

# SWISS AND GERMAN EMIGRANTS TO AMERICA IN ROTTERDAM, 1736

EXCERPTS FROM A TRAVEL JOURNAL OF HIERONYMUS ANNONI

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Our knowledge of the Germans and Swiss who emigrated to America in the eighteenth century is supplemented by some entries in a travel journal kept in 1736 by a Swiss minister, Rev. Hieronymus Annoni (also called d'Annone) (1697-1770).<sup>1</sup> Born and raised in Basel, Annoni was ordained in 1719 and in the same year became tutor to the prominent family Im Thurn in Schaffhausen. He served in this position until 1732 for two periods interrupted by a stay as curate in Sissach. In 1740 he became minister in Waldenburg and, in 1747, pastor in Muttenz near Basel, where he served until his death. Annoni is remembered as a popular preacher and hymn writer. He was a devout pietist of the moderate strain of church pietism, although he did associate with pietists of all shades of belief, including radical separatists and "inspired ones," especially on several trips in Switzerland and abroad.<sup>2</sup>

It was while Annoni was on such a tour, featuring visits to fellow pietists, that he encountered emigrants to America. In April, 1736, Annoni and two companions, Joh. Ulrich Hegner, of Winterthur, and Bernhardin Im Thurn, of Schaffhausen, set out from Basel on a trip abroad.<sup>3</sup> Their itinerary is reflected in the description of Annoni's journal of the trip in the catalog of his papers in the *Universitätsbibliothek*, Basel: "Travel Journal from the Year 1736 (April-October). Journey through Alsace, the Rhineland, the Palatinate, Belgium, the Netherlands, Hesse, Saxony, Herrnhut, Bohemia, Swabia and Return."<sup>4</sup>

Annoni and his companions first met with emigrants to America in Mannheim, where he noted in his journal for Wednesday morning, May 2 (p. 73): "On Wednesday, May 2, we strolled to the Neckar Bridge to see the Swiss who had recently arrived and were heading for Pennsylvania. However, because most of them were compatriots of ours from Bern and other compatriots whom we did not know, we did not stay with them long." ("Mittwochs den 2. Maji spazierten wir zu der Neckar-Bruck, die neu-angekommene und nach Pensilvanien zihlende Schweitzer zu besehen. Weilen es aber meistens bernerische und uns unbekandte Landleute waren, so hielten wir uns mit denselben nicht lang auf.") In Rotterdam, on Saturday afternoon, June 9, the travelers met the same group of emigrants again (p. 227): "Otherwise, we encountered this time many pilgrims to Carolina and Pennsylvania, who were happy to see us and complained of their manifold vexations. They were the very same ones whom we had met in Mannheim." ("Sonsten begegneten uns diessmals viele Caroliner und Pensilvanier-Pilgere, welche sich über unseren Anblick erfreuten, und über ihre mannigfaltige Widerwärtigkeiten klagten. Es waren namlich eben diejenige, welche wir in Manheim angetroffen.") On

June 10 and 11, Annoni and his friends visited the emigrants on board ship in the Maas River. Unfortunately, Annoni mentions no emigrants or ships by name. But, from what is known of emigration to America at this period, the "ships joined together," where the emigrants were quartered, were undoubtedly British vessels. Further information on the ships and passengers might be gleaned from whatever records have survived, such as records of ship arrivals and departures at Rotterdam, ships' logs and passenger lists.<sup>5</sup> What Annoni does relate is vividly presented: his sermon on shipboard; the jeering of the Palatines, answered by him with threats of divine vengeance; and two other matters, familiar also from other accounts: the wretched condition of the emigrants due to hunger and disease and the lack of ministers in the settlements in America. Annoni's otherworldly disapproval of the emigrants' undertaking may have mirrored a widespread attitude: A pamphlet of the time contrasts Carolina, where those seeking a better life are doomed to disappointment, with the splendors of the Kingdom of God.<sup>6</sup>

[Sunday afternoon, June 10 (pp. 228-230) ] In the afternoon we repaid Mr. Reiz's visit.<sup>7</sup> He first served us tea and then, together with his brother-in-law, accompanied us to a place outside town on the Maas River. Here our poor fellow countrymen, together with others heading for America—Franconians, Palatines and the like—were dispersed on various ships and were awaiting with longing the rather distant departure across the sea. Conditions among them were very chaotic, and on most of their faces one could see remorse and dissatisfaction, so that just a few words of comfort brought forth sighs and tears and the misery of these people affected us deeply. Many, especially young people, lay sick with smallpox, and the Swiss had already buried over seventeen of their children. Many tried to drive away their sorrows by drinking, singing and gambling, and these were joined by people of the same type from Rotterdam. Many, whose purses were already empty, let their children go begging. In short, it was a lamentable spectacle and at the same time a living proof of how very much the desire to become richer and more respectable can ruin people.

(Nach Mittags machten wir bey Herrn Reiz<sup>7</sup> unsere Gegen-Visite, der uns erstlich ein Théé aufstellen liesse, und hernach samt seinem Schwager an einen aussert der Statt an der Maas gelegenen Ort geleitete; woselbst unsere arme Landsleute samt anderen nach America zie[229]lenden Francken, Pfälzern und dergleichen auf verschiedenen Schiffen zertheilet waren, und mit Verlangen auf die fernere Abreise über Meer warteten. Es gieng unter ihnen sehr confus her, und bey den meisten ware die Reue und das Miss-Vergnügen aus dem Angesicht zu lesen, also dass auch nur bey wenigem Zuspruch<sup>8</sup> es Seufzer und Thränen setzte, und uns das Elend dieser Menschen sehr zu Herzen gieng. Viele, sonderlich junge, lagen kranck an den Kinderblatern, und die Schweitzer batten bereits über 17. von ihren Kindern begraben. Viele suchten sich die Melancholie mit Sauffen, Singen und Spihlen zu vertreiben, zu denen sich auch einheimische Leute gleicher Art geselleten. Viele, deren Seckel bereits lähr war, liessen ihre Kinder betteln gehn. [230] Kurz es war ein jämmerliches Spectacul und zugleich auch eine lebendige Prob, wie sehr das Verlangen nach Reicher- und Fürnehmer-Werden die Menschen verderben könne.)

[Monday morning, June 11 (pp. 231-237)] On Monday, June 11, we returned early in the morning to our fellow countrymen outside the town to preach them a farewell sermon, which, the day before, they had requested me to do. I sat down on the deck of the ships which were joined together and in which most of the people from Basel and Bern were staying. Some

of them still lay below deck in their miserable dens, but others gathered around me and already stirred my heart with their sad appearance. So we first implored the Lord Jesus,<sup>9</sup> who, in days of yore, had also preached from a ship,<sup>10</sup> for his gracious help and blessings. Then I spoke on the text (1 Peter v. 6) : "Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that in due time he may exalt you," which text I briefly and simply explained and applied to the circumstances of my listeners, who were gradually joined by others. I showed namely that by the phrase, the mighty hand of God, all sorts of divine afflictions, temptations, chastisements and persecutions were to be understood; that one humbled himself under it when he recognized, confessed and repented of the sins with which he had brought it on himself, and when one consequently bore his cross and suffering with patience and was brought by this means to truly repent and improve his life; that then such mortification would be followed by consolation, blessings and exaltation, both of the body and of the soul, etc., etc. Then the admonition was principally as follows: The poor people had acted foolishly, in that, by needlessly leaving their native land, they had strived to become happier elsewhere and to avoid the dear cross, etc. For that reason, they had, in all fairness, to consider the adversities, which they had already suffered on the journey and which they would experience in the future, as God's paternal rod of chastisement and his mighty hand of judgment. Consequently they should not curse and grumble at their miserable state, nor become impatient or desperate and wanton and uncharitable and faithless toward one another, by which they would only go from bad to worse and bring complete destruction upon themselves. But they should rather humbly recognize the wrongs which they had committed and the sum of their transgressions in Europe; they should ask the Lord and righteous God for forgiveness and, from now on, long for and strive for, first of all, the Kingdom of God and his righteousness and for the indwelling and guidance of the Holy Spirit; and they should long and strive to speedily inherit and possess the heavenly Canaan and New Jerusalem. Therefore they had to devote their leisure time, not to frivolous chitchat, singing, drinking, gambling and the like, but to common prayer, reading, singing and good works; and they had to make an earnest resolve to be, from now on, righteous Christians, true children of God and gentle and humble disciples of Jesus. Then the Lord of heaven and earth would not fail to exalt them in return, to comfort them with the gift of his Holy Spirit, to bless them in this life with rest, peace, physical necessities and happy hearts and to raise them up some day into eternal blessedness. The mockers, however (some of whom expressed themselves, especially from among the Palatines), had better believe that the Lord saw this and would punish them for it; that the ocean waves could still inflict on them the very same punishment that the waters of the Flood had inflicted on the blasphemers of the first age;<sup>11</sup> and that there were still the same kind of fishes, which, as had happened to Jonah, would swallow the obstinate ones but would not vomit them forth, etc., etc.<sup>12</sup> Finally I concluded by again invoking the divine name and praying that he inscribe these and all of his truths in our hearts and that he grant the travelers the grace of humility and exaltation in due time. Whereupon the benediction of the whole company followed, at which many sighs were again heard and many tears flowed. Finally we took our leave and received many letters to people left behind in Switzerland.

Specifically, a little old woman from Nassau, who was almost eighty, came up to us with thanks for the sermon and with the request that I might

agree to come with them as a preacher or to follow them soon, because her relatives in Pennsylvania had written that they had a great need of one or more faithful pastors.

On the way back to town, we were accompanied by a few persons who would gladly have made preparations for a return trip and who regretted their undertaking with bitter tears.

We were also joined by a Jew of Rotterdam, who had attended the farewell sermon and who showed his approval with these words: "The Jew Moses was in your sermon," and he had liked me better than his own rabbi.

(Montags den 11 ten Juni verfügten wir uns bej frühem Morgen nochmalen zu unseren Landsleuthen aussert die Statt, um denenselben eine Valet-Predigt zu halten, als wozu ich von ihnen tags vorher ware angesprochen worden. Ich sazte mich dan auf das Dach der zusammen gefügeter Schiffen, worinnen sich die meiste Bassler- und Bernerleuthe aufhielten, welche theils noch unter dem Dach in ihren Nestern lagen, theils aber [232] sich um mich herum lagerten, und mir bereits durch ihren traurigen Anblick das Hertz bewegten.<sup>15</sup> Mithin ruften wir erstlich den Herrn Jesu<sup>7</sup> der ehemals auch aus einem Schiff geprediget,<sup>10</sup> um seinen gnädigen Bejstand und Segen an. Demnach verhandelte ich die Worte des seligen Petri 1. Epistel 5:6. Demüthiget euch unter die gewaltige Hand Gottes, dass er euch erhöhe zu seiner Zeit. Welche Worte kürzlich und einfaltig erkläret und auf die Umstände der anwesenden Zuhörer, zu welchen sich nach und nach andere geselleten, appliciret worden. Ich zeigete namlich dass durch die gewaltige Hand Gottes allerhand göttliche Heimsuchungen, Anfechtungen, Züchtigungen und Verfolgungen zu verstehen seÿen; dass man sich darunter demüthige, wan man seine Sünden, womit man sich solche zugezogen, erkenne, bekenne und bereue, und wan man folglich alles Kreuz und Leiden mit Gedult trage, und sich dadurch [233] zu wahrer Buss und Besserung des Lebens bringen lasse; dass sodan auf solche Demüthigung auch wieder Trost, Segen und Erhöhung nach Leib und Seele erfolge usw. usw. Mithin giengte die Erinnerung furnemlich dahin: Es hätten die arme Leute thörlich gehandelt, dass sie mit unnöttiger Verlassung des Vatterlandes sich anderwärts glücklicher zu machen und das liebe Kreuz ausszuweichen getrachtet hätten usw. Sie hätten derohalben die Widerwärtigkeiten, welche sie auf bissheriger Reise bereits erlitten, und welche sie ins zukünftige erfahren müssten, billich als Gottes züchtigende Vatters-Rute und gewaltige Richters-Hand anzusehen usw. Folglich solten sie über ihren Jammerstand nicht fluchen, murren, ungedultig oder desperat und muhtwillig und gegen einander lieblos<sup>14</sup> und untreu werden; als wodurch [234] sie nur aus übel ärger machen und sich den gänzlichen Untergang auf den Hals ziehen wurden. Sondern sie solten vielmehr ihr begangenes Unrecht und alle in Europa gemachte Sünden-Schulden demüthig erkennen, den Herrn und gerechten Gott um Vergebung bitten, und von nun an am ersten nach dem Reich Gottes und nach seiner Gerechtigkeit, nach der Einwohnung<sup>15</sup> und Regierung des Heiligen Geistes, und nach der baldigen Ererbung und Besetzung des himlischen Canaans und neuen Jerusalems verlangen und trachten. Mithin hätten sie ihre müssige Zeit und Stunden (nicht zu leichtfertigem Schwätzen, Singen, Sauffen, Spielen und dergleichen) sondern zu gemeinschaftlichem Beten, Lesen, Singen und guten Wercken anzuwenden, und einen ernstlichen Schluss zu fassen, künftighin rechtschaffene Christen, [235] wahre Gottes-Kinder, und sanft und demüthige Jesus-Jünger zu seÿn. Alsdan wurde der Herr über Himmel und Erden nicht ermanglen, sie wiederum zu erhöhen, mit der Gabe seines Heiligen Geistes zu trösten, in dieser Zeit mit Ruh, Friede, leiblicher

Nohtdurft und vergnüglichen Herzen zu segnen, und sie dereinsten in die selige Ewigkeiten aufzunehmen. Die Spötter aber (deren einige, fürnehmlich unter den Pfälzern, sich äusserten) solten nur glauben, dass es der Herr sehen und suchen würde, dass die Meeres-Wellen noch eben diejenige Straffe an ihnen aussüben könnten, welche die Wasser der Sündflut an denen Laster-Mäulern und Herzen der ersten Welt aussgeübet;<sup>11</sup> und dass es noch dergleichen Fische gebe, welche die Widerspenstigen, wie dorten dem Jonas wiederfahren, [236] verschlingen, aber nicht wieder ausspeyen dörfen usw. usw.<sup>12</sup> Endlich machte ich den Beschlus mit abermaliger Anrufung des göttlichen Namens, dass er diese und alle seine Warheiten in unsere Herzen einschreiben,<sup>16</sup> und denen Reisenden die Gnade der Demühtigung und Erhöhung zu seiner Zeit angedeyen lassen wolle usw. Worauf die Sprechung des Segens über die ganze Reise-Gesellschaft erfolgte, wobey es abermals viele Seufzer und Thränen setze. Zuletzt nahmen wir Abschied und empfingen viele Brieffe an hinterlassene Landleute in der Schweiz.

Ein altes bald 80jähriges Mütterlein aus Nassau trat in specie zu uns, sich für den geschenehen Zuspruch bedanckende, mit angehängtem Wunsch, dass ich mir möchte gefallen lassen, [237] als Prediger mitzugehn oder bald nachzufolgen, weilen ihre Angehörige aus Pensilvanien geschrieben, dass sie einen oder etliche treue Menschenhirten gar sehr nöhtig hätten usw.

Auf dem Heimweg nach der Statt begleiteten uns etliche Personen, welche gerne Anstalt zur Ruckreise gemacht hätten, und ihre Unternehmung mit bitteren Thränen bereuten.

Auch gesellte sich ein Roterdamischer Jud zu uns, welcher der gehaltenen Valet-Rede bejgewohnt hatte, und sein Placet mit diesen Worten bezeugete: ["]Der Jud Moses ist in Ihrer Predigt gewesen["], und man hat ihme besser gefallen als sein eigener Domine.)

<sup>1</sup> An earlier version of this article appeared in the mimeographed *Swiss-American Historical Society Newsletter* (Embassy of Switzerland, Washington, D. C.), 1, No. 3 (Oct. 1965), 16-18.

<sup>2</sup> W[ilhelm] Hädm, *Geschichte des Pietismus in den Schweizerischen Reformierten Kirchen* (Konstanz & Emmishofen: Verlag von Carl Hirsch, [1901]), pp. 298-310. Chr. Joh. Riggenbach, *Hieronymus Annoni. Ein Abriss seines Lebens sammt einer Auswahl seiner Lieder* (Basel: Verlag christlicher Schriften, 1870). M. Schmidt, "Annoni, Hieronymus," *Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, 3rd rev. ed., I (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1957), 396.

<sup>3</sup> *Travel Journal*, April 16, 1736 (p. 1). Im Thurn was a cousin of Annoni's former pupil (Riggenbach, pp. 15-16).

<sup>4</sup> *Reisetagebuch vom Jahre 1736 (April-Oktober). Reise durch Elsass, Rheinland, Pfalz, Belgien, Niederlande, Hessen, Sachsen, Hermhut, Böhmen, Schwaben und zurück.* 533 Blatt 8 autograph. Call no.: "Nachlass Hieronymus Annoni. B. V." Where the travel journal is quoted in the text, an English translation is followed by the original German text in parentheses. In the German text the spelling and punctuation of the original have been retained, except that abbreviated and symbolized words have been written out in full and capitalization has been modernized. Biblical references are to the Revised Standard Version. I would like to express my appreciation to the staff of the *Universitätsbibliothek*, Basel, for making Annoni's journal and other materials available to me during my stay in Basel in the summer of 1965.

<sup>5</sup> Annoni's listeners may have been on board the *Harle*, the *Princess Augusta* or the *John*, whose passengers signed the oaths to the crown in Philadelphia on September 1, September 16 and October 19, 1786, respectively. Ralph B. Strassburger, *Pennsylvania German Pioneers*, ed. by William J. Hinke (1984; rpt. Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1966), I, 154-168. Another possibility is the *Eagle Galley*, which arrived at Charleston, South Carolina, from Rotterdam and Cowes, on September 27, 1736, carrying Swiss-German immigrants. *South-Carolina Gazette* (Charleston, S. C.), Oct. 2, 1736, p. 2, col. 2, microfilm at South Carolina Department of Archives and History, Columbia, S. C. South Carolina, Naval Office, Shipping Returns, Mar. 1736-Jan. 1764, CO 5/510: microfilm BMP/D571, copy at S. C. Dept. of Archives and History. Recently a letter was discovered in the *Generallandesarchiv* in Karlsruhe which might well have been written by one of Annoni's listeners. Dated October 11th, 1786, it was written by a Swiss, Joggi Thommen, soon after he arrived at Conestoga, Pennsylvania. Thommen made the ocean trip aboard the *Princess Augusta* together with 380 persons. He describes his journey from Basel to America in some detail. His dates seem to coincide with the time of Annoni's trip down the Rhine: "From Basel to Rotterdam one reckons with 180 hours. From Rotterdam to Philadelphia 1400 hours of travel. We spent 12 weeks on the ocean in the large ship. On the 28th of April we left Basel and arrived in Philadelphia on the 15th of September." The German original and an English translation were published in *Schaefferstown Bulletin* (ed. by C. Richard Beam), Vol. VI (March 1972), No. 1, pp. 1-3.

<sup>6</sup> [Joh. Rud. Ziegler], *Christholds Gedancken / Bey Anlass der Bewegung / welche die bekante Beschreibung von Carolina, in America, in unserm Land verursacht / und der vor etlichen Tagen dahin geschenehen Abriss verschiedener von unserm Volck* (n. p.: n. publ., n. d.) (a pamphlet of 12 pages; copy at Zentralbibliothek, Zürich).

<sup>7</sup>Reiz was a gentleman of Rotterdam whose acquaintance the travelers had made in Utrecht (Travel Journal, May 22 [p. 145]).

<sup>8</sup>On "Zuspruch" as a pietistic term, see: August Langen, *Der Wortschatz des deutschen Pietismus*, 2nd rev. ed. (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1968), pp. 61-62.

<sup>9</sup>At this point in the journal, Annoni has rewritten the words: "the Lord" ("den Herrn") and then crossed them out.

<sup>10</sup>Matt. xiii. 1 ff.; Luke v. 3.

<sup>11</sup>Gen. vii. 21-23.

<sup>12</sup>Jonah i. 17-ii. 10.

<sup>13</sup>On "das Herz bewegen," see Langen, p. 36.

<sup>14</sup>On "lieblos," see Langen, p. 120.

<sup>15</sup>On "Einwohnung," see Langen, p. 90.

<sup>16</sup>On "in das Herz einschreiben," see Langen, pp. 62, 409, 425.