'WE ARE AGAINST THE TRAFFIK OF MEN-BODY': THE GERMANTOWN QUAKER PROTEST OF 1688 AND THE ORIGINS OF AMERICAN ABOLITIONISM

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The 1688 Germantown Protest against Slavery

On April 18, 1688, a group of Quakers in the new settlement of Germantown authored a petition "against the traffik of men-body.[1] This protest against slavery was the first of its kind on the American continent and preceded the official Quaker abolition of slavery by ninety-two years. In their petition, the Germantowners argued that the oppression of blacks was no more acceptable than the oppression of Quakers in Europe, that the existence of slaves in Pennsylvania deterred potential European settlers from emigration and that slave revolts posed a major threat to Quaker welfare.

The Germantown Quakers presented their protest to the Monthly Meeting at Abington, where it was deemed too "weighty" an issue and referred to the Philadelphia Quarterly Meeting.[2] The members of the Quarterly Meeting again deferred judgment and sent the Germantown Protest to the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, the reigning Meeting in Pennsylvania.[3] There, the motion was rejected for having "so General a Relation to many other Prts [sic]."[4]

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After its rejection in 1688, the Germantown Protest was largely forgotten. It was not published and it had no quantifiable effect on the socio-political structure of seventeenth-century Philadelphia. It was not until 1844, when *The Friend*, a Quaker publication, announced the discovery of the document, that the Germantown Protest emerged as a historical document of interest.[5]

In the years following its rediscovery, the Protest served to strengthen the Quaker abolitionist identity and provide deep roots for the anti-slavery movement in American history. Samuel Pennypacker, a nineteenth-century Philadelphia judge and historian, predicted that "a mighty nation will ever recognize it in time to come as one of the brightest pages in the early history of Pennsylvania and the country,"[6] while William Hull, an historian at Swarthmore College during the early twentieth century, called the Protest "the memorable flower which blossomed in Pennsylvania from the seed of Quakerism."[7] In 2000, the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting included a portion of the Protest in an exhibit on "Quakers and the Political Process," in which they identified the protest as the seed of the Quaker abolitionist movement.[8]

Rediscovered Again

In March 2006, the Germantown Protest was rediscovered for the second time. After being misplaced over thirty years ago, the document was uncovered in the vault of the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting. This discovery has brought renewed attention to the document and its meaning in both a modern and historical context.

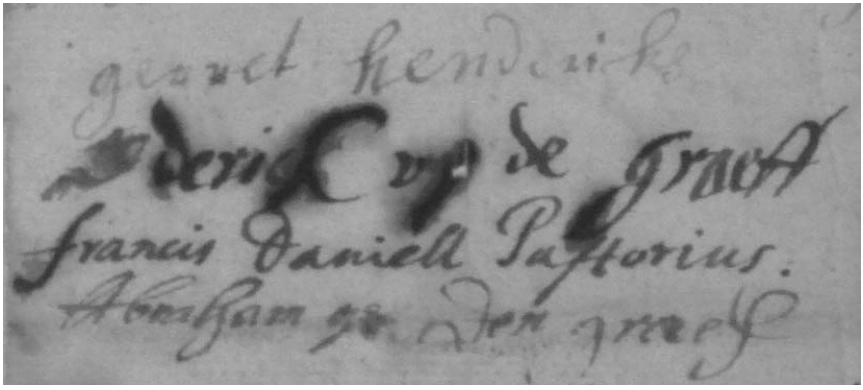

FIGURE 1: Signatures on the original Protest. Printed by permission of Germantown Friends Meeting.

The Germantown Protest was found in a box that contained another anti-slavery document, also written in the late seventeenth century. The second document was authored in 1696 by Cadwalader Morgan, a Quaker from Merion, Pennsylvania. Like the Germantown Protest, the anti-slavery document was submitted to the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting for consideration. Unlike the Germantown Protest, however, Morgan's protest inspired an immediate reaction: the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting issued an official "warning" against slave-holding and discouraged its members from importing more slaves.

Given the relative success of these two anti-slavery documents, it may seem surprising that the rejected and forgotten Germantown protest has become significant in a modern context while the initially successful protest of Cadwalader Morgan has been largely ignored. Yet a brief comparison of these two documents reveals sharp disparities in content, style and reasoning that account for the difference in modern appeal. While the Germantown Protest founds its anti-slavery argument on ethical and pragmatic concerns, Cadwalader Morgan argues that slaves are dangerous and morally corrupt.

Cadwalader Morgan's sentiments are reiterated in the Yearly Meeting's official warning against slavery, which advises Friends to "be more careful not to Encourage the bringing in of any more Negroes, and that such that have Negroes be Careful of them, bring them from Loose, and Lewd Living as much in them lies, and from Rambling abroad on First Days or other Times."[9]

Cadwalader Morgan's protest and the Yearly Meeting's warning are indicative of a wider attitude toward slaves and slavery in seventeenth-century Quaker Philadelphia. At the time, slave holding and trading was common practice in Philadelphia, and the Quaker slave trade was growing steadily.[10] Many Quakers owned slaves, and those who were against the practice were often concerned for their own safety and welfare.

Within this context, the Germantown Protest is an interesting anomaly. The Germantowners critiqued the institution of slavery with a novel argument and humanized the discourse on slave holding. The Germantowners challenged their readers to imagine themselves in a slave-like position and to take their ethics of equality seriously. As Tinkcom & Tinkcom write, "[The Protest expressed an] idea of human rights…[that] was in advance of humanitarian thought in either the Old or the New World."[11]

The 1688 Protest differed from other seventeenth-century Quaker texts not only in content, but also in linguistic structure and style. The

Germantowners did not follow the typical format of a Quaker document sent between Meetings. The Protest is addressed to "Christians," rather than "Friends" and with minor exceptions, it forgoes Biblical references and never mentions Jesus Christ—all unusual practices for a Quaker text in the late seventeenth century. The Germantowners also omit the salutary introduction to Friends that was customary of epistles sent between Meetings. In its structural style, the protest most resembles Quaker pamphlets, which were normally written to groups or individuals outside the Quaker community.

These disparities are indicative of deeper cultural, ideological and linguistic differences that divided the German-Dutch Quakers of Germantown and the English Quakers of Philadelphia. The Germantowners, the first of whom arrived in Pennsylvania in 1683, consistently set themselves apart from the rest of the immigrant population in Pennsylvania. Upon arrival in 1683, Francis Daniel Pastorius, one of the Protest's signers, insisted—against William Penn's preference—that the Dutch and German settlers be given land together, rather than in dispersed pockets around Philadelphia. In 1689, the Germantowners were granted the first charter to become a borough, the only one of its kind ever to be issued in Pennsylvania.[12] This political freedom lent Germantown such an air of independence that in 1701, the town argued that it should be exempt from Pennsylvania taxes.[13]

The Germantowners' conviction to remain autonomous, together with their lack of acquaintance with English Quaker conventions, presented them with a unique perspective on Pennsylvania society. Their normative place within the Quaker Meeting hierarchy, meanwhile, gave them a moral and religious voice with which to speak to the English Quakers and create what has become, in the past two centuries, a defining, formative and inspiring symbol of Quaker abolitionism.

Quakers and Slavery, 1688

The Germantown Quakers submitted their protest against slavery into the complex social matrix of seventeenth century Quaker Philadelphia. As Pennsylvania's social and economic structure developed, ties with the West Indies and other trade outlets flourished and the number of black slaves in Pennsylvania increased significantly.[14] In 1690, less than ten years after Pennsylvania was founded, William Penn announced proudly that ten slave ships had arrived from the West Indies in just one year:

> The several Plantations and towns begun upon the Land, bought by those first Undertakers, are also in a prosperous way of Improvement and Inlargement (insomuch as last Year, ten Sail of Ships were freighted there, with the growth of the Province, for Barbados, Jamaica, &c. Besides what came directly for this kingdom).[15]

The slave trade was a source of pride and a symbol of prosperity for many English Quakers who considered slaves to be necessary for economic development. James Claypoole, a Friend and slave trader who traveled to Pennsylvania with the Germantowners in 1683 and helped organize their journey on the *Concord,*[16] expressed anxiety when his slave shipment failed to arrive:

> I writt to thee, to send me 4 blacks viz. A man, a woman, a boy, a Girl but being I was so disappointed in Engl[and] as not to send thee those goods thou wrote for, I could not expect thou wouldst send them…Now my desire is that if thou doest not send them all however send me a boy between 12 & 20 years.[17]

Quaker merchants, like other slave merchants, saw blacks as a commodity. Gabriel Thomas, another Friend living in Pennsylvania, lists "Negroes" as one of many imports from the West Indies:

> Their Merchandize chiefly consists in Horses, Pipe-staves, Pork and Beef Salted and Barrelled up, Bread, and Flower, all sorts of Grain, Pease, Beans, Skins, Furs, Tobacco, or Pot-Ashes, Wx, etc., which are Barter'd for Rumm, Sugar, Molasses, Silver, Negroes, Salt, Wine, Linen, Household Goods, etc.[18]

The *Constant Alice,* a "non-Quaker vessel owned by William Douglas and James and Hercules Coutts," which sailed regularly between Pennsylvania and Barbados, records that a cargo worth £134 16*s.* 3*d.* was shipped to Philadelphia in June 1701. Of that, £47 consisted of black slaves. The following year, blacks "accounted for more than half" of the cargo: £57 10*s.* of £114 10*s.* 8*d.*[19]

The increase in slave shipments between 1701 and 1702 suggest that the Quaker slave trade was still on the rise at the turn of the century, thirteen years after the completion of the Germantown Protest. Although voices against slavery had intensified in the Quaker community, they were undermined by

the economic structure of colonial Pennsylvania and the demand for slaves in the Philadelphia Quaker community.

Early English Quaker Abolitionists

The burgeoning slave trade had few Quaker critics in 1688. Still, anti-slavery sentiment can be traced to the founder of Quakerism, George Fox. Fox emphasized that all humans were "children of God" and advocated for fair treatment of blacks, although he did not condemn slavery. In 1671, he preached to blacks and whites during a visit to Barbados and "urged Quaker masters to limit their slaves' terms and to educate them."[20] His thoughts and sermons were published six years later under the title, *Gospel: Family-Order, Being a Short Discourse Concerning the Ordering of Families, both of Whites, Blacks and Indians.*[21]

The existence of slavery concerned Fox on two counts: first, it made him uncomfortable to imagine himself or other Friends as slaves and he encouraged Friends to treat blacks as they would want to be treated in a "slavish Condition:"

> And further, consider with your selves, if you were in the same Condition as the Blacks are…if this should be the Condition of you or yours, you would think it hard to Measure; yea, and very great Bondage and Cruelty. And therefore consider seriously of this, and do you for and to them, as you would willingly have them or any other to unto you, were you in the like slavish Condition, & bring them to know the Lord Christ.[22]

Moral treatment, according to Fox, included allowing slaves to hold worship meetings and providing them with a Christian education. He argues that Christ "dyed for Tawnes and for the Blacks, as well as for you that are called Whites" and concludes, "therefore you should preach Christ to your *Ethyopians* that are in your Families."

Fox's second worry regarded the Quaker family. Fox saw the family as a sacred institution and feared that the presence of non-Christian "strangers" would weaken Christian practices. He reminds Friends to "see that all of your Families do keep this Sabbath, this Rest, both you and your Sons and Daughters, Men-Servants & Maid-Servants that are within your Gates; this concerns every one of you, that are Masters of Families."[23] He also warned

Friends to be wary of bringing blacks into their quarters and while he encouraged Friends to give blacks a time to meet for worship, he did not envision a shared meeting of blacks and whites:

> [It] burden'd my Life very much, to see, that Families were not brought into Order; for the Blacks are of your Families, and the many Natives of them born in your Houses...Friends…let them have two or three Hours of the Day once in the Week, that Day Friends Meeting is on, or an other Day, to meet together, to wait upon the Lord.[24]

Fox's two concerns, one founded on morality and the other on familial "order," are representative of the philosophical underpinnings of the early English Quaker anti-slavery movement.[25] On moral terms, Friends argued that slavery was inconsistent with Quaker principles of non-violence and equality.[26] This philosophical position came to fruition in the eighteenth century with abolitionists like John Woolman, Anthony Benezet, and David Ferris. The concern for familial order, meanwhile, maintained that owning slaves was ostentatious and would promote laziness in Quaker households. With slaves to perform menial labors, Friends argued, Quaker children would not learn the virtues of hard work, simplicity and humility.

The Quaker concern for familial order came in varying degrees of prejudice. While Fox was anxious that blacks were "strangers" who did not belong in Quaker families, other Friends feared that blacks could be dangerous. In his 1696 anti-slavery text, Cadwalader Morgan asked, "What if I should have a bad one of them, that must be corrected, or would run away, or when I went from home and leave him with a woman or maid, and he should desire to commit wickedness?"[27]

Quakers were also concerned about the moral welfare of blacks. English Quakers tended to regard blacks as unenlightened since they had not been exposed to the Gospel, and the question of how to reform them was a major issue for early abolitionists. William Edmunson, a Quaker who traveled to Barbados with George Fox, urged Friends to introduce blacks to God and Jesus as a means to "Christianize" them:

> Friends that have Negroes is to take great Care, to Restrain and Reclaim them, from their former Courses of their accustomed filthy, unclean practices, in defileing one another, they are to be Restrained, and Watched over, and diligently admonished in the Fear of God and

> brought to Meetings, that they may learn to Know God that made them, and Christ Jesus that died for them and all Men, and those things the Lord required.[28]

Edmunson became, as Jean Soderlund writes, "probably the first Quaker to denounce slavery outright," and J. William Frost adds, "Edmunson's letters to Quakers…linked spiritual and temporal freedom and raised for the first time the question whether Christianity and slavery were compatible."[29]

Slave Revolt: A Common Fear

Early Quaker abolitionists were also aware of the possibility of slave revolt. There had been a series of slave rebellions in the Caribbean during the seventeenth century, including three in Barbados, the site of the Pennsylvania Quaker slave trade. These rebellions, which occurred in 1649, 1674/5 and 1692, supported the perception of blacks as dangerous and encouraged Quaker opposition to the slave trade, albeit for practical, rather than moral, reasons.[30] The prospect of quelling a slave rebellion was problematic for Friends because they were opposed to all forms of violence and had no organized militia. These concerns were articulated by Robert Piles, another seventeenth-century Quaker abolitionist:

> I considered, also, that if all friends that are of ability should buy of them that is in this province, they being a people not subject to ye truth, nor yet likely so to bee; they might rise in rebellion and doe us much mischief; except we keep a malisha; which is against our principles.[31]

The Yearly Meeting responded to Piles' letter by writing to Friends in Barbados to request an end to slave importation, although the records from *The Constant Alice* suggest that their request was not heeded.

The fear of revolt influenced Benjamin Furly's attempt to limit slave ownership in Pennsylvania. In 1683 Furly, William Penn's agent in Amsterdam, wrote a letter to Penn with the following request:

> Let no blacks be brought in directly. And if any come out of Virginia, Maryland or elsewhere in families that have formerly bought them elsewhere let them be declared (as in ye west jersey constitution) free at 8 years end.[32]

The heading of the passage, "For the Security of Foreigners Who May Incline to Purchase Land in Pensilvania," suggests that Furly's incentive in writing to Penn was a concern for the safety of his clients—potential German and Dutch emigrants—rather than an altruistic desire to end slavery. It also suggests that Furly's clients were concerned about the presence of blacks in the colonies and had spoken to Furly about their fears.

Furly's letter to Penn is of particular interest because his clients included the four signers of the 1688 Protest—Francis Daniel Pastorius, the op den Graeff brothers and Garret Hendricks—and his letter was written in 1683, when Pastorius and the future Germantowners were in contact with him in Rotterdam.[33] It suggests that the Germantowners may have been concerned about slavery in America even before their emigration.

They were certainly concerned about both the slave trade and slave rebellion when they wrote their 1688 Protest. The Germantowners used the possibility of revolt to supplement their argument against slavery:

> If once these slaves (wch they say are so wicked and stubborn men) should joint themselves—fight for their freedom—and handel their masters and mastrisses as they did handel them before; will these masters and mastrisses take the sword at hand and warr against these poor slaves, licke, we are able to believe, some will not refuse to doe; or have these negers not as much right to fight for their freedom, as you have to keep them slaves?[34]

The slave revolt was a fear shared by the German-Dutch and English Quakers in Pennsylvania. Interestingly, it proved to be virtually the only shared concern regarding slavery.

The Germantown Protest: A New Type of Abolitionism

Within the context of the seventeenth-century Quaker anti-slavery movement, the Germantown Protest represents a radical shift in thinking. While the Protest shares philosophical similarities with Fox's moral concern in *Quaker Family Order* and Piles' practical fear of slave rebellion in his 1698 letter, these connections are, for the most part, superficial. Closer analysis reveals that the Germantowners had a fundamentally different perception of black slaves than English Quakers. As the anti-slavery texts of Fox, Morgan

and Edmunson demonstrate, the English saw black slaves as unenlightened at best and dangerous at worst. Neither the "progressive" nor "conservative" English Quakers considered blacks to be the social equals of whites.[35] The belief that blacks were the *spiritual* equals of whites was itself a development. Abolitionists like William Edmunson were revolutionary in their own way by proposing that blacks, like whites, were capable of salvation through belief in God and Jesus.

The Germantowners conceived of blacks as the social and spiritual equals of whites. They argue that there is "no more liberty" to have blacks as slaves as it is to have "other white ones" and in their phrasing of the Golden Rule, the Germantowners added the stipulation that no difference should be made based on "generation, descent, or colour." The Germantowners also compared the oppression of blacks in Pennsylvania to the oppression of Quakers and Mennonites in Europe. Since the oppression of Quakers and Mennonites was of a social nature, this suggests that the Germantowners believed that blacks, like Quakers in Europe, deserved to be treated as political citizens, not slaves.

The divergent conceptions of blacks among English and German-Dutch Quakers probably has less to do with the relative "morality" of each group and more to do with the rhetorical, philosophical and behavioral customs that defined the *mores* of each group's homeland. The near-unquestioned acceptance of the slave trade in England and the general assumption that blacks were socially and spiritually inferior to whites made it nearly impossible for the English to even conceive of racial equality. The German and Dutch Quakers, who were not accustomed to slavery or blacks, were unencumbered by these culturally engrained biases.

A Matter of Reputation

The lack of widespread slavery in Europe did, however, create one notable problem for the Germantowners; many of their friends and acquaintances were hesitant to emigrate to a land with slaves.[36] The "marketable" aspect of Pennsylvania was its pure wilderness and the institution of slavery worked against this image. According to the Germantowners, religious communities in Germany and Holland had gotten word of the presence of slavery in Pennsylvania and were not impressed. The Germantowners mentioned Pennsylvania's sinking reputation at three different points in their Protest:

> Ah! Doe consider well this thing, you who doe it…You surpass Holland and Germany in this thing. This makes an ill report in all those countries of Europe, where they hear off, that ye Quakers doe here handel men as they handel there ye cattle. And for that reason some have no mind or inclination to come hither…
>
> … such men ought to be delivered out of ye robbers, and set free…Then is Pennsylvania to have a good report, instead it hath now a bad one for this sake in other countries. Especially whereas ye Europeans are desirous to know in what manner ye Quakers doe rule in their province;—and most of them doe look upon us with an envious eye. But if this is done well, what shall we say is done evil?…
>
> …To the end we shall be satisfied in this point, and satisfie likewise our good friends and acquaintances in our natif country, to whose it is a terror, or a fairful thing that men should be handeld so in Pennsylvania…

For the Germantowners, who were desperate to attract more settlers from their own homelands, this was a major concern. Pastorius was eager to attract other Germans to Germantown, which was still nearly all Dutch. The other Germantowners were also hoping to lure more like-minded individuals from the Rhineland, and Herman op den Graeff's letters home had been used to advertise the tranquility and purity of Penn's woods.

While the existence of slavery acted as a deterrent for potential German settlers, the Germantowners found themselves unrestrained by economic reliance upon the institution, a factor that gave them practical flexibility to exercise their philosophical position. As English Quaker perceptions of blacks evolved over the next century, the economic and political structure of the slave trade proved to be the most stubborn obstacle in the fulfillment of the developing ideal of racial equality.

The Germantown Protest as a Quaker Text

While the Germantowners' acquaintance with German-Dutch *mores* allowed the authors to approach the slave trade with an uncomplicated perspective, their "foreign" status in English Philadelphia affected the way their Protest was received and defined by the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting. The

Germantowners were not fluent in the conversational and textual customs of the English and, as a result, they were not genuine "insiders" in the English Quaker community.

The ambiguous status of the Germantowners is evident in the style and structure of their Protest. While the Protest fit normatively into the genre of "intra-Quaker documents"—texts sent within and between recognized Quaker Meetings—it failed to follow the accepted textual conventions of this social framework. Intra-Quaker documents traditionally began with a salutary introduction to fellow friends and normally included multiple references to Jesus Christ and God. The 1688 Protest diverges from these conventions and looks more like a Quaker pamphlet—a text normally directed outside the Quaker community. This textual anomaly has important implications: it is symptomatic of the cultural and linguistic discontinuities between the English and German-Dutch members of the Society of Friends.

Intra-Quaker Texts

Intra-Quaker documents came in two primary forms: epistles and disciplines. Epistles were sent annually from Yearly Quaker meetings (e.g. London and Philadelphia) to subordinate Quarterly and Monthly meetings (e.g. Germantown or Abington). The epistles sent from the Yearly Meetings would be read by members of smaller meetings and they played an important role in defining Quaker behavior and tradition. The epistles covered basic material concerning Quaker etiquette and custom and they updated smaller Quaker communities on important news in the larger Quaker community. The London Yearly Meeting's Epistle of 1687, for example, informed its readers that the Friends held captive in Algiers were set free and that ten Friends remain in captivity in Mequinez.[37]

These annual epistles also responded to the concerns and news raised in subordinate meetings. When, for example, a Monthly Meeting could not come to consensus on a particular issue, that Meeting could issue an epistle that would be submitted for consideration at the nearest Quarterly Meeting. If the issue remained unresolved and carried enough weight, the epistle would be sent from the Quarterly Meeting to the Yearly Meeting for consideration.

As a result, epistles were the primary form of intra-Quaker communication and discussion. They defined and challenged the customs and laws of the Quaker community and allowed subordinate meetings to contribute to the

discussion of Quaker custom in the Yearly Meetings. The consensus of the Yearly Meetings, defined in the annual epistles, would later be summarized within a discipline. Disciplines combined the conclusions of epistles over the years and drew firm delineations about acceptable Quaker conduct. The discipline published by the London Yearly Meeting in 1783, for example, cited epistles from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries to define proper Quaker behavior regarding topics ranging from Appeals to Militia to Slaves.

The Germantown Protest as a Quaker Epistle

Within the hierarchy of Meetings, the Germantown Protest functioned as an epistle sent from a subordinate meeting to a more substantial meeting. As a Quaker document, intended for a specific purpose and a specific audience, the Protest would be expected to follow accepted textual guidelines. An examination of epistles sent between 1680 and 1700 illustrates that documents intended for intra-Quaker communication demonstrate a series of structural and stylistic similarities.

Nearly all intra-Quaker documents begin with a salutary greeting addressed to "Friends and Brethren." In some epistles, the greeting is written as a prayer ending with "Amen," while others give praise to God and Jesus Christ and show gratitude for the community of Friends. The following excerpts from the London Epistle of 1687, and the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting Epistle of 1692 are representative of the stylistic introduction of Quaker epistles:

> Dear and tender salutation in our Lord Jesus Christ, who is our life, and in whom we have fellowship, to all our true friends and brethren everywhere. Having great cause to bless and praise Almighty God for his continued goodness and renewed favours unto us, a deep and weighty sense whereof loves upon our spirits, and hath been upon this meeting, to the opening and tendering the hearts of many in renewed love and thanksgiving to the God of our mercies, and brotherly kindness and tender affection one towards another, and towards all the whole family and heritage of our God.[38]

> Dear Friends, brethren and Sisters in the holy relation sand divine fellowship, into which the Father of mercies hath begotten and

> graciously gathered us by the word of life, do we salute you with near and dear affection and travailing [word unclear], that Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ may be multiplied, and abundantly encreased [sic] amongst you everywhere, to the glory of God, and your unspeakable consolation.[39]

Invoking Jesus Christ and God, the London and Philadelphia Epistles used ornate language and their broad salutations to Friends preceded any informational content. The discipline published by the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting in 1689 followed the same trend:

> Beloved Friends of the several Monethly and Quarterly Meetings in East and West-Jersey and Pennsylvania &c. In the Gospel-fellowship and Unity of the Ancient Truth, do we at this time salute you, and in much Love, Good will and Godly Care recommend unto you, and lay before you the Consideration and due Regard of these few, but wholsom Particulars [sic].[40]

The 1689 Discipline, like the epistles, begins with ornate and salutary language, although it differs in purpose. While the epistles update the Quaker community on news and give some advice on etiquette and behavior, the disciplines were solely intended to instruct Quakers on how to act appropriately.

As a result, the 1689 Discipline has more in common with the Germantowners' protest, which also intended to change Quaker behavior. The significant difference between the two texts is their relative authority. The Germantown protest was written by a small subordinate meeting, and it would carry no weight with the larger Quaker population until it passed through the hierarchy of meetings. The Philadelphia Yearly Meeting's disciplines, conversely, influenced the entire Quaker community and they were written with that assumption.

Due to this difference in authority, a disparity in the structure and style of epistles and disciplines and the Germantown Protest is to be expected. But the extent of the disparity is surprising. The Germantown Protest skipped the flowery introduction and began with a declaration:

> These are the reasons why we are against the traffik of men-body, as followeth. Is there any that would be done or handled at this manner? viz., to be sold or made a slave for all the time of his life?

Given the conventional language of intra-Quaker texts, this beginning is unexpected—and significant. The Germantowners failed to follow the first implicit rule of Quaker writing: praising ones fellow Friends.

This may not seem like a major concern. It is, after all, only an introduction with no "real" content. But, as I will argue, minor textual norms are as important, and as revealing, as other more "significant" social customs. We can read text as a tool to discover how one group feels about its relation to other groups; to determine whether an author knows how to act within a particular social setting; and to distinguish social "insiders," who can follow, use and manipulate textual conventions, from social "outsiders," who lack fluency in a group's textual and behavioral customs.

The Germantowners' "outsider" status emerges in their introduction, which lacked the courteous greetings of the other epistles. They continue to diverge from Quaker textual convention throughout the Protest. They never called their fellow Quakers "Friends," instead referring to the wider community of "Christians." When they did refer to English Friends, they called them "Quakers," a term that would normally be used by non-Friends. They also omitted all references to "God" and "Jesus Christ," another significant divergence in writing style and content.

Numbers tell the story: The 1687 and 1688 London Epistles and the 1689 and 1692 Philadelphia Yearly Meeting (PYM) Discipline and Epistle use the words "Jesus Christ" or "Christ" an average of 3.75 times per document while the Germantown Protest never references either word.[41] The words "Lord" or "God" appear an average of 12.75 times in the English Quaker texts, while they never appear in the Germantown Protest. The most significant disparity is with the word "Friends." The Germantowners never use the word, while it appears an average of 16.75 times in the English Quaker texts. The words "Christian" or "Christians," conversely, appear four times in the Germantown Protest while they are only used an average of 1.75 times in the English Quaker texts. The Germantowners also use the word "Quaker" twice, which never appears in the 1687 or 1688 London Epistles, the 1689 Discipline or the 1692 PYM Epistle.

This comparison illustrates just how "different" the Germantown Protest was. The discrepancy regarding the word "Friends" is particularly telling. "Friends" is a recognized, insider term that was used by Quakers on a daily basis, both in text and in spoken language. Two Quakers who recognized each other as members of the same community would call each other "Friends." The epistles and the disciplines all repeated the greeting "Dear and Tenderly

Number of Religious References in Various Quaker texts

	Jesus Christ	Lord/God	Friend	Christian	Quakers
London Epistle 1687	4	11	34	3	0
London Epistle 1688	6	21	19	1	0
PYM Discipline 1689	1	3	4	2	0
PYM Epistle 1692	4	16	10	1	0
TOTAL	15	51	67	7	0
AVERAGE	3.75	12.75	15.75	1.75	0
Germantown Protest	**0**	**0**	**0**	**4**	**2**

Beloved Friends and Brethren" (or some variation therein) at multiple times within the same text. The London Epistle of 1687 used this greeting (or a similar one) three times. The Epistle of 1688 made five such greetings.

The only mention of "friends" in the Germantown Protest was in reference to the authors' "friends and acquaintances in [their] natif country." When the Germantowners mentioned the English Quakers in Philadelphia, they called them "Quakers," not "Friends:"

> This makes an ill report in all those countries of Europe, where they hear off, that ye Quakers doe here handel men as they handel there ye Cattle….Especially whereas ye Europeans are desirous to know in what manner ye Quakers doe rule in their province—and most of them doe look upon us with an envious eye.

In these lines, the Germantowners differentiated themselves not only from the English Quakers, but also from their friends and brethren in Europe. They referred to the Quakers as "ye Quakers" and Europeans as "ye Europeans," implying that they belonged to neither group. But they did include themselves as Pennsylvanians when they wrote that the Europeans look upon "us" with an envious eye.

While the Germantowners may not have considered themselves to be fully accepted by the English Quakers, they fit normatively into the social structure of the Society of Friends. Within the Quaker hierarchy, the Germantowners were members of a preparatory Meeting, no different from other subordinate English Meetings. This is obvious from the note written

in the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting minute about the protest, which mentioned "a Paper here presented by some German Friends."[42] As Tinkcom & Tinkcom (1955) write, "the Germantown meeting was from the beginning associated with the English Friends meetings in the usual way, being a constituent part of the Dublin or Abington Monthly Meeting, of the Philadelphia Quarterly Meeting, and of the Philadelphia or Burlington Yearly Meeting."[43]

The Germantown Protest as a Quaker Pamphlet

Instead of structuring their protest like an intra-Quaker text, the Germantowners followed the example of Quaker pamphleteers and petitioners. Pamphets and petitions, which were written by Quakers on contentious subjects like taxes or in defense of Quaker customs and beliefs, were normally directed outside the Quaker community. Unlike intra-Quaker texts, they did not begin with a salutary introduction but with a direct argument. A petition sent to the English Parliament by a group of women Friends in London, for example, began with rhetorical questions that lead into an argument:

> Now friends, you being first chosen by the Nation as a Parliament for to do the Nation the right, and to take off the Nations oppressions; are not you to search out the oppression? And are not people to lay their oppressions before you, without petitioning you to do them justice? And is not petitioning often for exalting such that will not do justice without flattering petitions, and then have but thanks, and seldom the thing done?

The rhetoric style of the women's petition, which was directed toward a powerful external institution (the Parliament), was nearly identical to the Protest. Both drew their readers into an argument with a statement followed by a series of questions:

> These are the reasons why we are against the traffick of men-body, as followeth. Is there any that would be done or handled at this manner? Viz., to be sold or made a slave for all the time of his life?… Now what is this better done, as Turks doe?

The effect of this style is striking: it challenges the reader to engage the text immediately. It also reveals that the first priority of the authors was to convey an argument. Neither the female authors nor the Germantowners attempted to please their audience, but to convince them of something. This objective poses a striking contrast to the Quaker epistles. The intra-Quaker epistles were intended to solidify and strengthen the Quaker community through praise and in recognition of common customs. As a result, they rarely mentioned contentious issues.

When powerful English Quakers in Philadelphia wrote pamphlets, they used a notably different writing style. William Penn, for example, wrote an answer to a "False and Foolish Libel called *The Quakers Opinions*." In it, he defended the customs and beliefs of Quakers against critics. While he opened his text with a dramatic introduction ("The end of controversie with good men, is the Advancement of Truth; with ill men, of themselves and their base interests; in all which God is judge, who judgeth righteously, and will reward every one according to their works, nor doth his Judgment slumber"), he soon moved into a direct argument, in which he used short, repetitive rhetorical questions:

> Tell me though vain disputer and Vicious Liver, what is Religion without Holy Love? What is Faith without Good Works? What is Worship without Godly Fear and Christianity, without true self-denial?[44]

Though the content of the text is different, Penn's direct style is reminiscent of both the women's petition to Parliament and the Germantown Protest. All three aimed to convince an audience of a particular point and all three were directed toward an external community.

Despite this resemblance, both the Penn pamphlet and the women's petition shared similarities with the intra-Quaker epistles that the Germantown protest lacked. Like the intra-Quaker texts, the Penn pamphlet and the women's petition used the words "God" and "Jesus Christ" extensively. The women's petition contains six references to God, six to Jesus Christ and one to Christians. The introduction to the Penn text also has six references to both "God" and "Jesus Christ" and three references to "Christians."[45] These statistics resemble the results from the intra-Quaker texts rather than the Germantown protest, which never mentioned "God" or "Jesus Christ."

Still, neither the women's petition nor the Penn pamphlet used the term "friends" frequently. In Penn's text the word never appeared, while the

women's petition cited it only once. The lack of reference to "friends" is a reminder that these were texts directed outside the Quaker community. The Germantown Protest shares this curious similarity and suggests that the Germantowners did not consider themselves to be truly accepted by the English Quakers in Philadelphia.

	Christ	Lord/God	Friends	Christian	Quakers
Average of Quaker Epistles	3.75	12.75	15.75	1.75	0
Germantown Protest	0	0	0	4	2
Women's Petition	6	6	1	1	0
Penn's Introduction to *Libell*	6	6	0	3	1

Overall, these textual discrepancies are another example of the Germantowners' ambiguous status within the English Quaker community. Some of the disparity in style between the English and German-Dutch texts is linguistic in origin: the Germantowners were not native English speakers and could not manipulate the English language with fluency. It would have been difficult for them to read and reproduce the proper textual conventions in the Quaker Epistles. But this linguistic diversity was tied to deeper social and cultural differences between the English and German-Dutch that profoundly affected each population's behavior, expectations and worldview.

The language of the Protest reveals an underlying disconnect between the Germantowners and the English Quaker community. Not only was their textual structure and style anomalous but the Germantowners' concern for blacks revealed a wholly new perspective on slavery that was unlike the English anti-slavery sentiment of the same period. This cultural disconnect may have been the reason the Protest was rejected by the English, but the Protest would not have been possible without it. By leaving their homeland and attempting to adjust to a foreign way of life in Pennsylvania, the Germantowners offered a new outlook on English customs. The Protest was a refreshing anomaly that emerged neither from a German-Dutch nor English perspective. It was unique to Germantown and the uncommon lives and convictions of the Germantowners.

APPENDICES

A. 1688 Germantown Protest against Slavery

This is to Ye Monthly Meeting Held at Richard Worrell's

These are the reasons why we are against the traffik of men-body, as followeth. Is there any that would be done or handled at this manner? viz., to be sold or made a slave for all the time of his life? How fearful and faint-hearted are many on sea, when they see a strange vessel—being afraid it should be a Turk, and they should be taken, and sold for slaves into Turkey. Now what is this better done, as Turks doe? Yea, rather is it worse for them, which say they are Christians; for we hear that ye most part of such negers are brought hither against their will and consent, and that many of them are stolen. Now, tho they are black, we cannot conceive there is more liberty to have them slaves, as it is to have other white ones. There is a saying, that we shall doe to all men like as we will be done ourselves; making no difference of what generation, descent or colour ther are. And those who steal or robb men, and those who buy or purchase them, are they not all alike? Here is liberty of conscience, wch is right and reasonable; here ought to be likewise liberty of ye body, except of evil-doers, wch is an other case. But to bring men hither, or to rob and sell them against their will, we stand against. In Europe there are many oppressed for conscience sake; and here there are those oppressed who are of a black colour. And we who know that men must not commit adultery,—some do commit adultery, in others, separating wives from their husbands and giving them to others; and some sell the children of these poor creatures to other men. Ah! Doe consider well this thing, you who doe it, if you would be done at this manner? And if it is done according to Christianity? You surpass Holland and Germany in this thing. This makes an ill report in all those countries of Europe, where they hear off, that ye Quakers doe here handel men as they handel there ye cattle. And for that reason some have no mind or inclination to come hither. And who shall maintain this your cause, or pleid for it? Truly we can not do so, except you shall inform us better hereof, viz., that Christians have liberty to practise these things. Pray, what thing in the world can be done worse towards us, than if men should rob or steal us away, and sell us for slaves to strange countries; separating housbands from their wives and children. Being now this is not done in the

manner we would be done at therefore we contradict and are against this traffic of men-body. And we who profess that it is not lawful to steal, must, likewise, avoid to purchase such things as are stolen, but rather help to stop this robbing and stealing if possible. And such men ought to be delivered out of ye robbers, and set free as well as in Europe. Then is Pennsylvania to have a good report, instead it hath now a bad one for this sake in other countries. Especially whereas ye Europeans are desirous to know in what manner ye Quakers doe rule in their province;—and most of them doe look upon us with an envious eye. But if this is done well, what shall we say is done evil?

If once these slaves (wch they say are so wicked and stubborn men) should joint themselves,—fight for their freedom,—and handel their masters and mastrisses as they did handel them before; will these masters and mastrisses take the sword at hand and warr against these poor slaves, licke, we are able to believe, some will not refuse to doe; or have these negers not as much right to fight for their freedom, as you have to keep them slaves?

Now consider well this thing, if it is good or bad? And in case you find it to be good to handel these blacks at that manner, we desire and require you hereby lovingly, that you may inform us herein, which at this time never was done, viz., that Christians have such a liberty to do so. To the end we shall be satisfied in this point, and satisfie lickewise our good friends and acquaintances in our natif country, to whose it is a terrour, or a fairfull thing that men should be handeld so in Pensilvania.

This is from our meeting at Germantown, held ye 18 of the 2 month, 1688, to be delivered to the Monthly Meeting at Richard Worrel's

Garret hendericks
derick up de graeff
Francis daniell Pastorius
Abraham up Den graef

B. Response of the Monthly Meeting at Dublin to the Germantown Protest

At our Monthly Meeting at Dublin, ye 30–2 mo., 1688, we having inspected ye matter, above mentioned, and considered of it, we find it so weighty that we think it not expedient for us to meddle with it here, but to rather commit it to ye consideration of ye Quarterly Meeting; ye tenor of it being nearly related to ye Truth.

On behalf of ye Monthly Meeting,
Signed, P. Jo. Hart

C. Response of the Quarterly Meeting at Philadelphia to the Germantown Protest

This, above mentioned, was read in our Quarterly Meeting at Philadelphia, the 4 of ye 4th mo., '88, and was from thence recommended to the Yearly Meeting, and the above said Derick, and the other two mentioned therein, to present the same to ye above said meeting, it being a thing of too great a weight for this meeting to determine.

Signed by order of ye meeting,
Anthony Morris.

D. Minutes of the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting Regarding the Germantown Protest

At a yearly meeting held at Burlington the 5th day of the 7th month, 1688.

A Paper being here presented by some German Friends Concerning the Lawfullness and Unlawfulness of Buying and keeping Negroes, It was adjudged not to be so proper for this Meeting to give a Positive Judgment in the Case, It have so General a Relation to many other Prts, and therefore at present they forbear It.

NOTES

1. The protest was signed by Garret Hendericks, Derick up de Graeff, Francis Daniell Pastorius and Abraham up den Graef. Scholars have disagreed over the ethnic, national and religious identities of these original settlers. While Samuel Pennypacker, *The Settlement of Germantown, Pennsylvania, and the beginning of German Immigration to North America,* (New York: B. Blom, 1899, reprinted in 1970) and Marion Dexter Learned, *The Life of Francis Daniel Pastorius*, (Philadelphia: William J. Campbell, 1908) cite the Germantowners as German Mennonites, John Ruth, "A Christian Settlement "In Antiquam Silvam": The Emigration from Krefeld to Pennsylvania in 1683 and the Mennonite Community of Germantown," *Mennonite Quarterly Review*, 57 (1983): 307–338, calls them ex-Mennonite Quakers and William Hull, *William Penn and the Dutch Quaker Migration to Pennsylvania*,

(Philadelphia: Patterson & White Co., 1932) and Harry and Margaret Tinkcom, *Historic Germantown*, (Lancaster: Lancaster Press Inc., 1955) argue that the Germantowners were Dutch Quakers. What must be taken into account is that ethnic, national and religious boundaries were not defined as they are today. It is clear, however, that the Krefelders spoke Dutch and the Krisheimers spoke a Dutchified German and that Pastorius, a German, referred to the Krefelders and Krisheimers as "Hollanders." As Hull argues persuasively in *William Penn and the Dutch Quaker Migration to Pennsylvania*, nearly all of the Krefelders and Krisheimers were Quakers when they arrived in Pennsylvania and had practiced Quakerism in their native lands. The majority had been Mennonites before Quaker missionaries arrived in the Netherlands and Germany in the mid-seventeenth century.

2. Francis Daniel Pastorius and Abraham and Derick op de Graeff were the likely representatives of the Germantown Preparatory Meeting. For more information, see Hull, *William Penn and the Dutch Quaker Migration to Pennsylvania*. Also, in 1688 the Abington meeting was referred to as the "Dublin Meeting." Throughout this article, I have chosen to use the modern name in order to avoid confusion.
3. In 1688, the Yearly Meeting was held at Burlington, not Philadelphia.
4. Minutes, 1681–1710, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, in Microfilm MR-Ph469. For the full text of the minute, see Appendix D.
5. Leroy Hopkins, "The Germantown Protest: Origins of Abolitionism among the German Residents of Southeastern PA," *Yearbook of German-American Studies*, 23 (1988): 22.
6. Pennypacker, *The Settlement of Germantown*, 144.s
7. Hull, *William Penn and the Dutch Quaker Migration to Pennsylvania*, 299.
8. The text from the exhibit reads, "Beginning with the Germantown, Pennsylvania Meeting in 1688 and culminating in 1776 with all Quakers in the Philadelphia region, Friends gradually refused to own slaves." The full text is available at http://www.pym.org/exhibit/p0910.html.
9. Quoted in Jean Soderlund, *Quakers and Slavery: A Divided Spirit*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), 19.
10. Darold Wax, "Quaker Merchants and the Slave Trade," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography,* 86 (1962), 146.
11. Harry & Margaret Tinkcom, *Historic Germantown* (Lancaster: Lancaster Press, Inc., 1955).
12. The borough was run by a small handful of citizens, as opposed to the more democratic political structure of later Pennsylvania boroughs. For more information, see Tinkcom & Tinkcom, *Historic Germantown,* 6.
13. Tinkcom & Tinkcom, *Historic Germantown*, 7.
14. Quoted in Wax, "Quaker Merchants and the Slave Trade," 146.
15. William Penn, *Some Proposals for a Second Settlement in the Province of Pennsylvania* (London: Printed by Andrew Sowl, 1690).
16. Hull, *William Penn and the Dutch Quaker Migration to Pennsylvania*, 254.
17. Quoted in Wax, "Quaker Merchants and the Slave Trade," 144–45.
18. Quoted in Wax, "Quaker Merchants," 146.
19. Wax, "Quaker Merchants," 146.
20. Soderlund, *Quakers and Slavery*, 3.
21. William J. Frost ed., *The Quaker Origins of Anti-slavery* (Norwood: Norwood Editions, 1980), 35–56.

22. Quoted in Frost, *Quaker Origins of Anti-slavery*, 18–19.
23. Quoted in Frost, *Quaker Origins of Anti-slavery*, 6.
24. Quoted in Frost, *Quaker Origins of Anti-slavery*, 19, 22.
25. Jean Soderlund makes this argument in *Quakers and Slavery*.
26. Soderlund makes the important point that belief in equality among humans does not necessarily demand an anti-slavery stance.
27. Quoted in Barry S. Levy, *Quakers and the American Family: British Settlement in the Delaware Valley*, (Cary, NC: Oxford University Press, 1992), 138.
28. Quoted in Frost, *The Quaker Origins of Anti-slavery*, 68.
29. Frost, *Quaker Origins of Anti-slavery*, 31.
30. J. William Frost writes, "Rather than face the possibility that Quaker magistrates might have to quell a revolution, Friends preferred to prevent the importation of Black slaves. It was not just a coincidence that the Pennsylvania assembly made a determined effort to limit slave imports immediately after New York experienced a slave conspiracy." *Quaker Origins of Anti-slavery*, 3–4.
31. Quoted in Frost, *Quaker Origins of Anti-slavery*, 71.
32. Naaman H. Keyser, et al., *History of Old Germantown*, (Philadelphia: Horace F. McCann, 1907), 61.
33. Hull, *William Penn and the Dutch Quaker Migration to Pennsylvania*, 296.
34. The use of the German word "neger," which bears resemblance to the derogatory English word "nigger," is a puzzling presence in the Germantown Protest and Leroy Hopkins notes that its use is "unusual…in a context where one would expect 'moor' or 'Ethiopian.'" "The Germantown Protest: Origins of Abolitionism among the German Residents of Southeastern PA," 22.
35. Soderlund, *Quakers and Slavery*, 18.
36. Hildegard Binder Johnson calculated the difference between English and German slave-holding patterns by using the first American census of 1790. As Binder Johnson reports, "Had the proportion of slaves for the entire white population of the United States in 1790 been the same as it was for the German element the aggregate number of slaves at the First Census would have been but 52,520 instead of 700,000." "The Germantown Protest of 1688 against Negro Slavery," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, 65 (1941): 145–56.
37. *Epistles from the Yearly Meeting of Friends Held in London, Vol. I: 1681–1857,* (London: Edward March, Friends' Book and Tract Repository, 1858), 32.
38. *Epistles from the Yearly Meeting of Friends Held in London*, 31.
39. [Philadelphia] Yearly Meeting held in Burlington, 7m07 1692. From FHL Mss. Epistles.
40. The Paper of Discipline, 1689. Original in the vaults at 304 Arch st. Philadelphia. From FHL Broadsides: Friends.
41. All texts are of comparable length.
42. From Minutes, 1681–1710, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, in Microfilm MR-Ph469.
43. Tinkcom & Tinkcom, *Historic Germantown*, 14.
44. William Penn, *A brief answer to a false and foolish libel called The Quakers opinions for their sakes that writ it and read it* (London: s.n., 1678).
45. I only include the introduction in this analysis because it is of a comparable length to the other documents. The entire *Libel* is too long.