible conditions.¹⁷ Dutch Reformed and Remonstrant ministers came to visit them and held long theological discussions with them, hoping to obtain sufficient evidence to induce the authorities to take measures against the Quakers, but they failed.

William Ames' and William Caton's Travels to Northern Germany

The Thirty Years' War had raged cruelly through the Rhine valley, wholesale depopulation being its consequence. Groups of newcomers, especially Dutch and Swiss, were attracted to resettle the land by promises of religious tolerance of Christian dissidents. These promises were frequently forgotten and denominations such as the Anabaptists, the Mennonites, and the Quakers were once again subjected to discrimination and persecution. Fines were imposed for their refusal to bear arms and for their meeting together for religious purposes, and, if they refused to pay, their cattle and goods were seized. Nonetheless it was possible for the Quakers to gain ground in such larger Protestant towns as Emden, Danzig, Altona, Krefeld, Kriegsheim, and Friedrichstadt.

In 1657 Ames, accompanied by George Rose, an English Quaker, travelled to the Palatinate.¹⁸ He was likely to have heard of some Dutch communities settled in towns along the Rhine from Hamburg as far south as Heidelberg. Ames wrote that in Gelderland and in the bordering Cleveland (Duchy of Cleves / Kleve), he “*labored pretty much, yet though a loue is raised in seuerall and that seuerall haue been Conuincied, yet little is brought forth*”.¹⁹ By setting up small Quaker meetings among the Dutch in the Rhineland, he paved the way for a Dutch Quaker migration to Pennsyl-

¹⁷ Hull, *Benjamin Furly*, 1941, 207–212.

¹⁸ Besse, J.: *Collection of Sufferings*, II, London 1753, 450. Today the Palatinate is called Pfalz.

¹⁹ Letter to G. Fox, Amsterdam, 3rd of September, 1661, A. R. Barclay, MSS VII, 21 (transcribed volume LSF G4/ARB/1).

vania. Although they had a different understanding of baptism, Quakers and Mennonites, both persecuted in Germany, had a lot in common: *"They had no organs in their churches then [...], nor did they have specially trained ministers. [...] They were exceptionally generous and hospitable [...], they were frugal, industrious, and frowned upon all unnecessary luxuries. Their clothes were simple, usually of a somber color, and of a prescribed form"*.²⁰

But there were also differences in their beliefs. In times of persecution it could be safer not to be included under the Quaker label. In the interrogation recorded below Mennonites from the Alzey district were accused of being Quakers.²¹

Examiner: *"Do you have community with the so-called Schwenckfelders and do you have Lord's supper with them?"*

All Mennonites present claimed not. Some time ago one William Ames, an English preacher, had converted some of them, but later, when they found out more about his false teachings and notions, they rejected them.

Examiner: *"In which beliefs are you different from them [Quakers]?"*

They answered: *"1. They [Quakers] do not respect and follow the authorities, which is against God's order. 2. They neither read the Old nor the New Testament. 3. They refuse to go to the Lord's Supper and deem it unnecessary"*.

Examiner: *"Do you, as Anabaptists do, recite and interpret the Gospels in every Sunday worship service?" Do you sing the Psalms in your meetings? Do you attend occasionally our church service?"*

Mennonites: *"Indeed we read and teach the Gospels, but not every Sunday. The Psalms we also sing in our meetings with love and zeal, and we often attend the [Calvinist] church service."*

The Calvinist church officials were satisfied with their answers and were relieved that this group distanced themselves from the Quakers' beliefs and teachings. Because there was no further mandate from the Electoral Prince Carl Ludwig of the Palatinate (1617–1680) in Heidelberg for interrogation, the Mennonites were dismissed with the admonishment to conduct themselves peacefully and cause no disturbance in the Palatinate.

Krefeld was then part of the Principality of Orange-Nassau and was ruled by William of Orange. In 1702 it was annexed to Prussia. Until the Quaker

²⁰ Smith, C. H.: *The Story of the Mennonites*, Newton 1957 (4), 259/260. For similarities between the two groups see Seidensticker, *William Penn's Travels*, 1878, 242f., 274f.

²¹ *Thesaurus Hottingerianus*, Ms F79, 549v/r, Zentralbibliothek Zürich, Swiss.

missionaries came and converted a number to Quakerism, these Dutch Mennonites were refugees who had fled their native country then under the Habsburg rule of Charles V. and Philip II. of Spain. They had settled along the North Sea from Hamburg to Lübeck and in the Marshland along the Baltic Sea.

Ames next visited the Mennonites in Krefeld and their community in the smaller village Kriegsheim. Sewel and another Dutch Quaker historian, Gerard Croese, both reported that Ames had become acquainted with Dutch Baptists at Kriegsheim near Worms, many of whom had become his followers and had stood fast under much opposition in their new faith until the settlement of Pennsylvania, for which they departed in 1683. In Alzey, Ames met personally with the Electoral Prince Carl Ludwig for the first time in October. The Quaker left the Prince with a less than favourable impression. Shortly thereafter he told his second wife Luise von Degenfeld: *"Today we received an English Quaker, or Quakerer, whom I often brought to silence. He was very slow in his mind, would not remove his hat, and persisted in addressing me with "Du". When anyone contradicted him, he only became stubborn"*.²²

In Heidelberg Quakers coming from Kriegsheim were summoned by the local church officials who had reported them to the Electoral Prince in Heidelberg. The title of one such report²³ is "Examination of Schwenckfelders".²⁴ Besides Ames, Christoph Moretz, a Quaker and former Mennonite from Kriegsheim who had been arrested several times, Jacob Eberlein, Gilles Kassell and Velten Hitt, were present. All were Mennonites, the last two having served their community as preachers.²⁵ Among the examiners,

²² Letter of the 18th of October, 1657; Holland, W. L. (Ed.): *Schreiben des Kurfürsten Karl Ludwig von der Pfalz*, Tübingen 1884 (Bibliothek des litterarischen Vereins in Stuttgart, CLXII), 49.

²³ The Latin and German report is part of the "*Thesaurus Hottingerianus*", a collection of correspondence, prints and illustrations made by the theologian J. H. Hottinger, 55 vols. (ca. 70.000 pages). Often used, it has never been published in full. The interrogation is to be found in Ms F79, 549-553, Zentralbibliothek Zürich, Swiss.

²⁴ „Schwenckfelders“ was, along with other names such as Enthusiasts, Quietists, Boehmists, and Pietists, a commonly used term for Quakers in Germany. Although the protocol pretends to be literal, the questions and answers, both in a nearly illegible handwriting with many short cuts and abbreviations, only reveal the essence of what was spoken during an hours-long examination. Nonetheless this rare document gives an authentic impression of the proceedings and the atmosphere of such an examination.

²⁵ *Thesaurus Hottingerianus*, Ms F79, 549v/550r. About eighty Mennonites lived in the district of Alzey in villages, including Rotenbach, Obersulzheim, Gundersheim, and Heppenheim (an der Wiese). Fifty of them regularly attended meetings in Kriegsheim.

Johann Heinrich Hottinger (1620–1667) was a famous Calvinist professor and member of the *Kirchenrat*. He had been to England in 1642, and later he was called by Carl Ludwig to Heidelberg to reconstruct the university, where he then became rector in 1656.²⁶

Before the examination opened in autumn 1657, all present but especially Moretz were accused of having left the Calvinist church and having joined the Quaker movement. Moretz opened with the argument that the priests honoured human nature before God, as could be seen in their hat-honour.

To this, the examiner responded: *“We ourselves don’t transgress the commandments of the Lord, because it is written ‘love God and give respect to the king’;²⁷ and due to this everyone has to pay tribute and respect, which is obedience, taking off the hat, genuflecting and similar honours, all common in our human society”*

Moretz: *“The people’s obedience to the ruler does not necessarily indicate taking off the hat or genuflecting, which we think are secondary things”*.

The response to this was a long lecture on the Fifth and Sixth Commandments. According to the Examiner, the commandment to honour father and mother would clearly include respecting officials from the church as well as those from the state.

Moretz: *It is an awful sin before God to take off the hat before human creatures, or to give respect to them by genuflecting, and this is written in the Psalms “Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, and for thy truth’s sake”*.²⁸

Examiner: *“God is honour enough by himself, but when you give honour to human beings, you give honour to God indirectly”*.

Quaker: *“Then let it be honour enough that I live in peace with my neighbours”*.

After a recess another Examiner continued: *“What is the reason that you have left the Anabaptists?”*

At first Moretz didn’t answer, but, when he was asked a second time, he stated: *“To such a question I’m not going to answer. I’m staying in the power of the Lord, no sin is in me, because I’m born again and God is within me”*.

Examiner: *“Do you pray the Lord’s Prayer?”*

²⁶ Steiner, H.: *Johann Heinrich Hottinger in Heidelberg 1655–1661*, Zürich 1886, 5–17.

²⁷ I. Peter, 2,17: *“Fear God. Honour the King”*.

²⁸ Psalm 115,1

THREE QUAKER MISSIONARIES

Moretz: "Yes, from time to time, yes".

Examiner: "Then, if you are without any guilt and sin, why are you praying 'and forgive us our debts'?²⁹

To this question no answer was given.

Examiner: "I would like to know from you, whether your friend is one of the sect from George Fox, and do you both depend on his writings?"

Ames: "Yes".

Examiner: "Do you hold communion in your meetings?"

Ames didn't answer that point, but asked: "Would you likewise answer my questions? I for my part believe in Christ as the true light, and I'm a follower of the light".

Examiner: "Did you hear from Calvinists or somewhere within the Palatinate, that Christ was not the true light, or that He was not with us?"

Ames: "There are many indeed who seem to live in Christ but are living in sinfulness".

Examiner: "Why do you despise the Christian Church, and why do three or four of you form a church of your own?"

Ames: "This is because within the church are much and many terrible nuisances".

Examiner: "God's harvest is compared to a field, which brings fruit as well as weeds, or to a net, which catches good and bad fishes the same time, and so it is with human beings".³⁰

Ames: "How then is Christ's community founded?"

Examiner: "In Acts Chapter II, where it is said we should have mercy on each other, and if one member is fallen, the others should not cut off from him or reject him. In this our community could be compared to a human body".

Ames: "If you do so with a Kingdom, it cannot exist".

Examiner: [...]

Quakers: "Everyone who argues against the Light will not stay within the Light, but be separate from it".

Examiner: "No, because the light, though hidden in the ashes, may still gleam and rise again, and likewise a sinner can arise and be converted".

Quakers: "However, our community is in the spirit and in the truth".

Examiner: "Who has called you to preach among us?"

²⁹ Mt. 6,12

³⁰ Mt. 13,36; Mt. 13,47.

Quakers: *"We were called by God and we are the followers of Christ, His Son".*

Examiner: *"Do you believe that the Old and New Testament are a guiding principle of our beliefs?"*

Quakers: *"Yes, but it is a testimony of His guiding principles".*

Examiner: *"Do you believe that there is – in one word – God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit?"*

Quakers: *"We believe in the substantial divinity of God the Father and of the Son, but that there is such a thing as the trinity you first have to show us from the Bible".*

Examiner: *"Do you believe that united in the trinity are three different persons?"*

Quakers: *"Yes, the Father and the Son are one, but that the Holy Spirit would be a third one is an uncertain thing, so we say the Holy Spirit dwells in Christ".*

Examiner: *"So I ask you, whether Christ is at the same time God and human nature, and whether he was born from a virgin?"*

Quakers: *"So it is".*

Examiner: *"Has Christ suffered for our sins sufficiently and has he died for all of us?"*

Here the Quakers did not answer.

Examiner: *"Do you believe that God has provided a church for human beings?"*

Quakers: *"Yes, for it is written: 'Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated'.³¹*

Examiner: *"Is the Bible necessary for teaching people to live piously and to be saved?"*

Quakers: *"No, they shall be taught by God himself".*

Examiner: *"It is written in Jeremiah: 'I will make a new covenant with you, and I will write my law in their inward parts, and write in their hearts',³² but Word and Spirit will bind you firmly together by God in the Holy Bible".*

Quakers: *"His word stays forever, beyond the Holy Bible".*

Examiner (to Ames): *"Are you preaching publicly?"*

Ames: *"Yes, I was called to do so from God. Also the reason that Hottinger brought us here was that we didn't belong to this parish".*

³¹ Romans 9,13.

³² According to Jer. 31,31/33.

THREE QUAKER MISSIONARIES

Examiner: "*The reason is that you have dared to preach among us*" [...].

There followed a discussion on their respective understandings of communion and baptism, which was unfortunately not written down. Due to time constraints, the interrogation was interrupted and the Quakers dismissed. On the 6th of November, 1657, the transcription was sent to Prince Carl Ludwig, who soon was to have personal contact with Ames. The Prince invited Ames for dinner in Heidelberg Castle.³³ In the conversation Ames used the occasion to appeal for Quaker toleration with the result that orders of the *Landschreiber* Philip d'Auber against Quakers in Kriegsheim were disannulled.³⁴

In the company of Caton and Jan Hendricks, William Ames departed from Amsterdam for his second journey to Heidelberg in June 1661. Caton spent six months in the Palatinate, which encompassed Cologne, Mannheim, Frankfurt, Worms, and Alzey.³⁵ In Frankfurt (Main) he tried to have books printed, but Lutheran censorship did not allow it. They were then printed in Hanau, twenty miles east of Frankfurt. It was also in Frankfurt that Caton entered the Cathedral of St Bartholomew, where the German emperors were usually crowned. Because he didn't remove his hat he became embroiled in a Latin debate with a Catholic priest, whose companion finally beat the Quaker and left him bleeding in the church.³⁶

They then travelled down the Rhine to Heidelberg, where they gained an audience with Prince Carl Ludwig and his nobles. After several friendly and courteous conversations over dinner and a number of meetings for worship in the town, the Quaker group left Heidelberg to return to Kriegsheim. But Caton unexpectedly returned again to Heidelberg, "*for I was not clear of that city*"³⁷ and started an intense missionary work among the inhabitants. This caused the clergy to rise up against the Quakers, so that Caton, another Friend, and the man that entertained them, had to appear before the council for questioning. This treatment of the Quakers later aroused the Prince's feelings against his own councils: "*Afterwards the prince came to hear of it, at which he was very highly displeased with the council for troubling us,*

³³ An account of this in a letter from Ames to Fox, 3rd September, 1661, from his memoir is published in Hull, *William Penn*, 1935, 267f.

³⁴ Besse, *Collection of Sufferings*, II, 1753, 450.

³⁵ In 1657 the *Landschreiber* from Alzey lent support to the clerical officials by agreeing that the dissidents should first submit to a hearing and, if necessary, later be referred to appear before a judge; *Thesaurus Hottingerianus*, Ms F79, 549r.

³⁶ Caton, *Journal*, 1839, 105; see also letter by Caton, Kriegsheim, 30th February, 1662, Besse, *Collection of Sufferings*, II, 1753, 454.

³⁷ Caton, *Journal*, 1839, 102.

*when we had given them no just occasion. After that I went to the president's house, who had examined me before the council, and after a little discourse with him, he became pretty moderate, and did reason very familiarly with me, and asked me many things concerning our Friends in England, as also concerning the magistrates' proceeding towards them".*³⁸ Together with John Stubbs and Henry Fell, who had come back from missionary travel in Egypt, he returned to Heidelberg later in 1661 for a third time. Once again the Quaker group had disputes with the Prince and nobles of his court, all of whom were interested to hear news from foreign places.³⁹

On his fourth journey to Holland in the autumn of 1660, Ames continued to work together with Caton in Rotterdam, Haarlem, Leiden, and Amsterdam. This time he did not stay long in Holland since he was anxious to return to Germany. Caton, however, was so absorbed in his work in Amsterdam that he refused to heed George Fox's urging that he should go with Ames. Ames, together with Jan Hendriks, one of the Quakers from Kriegsheim, undertook a long journey to eastern Germany. On their way they passed Glücksstadt where Ames converted Hendrick Pieters and his son Pieter Hendricks, both with a Dutch-Danish-German background. They then had to flee Glücksstadt on account of their Quakerism, and Pieters and his son became capable ministers in the Amsterdam meeting. Next the Quakers went to Bohemia, to Frankfurt on the Oder, and finally to Danzig, where Ames, falling into controversies with the magistrate and the Lutheran Church, stayed during July 1661. Josua Schwarz, an orthodox Lutheran, was present at that time and preached against Pietists and Quakers, who, after they had met in fields and in the woods,⁴⁰ started around 1663 to gather regularly for silent meetings in the house of Marten Stimer.

In the winter of 1661/62 Caton learned in Heidelberg about the death of Niesje Deriks, a Dutch Quakeress whom he had proposed to marry. He wrote the sad news to Fell when he was in Kriegsheim on the 5th of February 1662: "*J also injoynd dear H.ffel [Margaret Fell] to signifie to you how it was with mee, when he was there, which was indeed a time of heavynesse with mee, which was chiefly occasioned through the tydings of the departure of that dear handmaid of the Lord Niesie Dirricks*".⁴¹ During the winter of 1661/62 Amsterdam had been stricken with the plague, and Niesje Deriks had probably fallen a victim. Ames, on his way back from Danzig, remained

³⁸ Ibid. 104.

³⁹ Ibid. 108/109.

⁴⁰ A. R. Barclay MSS VII, 24

⁴¹ Swarthmore MSS, I, 467.

THREE QUAKER MISSIONARIES

in Kriegsheim, comforting Caton and labouring among the Quakers. In 1662 Ames returned to London to speak with the Quaker leaders about Caton's fervent desire to marry, this time to Annetje Deriks, Niesje's elder sister, a notion he got while still in Germany. The three Deriks sisters were pillars of support to the Amsterdam meeting. They lived in the Vischsteeg (Fishstreet) and their house had become one of the earliest places of worship and refuge for the Amsterdam Quakers. The third sister, Gertrude Niessen Deriks, became the wife of Stephen Crisp (1628–1692), Caton's successor in Holland. The marriage of William Caton proceeded with the leaders' full approval the last day of October 1662. In the afternoon of the same day William Ames was buried in Amsterdam, to which he had returned a sick man from his imprisonment in London.

As Caton continued his work as a travelling minister, he often went to England and once he took his wife and other Dutch friends with him. One of them, Judith Zinspenning, was moved to speak in one of the meetings, and her message was interpreted by William Caton. When the Dutch friends returned to Holland, he stayed in England. His letters to them tell of his sufferings, of his being kept in jail, and of the storms at sea which he had to endure going back and forth between England and Holland. When he was in prison in Yarmouth Gaol, John Higgins went to Holland in order to take his place. In 1663 and 1664 Higgins, who was a very beloved and devoted Quaker, worked with Peter Hendriks, Barend Roelofs, and Judith Zinspenning. After his release from Yarmouth Gaol in 1664 Caton went to Amsterdam, to the joy of his wife and the Amsterdam Quakers, who had already given him up as lost or dead. In the last extant letter from his hand, addressed to James Moore, a woollen draper in Kendal, dated the 20th of November 1665, he praised the religious tolerance in Amsterdam. He wrote: *"Me thinks it is very commendable for to see [...] how that Calvinists, Lutherans, Papists, Baptists of divers sorts, Jews, Friends, Arminians etc. go in peace, and return in peace, and enjoy their meetings in peace, and all are kept in peace in the city, and that without any trouble to the rulers of the city, who I think have it manifold better, and are much more at peace and quietness than the magistrates in England, who first are troubled with making of laws to take away liberty of conscience, and then more than a little with executing those laws etc."*⁴² Caton died in the early part of December 1665. Many of his writings were published on the Continent. In a testimony concerning Stephen Crisp, William Allen, William Caton and

⁴² Swarthmore MSS, I, 536.

John Higgins, adopted by the Yearly Meeting of Friends held at Amsterdam in 1693, the following tribute was paid to this first generation of "Publishers of the Truth": "*Our Dear and Well-beloved Friends, and Gods Faithful Servants, and Ministers of the Gospel [...] who had it chiefly upon them to Preach the Truth, and watched over the little Flock of Christ in these Countries, and to minister unto the Believers thereof in these Parts, according to the Heavenly Gift committed to them*".⁴³ After Caton's death, Pieter Hendriks, Gertrud Deriks, and Jan Claus along with the aid of Benjamin Furly and Stephen Crisp became the leaders of the little flock in Amsterdam. Stephen Crisp, who already belonged to the second generation of Quakers, first visited Holland in 1663. After Caton's death Furly wrote: "*the Lord laid yet more of the weight and care of the Affairs of his people in the Low Countries upon me*"⁴⁴ and from that time until his death in 1692 he made more than a dozen journeys to that country.

Benjamin Furly and the Development of the Amsterdam Meeting

Besides Caton and Ames, Benjamin Furly can be numbered among the leading figures of the Continental and the early Dutch Quaker movement. Croese wrote in 1695: "*But Ames and his first Companions departing out of these Countreys, the Quaker's affairs in Holland were principally promoted by the Council and Assistance of one Benjamin Furley [...]*"⁴⁵

Furly was the younger son of John and Ann Furly of Colchester, who converted to Quakerism in 1655.⁴⁶ He was born in 1636 and appears to have been converted at the same time as his parents. Furly received an excellent education and was especially proficient in languages, among them the Dutch language. His mission was primarily Rotterdam, where he settled in 1659 in connection with the family's linen business. He became a wealthy Quaker and, being a learned man as well, was able to make a large contribution to the spreading to spreading of Quakerism in Holland through writing pamphlets and editing Quaker literature. His house served as a centre of Quaker meetings throughout his lifetime.

In Rotterdam Quakers preached in Furly's house and, according to Penn, "*a great Company of people, some of them being of the considerablest note*

⁴³ Hull, *Rise of Quakerism*, 1938, 196.

⁴⁴ Crisp, S.: *A Memorable Account*, London 1694, 28.

⁴⁵ Croese, G.: *General History of the Quakers*, London 1696, 177.

⁴⁶ See the entry in DQB and Simpson, C.: *Benjamin Furly, Quaker Merchant, and his Statesmen Friends*. In: JFHS, XI, 2, 62-70.

THREE QUAKER MISSIONARIES

of that city”⁴⁷ attended the meetings. Among the wealthy and famous Quakers were John Watts, George Weatherley, George Keith, Robert Barclay, and George Fox. Fox, accompanied by five Quakers, made a second visit to Holland in 1684 and again stayed in Furlly’s home. In 1686 Penn visited Rotterdam for the third time and preached a sermon in Furlly’s home.

John Bowne of Flushing, Long Island, came to seek Furlly’s aid to plead with the Dutch West India Company for religious toleration in the New Netherlands. Furlly also accompanied William Penn and Robert Barclay in the 1670s to Continental centres of Quakerism and Pietism, to Frankfurt and Kriegsheim and to Princess Elisabeth of the Palatinate in Herford, Westphalia. In contrast to the earlier travels of Caton or Ames, they visited the country mainly to try to convert the Labadist and single noble women with a Pietistic backgrounds to Quakerism, efforts which in the end were unsuccessful.⁴⁸

In 1676 Furlly went to London to present a letter from the “General Meeting” held in Amsterdam to the Friends in England. The subject of his visit was the newly established Amsterdam Yearly Meeting, the fifth Yearly Meeting to be established.⁴⁹ In the General Men’s Meeting of Friends, held on the 12th of August, 1677, the Amsterdam Yearly Meeting was established and was to include all Quakers of the Netherlands and in many of the German Principalities. In addition a Quarterly Meeting was established to include all Quakers in Amsterdam and its immediate surroundings. The first Minute of that meeting was written in the style of George Fox: “*Be it Known to all, that the power of god, the gospel, is the authority of all our men & womens meetings, & every heir of that power is an heir of that Authority: & so becometh a living member of right of either of these meetings, & of that heavenly fellowship & order, in which they stand; which is not of man, nor by man*”.⁵⁰

While at The Hague in October 1677, Fox and Penn were introduced by Furlly to one of the judges of Holland, through whose support they managed to secure religious toleration for Quakers in Holland. To promote toleration, in 1686 Penn and Furlly had several interviews with William of Orange, the

⁴⁷ Dunn, M. M.; Dunn, R. (Ed.): *The Papers of William Penn*, I. Philadelphia 1981, 430.

⁴⁸ The best research on this account, still used by modern scholars as source material, is, as well as the writings of William Hull, Seidensticker, O.: *William Penn’s Travels in Holland and Germany in 1677* (PMHB 1878).

⁴⁹ 1661: New England Yearly Meeting, 1668: London Yearly Meeting, 1672: Baltimore (original name: Maryland Yearly Meeting), 1673: Virginia Yearly Meeting.

⁵⁰ Dunn, *Papers*, I, 432.

future successor to the throne of England. James II, father-in-law of William of Orange, sent Penn with messages to Holland that he was to deliver to William of Orange.⁵¹ In "A Perswasive to Moderation", a treatise on religious liberty dedicated to King James II, in 1686 Penn paid his famous tribute to the example of Holland: "*Holland, that Bog of the world, neither Sea, nor dry Land, now the Rival of tallest Monarchs, not by Conquests, Marriage, or Accession of Royal Blood, the usual Ways to Empire, but by her own superlative Clemency and Industry, for the one was the Effect of the other: She cherished her People, whatsoever were their Opinions, as the reasonable Stock of the Country, the Heads and Hands of her Trade and Wealth, and making them easy in the main Point, their Conscience, she became Great by them*".⁵²

At the same time Furly was of useful service to Quakers in Holland, where tolerance was not as widespread as Penn had portrayed it to his English readership. The Quakers there were concerned about the validity of their self-performed marriages. The Dutch regarded Quaker marriages as a matter of religion, whereas the state regarded it as a civic function and held that the marriage should be sanctioned only by a state-recognised church. The Amsterdam Quakers refused to give notice even to the civil authorities of the marriage, either before or after the ceremony. Quakers in Holland disagreed among themselves on this point and Furly was the intermediary among them and between Quakers and the Magistrate. He negotiated the matter with the Grand Pensionary. The Amsterdam Yearly Meeting of 1683 appointed a committee, consisting of Pieter Hendriks, Jan Poelofs, Jan Claus and Benjamin Furly to consider the matter. George Fox and seven other English Quakers expressed their opinion in a letter addressed to this committee which read in part: "*It is not inconsistent with Truth's testimony to certify the magistrate both before and after the marriage, all things having first passed with clearness through the meetings of Friends, and if the like were proffered here, and to exempt and clear Friend's marriages from the penal laws, Friends believe it would be accepted by Friends generally*".⁵³

In the meantime Furly had obtained from the Pensionary of Rotterdam the statement, approved by the Grand Pensionary, that Quakers "*were scrupulous to owne their Authority in ye point and so durst not apply to them [the civil authorities] desire him [the Grand Pensionary] to do anything in*

⁵¹ Illick, J.: *William Penn the Politician*, New York 1965, 85/86.

⁵² Penn, W.: *A Collection of the Works*, II, 1726, 730/731.

⁵³ Hull, *Benjamin Furly*, 1941, 64.

the case either preparatory to it [the marriage] or confirmatory of it. But after the thing was done simply to give them [the civil authorities] notice of it by an other tract or certificate out of the [minute] book, leaving the government to their liberty to register it as they saw fit".⁵⁴ Due to Furly's effort this question was settled to the satisfaction of both Dutch and English Friends who were frequently intermarrying. The question was important with regard to the legitimacy of the children and inheritance. Paradoxically both Furly's marriages were performed at the Stadhuis of Rotterdam by civil ceremony, and by special permission of the clergy the bans were read in the Dutch Reformed Church. In his later years these and other circumstances estranged Furly from the Dutch Quakers, who complained about his increasing worldliness. It is possible that he consented to being considered a non-member without being disowned. He died in March 1714 and was buried in Rotterdam's Calvinist church, St. Lawrence or Grote Kerk.

Conclusion

Quakers did not simply travel "everywhere". Often they focussed on towns with Protestant rulers and on towns where Mennonite groups were already present. This brought Quaker missionaries more to the Netherlands and North Germany than to Spain or Italy. In the Protestant areas many other denominational groups were already on the scene, so that conflicts with the Quakers were inevitable. The examination or interrogation of travelling Quakers by Lutheran and Calvinist church officials gives us a more concrete picture of what was thought of Quakers and how Quakers themselves promoted their beliefs. The interrogation in Heidelberg is one of the most important sources for getting an authentic picture of the proceedings and the atmosphere of such an examination.

It is significant that it was overwhelmingly Quaker men such as William Ames, William Caton, and Benjamin Furly who found their way to both Holland and North Germany; only a few Quaker women came there. Important early Quaker women such as Mary Fisher, Elizabeth Hooton, and Ann Austin travelled to places other than Holland or Germany, and female Quaker travellers such as Elizabeth Cox, Elizabeth Hendricks, Lillias

⁵⁴ Ibid. 66.

Skene,⁵⁵ and Elizabeth Johnston Keith did not have the weight, influence, and reputation among Quakers that Caton, Ames or Penn did.

Nonetheless the latter tried their best to establish Quakerism in specific locations in Holland and North Germany, where the Quakers likewise hoped to be tolerated and to win followers among denominations and groups similar to Quakers such as Anabaptists, Mennonites, Labadists, and Pietists. For a clearer and deeper understanding of Quaker missionary work in late seventeenth century Germany it would be necessary to reconstruct the lines of the international Quaker movement in greater detail than it was possible here.

In that international Quaker movement Holland and North Germany were, for a short period of time in the second half of the seventeenth century, a field of intense missionary efforts and great expectations. While in the long run the movement did not manage to get a foothold in Germany, the English Quakers managed to found in the Netherlands one Yearly and a number of Quarterly Meetings. Quakers built themselves a base from which they, mostly from Amsterdam, influenced Germany via correspondence, printed material and visits during the eighteenth century. We are better informed about the early period of Quakerism in the century of the Society's founding than the history of Continental Quakerism during the eighteenth century, which remains for the most part still unwritten.

⁵⁵ Born Gillespie (1626?–1697), married to Alexander Skene, magistrate and city treasurer of Aberdeen; DQB.