

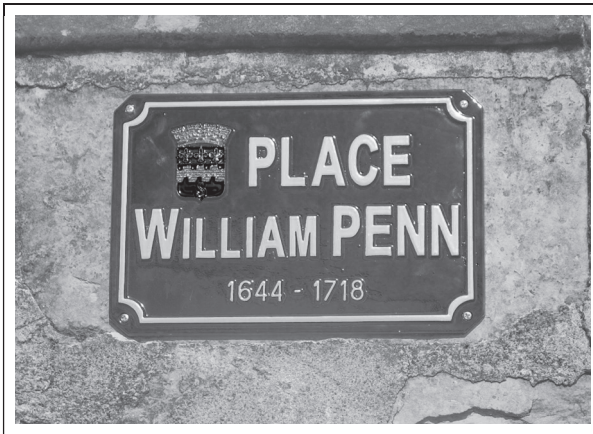
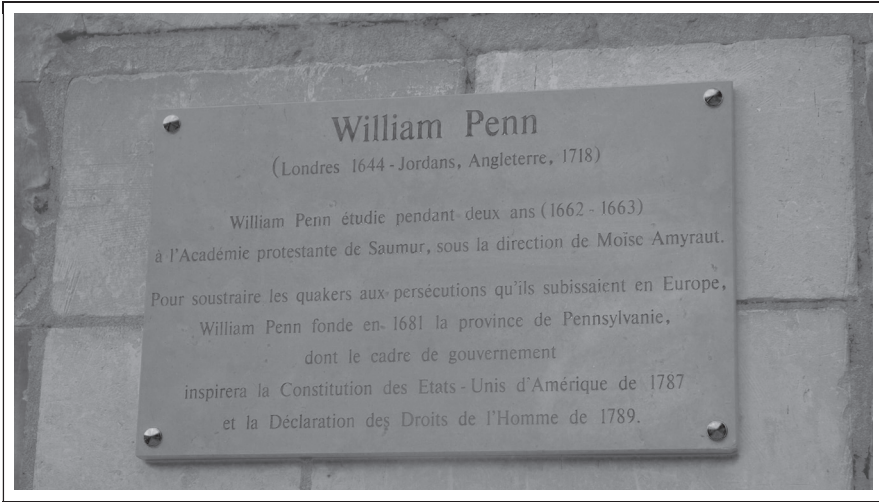
GUEST EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

Saumur is a town of about 30,000 inhabitants on the river Loire in France. In the seventeenth century it housed a particularly distinguished Protestant Academy, which was closed and demolished at the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685. The revocation had a deleterious effect on Saumur, which had become a thriving international centre of learning with both a Protestant and a Catholic Academy and generally good relationships between the denominations,¹ but which subsequently declined into obscurity.



Figure 1. Chateau de Saumur in France, overlooking the Loire.

The Protestant Academy drew students from far and wide, William Penn among them from 1662 to 1664. Among its most distinguished teachers was the theologian Moïse Amyraut (1596–1664). It has been argued that many of Penn's ideas were inspired by Amyraut and Saumur and it is possible that ideas acquired at Saumur helped shape Penn's later activities and writings.



Figures 2 and 3. Plaques in the newly named 'Place William Penn'.

On 20–22 May 2011, a bilingual academic colloquium and a series of related events were held in Saumur to explore the possible connections between Penn and Saumur. Drawing participants from around the world, the event culminated in the official naming of a square after William Penn.

The colloquium was preceded by an international academic essay competition, which attracted distinguished entrants from three continents. Stephen Angell of the Earlham School of Religion, Richmond, IN, wrote the winning essay, 'William Penn's Debts to John Owen and Moses Amyraut on Questions of Truth, Grace, and Religious Toleration', and was presented with an officer's tie from the Cadre Noir, the elite French cavalry regiment based in Saumur.



Figure 4. Didier Poton, Université de la Rochelle, presents Stephen Angell with his essay prize.

Papers presented over the two days explored various aspects of Penn's time at Saumur and ways in which influences might be traced in his later work and writings. Two of those papers are included in this issue of *Quaker Studies*. Stephen Angell's paper looks at Penn's time at Oxford University and at Saumur. In both places, Penn was exposed to the thoughts of major thinkers in the fields of theology and statesmanship among Reformed Protestants, John Owen at Oxford and Amyraut at Saumur. Angell's essay compares and contrasts the influences of both Amyraut and Owen upon the young Penn, focussing particularly on questions of truth, grace, and responses to religious pluralism.



Figure 5. Jerry Frost delivering his paper on Penn and Christian Humanism.

The second paper from the colloquium, by Jerry Frost, looks at the tradition of Christian humanism from Erasmus, Grotius, Mornay and Amyraut that Penn probably learnt at Saumur and that served as an undercurrent to the rest of his life. Frost argues that, while it is impossible definitively to prove direct influence, the similarities between Amyraut's ideas and Penn's later perspectives make the possibility of influence likely.

A third paper from the colloquium by Peter van den Dungen on William Penn's plan for perpetual peace in Europe (1693) and its influence on the Abbé de Saint-Pierre will be published in the next issue of *Quaker Studies*.

Angell's and Frost's papers are supplemented by Kenneth Morris's paper on the theological sources of Penn's ideas about religious toleration in which he argues that, despite the wide range of different ideologies and persons with whom Penn came into contact—royalists, Whigs, humanist philosophers, Puritan Independents, Commonwealth Protestants, European and English nobility, French Huguenots, Labadists, and Quakers—Penn's time at Saumur may well have been the most significant influence on his later thought.

The issue ends with a selection of book reviews.

Some background information on the Protestant Academy may be useful in contextualising the papers in this special commemorative issue of *Quaker Studies*, and the following brief summary is provided from that standpoint. L.-J. Méteyer's 1933 book, *L'Académie Protestante de Saumur*, remains the most comprehensive source of information about the organisation and daily life of the Academy. Unfortunately, only a few academic libraries outside of France hold a copy.² A corrected and revised edition, edited by Didier Poton, was published in 2005 by a charitable organisation but this appears to be unavailable outside France. No English translation exists. The information contained in Méteyer's book provides a useful insight into the life that William Penn would have led at Saumur, and this preface draws heavily on Méteyer's work.

In the seventeenth century, Saumur was a substantial town whose bridge over the Loire gave it strategic importance. It was also a major Protestant stronghold. As J.P. Dray has demonstrated, from the beginning of the Reformation, 'education occupied a central position in the French Protestant outlook'.³ Schools at all levels were established across France and education and instruction for both adult and children was seen as integral to the Protestant project. Each temple (Protestant church) had a primary school; each province had a College, for secondary level education; and alongside certain Colleges, there were Academies for higher education.

French universities of the time required their students to participate in Catholic worship, and the Academies were therefore established as an alternative route to higher education for Protestant young men. The French Protestant institutions shared certain similarities with the dissenting academies set up in England at the same time, where the exclusion of dissenters from Cambridge and Oxford Universities meant that an alternative set of institutions was needed.⁴



Figure 6: The Protestant Temple today.

In 1589, Henri de Navarre appointed the prominent Protestant theologian, scholar, and diplomat Philippe Duplessis-Mornay governor of Saumur as a reward for his loyalty during the Wars of Religion. It was a position that he held for 32 years. In 1599 Duplessis-Mornay established the Protestant Academy of Saumur. It attracted teachers from across Protestant Europe, particularly from Scotland, and rapidly began to flourish. It was situated in the road known nowadays as la rue Saint-Jean, just behind the Maison de Ville, the present day Town Hall. Part of the buildings survived until the middle of the twentieth century; in 1933 L.J. Méteyer described the straight entrance hall leading to a spiral stone staircase and suggested that it was not a grand building, but ‘une très bonne maison’.⁵

Like the teachers, the students too came from across Europe—from France, Switzerland, Germany, England, the Netherlands, Spain, and Poland. Although a Protestant Academy, the student body included many Catholic students, drawn by the Academy’s high academic reputation, and the students came from a wide range of social classes. Students from poor families, supported by grants from their church or a scholarship from the Academy, arrived on foot, carrying letters of introduction; the churches that they passed en route provided them with food and accommodation. Sons of bourgeois families travelled to Saumur by public stage-coach or in a ‘coche d’eau’, a boat along the Loire. Some arrived on horseback. Sons of rich families frequently arrived with servants, tutors, horses, and grooms.

Before coming to the Academy, the majority of boys from local Protestant families began their studies at the Protestant College in Saumur, a secondary school of 5 classes with 250 pupils, where the main subject taught was Latin. The emphasis on Latin at the College was such that even during their recreations the boys were obliged to speak Latin, a necessary requirement since a boy could not

enter the Academy without an excellent knowledge of Latin and an ability to speak and read it as if it were still a living language. Greek was also taught at the College and the boys were expected to become sufficiently fluent as to be able to read the New Testament and the Church Fathers in the original. Saturday afternoon catechism lessons were taught in French for the first two years, in Latin during the third and fourth year, and in Greek during the final year. At the College, the pupils had classes for five hours a day, from 8 to 10.30 in the morning, and from 1 to 3.30 in the afternoon. The pupils in each year were divided into groups of 10 according to their results for written work each fortnight, with the boys who got the highest marks serving as monitors.

The College was a religious institution. Boys knelt for prayer in French and Latin at the sound of the bell each morning. In the afternoon, the class finished as the morning had begun, with all the boys kneeling while prayers were read in French and English. On Sunday and Wednesday the pupils of the College and the students of the Academy attended church services, later writing reports on the sermon. On the Friday before each of the quarterly Communion Sundays, all of the students attended religious retreats, presided over by one of the pastors from the church, who would invite the boys to 'examine themselves, to see whether they were religious and truly feared God and lived in peace with all men'.⁶

Like the Academy, the College was a day school. Many of the boys, of course, lived with their families in Saumur. Those from Paris or the provinces, who were from rich or noble families, lodged with the teachers or in private homes accredited by the Principal or with one of the pastors from the church. Those who came from families of more modest means lodged in les 'économés' or les 'hôteliers'. There were numerous 'économés' and 'hôteliers' in Saumur, whose business it was to provide accommodation for the pupils. The money that the boys paid covered their accommodation, their meals, their amusements, firewood for heating their rooms, candles, and laundry. The school inspected the lodgings and the regulations were strict: they were expected to provide a family away from home for the boys, to correspond with their own families, to look after the boys' health, to treat them affectionately but firmly, to give them good food, to help with their homework, to watch over their conduct, and to make sure that the boys did not engage in recreations that were 'scandalous or damaging'. They were also expected to be pious and to set a good example to the boys and to conduct family prayers every morning and evening.⁷

The Academy provided two kinds of education. Many boys—including William Penn—took the two year course in philosophy (logic and ethics in the first year, physics and metaphysics in the second) which led to a masters degree. Their studies also included the reading of classical texts, theology, Hebrew, Greek, mathematics, history, and eloquence. Most of the lessons were given in Latin and a considerable proportion of time was spent in memorising classical texts. Others came to the Academy to train as Protestant ministers. Those students took a three-year course in theology. The prospective ministers studied mainly Scripture and rhetoric. When they finished their courses, they returned to their provincial synod to preach there their sermons d'épreuve. Some students took the full

five-year course, the two years of humanities followed by the three years of theological study.

As at the College, the Academy began and ended with prayer and usually consisted of 5 or 6 hours of classes, together with large quantities of homework. One boy who asked his teacher for a suggested schedule for his vacation reading was given the following:

- 6 am—Bible reading and prayer
- 9 am—study of John Calvin's 'Institutes'
- 9–11 am—study of classical authors
- 11 am—dinner
- 12–5 pm—study of history and politics
- 5–6 pm—meal
- After 6 pm—study of the 'Paratitles' by Jacques Cujas (a book on Roman law)
- After supper, preparation of work for the next day, Bible reading and prayer.⁸

While most of the boys appear to have taken their studies seriously, this was not true for all. In 1615, for example, a boy called Jorlin was expelled from the Academy six months before his graduation because he missed lessons, refused to do his homework, and profaned the name of God.⁹

The academic year at the Academy ran for eleven months, from the middle of October to the middle of September the following year, with only one month for vacation and a few short holiday periods—eight days at Easter, a few days at Christmas and at Pentecost, the first of each month, and the evening before the four celebrations of Holy Communion. The principal could also authorise extra holidays—as a reward for high marks, for example, when a new teacher arrived at the Academy, or if there were important visitors. Those extra holidays were celebrated by verse recitations, in French or in Latin, given by the students. When Amyrault's baby son was born, he granted the boys a holiday—they celebrated by writing and delivering flattering poems about their teacher and his family.



Figure 7. House believed to have been a boarding house for students at the Protestant Academy.

Like the College for the younger boys, the Academy did not provide accommodation and the boys needed to stay in Saumur, which could make studying at the Academy very expensive. It was more expensive to live in Saumur than in Paris. Poor students lodged in inns and hotels, often sleeping two to a bed. Those who had more money could lodge with teachers and pastors, as was the case for William Penn, who, it has been claimed, stayed for a while in the home of Moïse Amyraut.¹⁰ Others boarded with local families, including in many cases, Catholic families. There are a number of cases in the records of Academy students marrying the daughters of the families with whom they stayed.

To make the cost of attending the Academy more affordable, in 1619 the council set up a pension with fixed charges for board and lodging at between a quarter and a third of the cost of living *en ville*. There were three prices for living at the pension. Those who paid the lowest price had brown bread for lunch; paying the middle price entitled a boy to butter or eggs along with his bread; and the highest price lunches included soup, salad, and fruit. In the evening, boys at the first table shared a serviette which was changed twice a week and had rustic bread, made of buckwheat and rye and a *pinte* of wine between four. They had dessert twice a week—plums, apples, or nuts. The second table had a *chopine* of wine, and dessert every day. Boys who sat at the third table had personal serviettes, white bread, and a *demi septier* of wine, and a greater choice of what they ate. Meat was served every evening except Friday, when it was usually cod, herrings, or eggs. Prices in Saumur continued to rise and 40 years later, in 1664, the cost of staying at the pension was twice what it had originally been.

The boys worked hard at the Academy but they were not angels. The registers of the Academy talk of ‘insolence’, of ‘excesses of debauchery’ and of ‘licence’.¹¹ Their misdemeanours included missing church services, sitting in the wrong seat at church, forgetting their prayer-books, not kneeling at the right time, talking during the sermon, being noisy in lessons, playing loud music, skipping lessons to go hunting, swimming in the river, and learning to dance. Some of the boys did misbehave more extensively—fighting, bringing dogs, cats, and chickens into the Academy, throwing stones at the rector’s windows, making noise late at night outside teachers’ homes, setting off firecrackers, donning masks and jumping out at people in the street in the middle of the night, writing rude Latin poems, frequenting taverns, brawling with the villagers, gambling, and flirting with the local girls. But these occasions were rare and most of their ‘crimes’ were minor ones.

The year ended with examinations, with Latin sermons delivered by the theological teachers, and with the ‘Fête des Promotions’. Both the Academy and the College joined together for the Fête. Dressed in robes, the teachers and the pastors marched through the village with great ceremony and solemnity, accompanied by the members of the Church Council and followed by the magistrates and the nobility. The day would be spent listening to speeches and to recitations in French and in Latin and prizes were given to the best students. At the end of the day, students who were to receive their degrees were conducted to the temple, dressed in academic robes and following the verger who was carrying a branch of laurel. In front of their friends, their teachers, and the people of Saumur,

they took part in a debate, defending their theses. Judged worthy to receive the degree, a ceremony was held that was similar to the one held at French Universities. The successful candidates were presented with a hat and a wide belt or sash, and a book by Aristotle was placed in their hands. They were then led back to the Academy, where they wrote their name and their new title on the door. Finally the teachers were solemnly led back to their homes by the verger, still carrying the branch of laurel.

Many of the boys who studied at the Academy went on to become church ministers, but others became teachers, linguists, mathematicians, politicians, writers, and doctors.

Saumur also had a Catholic college and seminary, run by the Congregation de l'Oratoire. It was very similar in its approach and teaching to the Protestant Academy, although it was more radical in its use of the vernacular, and its inclusion of geography and science on the curriculum. As Dray has argued,

The combination of the two institutions, the Protestant college and Academy and the college and seminary of the Oratorians, secured for Saumur a considerable reputation throughout Europe and made it perhaps the foremost intellectual centre in France in the mid-seventeenth century outside Paris itself... There was a surprising degree of interaction, cooperation and collaboration between Catholics and Protestants in Saumur.¹²

William Penn was aged 18 when he arrived at Saumur; he spent two years there. It is difficult to trace definitively the influence of the Saumur Academy and its teaching on Penn. No archival evidence has survived. But there are sufficient similarities to suggest strong links between Penn's education in Saumur and his later thought and writings. Studying in an international atmosphere with boys and teachers from many countries must surely too have shaped his later thinking, particularly on issues of war and peace.

Beyond that, at Saumur Penn had positive ecumenical experiences. There was a considerable and unusual degree of interaction and collaboration between Catholics and Protestants in Saumur and—until the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685—a spirit of toleration and cooperation, which can be seen echoed in Penn's later writings on religious liberty. It was the connection between Penn's studies at Saumur and his life and works that the colloquium set out to explore.

NOTES

1. See Dray, J.P., 'The Protestant Academy of Saumur and its Relations with the Oratorians of Les Ardilliers', *History of European Ideas* 9/4 (1988), pp. 465-78 for further information about the Saumur Catholic Academy.

2. The only copy I have been able to trace in the United Kingdom is in the British Library.

3. Dray, 'The Protestant Academy of Saumur', p. 466. See pp. 466-68 for a discussion of *La Discipline* and Protestant attitudes towards education and the establishment of schools.

4. From 1662 until the mid-nineteenth century it was not possible to take a degree at either Oxford or Cambridge without a religious test. At Oxford in order to matriculate it was necessary to subscribe to the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England and to take the Oath of Supremacy. At Cambridge it was necessary at graduation to subscribe to the three

articles in the Thirty-Sixth Canon concerning the doctrine and authority of the Church of England. Much of the work that has been done on the history of the dissenting academies in England is old, but there is a major research project on dissenting academies based on a collaboration between Dr Williams's Centre for Dissenting Studies and the Sussex Centre for Intellectual History (<http://www.english.qmul.ac.uk/drwilliams/academies.html>) and a multi-authored volume on the history of the academies from 1660–1860 currently in preparation for publication by Cambridge University Press.

5. Méteyer, L.-J., *L'Académie Protestante de Saumur* (first published 1933), revue et corrigée par D. Poitier, Carrières-sous-Poissy: La Cause, 2005, p. 34. My translation.

6. Méteyer, *L'Académie Protestante de Saumur*, p. 52. My translation.

7. See Méteyer, *L'Académie Protestante de Saumur*, pp. 52–53.

8. Méteyer, *L'Académie Protestante de Saumur*, p. 78. My translation.

9. Méteyer, *L'Académie Protestante de Saumur*, p. 78.

10. This claim was first made by the early Quaker historian William Sewel who stated that 'For some time [Penn] lived (as he himself once told me) with that famous preacher Moyses Amyraut'. Sewel, W., *The History of the Rise, Increase, and Progress of the Christian People called Quakers*, 6th edn, 2 vols., London: Darton & Harvey, 1834, II, p. 166. First English publication 1722. See, however, Stephen Angell's discussion of this claim in the present issue.

11. Méteyer, *L'Académie Protestante de Saumur*, p. 79. My translation.

12. Dray, 'The Protestant Academy of Saumur', p. 472.

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