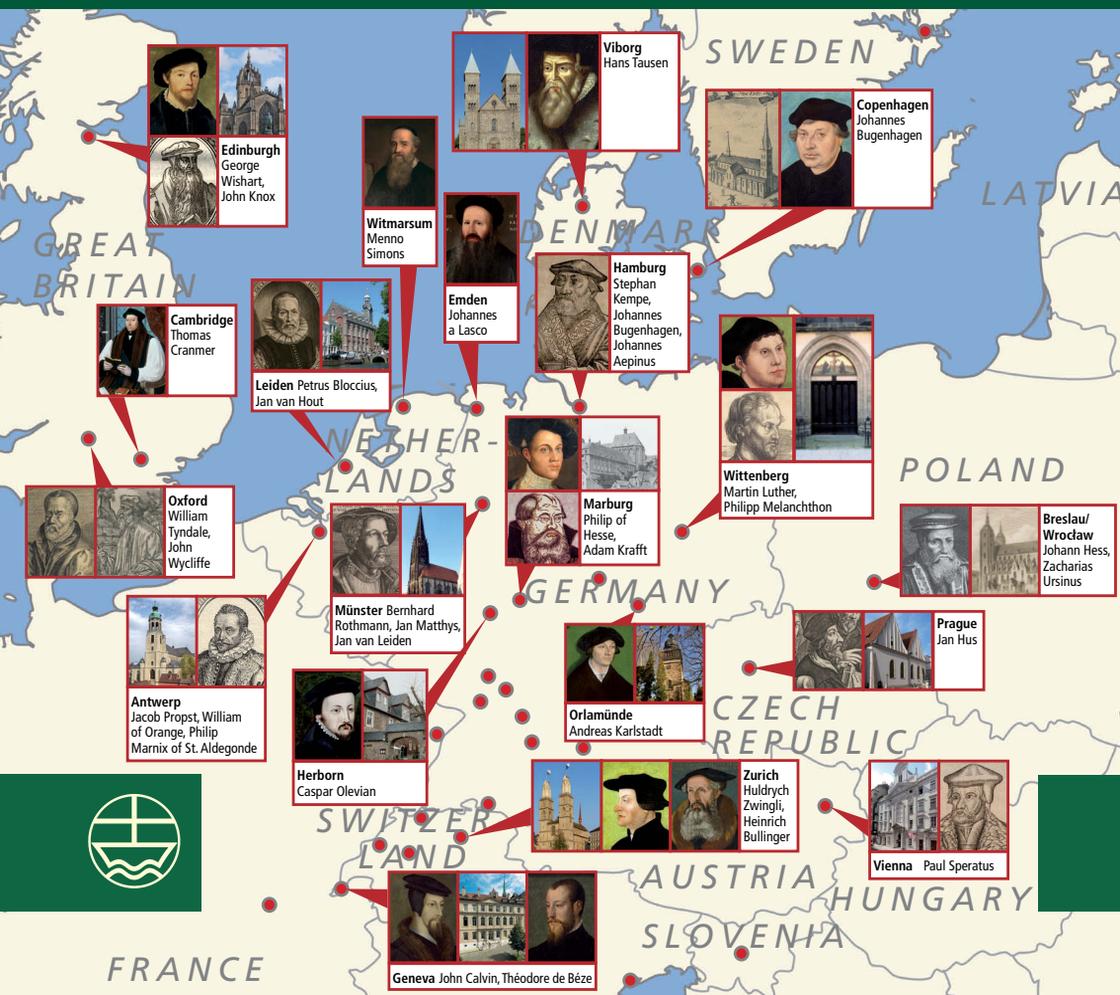


Europa 1517 reformata 2017



EUROPA REFORMATA

Europa reformata

European Reformation Cities
and their Reformers

Edited by

Michael Welker, Michael Beintker and Albert de Lange



EVANGELISCHE VERLAGSANSTALT
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In grateful memory of Bishop Prof. Dr. Friedrich Weber (1949–2015)

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Preface

Five hundred years of Reformation – the social, cultural, and religious movement that commenced during the early sixteenth century arose from efforts to renew the church in the light of the gospel. Within a remarkably short period, this resulted in developments the impacts of which continue to be felt globally today – and not just where the Reformation was successful. Even where such success was denied, the movement was still able to shape the very opposition it provoked.

The beginning of the Reformation is inextricably linked to the name of Martin Luther and the debate concerning penitence and indulgences he ignited in Wittenberg during the autumn of 1517. During the following years, no one shaped the drama and dynamics of the Reformation as did Luther, and in this sense he is undeniably of epochal significance. Precursors prepared the ground. Waldes of Lyon, John Wycliffe, and Jan Hus along with the movements they inspired all struggled and suffered on behalf of a comprehensive renewal of the church. But the radical change and departure into a new age came about only with Luther.

Nothing less than world history was now being written. The Reformation spread like wildfire. Under Luther's influence and unmistakably parallel to the events in Wittenberg, new Reformation cells and centers emerged, notably Zurich, Strasbourg, and Geneva. These cities can also be called strongholds, or hubs of the reformational movement. Yet limiting the discussion to them fails to do justice to the multifaceted, polycentric nature of what actually took place. Whether it be Antwerp or Riga, Leiden or Debrecen, Copenhagen or Lyon, Oxford or Venice – almost every place in Europe has its own Reformation story to relate. Although these stories did not always end successfully, with nascent Reformation initiatives often being bloodily suppressed, their stories must not be forgotten, since those who died for their faith shaped these stories no less than those who – as the grand

thinkers and organizers of this renewal – were far more prominent and visible. The Reformation in Europe consisted in a whole array of larger and smaller reformations and as such constituted a phenomenon and a network of genuinely pan-European proportions. Hence our title *Europa reformata*.

The 500th anniversary of the Reformation was a welcome occasion for the Community of Protestant Churches in Europe (CPCE) to draw public attention to the European dimensions of the Reformation. The CPCE has always acknowledged the importance of the sometimes quite different experiences of both its larger and its smaller member churches, originating as it did from the approval of the Leuvenberg Agreement (1973). In doing so, the churches that emerged from the sixteenth-century Reformation and their pre-Reformation siblings in faith laid aside their centuries-old ecclesiastical estrangement and began living together in pulpit and table fellowship. To date, 107 European Protestant churches have signed the Leuvenberg Agreement, bringing with them at least 107 different Reformation stories. Yet even these 107 Reformation stories could easily be enriched by the Reformation stories attaching to the numerous localities and regions within those individual Protestant churches: a colorful tableau indeed, easily illustrating how selective this present volume has had to be – with its 72 prominent figures and 48 cities associated with the Reformation. In short, it can only hope to give the reader a taste of the multifaceted nature of the Reformation and its resonance within its pan-European setting.

At its seventh general assembly in Florence in 2012, the churches of the CPCE initiated the project *Europa reformata: 500 Years of Reformation in Europe*. The assembly called for cities to apply for the title “European City of the Reformation”. Candidates were to be those towns and cities that had played a special role in the sixteenth-century Reformation. Naturally there were to be historical testimonies to the Reformation period and the cities were to be sufficiently accessible for visitors and tourists. The assembly wanted these cities, located across the entire continent, to commemorate the Reformation over its entire breadth for the European public at large and to inspire dialogue with contemporary culture concerning the social and cultural insights associated with the Reformation.

The response to this initiative surpassed all expectation. Although the editors of this volume could easily have presented 80 Reformation cities, the 48 that were eventually included, along with the Reformers associated with them, offer a commemorative panorama that will enable readers not merely from Europe but from all over the world to participate in an exciting expedition that follows the traces of the Reformation down through history. On this expedition, readers will not only be journeying to Wittenberg, Zurich, Strasbourg, and Geneva, but will also find themselves, perhaps even unexpectedly at times, following the Reformation trail right across the entire European continent.

We would like to thank the authors who contributed to this “travel guide” through European Reformation history. The individual chapters stem from theologians and historians with specialized knowledge of the specific Reformation sites and the prominent figures portrayed. Each author may have a slightly different angle of vision, focusing sometimes on a town’s religious, political, or architectural profile during the Reformation period, and sometimes on the personal and theological profile of individual Reformers, or even on the historical setting. The overall yield of these contributions, however, throws into striking relief the grand contours of the Reformation.

We would also like to thank the numerous churches and church leaders who through subscription have enabled the financing of this ambitious undertaking. We are especially grateful to the Church Office of the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD) and to the City of Basel for providing printing subsidies. Bishop Prof. Dr. Jochen Cornelius-Bundschuh of the Protestant Church in Baden, the executive of the Protestant Church of the Palatinate and Dr. Thies Gundlach, vice-president of the EKD Church Office, supported the English translation. Senior pastor Dr. Younghoon Lee of the Yoido Full Gospel Church in Seoul funded the Korean edition (edited by Prof. Dr. Kim Jae Jin).

Church historians Prof. Dr. Berndt Hamm and Prof. Dr. Christoph Strohm provided extensive advice during the preparation of this volume. We are grateful to Dr. Alexander Massmann and Maren Ossenberg-Engels for preparing the map *Europa reformata*, and to Bettina Höhnen, Corinna Klodt, Irmela Küsell, Simon Layer, Charlotte Reda and Dr. Hanna Reichel for gathering special information concerning the Reformers and for collecting the addresses of church, political, and tourist contact centers. Dr. Albert de Lange has done a great deal of editorial work and presented the numerous illustrations. We would also like to thank Dr. Annette Weidhas of the *Evangelische Verlagsanstalt* for her invaluable assistance.

For the English edition we thank the translators Margaret Lampe (Heidelberg and Nuremberg), Neville Williamson (Emden) and Dr. Douglas Stott, who translated the majority of the remaining essays (six were submitted in English). Endre Iszlai translated the essay on Debrecen from Hungarian into English. Elaine Griffiths edited the entire English manuscript with a mixed international readership in mind.

We dedicate this book to the memory of Bishop Friedrich Weber, who died on 19 January 2015 after a short period of serious illness. Friedrich Weber, executive president of the CPCE Council from 2012, followed and supported the development of this book with passion and commitment from the very outset, and we remember him with profound gratitude.

For the editors: Michael Beintker

Introduction

by Michael Welker

I. The spiritual heart of the Reformation: trust in God's revelation

The Reformation message is characterized by profound trust in God and by fearlessness in the face of human power. The alternatives it articulates are quite clear:

- God's word before human words, if necessary even *against human words*
- Biblical witnesses before human doctrines
- God's truth before human certainties or opinions
- Faith in redemption that cannot be attained through one's own actions, but solely through God, not trusting in indulgences and one's own works (cf. Berndt Hamm's article on Nuremberg)

The Reformation emphasizes that God has turned compassionately toward human beings, and that precisely this action on God's part is revealed in Jesus Christ and grasped in faith (cf. Christoph Strohm's article on Heidelberg). God, God's Word and God's truth draw near to human beings, seeking to comfort, encourage and uplift them.

- God reveals himself in the compassionate, suffering human being Jesus Christ, who was executed on the cross.
- Jesus Christ takes hold of his witnesses in the power of the Holy Spirit and draws them into his life and authority – even against the power of pope and emperor.

The Reformation's stirring theological insights and life-changing energy are today associated especially with the towns of Wittenberg (Martin Luther and Philipp Melanchthon), Zurich (Huldrych Zwingli and Heinrich Bullinger), and Geneva

(John Calvin and Théodore de Bèze), on the one hand, and with the developments commencing after 1517 (Luther posts his theses in Wittenberg), on the other. And yet more than a century earlier than the Reformation in Germany, Switzerland, and other European countries, reform initiatives and the articulation of several key Reformation insights prompted the demand for corresponding reforms, especially from circles near the universities of Oxford (John Wycliffe) and Prague (Jan Hus), and indeed even earlier from Waldes of Lyon and the Waldensians. Such Reformation forerunners were already emphasizing that God's grace alone constitutes the foundation of human salvation, and that the status of Scripture was higher than any church doctrine. For just that reason, they argued, not only should the Bible be made accessible to all people, it should also be preached and its teachings communicated in the country's native language. Emphasis was on human maturity, on human beings having come of age in spiritual matters, and accordingly on the bread and wine in the Eucharist being distributed to all congregation members. Even before later Reformation figures, several of these "pre-Reformers" were publicly executed for having disseminated these liberating, but also heretical notions.

II. The importance of the printing press and education for the Reformation

One simply cannot overestimate the importance of what at the time was the still relatively new technology of moveable-type printing for the success of the Reformation, especially with regard to the production of pamphlets and books in the vernacular. Between 1518 and 1530, no fewer than 457 printings of Luther's writings – with an overall print run of a half million copies! — appeared in Augsburg alone. Publishers and printing shops were enormously successful in Basel, Emden, Hamburg, Herborn, Hermannstadt, Kronstadt, Leiden, Nuremberg, Speyer, Stockholm, Ulm, Urach, Vienna, Worms, and other cities. Pamphlets, often with gripping illustrations, shook people up. Printed sermons and treatises made it possible to disseminate the Reformation message directly among the people. Catechisms summarized the most important elements of faith and were disseminated far and wide — some globally. Translations of the Bible into the language of the people swiftly appeared in many countries. New congregational hymns and even entire hymnals were printed.

Many Reformers distinguished themselves through their extraordinary rhetorical and creative talents. Several, often supported by teams of translators, produced Bible translations that in their own turn determinatively influenced the development of local languages: Martin Luther in Germany, William Tyndale in England, Pierre-Robert Olivétan in France, Casiodoro de Reina in Spain, the Petri

brothers in Sweden, Michael Agricola in Finland, Gáspár Károli in Hungary, and Primož Truber in Slovenia. Johannes Bugenhagen's translation of the Bible into Low German provided the model for the Danish Bible. The list could easily go on.

III. Reformation advocacy of education and liberation

At the time, enthusiasm for the Reformation was borne largely by an educated middle class with a pronounced emancipatory disposition. Yet even before the Reformation, larger towns as centers of both news and communication were already providing the backdrop for educational movements – about forty percent of the population in Nuremberg, for example, could read. In some towns, circles of educated persons met who not only were attracted by the humanist ideals of Erasmus of Rotterdam but were also open to the Reformation. To put it simply: “Without humanism, no Reformation!” (Bernd Moeller). These circles, often with a broad network of correspondents, both disseminated and otherwise promoted Reformation doctrine. But it was not just in larger towns that the Reformation was able to gain a foothold. Devout rulers also joined and began supporting it in their own territories. Ultimately the Reformation spread to every class in the population.

As an educational movement, the Reformation attached great value to founding schools and *Hohe Schulen* (schools of higher learning), and in renewing the educational system from the ground up. The impetus behind this extraordinary commitment was the will to promote universal access to the Bible as the Word of God and, by educating all people – not just the clergy – to promote a sound community in which human freedom could flourish. Portraits of numerous towns in this volume (Debrecen, Ferrara, Ljubljana, Riga, Strasbourg, etc.) vividly illustrate these developments. In Schwäbisch Hall, for example, Johannes Brenz taught in his own writings that children were to be esteemed and respected, and demanded the development of more empathetic pedagogical methods. Just as Luther himself had proposed in his publication *To the Councilors* (1524), Brenz founded German and Latin schools for both boys and girls of all classes. In 1526 in Nuremberg, similarly inspired by Melanchthon, a new type of school altogether was created, the *Gymnasium* (secondary school). And finally, in 1541 the Reformer Johannes Honterus founded the first humanist *Gymnasium* in Kronstadt in southeastern Europe.

In 1527 Philipp of Hesse, in Marburg, founded the first Protestant university. The *Hohe Schule* in Herborn was developed as an educational institution not only for theology but also for philosophical and jurisprudential research and teaching. Dynamic young scholars (a notable pioneer in Herborn: Caspar Olevian)

and erudite teachers from other European countries accepted appointments at the various universities, contributing considerably to these institutions' ability to attract students from all over Europe and enhancing their interdisciplinary renown. Through these developments, the Reformation provided an enduring source of energy and inspiration for early modern universities in the fields of theology, philology, historiography, jurisprudence and political science.

This intensified and enhanced educational climate together with the will to support and sustain it similarly contributed to a renewal and fortification of people's self-confidence, which at least over time promoted change with respect to freedom in the political sphere. Members of the clergy enthusiastically embraced the new ecclesiastical and theological freedoms. Legal scholars sensed the potential of political freedom and were keen on putting these theories into actual practice. And even the mercantile upper classes, tradesmen and the guilds participated in emergent Reformation developments, intent in their own turn on helping secure and solidify these newly acquired freedoms. At the same time, such developments often served to strengthen previously existing anticlerical attitudes among the various strata of society, with the clergy's political, economic, and taxation privileges now coming under fire or being eliminated entirely. The message was clear: This yearning for a radical renewal of the church could no longer be repressed.

As was to be expected, especially where the Reformation did not enjoy the protection of a territorial ruler, various forms of opposition against the Reformers and their followers quickly emerged, including persecution and even public executions. Like the pre-Reformation, the Reformation movement proper was from the very outset also a movement of martyrs. Indeed, in some places, especially in southern Europe (e.g. Seville, Valladolid, Venice), Protestants could sustain their faith only as "crypto-Protestants", organizing themselves in secret networks.

IV. Reformation and the sharing of power: the involvement of city councils, guilds and kings

Even prior to the Reformation, secular authorities were becoming increasingly interested in expanding their oversight and control of ecclesiastical spheres and concerns. Indeed, in some cities councils even received papal support or at least tolerance in this regard, the pope granting the council in Bern, for example, the right to appoint ecclesiastical officeholders before the Reformation. In many places, however, politicians simply exploited Reformation successes to expand the scope of their own power. In Augsburg, for example, where ninety percent of the citizens quickly became Protestant, the town council and laypersons took over the

task of appointing ecclesiastical officeholders, adjudicating disputes in matters of faith, and ensuring that sermons adhered to Scripture and were of an acceptably Protestant orientation.

There was cautious maneuvering on the part of some town councils with respect to the uncertainty of their legal status in the empire, e.g. in Augsburg, Speyer, Worms, and also in certain towns in Switzerland (Zurich, Bern) and in Latvia (Riga, Reval). In some instances this was able to promote peaceful and even biconfessional arrangements — situations in which groups and church communities of Protestants could coexist with those of members of the “old faith” — sometimes even for the long term. In other places, a hesitatingly *de facto* emergence of a division of power between church and political authorities (also legal and scholarly bodies) was unfortunately hindered by monarchical actions. In Copenhagen and Stockholm, for example, the king exploited Reformation enthusiasm to rid himself of opponents from among the nobility and upper citizenry, or to have himself consecrated in a quasi-religious fashion and then assume the corresponding authority. In Lyon, Huguenots under the influence of Pierre Viret tried, through violent means, to turn the town into a “second Geneva”. These and similar developments are sometimes adduced — especially among some Roman Catholic authors — to demonstrate how the Reformation utterly disempowered the church and surrendered control to political authorities. However, what in fact emerged was a gradual process of division of power (religion, politics, law, scholarship/education) and a commitment to an ecumenical search for truth that turned out to be quite compatible with a more globally receptive and open piety, on the one hand, and an enhanced focus on freedom and democracy in later developments, on the other.

V. Public theology: the importance of sermons and disputations

The Reformation was “a reading and preaching movement” (Berndt Hamm). Even the worship service was now to serve spiritual, ethical, and political education. Questions of faith and church policy were to be stated and discussed freely and openly. Town councils in many places embraced the Reformation message and accordingly promoted theologically and biblically informed “sermons according to God’s word”. Public reaction to these developments was strong and positive.

“Disputations” played an important role in spreading new Reformation ideas, in which regard the famous Heidelberg Disputation of 1518 can serve as a kind of model. It was through this disputation that Luther, focusing intently and unswervingly on God’s revelation in Jesus Christ, excited and won over numerous future Reformers. Other important disputations included those in Zurich in

1523; Breslau in 1524 (contributing to the adoption of the Reformation there); religious colloquies in Memmingen in 1524 and Nuremberg in 1525; disputations in Hamburg in 1527 and 1528; Stockholm in 1527; Bern in 1528 (the Ten Bernese Theses), as well as a synod there in 1532; and Flensburg in 1529. The missive to the emperor himself issued by the urban diet in Ulm in 1524 represents the first Reformation confession at the imperial level. Of 1865 qualified voters in Ulm in 1530, 1621 voted to adopt the Reformation. “In all public or semi-public disputations during the 1520s, those of the old faith inevitably ended up having to depart in defeat” (Peter Blickle’s article on Memmingen).

VI. Catechisms — church ordinances — innovations in ordinary life

In many cities, adopting the Reformation was accompanied by the emergence of church ordinances (the first, by Johannes Aepinus in Stralsund, appearing in 1525) and catechisms designed to provide reliable orientation in both life and doctrine. Over time, Luther’s Small and Large Catechisms (1528/29), the Heidelberg Catechism (1563), and Thomas Cranmer’s *Book of Common Prayer* (1549) all became perennial spiritual bestsellers throughout the world. Yet even catechisms that today remain relatively unknown often exerted enormous influence. The most important of the three catechisms by Johannes Brenz from Schwäbisch Hall (1535) went through five hundred printings.

Reformers focused not merely on renewing church life and doctrine in the narrower sense, but also on improving the culture of social services and assistance, for example, of care for the poor, services to the ill, and care of orphans (cf. the alms ordinance of 1522 in Nuremberg). Reformers largely transferred care for the poor from ecclesiastical to secular oversight. In Hamburg and elsewhere, a fund was established to address the needs of the poor and ill, overseen by twelve citizen “deacons”. This reorganization of church institutions, of school systems, and of institutions of social services, e.g. hospitals, was buoyed and sustained by a spirit of Christian fellowship. In Constance, Ambrosius Blarer drafted exemplary ordinances for reorganizing monastic life and implementing worship services that were commensurate with Scripture (1535 and 1536). Whether through the reorganization of existing structures or the adoption of completely new forms, initiatives for concrete aid for the poor emerged in many places, often as a reaction to acute crises, for example, in connection with the demise of the textile industry (Leiden, Memmingen) or after natural disasters (Witmarsum).

VII. Princesses, female Reformers, and young theologians and jurists in leading roles

Theologically and spiritually engaged princesses and educated women from the upper classes of the citizenry made important contributions to the Reformation. Marguerite of Angoulême, Queen of Navarre, and her daughter Jeanne d'Albret, the Duchess of Albret in the principality of Béarn, promoted “simultaneous churches”, that is, churches that opened Roman Catholic church buildings to Protestant preachers. In contact with Reformers in Geneva, they assisted in reforming church institutions and the principality itself as well as in efforts to purify “Roman idol worship”. In cosmopolitan Emden, Countess Anna of East Frisia appointed as senior spiritual administrator the Polish humanist and Reformation theologian John a Lasco, charging him with reorganizing the entire church and its institutions in East Frisia. New synodical leadership committees were created, and in Emden itself leaders organized religious colloquies with those who were still adherents of the “old faith” and with peaceable Anabaptists.

At the court of Ferrara, Renée de France promoted interest in Protestant ideas in a circle of ladies and gentlemen of the nobility. One of the most genteel families in Constance, the Blarers, was captivated by the educational ideals of humanism and inspired by the Protestant spirit. The Blarer siblings, acquainted with both Melanchthon and Luther, endeavored not only to renew the church and school system, but also to improve care for the poor. Margarete Blarer, whom no less a personage than Erasmus of Rotterdam publicly praised, began a correspondence with Martin Bucer and became personally engaged on behalf of impoverished women and orphans as well as in care for the sick.

In 1523 in Strasbourg, Katharina Zell not only became one of the first Protestant clergyman's wives as the wife of the preacher at the Strasbourg cathedral, but also a distinguished Reformation writer. She defended publicly the abolition of celibacy as well as — adducing as support the biblical testimony to the effects of the Holy Spirit — the right of women to speak and play a role in spiritual matters. She became engaged for refugees of faith not only by providing practical assistance, but also through letters of consolation and encouragement. She published a hymnal reflecting the spirituality of the Bohemian Brethren, and defended peaceable Anabaptists against public persecution.

The spirit of the Reformation was, finally, also characterized by the considerable influence exerted by energetic young theologians and jurists who, often immediately after concluding their university studies, assumed key leadership roles in doctrinal matters, proclamation, and church administration and governance. Distinguished examples include, of course, Philipp Melanchthon and John Calvin,

though also numerous other young Reformers, such as Márton Kálmáncsehi Sánta in Debrecen, Johannes Honterus and Valentin Wagner in Kronstadt, Johannes Brenz in Schwäbisch Hall, Michael Diller in Speyer, Michael Agricola in Turku, Hans Tausen in Viborg, and Huldrych Zwingli and Heinrich Bullinger in Zurich.

VIII. European internationality

The small town of Wittenberg became the “center of the civilized world” from which a new religious culture radiated out in all directions. The only recently founded university (1502), with its renowned teachers Luther and Melancthon, attracted more than forty-seven hundred students from all over Europe between 1535 and 1545, making it the most populous university in the empire. Distinguished artists as well, especially from the school of Lucas Cranach, extended the Reformation’s aura far beyond Germany. Other institutions of higher learning where Reformation doctrine was represented similarly attracted students and scholars from all over Europe. Heidelberg, Marburg, Herborn, and also Cambridge were especially successful in this regard.

Alongside the attraction of theological, jurisprudential, and humanist educational opportunities, however, the persecutions and resultant flood of refugees also contributed across borders to education and exchange, and to the increasingly international connections in daily life. By accepting refugees from other countries, towns such as Emden and Frankfurt am Main, also enhanced their own economic and cosmopolitan aura. Students, teachers and church workers, who because of their beliefs had to flee their country, acquired additional cultural and linguistic skills that enabled them to pass on the new ideas in the most varied contexts. Cosmopolitan towns with a long local tradition and great power, such as the Republic of Venice or Edinburgh — and also places characterized by multiple ethnic groups such as Kronstadt and Turku — were stimulated anew through their often contentious exposure to the Reformation spirit. At the same time, their previous cultivation of tradition and fixed cultural routines underwent constructive tests of endurance.

IX. Thematic conflicts with the Church of Rome

Not surprisingly, copious thematic issues generated conflicts between the Reformation and the Roman Church. Although many people today view the Reformation as having been initiated or set into motion by the sale of indulgences, that theme was but one among many. The central theme prompting this new

religious departure was the Reformation's disagreement with the prevailing speculative and metaphysical theology and its ideas about the remoteness of God. Luther's Heidelberg disputation of 1518 broke completely new ground from which to criticize a theology that did *not* grant absolutely normative status to God's revelation in Jesus Christ and to a focused orientation toward the biblical witnesses. Whereas the new theology, oriented toward Jesus Christ and Scripture, was intent on enabling all people to gain access to the sources of knowledge of God, speculative and metaphysical theology now seemed exposed as a theology exclusively of rulers and of those who sought even more power to rule. The new theology also called into question the powerful practice of confession as well as celibacy.

Another controversial topic during the Reformation was the traditional church's refusal to offer the Eucharist to the congregation in its two forms (bread and wine — *sub utraque*). The Reformation objected that this position clearly contradicts the witness of Scripture. The Reformation similarly rejected other themes as being non-biblical or as exaggerations with little or no direct biblical support, including the cult of Mary and the saints, the transmission of legends of the saints, saying the rosary, and the doctrine of purgatory. It also demanded the abolition of the mass held in Latin, processions, excessive imagery in churches, and the often numerous secondary altars. Such objections and disputes were often particularly vehement precisely where unjustified economic privilege and the obvious cultivation of a double morality were associated with clerical hegemony. Conflicts similarly arose when social problems and poor educational opportunities were attributed to the inadequate leadership of the church itself.

The notion of the priesthood of all believers provided support for those who criticized the questionable authority of the pope, the hierarchical organization of the clergy, and the powerful status of monasteries. Teaching and proclamation that was focused solely on Scripture was to expel all obscurantism from the church. The dominance of church jurisdiction was called into question, and in many areas adjudication by secular authorities replaced canon law and traditional dispensation of justice by the church. Many developments initiated by the Reformation anticipated that a division of power offered a more effective way of promoting individual and societal freedom; people began to see that such freedoms were best served when politics, the administration of justice, science and scholarship, and oversight of church and religious matters were not concentrated in a single entity.

X. Intra-Protestant thematic conflicts

As early as 1520, conflicts arose between Luther and the very man whom, alongside Luther, many between 1518 and 1522 considered one of the most important representatives of Wittenberg's Reformation theology. This was Luther's own doctoral advisor, Andreas Rudolf Bodenstein, called Karlstadt after the Franconian town of Karlstadt. The initial issue concerned the inviolability of the biblical canon. Luther had questioned the canonical validity of the Letter of James, which in Luther's view advocated "righteousness through works". His colleague Karlstadt sensed here a threat to the authority of Scripture. The two men also came into conflict concerning infant baptism and the appropriate age for baptism, as well as concerning the presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist. Karlstadt, influenced by mystical theology, emphasized more radically than Luther the maturity of the individual Christian and the authority of the congregation — even without the important prerequisite of education and training that was so important for Melanchthon and Luther. Called Brother Andreas in his church community in Orlamünde, he developed a ministry that emphasized the importance of all laypersons.

These and other issues generated intra-Protestant conflicts that, along with social conflicts and the accompanying tensions, exacerbated the contentious arguments. The dispute concerning Christ's presence in the Eucharist turned into one of the central conflicts between Lutherans and Reformed believers. In Marburg in 1529, after a debate that had started in 1526 and been carried on in polemical pamphlets, Philipp of Hesse tried to find a "middle ground between Lutherans and Zwinglians", albeit without success. Although an important step along this path was taken with the Wittenberg Concord of 1536 (Bucer and Melanchthon), intra-Protestant reconciliation in this matter was not achieved until the Leuenberg Agreement of 1973.

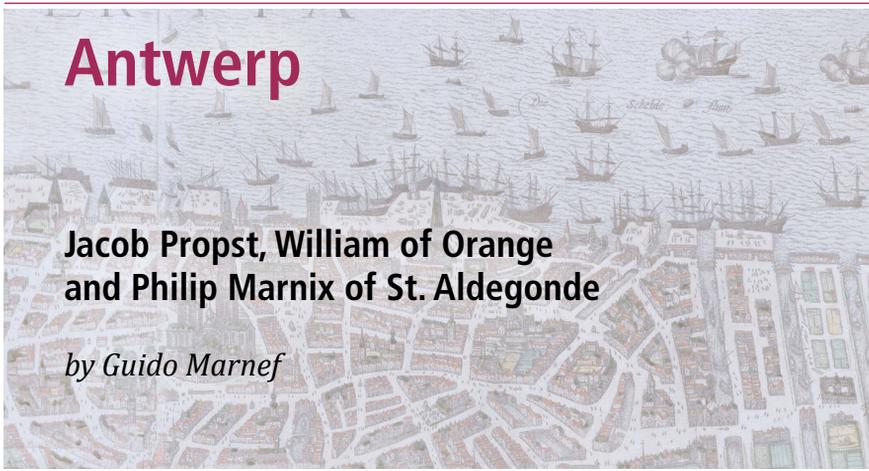
Similarly fierce conflicts arose in connection with spiritualist movements, which appealed to the "inner word of the Spirit" in emphasizing the theological authority of the individual Christian (e.g. Sebastian Franck and Caspar von Schwenckfeld in Ulm) and called into question central tenets of faith such as the doctrine of the Trinity and of Christ's divine nature (cf. the Anti-Trinitarians in Venice, Poland, and Transylvania; and Miguel Servet in Geneva). Conflicts arose in connection with the rejection of infant baptism and the introduction of adult baptism, which not infrequently was accompanied by a willingness to undergo rebaptism (Anabaptism). These conflicts came to a head within the framework of emancipatory and ultimately violent protest movements that also directed their anger toward oppressive economic abuses and situations of acute distress. Mühlhausen, Münster, Memmingen and other cities became centers of such radicalization.

In the spring of 1525, the largest uprising in Europe prior to the French Revolution commenced in Upper Swabia, gravitating around Memmingen. Presumably fifty thousand rebellious peasants demanded in *Twelve Articles* the abolition of serfdom, the right of the congregation to choose its own pastor, and the replacement of the hegemony of the nobility and ecclesiastical princes by a “common government” and the implementation of other freedoms and privileges. Thousands of peasants perished in battles with troops of the nobility. Reformation historian Heiko A. Oberman was inclined to assert that Memmingen in fact represented a “fourth center of the Reformation” — alongside Wittenberg, Zurich and Geneva.

Anabaptist movements also fell prey to extremism, e.g. in Münster, where the tailor Jan van Leiden had himself declared king, thereafter abolishing, among other things, money and imposing the death penalty on those who transgressed against the Ten Commandments, and even arrogating to himself the right to choose the name of every newborn child. Such phenomena remained isolated incidents and were nonetheless able to damage the reputation of the Reformation. To this day, the unsatisfactory engagement with the Anabaptists, the Reformers’ failure to address the misery of the peasants, and the stubborn recurrence of anti-Semitism throughout church history belong to the dark side of the Reformation. The Mennonite strand of the Anabaptist movement was markedly different from the violently inclined peasants and Anabaptists and their equally violently inclined opponents in the sixteenth century. To this day, Mennonite churches continue to embody a rigorous and consistent peace theology and ethics (see Menno Simons in Witmarsum).

Such Reformation highlights include countless other examples of non-violent resistance and efforts on behalf of peaceful ecumenical coexistence. Many towns, after dramatic show trials, public executions and burnings, and even posthumous condemnations with public burnings of coffins (Antwerp, Augsburg, Cambridge, Ferrara, Oxford, among others), became temporary or even permanent places in which refugees of faith from many different countries could find a safe harbor. Protestants in Augsburg, after their churches were confiscated following their impressive initial successes, patiently and peacefully conducted their services for fourteen years out in the open air. Accounts from other towns similarly relate how Protestants had “leave town” to attend worship (e.g. as late as 1649 in an engraving of Hernals Castle near Vienna by Merian). The turbulent emergence of the Reformation was followed in many countries by long periods of hardship and patience — but always on a path ultimately leading to a peaceful ecumenical life enduringly inspired by the Reformation.¹

1 I would like to thank Irene Dingel, Berndt Hamm, Albert de Lange, Jan Stievermann and Christoph Strohm for their careful reading and many fine suggestions.



A tourist visiting present-day Antwerp and seeing the many churches might conclude that the city was always a stronghold of the Catholic Church. At the end of the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth century Antwerp became indeed a bulwark of the Counter-Reformation and the new churches and convents built in a baroque style still leave their distinct traces in the urban landscape. Yet the baroque splendor conceals the fact that Antwerp was once the big center of Protestantism in the Netherlands.

A cosmopolitan metropolis

It was no coincidence that Antwerp was the first city in the sixteenth-century Netherlands touched by the broad Protestant and the more specific Lutheran reform movement. In the first half of the sixteenth century, Antwerp became the big metropolis of western trade. Merchants coming from Spain, Portugal, the German Empire, England and other parts of Europe came together in Antwerp. The commercial expansion stimulated existing industries and attracted new ones. The population exploded from 40,000 at the end of the fifteenth century to 100,000 in the 1560s. Antwerp's economic boom profoundly affected cultural life. The availability of capital, distribution channels, skilled labor, and a vast reading public turned the city in an international center of book production and book trade. A well-developed school system enhanced the cultural emancipation of the urban middle classes. There are no data about the degree of literacy in sixteenth-century Antwerp but everything seems to indicate that at least half of the population achieved elementary literacy. Three chambers of rhetoric — poetry guilds that

performed like amateur theater companies — reflected in their vernacular poems and plays upon the social and religious problems of the day.

Early support for Luther's reform

As a cosmopolitan trading metropolis with a vibrant cultural life Antwerp was open to new religious and cultural influences. Martin Luther's ideas reached Antwerp at an early stage through German merchants and some Antwerp printers did not hesitate to publish the work of the Reformer from Wittenberg. The most important center of support, however, was the Augustinian monastery. This had been founded in 1513 and was part of the reformed German congregation of Augustinians to which Luther's branch in Wittenberg also belonged. Several Antwerp friars had studied at the University of Wittenberg. Jacob Propst (1486?–1562), who was prior of the Antwerp monastery in 1518–22, was even a close friend of Luther. He supported Luther's theology from the pulpit. In a letter to Luther, Erasmus of Rotterdam called Propst "a genuine Christian, who is most devoted to you and was once your pupil [...]. He is almost the only one who preaches Christ; the others, as a rule, preach the inventions of men or their own advantage".

Propst's sermons found fertile ground in Antwerp. However, the ecclesiastical authorities were alarmed and with the central government started a campaign against the Lutheran influences in the city. Propst was summoned and questioned by an inquisitor and on 9 February 1522 he was forced to abjure his errors in the main church of Brussels. Shortly afterwards he returned to his Lutheran convictions and had to flee to Wittenberg. From 1524 till 1559 he worked as a Lutheran pastor at Bremen.

Yet, the actions of the authorities did not succeed in silencing the Lutheran spirit in the Augustinian monastery. The new prior who succeeded Propst in the summer of 1522, Hendrik van Zutphen (ca. 1488–1524), had also studied at Wittenberg and was an acquaintance of Martin Luther. Van Zutphen, too, preached Lutheran opinions and was arrested on 29 September 1522. The next day, he was liberated by a crowd of angry supporters, mostly women, and he left the city, heading for Wittenberg. In October 1522, Margaret of Austria, the regent of the Netherlands, ordered the arrest of the remaining friars. Three friars refused to recant and two of them, Hendrik Voes and Johann van den Esschen, were burned at the stake at the Brussels Great Market on 1 July 1523. They were immediately hailed as the first martyrs of the Lutheran Reformation. In the meanwhile, Emperor Charles V had ordered that the monastery buildings be demolished. The Augustinian church, however, was spared and turned into a new parish church.



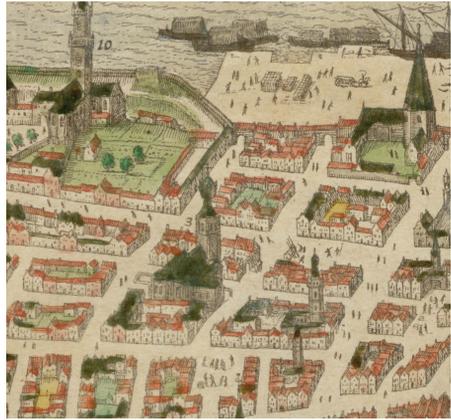
The parish church of St. Andrew. The church building was part of the Augustinian monastery in the early sixteenth century

The rise of Anabaptism and Calvinism

After the dissolution of the Augustinian monastery, the Lutheran reform movement lost its leading institution and centrifugal forces gained influence. The Lutheran minority though kept in close contact with Wittenberg. Small groups met in private houses, reading from Scripture and from Luther's *Postille* (collection of sermons) while others emigrated to German cities where they could practice their faith openly. However, a broad, eclectic Protestant movement set the tone in Antwerp and elsewhere in the Netherlands from the mid-1520s. At secret meetings a variety of new ideas could be heard, stemming from Protestant reformers of different flavor. Several of those present at these meetings had completely broken with the Catholic Church but others still maintained ties with the old Church.

The Lutherans and the supporters of the broad Protestant movement in Antwerp did not form a real church with an appropriate structure. Yet the Anabaptist movement, which came to the fore in the 1530s, developed an elaborate underground organization. While the pragmatic Antwerp city fathers were quite moderate towards Protestants, especially when people of economic weight were involved, they severely persecuted the Anabaptists. Since the seizure of Münster, Anabaptism had been associated with rebellion and disorder. The city government strictly executed the heresy edicts of the central government and condemned eight Anabaptists to death in 1535. Another fifteen followed until 1550. Most of the prosecuted Anabaptists were simple artisans. This prosecution pattern continued during the next decades. In the meanwhile, the pacifist Anabaptism molded by Menno Simons (1491–1561) had thrown off the revolutionary taint of the early movement, but this did not change the policy of the Antwerp city government. The rigorous persecution notwithstanding, the Anabaptists succeeded in building substantial underground communities. The Anabaptist leaders demanded high standards for membership of the “brotherhood” and had to be “without spot or stain”. Adult baptism was only administered when someone was prepared to leave the world of sin and after a conscious process of soul-searching and penance.

The Calvinist church, however, was best equipped to challenge the hostile authorities and the rivalry of other religious communities. In 1554, a Walloon or French-speaking church was established in Antwerp, followed the next year by a Dutch-speaking congregation. From the beginning, both churches were equipped with a strong organization. An extensive and decentralized network of elders, deacons and “messengers” (which informed the members where and when the secret services were taking place) formed a close link between the community's core leadership and the faithful brethren. Furthermore, the Antwerp Calvinist church was integrated in a European network. Preachers from the exile churches



Antwerp; colored town map from Georg Braun and Franz Hogenberg, "Civitates orbis terrarum", vol. 5, Cologne, 1599

Middle left: Church of Our Lady (no. 1); middle right: Church of St. Andrew (no. 3)



Iconoclasm in the Antwerp church of Our Lady, 20 August 1566. Engraving by Frans Hogenberg

were sent to Antwerp. In times of need, Calvinists in London, Cologne, Emden and other places held collections for their co-religionists in Antwerp. These bonds of solidarity were invaluable for the Antwerp underground churches. Needless to say, the contacts and the mobility were greatly enhanced by the commercial channels and networks of the Antwerp metropolis.

The first minister and architect of the Dutch-speaking church, Gaspar van der Heyden (1530–85), was a typical representative of the Calvinists of the first generation. He compiled a church order and required from each member a confession of faith. He followed a very strict line and wanted to exclude all those who from time to time took part in the ceremonies connected with Catholic “superstitions”. Van der Heyden distinguished between the children of God — those who made the confession of faith and submitted to ecclesiastical discipline — and the children of the World. Not all the members of the Antwerp church shared Van der Heyden’s sharp demarcation and a distinction remained between the small congregation of fully-fledged members and the wider circle of sympathizers who did not make a far-reaching commitment.

From the beginning, Antwerp acted as a kind of bridgehead, from which Reformed ideas were carried into the surrounding towns and provinces. At the same time, the Antwerp Calvinist church played a leading role in spreading and supporting Reformed Protestantism in other provinces, such as Flanders, French Flanders, Hainaut and Artois. Above all, the Antwerp metropolis acted as a central refuge for persecuted Calvinists from Flanders and the Walloon provinces.

Protestant expansion during the *annus mirabilis*

In the 1560s there was an increasing opposition to the strict heresy policy of Philip II, the son and successor of Charles V. At this level, the Calvinist church showed a firm militancy and a readiness to interact with the political developments. The *annus mirabilis* (the Wonder Year) — the period from April 1566 to April 1567 — offered ample room for political and religious action. In April 1566, a group of confederated nobles presented to the Regent, Margaret of Parma, a petition demanding that the Inquisition be abolished and the heresy edicts suspended. This presentation stimulated the self-confidence of the Calvinists. Many exiles returned and in June 1566, a synod of the Calvinist churches held in Antwerp decided it was time to come into the open. Mass meetings organized outside the Antwerp city walls attracted thousands of listeners. Yet, the Calvinist leaders also wanted to exercise their religion within the city walls. In this regard, the wave of iconoclasm which swept through the Netherlands in August 1566 proved to be instrumental. On 20 August, the image breaking started at Antwerp. Relatively small groups of rioters led by Calvinists smashed images in the church of Our Lady — Antwerp's main parish church — and in several other churches, monasteries and chapels. The iconoclasm was not only a religiously inspired act but also a way to expand the rights of the Calvinists within the city.

The iconoclastic wave indeed had an immediate impact on the Calvinist Church. On 2 September, William of Orange (1533–84), who was sent to Antwerp by the Regent, reached an agreement with the Calvinist leadership that granted the Calvinists three places where they could preach. The very same day, the accord was extended to include the Lutherans. The 2 September accord was a milestone in the development of Protestantism in Antwerp. For the first time, a legal framework now allowed Calvinists and Lutherans to live and worship in the city. Both Calvinists and Lutherans built new churches on their assigned places and they succeeded in recruiting new followers.

At the same time, there was a growing tension between Calvinists and Lutherans. The discord was on political, as well as religious grounds. In the autumn and winter of 1566, the leaders of the Antwerp Calvinist church openly

opted for political resistance and the church even served as the headquarters of the rebel movement against Philip II and the central government. By contrast, the Lutherans followed a more prudent line. In March 1567, after the defeat of a rebel army at short distance of the Antwerp city walls, the Calvinists tried to seize power in Antwerp. The Lutherans remained loyal to the civic authorities and joined the Catholics. The Calvinist leaders, who now had to withdraw, perceived this as a betrayal of the Protestant cause and continued to consider the Lutherans politically unreliable.

In April 1567, Margaret of Parma and her royal troops regained control of the situation in the Netherlands. On 11 April, William of Orange and many Calvinists and Lutherans left the city. The arrival of Fernando Álvarez de Toledo, Duke of Alba, in the summer of 1567 heralded a period of harsh repression. The Protestant communities of Antwerp were driven underground again.

A last climax of Protestantism: the Calvinist Republic

After the *annus mirabilis* the fortunes of the Protestant communities in Antwerp were closely connected to the course of the Dutch Revolt. After the proclamation of the Pacification of Ghent (8 November 1576), which suspended the heresy edicts, the situation of the Protestants considerably improved. When the Antwerp citadel, built by the Duke of Alba, was cleared from its Spanish garrison, the Antwerp city fathers more and more followed the political line of William of Orange and the rebellious States-General. The Calvinists, who were the most loyal supporters of the Revolt, gradually took over the different echelons of the Antwerp city government. In August 1578, the city fathers proclaimed a “Religionsfried” or religious peace that granted Calvinists and Lutherans places for worship.

From then onwards, the Calvinist and Lutheran Church experienced a rapid growth. Several preachers left their exile centers and henceforth labored in the “fertile vineyard” of Antwerp. Among them was Gaspar van der Heyden who came over from Middelburg. Calvinist ministers who wrote about the expansion of their church once again distinguished between core members and “sympathizers”. In April 1579 the minister Johannes Cubus declared that the Dutch church already had 12,000 hearers or sympathizers and more than 3000 incorporated members.

In June 1579 the city government proclaimed a second religious peace which granted more church buildings to the Calvinists and Lutherans including existing Catholic parish churches and convents. The Catholic Church was more and more sidelined and in July 1581 the public exercise of the Catholic religion was forbidden. The Calvinist Church acquired a truly cosmopolitan character with a



The statue of William of Orange and Philip Marnix of St. Aldegonde located at the back of Antwerp's Museum of Fine Arts

Dutch and French-speaking church and smaller Italian and English congregations. The Lutherans had not only a Dutch and French church but also a German one.

It was, however, military developments which sealed the fate of the "Calvinist Republic". From August 1584 Alexander Farnese besieged Antwerp with his Spanish army. The city's defense was headed by burgomaster Philip Marnix of St. Aldegonde (1540–98), a staunch Calvinist and adviser of William of Orange. Yet, after one year the rebellious city government had to surrender. The capitulation treaty of 17 August 1585 granted the Calvinists and Lutherans a term of four years during which they were allowed to live in the city without being troubled. Within this period, a number of Calvinists and Lutherans converted to the Catholic Church but many more decided to leave the city. The population of Antwerp nearly halved, going from ca. 82,000 in 1585 to 42,000 in 1589. Henceforth, the new city government and ecclesiastical authorities closely collaborated in building a new Catholic Church with a distinct Counter-Reformation character. A new religious era had begun.

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Further reading

VICTORIA CHRISTMAN, *Pragmatic Toleration. The Politics of Religious Heterodoxy in Early Reformation Antwerp, 1515–1555*, Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2015

GUIDO MARNEF, *Antwerp in the Age of Reform: Underground Protestantism in a Commercial Metropolis 1550–1577*, Baltimore/London: John Hopkins University Press, 1996

GUIDO MARNEF, “From prosecuted minority to dominance: the changing face of the Calvinist Church in the cities of Flanders and Brabant (1577–1585)”, in: Herman J. Selderhuis and J. Marius J. Lange van Ravenswaay (eds.), *Reformed Majorities in Early Modern Europe*, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2015, pp. 227–244

Visiting Antwerp

www.visitantwerpen.be

www.protestantsekerkantwerpennoord.be

<http://users.skynet.be/lutherse.kerk>

and the Habsburg margravate of Burgau. Between 1522 and 1534, Wurttemberg, too, passed to Ferdinand von Habsburg as a benefice. The town's "moderate middle course" was an elastic reaction to this complex set of circumstances.

It took a while for the town council to finally acknowledge that Augsburg was almost ninety percent Protestant. In 1534, it restricted the celebration of the Catholic mass to eight collegiate and monastery churches that were still intact. Then in January 1537 it entirely banned "papist idol-worship", stating its reasons in a document addressed to the emperor and imperial estates which was also published. The remaining monasteries were dissolved and transferred to civic ownership. Almost the entire Catholic clergy went into exile. In cooperation with Martin Bucer from Strasbourg, the council created a church ordinance, a *forma* for worship services, a new disciplinary and police ordinance, and a marital court. The council also took control of the entire school system, including the new Latin school (1531) at St. Anne's Church.

Augsburg had now set out on the Reformation path taken by the upper German imperial cities oriented toward Zurich and Strasbourg. Wolfgang Musculus played a leading part in this, after his arrival in Augsburg from Strasbourg in 1531.

The city now cautiously left the "moderate middle course" with respect to external relationships as well. After concluding a special alliance with Ulm and Nuremberg in late 1533, Augsburg joined the Schmalkaldic League in 1536, which promised to provide broader political support. In the same year it acceded to the Wittenberg Concord — the compromise between Luther and Bucer on the Eucharist. Augsburg had now also positioned itself externally as a town committed to the Protestant confession.

Augsburg ca. 1520: Episcopal city and global business center

Yet Augsburg had provided a backdrop for Reformation history early on. When in October 1518 Luther arrived for consultation with Cardinal Cajetan after the conclusion of the Imperial Diet, his Ninety-five Theses were the talk of the town, no surprise in an Episcopal city with seventeen monasteries ranging from the exclusive foundation for the nobility to the more citizen-oriented mendicant (begging) order. Augsburg had countless devotional institutions focused on the salvation of souls. "Everyone wants to get into heaven," a chronicler noted. Famous institutions include the "Fuggerei" social settlement founded in 1516 by Jakob Fugger the Rich, and his tomb in St. Anne's. Designed according to plans by Albrecht Dürer and consecrated in early 1518, this is a Renaissance monument of genuinely European stature.



View from the nave of St. Anne's toward the Fugger chapel

It was, however, that same Jakob Fugger whose new municipal palace was used to administer indulgence payments for Rome, and where Martin Luther was interrogated after criticizing indulgences. Canon Bernhard Adelman was a resolute opponent of Fugger's business profits from charging interest. A cathedral chapter with humanist members was an exception among south German dioceses. The new bishop Christoph von Stadion (in office 1517–43) exhibited a conciliatory disposition, and town secretary and imperial counselor Konrad Peutinger, who invited Luther to dinner in October 1518, was a respected humanist whose "singular zealotness for my cause" Luther himself attested. Yet it was the same Konrad Peutinger who, as the "gray eminence" of municipal politics, advocated the "moderate middle course".

However, debates concerning a *reformatio* were not simply a matter for scholars and theologians. In the rapidly expanding economic metropolis of Augsburg, the gap between the rich and poor was enormous. The 25,000 inhabitants of Augsburg around 1500 included, on the one hand, the rich (30 of whom were worth at least 10,000 guilders and 140 at least 2400 guilders), and, on the other, the "have-nots", representing more than half the inhabitants, including many weavers who were

barely managing to make ends meet due to the capitalist methods now being used in the textile trade.

The social tensions in Augsburg inevitably entered into the debates surrounding the *reformatio* and were further nourished by numerous publications in German. This was a specialty of Augsburg printers, who — in this town without a university — targeted readers unable to read Latin. Indeed, between 1480 and 1500, three fourths of all books published in Augsburg used the vernacular. With eighteen per cent of Luther publications, Augsburg was positioned after Wittenberg but still ahead of Nuremberg, Strasbourg and Erfurt. Between 1518 and 1530, 457 publications of works by Luther in Augsburg sold half a million copies. They were theological bestsellers.

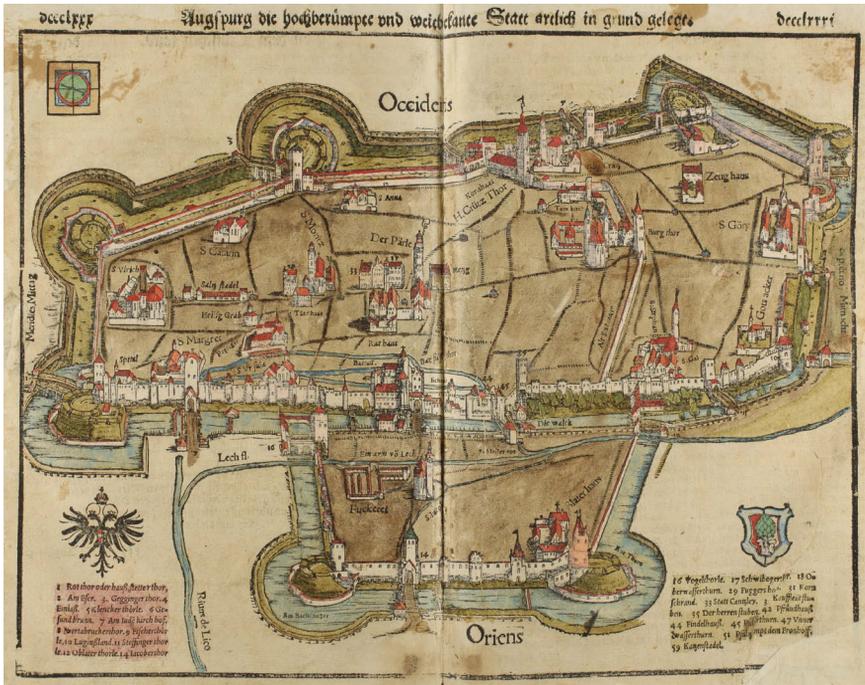
Only 17 publications by Zwingli are known, and other theologians, even those living in Augsburg itself, follow at a considerable distance. Publications defending the Roman church are entirely absent; not even the bull threatening to ban Luther found a printer in Augsburg. In 1520 the council decreed that nothing be published concerning “aberrations between the clergy and doctors of the Holy Scriptures”. Nevertheless, no genuinely effective censorship was enforced, and the development of opinions in the town continued unobstructed.

Local parish reformations and the town council’s deferred Reformation

One crucial reason for the decentralized development of the Reformation in the beginning was the legal status of parishes. Rather than being independent, they were all under the purview of monasteries and ecclesiastical foundations, which in their turn enjoyed a status as special districts outside town law. As early as the Middle Ages, however, the citizenry and civil institutions acquired increasing influence over these parishes. Officers appointed by the council oversaw the economic affairs of the Holy Spirit hospice (Heilig-Geist-Spital) and the mendicant orders; monasteries even occasionally acquired rights of citizenship.

The involvement of lay members of the parishes became especially important. In the thirteenth century, financial oversight boards emerged from the need to check whether the monasteries were correctly fulfilling their obligations with respect to the numerous foundations. As independent legal bodies, they managed the foundation funds and acquired a say in matters ranging from public worship and church furnishings to parish schools and their own preaching halls.

When, on 11 August 1523, the council forbade preaching anything other than “the holy Gospel and Word of God”, lay members also resorted to appointing pastoral positions. In the impoverished quarter of St. George’s Church, for example, Johann Seifried was elected by the parish community in 1524 and appointed



Augsburg; colored town map from Sebastian Münster, "Cosmographie", Basel, 1567
 Middle: Churches of St. Maurice and St. Anne. Below: "Fuggerei" and town hall



The Eucharist in both kinds; 1525 in St. Anne's. Illustration from [Augustin Scheller], "Chronica Ecclesiastica Augustana", 1744. Manuscript from the State and City Library of Augsburg

by the oversight board. Even in the elite quarter around St. Maurice's Church, the parish members took action. When Johann Speiser preached the Lutheran doctrine of justification in 1523 in St. Maurice's, as a result of which Johann Eck declared him a heretic, four hundred citizens demanded that the council offer him

protection — successfully! When the abbot of St. Ulrich dismissed Johann Schmidt in 1526, who was allegedly preaching in a “wholly Lutheran fashion”, the oversight board promptly hired him. In the church of the Holy Cross, the board took control of the parish and financed its radical preacher Wolfgang Haug by a door-to-door collection.

Even though lacking a parish, the mendicant orders similarly opened their doors to the introduction of Reformation ideas; indeed, under the prior Johann Frosch, the Carmelite Monastery of St. Anne became known as a Lutheran stronghold. In 1523 the council additionally appointed Urban Rhegius as preacher, and in 1525 St. Anne’s offered Holy Communion in both kinds.

Among the Franciscans in the Barfüsser Church, Johann Schilling preached such political sermons that the council authorities found their own status being questioned, and were only able to remedy this situation by dismissing the “reading master”. This event, however, became the catalyst for an armed uprising of craftsmen on 6 August 1524, which resulted in the immediate execution of the two ringleaders and considerable confusion. That autumn saw the arrival of Michael Keller, who had been driven out of Bavaria. He conducted Holy Communion in its Swiss form as a purely commemorative celebration and soon became the most important preacher in Augsburg, able to exert considerable influence even on council politics. The people voted with their feet. While Rhegius or Speiser preached to a dozen listeners, Keller’s church was full.

In a letter to Georg Spalatin in 1527, Luther expressed his horror at this doctrinal diversity: “Augusta in sex divisa est sectas” (Augsburg is divided into six). Alongside the Zwinglian majority, there were also adherents of Johannes Oecolampadius and Martin Bucer, with the Lutherans at St. Anne’s falling behind and adherents of the old faith remaining under the influence of the Fuggers. The council’s rather soft attitude attracted religious “dissidents”. Under the guidance of the emigrants Balthasar Hubmeier, Hans Denk and Hans Hut (for a time a student of Luther and later of Thomas Müntzer), Augsburg also became a center for Anabaptists.

Yet events in the Peasants’ War compelled the council to take action. During a gathering of south German Anabaptists in the summer of 1527, known as the “Synod of Martyrs”, the leaders were arrested and expelled from the town. Some were even branded. Hut died in the dungeon, and in 1528 another Anabaptist was executed as well. Henceforth the Anabaptist gatherings ceased, and the only trace of them is the occasional reference to isolated adherents underground.

The Council's late Reformation after the Imperial Diet of 1530 and its theological advocate, Wolfgang Musculus (1497–1563)

The Imperial Diet of 1530 was a turning point for the Augsburg Reformation. As a result of the pulpit prohibition Charles V imposed on all local preachers, several Lutheran doctors departed, including Stephan Agricola, Johannes Frosch, and Urbanus Rhegius. New appointees came from Strasbourg, including Bonifatius Wolfart (St. Anne's), Theobald Niger (St. Ulrich's), and Wolfgang Musculus. The Augsburg Reformation found its advocate in Musculus, whom Bucer and Wolfgang Capito had recommended as follows: "He does not put on airs and graces. But those who know what a peaceful, gentle, correct and modest spirit the Lord has bestowed upon him, along with a refined, bright, quick and even-tempered understanding accompanied by a considerable acquaintance not only with divine Scripture, but also with the Church Fathers, and all of it encompassed within a quiet, wholly irreproachable life — they will think all the more highly of him because of his wholly inconspicuous appearance."

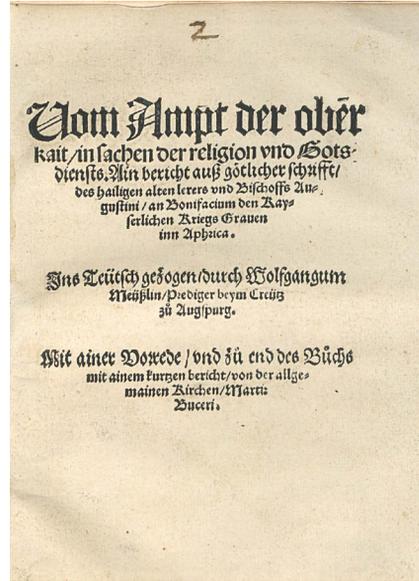
Wolfgang Mäuslin (Latin: Musculus) came from simple circumstances and in his early years was shaped by Alsatian humanism, Benedictine life at the monastery Lixheim (1512–27), Lutheran doctrine as early as 1518, and the Strasbourg Reformation. He had moved to Strasbourg after his life in the monastery, married and worked as a weaver. Bucer and Capito appointed him preacher in Dorlisheim in Alsace, and in 1528 deacon at Strasbourg cathedral. Musculus continued to educate himself, attended the lectures of both, and learned Hebrew. When he received a call from Augsburg, he hesitated to accept the task of reconciling the doctrinal diversity in a compromise, where others had failed.

The council appointed him to the pulpit at Holy Cross in 1531, where he preached until 1537. These were the years of the council's Reformation, during which the church institutions were established through the wrangling of theologians and lay members, guilds and the council. Bucer paid lengthier annual visits of support beginning in 1534. Musculus' actions were unspectacular but no less enduring. In 1535, for example, he translated St. Augustine's ideas on authority in matters of religion and worship into German (*Vom Ampt der Oberkait / in sachen der Religion vnd Gotsdienst*) and published it with a preface and a timely epilogue by Bucer. According to Musculus, an acquaintance with the Church Fathers heightens the reader's understanding of the Bible. The council based its actions on this careful argumentation concerning the right and even duty of the authorities to take an active role in religious matters.

In 1536 Musculus as the town's representative signed the Wittenberg Concord concerning the question of the Eucharist, agreeing "that the body and blood of



Wolfgang Musculus. Anonymous portrait
(late 16th century)



Wolfgang Musculus, "Vom Ampt der
Oberkait", 1535. Title page. This copy
belonged to Konrad Peutinger

Christ are present and truly offered". The following year he became preacher at the cathedral, and from 1540 functioned as the council's theological contact, representing the town at the (ultimately futile) religious colloquies in Worms and Regensburg. Alongside these official duties, Musculus learned Greek from Sixt Birk, who had become headmaster of the grammar school (*Gymnasium*) in 1536. He also taught himself Arabic to read Psalm commentaries. He translated several important Greek Church Fathers into Latin, published commentaries on numerous biblical books, and composed his own systematic theology. In 1543/44 he persuaded the council to acquire almost one hundred early Greek manuscripts in Venice, thereby laying the foundation for the Augsburg library's international reputation. In 1544 the council dispatched Musculus to Donauwörth, where he was to strengthen the Reformation on the pattern already established in Augsburg. But his efforts were in vain, since Donauwörth ultimately decided to follow the model of Nuremberg.

Not only did the defeat in the Schmalkaldic War burden Augsburg with enormous debt, the harsh Imperial Diet of 1548 also introduced a new constitution.

It deprived the guilds of their political rights (Emperor Charles viewed them as the source of all evil) in favor of the patricians. It also ensured that Catholics outnumbered Protestants in the city administration. Representatives of the Catholic Church received back their rights, and also the confiscated churches. Most importantly, at the height of his power, Charles V decreed an “interim religion” for Protestants aimed at guiding them back to the old church; although it permitted priests to marry and the laity to receive both the bread and wine at the Eucharist, the Roman rite alone was to be followed.

Musculus immediately left Augsburg in protest and, after a hazardous flight, made it to Bern. There, as a professor of theology until his death in 1563, he acquired a wealth of international influence and shaped an entire generation of Reformed theologians.

Augsburg as a town of two religions

It must be said that the council implemented the “Interim” in Augsburg only half-heartedly, and the residents boycotted it. After various shifts in power within the empire and the Treaty of Passau in 1552, which ensured the continuation of the Augsburg Confession, King Ferdinand again opened an Imperial Diet in Augsburg in 1555. This too had religious matters on the agenda. A specific article stipulated that because the (later) formula *cuius regio, eius religio* did not sufficiently encompass confessionally mixed imperial cities, the two confessions should there remain in place.

After the horrors of the Thirty Years War, this juxtaposition, accompanied by various controversies, led to a legal guarantee of parity. As a result, Augsburg even saw the emergence of a unique Protestant Baroque culture. During subsequent periods, this cohabitation of two confessions was laborious but it ultimately worked in practice.

It would have been unimaginable in those times that the two adjacent churches of St. Ulrich would one day



Plaque commemorating the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification on 31 October 1999, in St. Anne's Church



In the past, the close proximity of the Catholic Basilica of St. Ulrich and St. Afra (behind) and the Protestant Church of St. Ulrich was a cause of conflict; today it symbolizes good ecumenical relations

be viewed as a symbol of ecumenism. Or that a Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification would be signed by both the Lutheran World Federation and the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity. A commemorative plaque at St. Anne's recalls this event, which took place in 1999 on Reformation Day.

► Dr. *Andreas Link* is a retired pastor. He has published on Swabian history and on church and art history.

Further reading

RUDOLF DELLSPERGER et al. (eds.), *Wolfgang Musculus (1497–1563) und die oberdeutsche Reformation*, Akademie-Verlag, Berlin: 1997

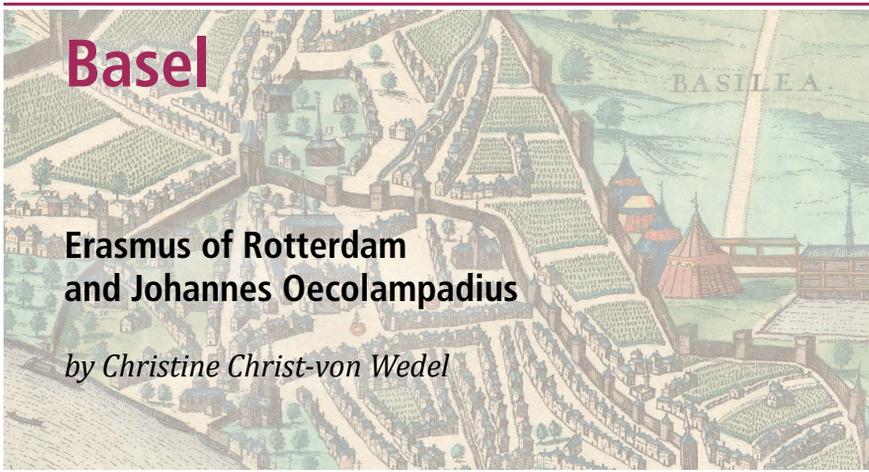
ROLF KIEßLING et al. (eds.), *Im Ringen um die Reformation. Kirchen und Prädikanten, Rat und Gemeinden in Augsburg, Epfendorf/Neckar*: Bibliotheca-Academica-Verlag, 2011

ROLF KIEßLING (ed.), *St. Anna in Augsburg. Eine Kirche und ihre Gemeinde*, Augsburg: Wißner, 2013

Visiting Augsburg

www.augsburg-tourismus.de/tourist-info.html

www.augsburg-evangelisch.de



Basel

Erasmus of Rotterdam and Johannes Oecolampadius

by Christine Christ-von Wedel

On 21 October 1515 the priest Johannes Oecolampadius (1482–1531) journeyed from his Württemberg hometown Weinsberg to the distinguished imperial city and business metropolis Basel with its bishop's see, grand cathedral, university, monasteries and rich libraries. A friend from his student days, the new cathedral preacher Wolfgang Capito, had invited him. How enthusiastically this friend had spoken about all the scholars in Basel, the excellent printers with whom Oecolampadius doubtless could find work, and especially about the famous Erasmus of Rotterdam (1466/67–1536)!

Indeed, Oecolampadius was even carrying a letter of introduction to the great Erasmus in his luggage. But how would this respected and admired scholar receive him, a scholar who was shaking up Christendom itself in such elegant Latin, summoning it to a new life that combined the virtues of antiquity with Christian love and humility? People could hardly believe the utterly original way Erasmus had exhorted Christendom to embrace a reform of both church and society in his book *In Praise of Folly*, in which he boldly dared to chastise the inadequacies of even the most respected institutions. This work, which was anything but a hackneyed satire, fairly scintillated with wit and jest — deftly pointing beyond all that was merely commonplace human folly and guiding the reader to the very heart of the Christian faith. Indeed, here foolishness itself turned into wisdom, for on the cross of Jesus Christ God “made foolish the wisdom of the world”, as the apostle Paul had written (1 Cor. 1:18–25). And now word had it that Erasmus wanted to give to that same world the New Testament in its original text; that is, a Greek-Latin edition was in the works.

Two scholars, young and old, become friends

From letters, Erasmus already knew that his visitor was a competent Hebraist and a gifted theologian. Oecolampadius himself, however, could report even more to him in person, namely how captivated he was by the new *studia humanitatis*, how he had learned more from language studies than from scholastic lectures and disputations, and more still from conversations in Tübingen and Heidelberg with Philipp Melancthon, Johannes Reuchlin and Wolfgang Capito. Those university Scholastics, Oecolampadius believed, with their contentiousness and quibbling, did more to damage the dogmas of the holy church than to promote them. In any case, they were of no use to him in preparing sermons in his native Weinsberg. Such opinions, however, were quite in line with Erasmus's own position, who later wrote that there was no one of whom he thought more highly or expected more than Oecolampadius.

The Greek New Testament

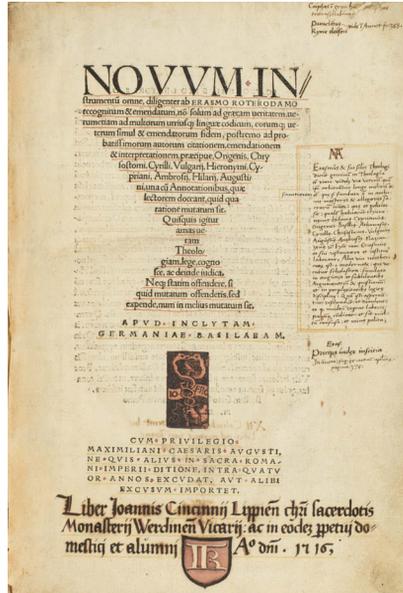
Erasmus immediately engaged Oecolampadius as an assistant and proofreader for his New Testament project. This young scholar, with an outstanding knowledge of Hebrew that, as Erasmus acknowledged quite without envy, far surpassed his own, had arrived at just the right time, since an analysis of the Greek New Testament texts also required a sound knowledge of Hebrew, and Erasmus had variously referred to Hebrew terms in his annotations. Through this intense teamwork between Erasmus and Oecolampadius, the first Greek edition of the New Testament emerged, what is known as the *textus receptus*, which then served as the foundational text not only for the Reformers themselves, but also for non-Reformation commentators and translators. Johann Froben printed the work.

In his introductions, Erasmus urged people to read the Bible, especially laypersons. Individuals should read the New Testament and allow it to alter the course of their lives toward new life in Christ. Erasmus further exhorted theologians to engage with the biblical text in a completely new scholarly fashion, urging them to read the texts in context and to remain ever mindful of precisely that context rather than introducing alien philosophical methodology into the Bible; that is, he urged them to interpret the Bible on the basis of itself. Doing so, however, required reading it in its original language and familiarizing oneself not only with the authors, but also with the historical situation of those being addressed.

Although this edition made Erasmus even more famous than he already was, it also generated vehement criticism, for this Greek text, the new Latin translation



Albrecht Dürer depicts Erasmus as a Church Father, writing and surrounded by books; the Greek text reads: "His writings show him better." Copper engraving, 1526



Title page of the New Testament edition, Basel, 1516. This copy belonged to the Humanist Johannes Cincinnius

accompanying it, and the copious annotations all jolted what at the time were universally accepted dogmas. Such was the case, for example, with respect to the understanding of original sin, the doctrine of justification, confession, canon law and the sacraments — all of which were topics the Reformers later addressed. Although Erasmus was quite conscious that he was here attacking the entirety of scholastic theology, he also knew he could count on the agreement and even enthusiasm of the educated elite in both the empire and the church; Oecolampadius himself emphasized in his afterword how the accessibility of these texts would promote both education and devotion among readers.

It was a foregone conclusion, Oecolampadius continued, that the most learned scholars would reach passionately for the nourishment Erasmus was here offering them. And indeed, not only scholars, but also the grand personages of the world, the Curia, the emperor's court, and princes could hardly wait to obtain a copy, many even making Erasmus attractive offers if he would enter their service. But would they heed him and bring about the urgently needed reforms of empire and church he was advocating?