

# Franz Daniel Pastorius and Transatlantic Culture: Early Life in Germany, with Pennsylvania Commentary

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Summary of 1985 Ph.D. dissertation (revised 1989)

This study describes Pastorius' character and ideology in the narrative context of his growth to adulthood in Germany. It is based on his Pennsylvania correspondence, autobiographical writing, poetry and scholarship as well as documentary evidence and historical evaluation from a great variety of German sources (here presented in English translation)—government files, studies of folk culture and local history, religious and political monographs, baptismal records, funeral sermons, biographies, etc. Chapter One cites biographical misinterpretations overemphasizing the emotional piety of Pastorius' reports and letters, or simplifying his piety and emphasizing his learnedness and pragmatism. The chapter introduces the Franconian culture of his youth, indicating historical reasons for his conversion to Lutheran Pietism in 1679 and his emigration in 1683.

Chapter Two describes Pastorius' childhood and youth, noting the vitality of his community and family life, and his disciplined growth from childhood spontaneity to an identity anticipating adult responsibilities as a burgomaster's son in the Lutheran imperial city of Windsheim. (A short biography of his father Melchior Adam is appended to the book.) The chapter identifies tensions involving authoritarianism and latent resistance to authority especially in Pastorius' Gymnasium schooling and in the complex relationship of father and son, and gives complementary views on upbringing from his Pennsylvania writings. Chapter Three traces his student career at Nürnberg and other German universities (1668-76)—studying philosophy, language and law, observing a wartime Reichstag in Regensburg, and attaining a doctorate in civil and canon law—in a milieu revealing learned compulsions related to the tensions described in Chapter Two. It notes his courtly delights and cultural attainments as well as their social costs, and examines Pastorius' commentary, including poetry and scholarly notations on his aesthetic and sensual pleasures, and satire and criticism epitomized in Gospel references to rich Dives and the beggar Lazarus.

Chapter Four presents Pastorius' adult experience of Europe and America, describing the start of his law career during two years of strife in Windsheim (1677-79), when his family and friends helped to suppress a popular insurrection against abuses of oligarchic rule. It examines the complicity and guilt that led him to reject the home and community he dearly loved, and to join the learned Pietists of Frankfurt am Main, and the baroque tensions he continued to encounter as he practiced law in Frankfurt and the Palatinate and toured Europe (1679-83). His predictions of a European Armageddon (1683-84), reflecting these tensions, are explained on several levels, including the destructive potential of the era of the Thirty Years' War and the 1688 Palatine devastation. The chapter analyzes Pastorius' letters and reports from Pennsylvania, in which he piously urges humane reforms and pragmatically describes the Anglo- and German-American--and native American--economy, politics and society of the province. It examines his opposition to black slavery and the exploitation of native Americans (and related criticism of European cultural imperialism in Asia) as well as his praise of material and ethical satisfactions in the New World, and describes his personal maturation in Pennsylvania, reflecting a diverse and evolving culture with secular influences of neoclassicism and the Enlightenment.

Comprehensive analysis of Pastorius' German experience includes issues like family structure, obedience and authority, the rationalist and Pietist attack on Lutheran scholasticism, radical views on church and state, feminist idealism in patriarchic society, and Pietist social criticism and millennialism. The transatlantic perspective further defines Pastorius' complex ideology, with its blend of tradition and innovation, including his ecumenical or universalist theology, his pacifism, his criticism of pedantry, learned arrogance and political and religious conformity, and his regard for the values of farmers and craftsmen, of women, and of the Delaware Indians. The interdisciplinary approach of this study amply demonstrates the humor, common sense and unusually broad learning and experience that gave Pastorius an exceptional awareness of the forms of culture evolving in his transatlantic world.