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Zwingli's Ambivalent Anniversary 2019: An *Ereignisbericht*

By Bruce Gordon and Randolph C. Head

2019 marked the five-hundredth anniversary of Huldrych Zwingli's arrival in Zurich as people's priest at the Grossmünster, the first step towards his decisive influence on the early Reformation movement in the city, across the Swiss Confederation, into the southwestern Empire, and beyond. Unlike the commemorations in 2017 that looked to Martin Luther's Ninety-Five Theses as the genesis of the Reformation, however, 2019 lacked any uniquely dramatic moment to mark. On 1 January 1519, Zwingli began to preach through the whole of the Gospel of Matthew, setting aside the church lectionary to establish the practice of *lectio continua* that would become central to the Reformed tradition. The contrast between the two anniversaries is striking and informative.

Zwingli is not an easy figure to commemorate, and many modern Zurichers have little inclination to do so. Even before Catholic Swiss troops on the Kappel battlefield in 1531 put an abrupt end to his prophetic mission to reform church and society in the Swiss Confederation, Zwingli's career evoked conflict and ambiguities among his colleagues and critics, a reaction that only deepened and became more complex in subsequent centuries. In December 1518 he had been elected to his priestly post in the Grossmünster in a divided vote, a controversial figure with a reputation for sexual promiscuity and outspoken views on sensitive subjects such as mercenary service, pensions, and the alliance with the King of France. He was also known for his passionate preaching at the Benedictine Abbey of Einsiedeln, where many civic leaders had heard him during the annual pilgrimage from the city to the Black Madonna. Disagreement among the canons of the Grossmünster in December 1518 foreshadowed what was to follow. Zwingli divided the city, his native land, and the Reformation with his uncompromising views on the nature of God's Word and imminent divine judgment on immorality. Yet his vision of a *communio sanctorum*, in which all would be brought together under the guidance of the Spirit, also inspired many in the city and indeed, many European Christians, and continued to evolve in the hands of later reformers in the Calvinist tradition.

Unlike Luther and Calvin, whose lives ended in their beds, Zwingli haunts the Reformation as a deeply problematic figure. Certainly, the pace of change under his guidance was breathless, forcing scholars to concentrate on the frantic years of the 1520s. Luther, in contrast, lived for another fifteen years after

Zwingli was cut down *in medias res* of his ambitious reforms, leaving him ample time to curate his own legacy. Commemorating Zwingli raises the question of how we should portray a self-proclaimed prophet who died in a nocturnal skirmish, dressed in armor and wielding a halberd. His fierce denunciation of the radicals, his willingness to see them banished or executed, and his emphasis on moral reform further render him an epitome of religious intolerance and bigotry to modern eyes.

In what follows, we shall consider the shaping of Zwingli's memory that began with his death, continued through the vicissitudes of the nineteenth century revival of interest in his life, and peaked with his establishment as canonical reformer and cultural hero by the quatercentenary in 1919. Zwingli's legacy continued to evolve after 1919, in sometimes paradoxical ways, inside the Swiss Confederation and in the larger world of Protestant and Reformed churches, and remains in flux today. Scholarly work on Zwingli as an individual reformer, but also on the larger Zurich Reformation movement, the church it produced, and the rich intellectual and political life in the city and its Confederation, exploded in the second half of the twentieth century, and will receive a brief overview in this essay, which will trace shifting configurations of admiration and ambivalence in considering the Zurich reformer and the trajectories he helped launch. Finally, we shall turn back to the *Ereignis* that took place in 2019, the quincentenary that celebrated Zwingli (or not) in ways that reflect how a secular society has attempted to grapple with an avowedly religious reformer who brooked neither opposition nor resistance. Although deeply entangled with the differently configured celebrations centered on Martin Luther and the 500th anniversary of the Reformation seen as a single event, the Zurich event was distinct in its local, regional and scholarly dynamics. *Zwingli 2019* encompassed memorial work ranging from a burst of high-caliber scholarly publications and works of scholarly synthesis to public art, school programs, and Switzerland's most expensive feature film production ever.

I. REMEMBERING ZWINGLI

There was never only one Huldrych Zwingli. When he died in the night of 11 October 1531, his closest friends, although devastated, were uncertain as to what had happened or what to make of the fiasco.¹ They quietly confided

1. Jacques Courvoisier, "Zwinglis Tod im Urteil der Zeitgenossen," *Zwingliana* 15 (1982): 607–620.

their concerns about who this man had been, with his extraordinarily charismatic persona, love of music, and good humor. Why had he compiled detailed war plans and twice ridden with the soldiers of Zurich towards military conflict? Did the Gospel demand coercion? There was little doubt that Zurich's humiliating defeat in October 1531 had nearly wrecked the Reformation in Swiss lands and suffocated the nascent Reformed tradition. The question was whether Zwingli had been the architect of this disaster. Had he, as his radical and his Catholic opponents maintained, compromised the faith through attachment to civil authority and worldly concerns?

The answers to these questions were by no means straightforward, even for the fellow humanists and theologians who had been his closest friends. In the weeks following Zwingli's death, Johannes Oecolampadius, who himself had only a short time to live, wrote to Martin Frecht in Ulm: "Relying on our friendship, I repeatedly appealed to him not to engage in things that had little to do with the Gospel. He wrote back that the morals of his people were little known to me. He had seen the sword drawn and would do the duty of a true shepherd. He would not act rashly."² Martin Bucer in Strasbourg, whose own relationship with Zwingli was not untroubled, put the case most clearly: "I feared for Zwingli. The Gospel triumphs through the cross. One deceives oneself when one expects the salvation of Israel through external means with impetuosity and triumph through weapons. [...] I fear, however, that this matter has been begun without the will of God, and it greatly unsettles me that our Zwingli not only recommended the war but did so incorrectly, as appears to have been the case, and if we are rightly informed."³ A decade later, Zwingli's closest companion, Leo Jud, confessed on his deathbed: "Remember forever the unfortunate consequences of this war [Kappel]."⁴

Zwingli's critics were more blunt. Martin Luther, of course, cut straight to the point with his assessment. In a well-known passage in *Table Talk*, he was asked whether Zwingli had been saved: "I wish from my heart Zwinglius could be saved, but I fear the contrary; for Christ has said that those who deny him shall be damned. God's judgment is sure and certain, and we may safely pronounce it against all the ungodly, unless God reserve unto himself a peculiar privilege and dispensation. Even so, David from his heart wished that his son

2. As quoted in Alfred Erichson, *Zwingli's Tod und dessen Beurtheilung durch Zeitgenossen: Zumeist nach ungedruckten Strassburger und Züricher Urkunden. Ein Beitrag zur 350. Todesfeier Zwingli's* (Strasbourg: C. F. Schmidt, 1883), 23.

3. Erichson, *Zwingli's Tod* (see note 2), 20.

4. Quoted in Karl-Heinz Wyss, *Leo Jud: Seine Entwicklung zum Reformator, 1519–1523* (Bern: Herbert Lang, 1976), 122.

Absalom might be saved, when he said: 'Absalom my son, Absalom my son;' yet he certainly believed that he was damned, and bewailed him, not only that he died corporally, but was also lost everlastingly; for he knew that he had died in rebellion, in incest, and that he had hunted his father out of the kingdom."⁵ The wide range of conflicting perspectives on Zwingli's mission, not to mention its tangled outcomes, ensured that both contemporary and later remembrances would remain strikingly contentious, in notable contrast with the memorials to Luther, which began with his death in 1546 and (at least among Lutherans) long conveyed only heroic aspects of the reformer's life.⁶

The political catastrophe that followed Zwingli's death in Zurich cast an immediate shadow on his memory among the wider population. Opponents and former supporters publicly vilified him for using the pulpit and his influence among the magistrates to bring about an unwanted war and the misery of defeat. Zwingli's name was spat out in Zurich by those who named him a traitor. No official funeral or public commemoration took place, and there was no grave. At the same time, his friends sought to keep the flame alive. In particular, Heinrich Bullinger's efforts to defend Zwingli emerged quickly and emphatically. In January 1532, Bullinger held a public speech on the prophetic office in which he dared to claim Zwingli was not only a prophet of God, but the model prophet.⁷ It was a brave yet intentional decision to claim Zwingli's legacy while setting out the terms of his own role as leader of the church. In his biblical commentaries that appeared in the early 1530s, Bullinger declared his predecessor the "Swiss Apostle" – notably not simply for Zurich – and cited him extensively as an authoritative commentator on the Bible.⁸ The successor poured forth a humanist laudation: "The Romans take pleasure in their Cicero for his rhetoric, praise their Brutus for the struggle for freedom, admire the

5. Martin Luther, *The Table Talk of Martin Luther*, trans. by William Hazlitt (Grand Rapids, MI: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, 1990), DCCLVII.

6. Robert Kolb, *For All the Saints: Changing Perceptions of Martyrdom and Sainthood in the Lutheran Reformation* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1987).

7. Heinrich Bullinger, *De prophetarum officio* (Zurich: Froschauer, 1532); Joachim Staedtke, ed., *Heinrich Bullinger Werke, I: Bibliographie, I: Beschreibendes Verzeichnis der gedruckten Werke von Heinrich Bullinger* (Zurich: Theologischer Verlag, 1972), n. 33. See Fritz Büsler, "De prophetarum officio": Eine Gedenkenrede Bullingers auf Zwingli," in Fritz Büsler, *Wurzeln der Reformation in Zürich* (Leiden: Brill, 1985), 60–71.

8. Luca Baschera, "Apostel Helvetiens: Aspekte der Zwingli-Rezeption in Heinrich Bullingers Kommentaren zu den neutestamentlichen Briefen," paper presented at the conference, "Die Zürcher Reformation und ihre Rolle in den europäischen Reformationsbewegung," held in Zurich on 6–8 February 2019. We are grateful to the author for allowing access to the pre-publication essay.

Greeks for their generals and lawgivers: to value a Themistocles, a Pericles or a Solon. With greater truth and right we extoll our Zwingli, who brought about most extraordinarily the restoration of freedom and the renewal of holy studies.”⁹ The first and only printed contemporary biography of Zwingli, from the hand of his friend Oswald Myconius in 1536, provided a full-throated defense of the fallen reformer that stressed his many virtues, godly convictions, and courage. Zwingli had been a hero and martyr for the faith, and his ministry in Zurich had been in the service of the Gospel. In addition, Myconius, who had known the reformer well, provided considerable detail about Zwingli's character, writing of his phenomenal energy and perseverance. In death, the fallen hero became a saint, complete with a remarkable miracle:¹⁰ “The enemy having retired after the third day, friends of Zwingli went to see perchance find any remains of him, and lo!, strange to say, his heart presented itself from the midst of the ashes whole and uninjured. The good men were astounded, recognizing the miracle indeed, but not understanding it. Wherefore, attributing everything to God, they rejoiced because this supernatural fact had made more sure the sincerity of his heart.”¹¹

Although Bullinger and Myconius's filial loyalty was shared by a circle of reformers and churchmen, the subject of Huldrych Zwingli remained remarkably contentious. Throughout the sixteenth century, all attempts to honor him remained mired in the internecine warfare among Protestants over the Lord's Supper and other doctrines. An example of the extreme sensitivity of the situation comes from the 1540s, when during the height of the sacramental disputes with the Lutherans, Bullinger and his colleagues decided to produce a Latin edition of Zwingli's writings. The head of the Zurich church wrote to Vadian (Joachim von Watt) in St Gall, urgently inviting him to participate by providing a life of Zwingli.¹² Vadian responded with a succinct analysis of Zwingli's problematic legacy for the Reformation:¹³ “I must at least say what I mean. It seems to me by no means reasonable, that at this time, when so much wisdom

9. Heinrich Bullinger, *Schriften*, ed. by Emidio Campi, Detlef Roth, Peter Stolz (Zurich: Theologischer Verlag Zurich, 2004), vol. 1, 45.

10. Irena Backus, *Life Writing in Reformation Europe: Lives of Reformers by Friends, Disciples and Foes* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2008), 47–52.

11. Samuel Macauley Jackson, ed., *The Latin Works and Correspondence of Huldreich Zwingli*, 3 vols. (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1912), vol. 1, 23.

12. The letter from Heinrich Bullinger to Joachim Vadian, 8 May 1544, is summarized in *Heinrich Bullinger-Briefwechsel*, vol. 14: *Briefe des Jahres 1544*, ed. by Reinhard Bodenmann, Alexandra Kess, Judith Steiniger (Zurich: TVZ, 2011), 233.

13. Ernst Gerhard Rüsch, “Vadians Gutachten für Zwingli-Vita, 1544,” *Zwingliana* 15 (1979): 40–49.

has been lost, and so many spirits thrown into confusion and afflicted with the most unjust judgments, that a life of Zwingli should be placed in the edition of his works to be soon printed.”¹⁴ In the end, the edition was produced in 1545, but without a vita. At the end of his life Bullinger left a powerful memorial to Zwingli in his *Reformation History*, a painstaking account of the Reformation years in which the reformer’s life and thought were recorded with remarkable attention to historical detail. The *History* remained unprinted until the nineteenth century, however, and circulated only among friends as Vadian had recommended.¹⁵

John Calvin avoided speaking about Zwingli as much as possible, and when he did, he was rarely positive.¹⁶ Attempting to win over both Lutherans and the Swiss to his vision of a united Protestantism, he was aware that Zwingli’s name was too divisive to be mentioned. Zwingli was not forgotten in Geneva as a hero of the Reformation, however, and we find fulsome praise in the *Icones* of Theodor Beza, Calvin’s friend and successor. The elegant humanist volume gave tribute to the leaders of the Reformation, pairing portraits with encomia.¹⁷ Zwingli was coupled with Oecolampadius as *Christi fortissimos athletas* who had “excelled in doctrine” and were “by far the best of the Alpine peoples.”¹⁸ Even Zwingli’s death garnered words of praise: “And in the war stirred up by those who could not bear the brilliance of the Gospel, a hostile hand caused Zwingli’s fall while he was serving in the army for his own ministry, such that God crowned the death of his servant with a double honor. For what could be a more holy or honorable death, than to die for both the glory of God and for the patria?”¹⁹

For Beza, Zwingli was not only a faithful servant of the Gospel, but a great patriot. By the late sixteenth century, Zwingli had emerged as a founding figure of the Reformed movement, even as he remained a *bête noir* for both Lutherans

14. Ernst Gerhard Rüschi, ed., *Joachim Vadian: Ausgewählte Briefe* (St Gallen: Verlagsgemeinschaft St Gallen, 1983), 78–79.

15. *Heinrich Bullingers Reformationsgeschichte, nach dem autographen herausgegeben auf Veranstaltung der Vaterländisch-historischen Gesellschaft in Zürich von J. J. Hottinger und H. H. Vögeli* (Frauenfeld: C. Beyel, 1838–1840).

16. Fritz Blanke, “Calvins Urteile über Zwingli,” *Zwingliana* 11 (1959): 66–92. Also, Bruce Gordon, *Calvin* (New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 2019), 164, 167, 207.

17. Theodor Beza, *Icones, id est verae imagines virorum doctrina simul et pietate illustrium, quorum praecipue ministerio partim bonarum literarum studia sunt restituta, partim vera religio in variis orbis christiani regionibus, nostra patrumque memoria fuit instaurata* (Geneva: Jean I de Laon, 1580).

18. *Ibid.*, Miiiv.

19. *Ibid.*, Miiiv.

and Catholics. In notable contrast to Luther, moreover, efforts to memorialize the anniversaries of Zwingli's career for the rest of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries remained scarce.

Some exceptions should be noted. In 1719 a text for lay readers appeared in Zurich for the two-hundredth anniversary that offered a biography of Zwingli along with a series of questions about the Reformation.²⁰ The events of the 1520s were presented as a manifestation of God's providential care for the church, but most intriguingly there was a concern to address objections to the verity of the cause. One detailed answer, for example, spoke of the necessity of the Reformation: it was the moment when God restored his "*reine Lehr*," removed error, purified his church from numerous abuses and liberated the consciences of the faithful.²¹ The temple was cleansed and the people were led out of Egypt and Babylon. To the question of what the word "Reformation" meant, the answer was "*Verbesserung*," a restitution of the church to true doctrine.²²

II. FROM REVOLUTION TO 1919: THE LONG NINETEENTH CENTURY

Commemoration in the eighteenth century remained sporadic, but matters changed significantly in the nineteenth as Zwingli emerged as a key figure both in Swiss cultures of memorialization and in the increasing flow of literature about the Reformation. Several principal themes dominated in Swiss depictions of Zwingli: the rational humanist, liberal theologian, patriot, and hero. Zwingli's theology came to be admired for its emphasis on return to the Gospel and on moral rectitude in Christian life. Other aspects of Zwingli's theology were passed over in silence, such as his strong emphasis on the doctrine of election, in favor of representing Zwingli as a reasonable and moderate regenerator of Christian society and ethics. Such a portrayal made him an ideal authority in the struggle against contemporary spiritualist "sects."

During the slow emergence of a modern Swiss state after the Congress of Vienna, Zwingli became a model for Protestant hopes for this nation, not only in churches and theological faculties, but also among wider society through journalism, the arts, and culture. In 1819, the first major anniversary of the

20. *Bericht von dem zur dankbezeugender Widergedächtnuss der vor 200 Jahren von Gottgegeben höchst-seligen Reformation in der Stadt und Landschaft Zürich* (Zurich: Gessner, 1719).

21. *Ibid.*, 20.

22. *Ibid.*

century, Zwingli's role both in leading the Reformation and opening the path to the Enlightenment dominated the celebrations, despite strong opposition from more Pietistic elements opposed to Zurich's state church.²³ The Zwingli presented in the 1819 official celebrations was a rational humanist and a proponent of church and state existing in harmony. Following the formation of the united German church in Brandenburg, there was also hope that his rational theology might offer a way towards agreement with the Lutherans. This enthusiasm for Zwingli extended to the first critical edition of his works, which appeared in eight volumes between 1828 and 1842.²⁴

Zwingli's death in war remained a major stumbling block, however, and the question persisted as to whether he had perished righteously or in violent delusion. The prevailing narrative among Swiss Reformed patriots insisted that he had died a martyr to religious freedom, democracy, and independence. Some enthusiasts sought to see past Zwingli as merely a Protestant by making his loyalty to the Swiss Confederation a symbol for all the confessions. A fraternity of students at the field of Kappel in 1831 celebrated their *Glaubensheld*: "We gathered at the place where Zwingli fell, not in order only that we might offer to him with fleeting emotion due payment of our gratitude, our admiration, our love, even if it would be from still so sincere hearts, but also as it were to invoke his heroic spirit in order that he might speak to us like an immortal to another person, like an angel from beyond to a brother from this world, and that he might consecrate us as warriors of the same battle that also was his and still is."²⁵

By the middle of the century, however, the Swiss Reformed churches were locked in conflict over the theological direction of the church, roughly divided into conservative, liberal, and moderate parties.²⁶ The political atmosphere remained tense, and in 1868, a referendum overwhelmingly supported a new, more autonomous constitution for the church, making it more separate from the state.²⁷

23. Helen Wild, "Das Zürcher Reformationsjubiläum von 1819," *Zwingliana* 12–13 (1918): 441–460.

24. Melchior Schuler, Johannes Schultheiß, ed., *Huldreich Zwingli's Werke*, 8 vols. (Zurich: Schultheiß, 1828–1842); Huldrych Zwingli, *Supplementorum fasciculus*, ed. by Georg Schultheiß, Kaspar Marthaler (Zurich: Schultheiß, 1861).

25. *Todtenfeier: U. Zwinglis Todtenfeyer gehalten auf dem Schlachtfeld zu Kappelden 11. Weinmonat 1831* (Zurich: bei David Bürki und in der Trachslerschen Buchhandlung, 1831), 22.

26. Hedy Tschumi-Haeffiger, "Reformatoren-Denkmäler in der Schweiz," *Zwingliana* 17 (1987): 193–262, here 219.

27. *Ibid.*

When Georg Finsler became chief pastor in the Grossmünster in 1871, he began a campaign to have a Zwingli monument erected in the city. The proposal was highly controversial, not least on account of the troubled reputation of the reformer and his close association with a state church. Finsler was clear in articulating his purpose: "We certainly want to erect a monument to honor Zwingli, but not in any manner to idolize him, but rather to express our gratitude and joy for that which God gave in this man."²⁸ After much discussion and numerous proposals, the commission went to an Austrian Catholic, Heinrich Natter. His design raised further objections, especially over the extremely large sword Zwingli was to carry. Many then and today regarded it as a commemoration of the reformer's bellicose spirit and death on a battlefield. Christian Moser has persuasively argued otherwise, however, demonstrating that Natter's intention, following Albrecht Dürer's Diptych "The Four Apostles," was to present Zwingli as an Apostle. The sword indicated not war or politics, but martyrdom.²⁹

Finsler was undaunted. The leading pastor of the Zurich church believed that Zwingli could serve as a figure of reconciliation among the warring theological and church parties of the nineteenth century. Each faction, he claimed, had its own Zwingli: the liberals, the conservatives, the supporters of free and state churches. Finsler's drive to commemorate the reformer thus went hand in hand with efforts to forestall further splintering among the Reformed churches in Switzerland. In a lecture held in support of the monument, for which he was actively raising money, he appealed to Zwingli as a figure who could unite the divided Zurich, Swiss, and international churches: "Personally, Zwingli will remain a model of a robust faith and trust in God in a troubled age. [...] With Zwingli we do not want today a church that is a narrow religious circle but one that stands in the middle of the people and works with them, serves it morals and social problems. [A church] that shares its joys and sorrows. Indeed, out of the Gospel it exercises for the whole population a sanctifying and consecrating influence [...]. This is what Zwingli desired."³⁰

Enthusiasm for Zwingli in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries profoundly shaped the emerging scholarly narrative of the Swiss Reformation,

28. Cited in Tschumi-Haefliger, "Reformatoren-Denkmäler" (see note 26), 222.

29. Christian Moser, "Zwingli bild in der Schweiz im 19. Jahrhundert," paper presented at the conference, "Die Zürcher Reformation und ihre Rolle in den europäischen Reformationsbewegung," held in Zurich 6–8 February, 2019. We are grateful to the author for allowing us to see his paper in advance of publication.

30. Georg Finsler, *Drei Vorträge gehalten und herausgegeben zu Gunsten des Zwingli Denkmals* (Zurich: Meyer und Zeller, 1873), 93–94.

supported by source collections that provided extensive material for the period up to 1531. Notable was a volume of documents from the Zurich archives for the years 1519–1531 edited by the pastor and later professor Emil Egli (1848–1908), who also took the lead in creating a new critical edition of Zwingli's works.³¹ Like the earlier work of Johann Kaspar Mörikofer, Egli's source collection made possible a wholly new perspective on Zwingli by presenting extensive political and economic documents. The liberal-minded Egli was a passionate believer in the importance of the Reformation for contemporary society, and dedicated himself to enabling interested pastors and laypeople to access Zwingli as a powerful force for the renewal of church and society.³² Rudolf Stähelin's two volume Zwingli biography of 1895–1897 was another extraordinary piece of scholarship made possible by the publication of a large body of primary sources, both Protestant and Catholic, over the previous twenty years. The Basel scholar's biography was rich in detail, and fulfilled the author's desire to reach a broader audience. The formal decision to publish a critical edition of Zwingli's work, undertaken by the newly founded Zwingliverein in 1898, further transformed the field of Swiss Reformation studies.³³

The 1919 Zwingli anniversary was the high-water mark of the liberal interpretation of the reformer, who was celebrated with public events and commemorative volumes. Representative of the publications was *Ulrich Zwingli: Zum Gedächtnis der Zürcher Reformation 1519–1919*, which contained essays by the leading scholars of the day, including Walter Köhler, Oskar Farnet, and Wilhelm Oechsli.³⁴ Köhler would remain one of the most prominent authorities on Zwingli in the interwar period, publishing extensively on the reformer's theological and institutional labors. In 1920 he produced his influential study of the role of humanism in the Zurich Reformation with his *Die Geisteswelt Ulrich Zwinglis: Christentum und Antike*.³⁵ During the 1920s came two seminal works on Zwingli's theology, particularly of the Eucharist. Köhler was fascinated by the relationship between Luther and Zwingli, and sought to recon-

31. Emil Egli, ed., *Actensammlung zur Geschichte der Zürcher Reformation in den Jahren 1519–1533* (Zurich: J. Schabelitz, 1879).

32. Bernd Moeller, "Der Zwingliverein und die reformationsgeschichtliche Forschung," *Zwingliana* 25 (1998): 5–20.

33. All issues of the journal from its inception are available at <http://zwingliana.ch/index.php/zwa/issue/archive> (accessed 29 December 2019).

34. *Ulrich Zwingli: Zum Gedächtnis der Zürcher Reformation 1519–1919* (Zurich: Berichthaus, 1919).

35. Walther Köhler, *Die Geisteswelt Ulrich Zwinglis: Christentum und Antike* (Gotha: F. A. Perthes, 1920).

struct the Marburg Colloquy from extant sources.³⁶ Farner, in turn, wrote for both a scholarly and public readership, producing a four-volume biography that appeared between 1943 and 1960.³⁷

The great critic of liberal interpretations of Zwingli was the young Karl Barth, who had written on Zwingli during his student years at Bern and whose father had taught seminars on the reformer's theology. Barth returned to the subject in 1922/23 for a series of lectures to students in Göttingen.³⁸ Barth was fully aware that for liberal Protestants of the nineteenth century, Zwingli served as a hero on account of his supposed emphasis on the ethical nature of Christianity and his favorable view of the relationship between antiquity and Christianity. Barth, in contrast, was not inclined to defend Zwingli against Luther, but rather sought to demonstrate the distinctiveness of the Swiss reformer's thought. He argued that Luther and Zwingli were different manifestations of the central Reformation doctrine of God's address to humanity. While the Wittenberger focused on the inner nature of faith, Zwingli looked to its application in the world.³⁹ What did not appeal to Barth, however, was Zwingli's emphasis on the role of reason, such as in his argument that Luther's teaching on real presence contradicted what was reasonable. Barth's argument – that this misplaced logic made Zwingli a forerunner of Enlightenment and liberal theology (a most unfortunate legacy in his eyes) – shows the durability of this perspective on Zwingli's significance.

III. A NEW GENERATION

The most influential modern voice on Zwingli remains the Swiss theologian Gottfried W. Locher, who as pastor and theologian sought to bring Zwingli

36. Walther Köhler, *Zwingli und Luther: Ihr Streit über das Abendmahl nach seinen politischen und religiösen Beziehungen*, 2 vols. (Leipzig: Verein für Reformationgeschichte, Vermittlungsverlag von M. Heinsius Nachfolger, 1924–1953); Walther Köhler, *Das Marburger Religionsgespräch 1529: Versuch einer Rekonstruktion* (Leipzig: M. Heinsius Nachfolger Eger & Sievers, 1929).

37. Oskar Farner, *Huldrych Zwingli*, 4 vols. (Zurich: Zwingli Verlag, 1943–1960).

38. Matthias Freudenberg, "... und Zwingli vor mir wie eine überhängende Wand": Karl Barths Wahrnehmung der Theologie Huldrych Zwinglis in seiner Göttinger Vorlesung von 1922/23," *Zwingliana* 33 (2006): 5–27. See also Peter Winzeler, "Zwingli und Karl Barth," *Zwingliana* 17 (1987): 298–314.

39. Freudenberg, "Zwingli vor mir" (see note 38), 16.

into the twentieth century (though with a Barthian voice).⁴⁰ He authored the most comprehensive study of Zwingli's thought, historical contexts, and influence.⁴¹ Although Locher's Zwingli was distinctively Swiss, his importance for the development of theology and the Reformed tradition was the theologian's principal concern. "Zwingli is an unknown figure," Locher wrote, largely because he had only been placed unfavorably alongside Luther and Calvin. Locher saw his task as examining the reformer on his own terms, "to understand Zwingli in terms of his own presuppositions, and not merely by comparing him with the other reformers and the humanists."⁴²

Locher inherited the decidedly mixed legacy that emerged from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, which represented Zwingli as caught between his striving for orthodox theology and the disastrous course of his politics. Locher proposed an interpretation of Zwingli that emphasized the community as the source of reformation through the actualization of the Holy Spirit. Politics and theology were not separate aspects of Zwingli's life, Locher argued, but lay at the heart of his understanding of divine-human relations, thus distancing the reformer from the earlier image of a Platonist and humanist who was brought to the Reformation by Luther's ideas.⁴³ Rather, his distinctive turn to the Reformation grew out of his deep concern for the social and political conditions of the Swiss: for Locher, Zwingli's "'belief in the Gospel' means not only a personal laying hold of the gracious promise of eternal salvation, but also a decision to make a total change in the whole social and political spheres of life."⁴⁴ Locher came to the following eloquent conclusion: "Luther sees before him a troubled man and proclaims to him the *solus Christus*, *Christus pro me*. Zwingli sees before him the deceitful, selfish man, and the disruption of his social life. He cries to the *solus Deus*, the *Deus noster* in *Christus noster*. Calvin sees before him man as a disobedient individual. He calls him to order and salvation under the glory of Christ in his Church."⁴⁵ Locher's scholarship has profoundly shaped the view of Zwingli among theologians and the Reformed over the past half century in the German- and English-speaking worlds, not

40. Peter Winzeler, "Losend dem Gotzwort!": Gottfried W. Lochers Bedeutung für die Zwingliforschung," *Zwingliana* 25 (1998): 43–63.

41. Gottfried W. Locher, *Die Zwinglische Reformation im Rahmen der europäischen Kirchengeschichte* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1979). The book is more of a handbook than a monograph, but it remains an indispensable resource.

42. Gottfried W. Locher, *Zwingli's Thought: New Perspectives* (Leiden: Brill, 1981), 91.

43. Winzeler, "Losend dem Gotzwort" (see note 40), 48.

44. Locher, *Zwingli's Thought* (see note 42), 148.

45. *Ibid.*, 231.

least in the work of the British scholar Peter Stephens, whose comprehensive study of the reformer's theology in 1986 remains a standard work in the Anglo-American world.⁴⁶ Stephens's compendious treatment of Zwingli's theology supplemented the standard biography in English that had appeared from the medieval historian George Potter ten years earlier.⁴⁷ Potter not only provided a summary of earlier scholarship, but also offered an elegant and meticulously researched account of the reformer's life in the context of Swiss political culture. With a stronger focus on history than theology, Potter's biography of Zwingli was rich in detail and gave full attention to the reformer's friends, colleagues, and opponents, attentive to their distinctive and significant contributions. The author's assessment of Zwingli was insightful and balanced, but by no means uncritical. Unlike most previous biographies in German and English, Potter had no confessional investment in his subject.

IV. SCHOLARLY WORK ON ZWINGLI AND THE SWISS REFORMATION UP TO 2019

In the last decades, our understanding of Reformation movements in Switzerland and their outcomes has moved away from the issues that dominated Locher's analysis and the work of his predecessors. A theological focus on Zwingli and his relationship with Martin Luther has given way to a more diverse set of questions, such as his relationship to late medieval thought, Erasmian humanism, and the pre-Reformation church.⁴⁸ The Luther quincentenary and *Zwingli 500* commemorations helped stimulate new syntheses and perspectives, moreover, leading to several important publications. The former sharp contrast between theological and social-historical approaches that emerged after Locher's biography and that predominated until the 1990s has been bridged by new appreciation of the importance of ideas and commitments among secular historians, and by efforts to look beyond charismatic

46. W. Peter Stephens, *Zwingli: An Introduction to his Thought* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992).

47. George R. Potter, *Zwingli* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976).

48. Notable works include Daniel Bolliger, *Infiniti Contemplatio: Grundzüge der Scotus- und Scotismusrezeption im Werk Huldrych Zwinglis* (Leiden: Brill, 2003); Christine Christ von-Wedel, ed., *Erasmus in Zürich: eine verschwiegene Autorität* (Zurich: Verlag Neue Zürcher Zeitung, 2007); Bruce Gordon, *Clerical Discipline and the Rural Reformation: The Synod in Zurich, 1532–1580* (Bern, New York: Peter Lang, 1992).

founders among church historians.⁴⁹ Bullinger, Oecolampadius, Vadian, and other leaders of the magisterial Swiss Reformation figure far more prominently now as parts of a temporally extended and complex Reformation process, and that process has been expanded to include the vibrant intellectual life in post-1531 Zurich, which spanned both traditional and humanist learning.⁵⁰ Meanwhile, reassessments of Zwingli's own radical early positions can connect with new approaches in Anabaptist studies that probe the exact milieu and dynamics by which the Reformed and radical movements emerged together before separating.⁵¹ As a result, there is potential to bridge the gap between scholarship that puts its focus only on the emerging Swiss Reformed church, with only secondary and highly encapsulated treatments of the Anabaptists, on the one hand, and inwardly-directed research into the origins of Anabaptist communities and churches that equally downplayed the close associations among the first generation of Reformation figures in the Swiss region on the other.

The positive results of such new perspectives, with many openings for additional research and reconceptualizations, are visible in two recent scholarly events: the wide-ranging conference held in Zurich in February of 2019, whose results will appear in book form in 2020, and the publication of a comprehensive *Companion to the Swiss Reformation* in 2016 (with a German edition in 2017).⁵² Both events drew heavily on a combination of Swiss and Anglo-American scholars, with important contributors from Germany and the rest of Europe as well; and both demonstrated how much the field has evolved in the past generation.

The Institut für Schweizerische Reformationsgeschichte organized a major conference in February 2019 under the title "The Zurich Reformation and its Role in the European Reformation Movements." Over forty academic talks

49. See Amy Nelson Burnett, *Debating the Sacraments: Print and Authority in the Early Reformation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019).

50. Recent works of note include Luca Baschera, Bruce Gordon, Christian Moser, ed., *Following Zwingli: Applying the Past in Reformation Zurich* (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2014). See also the biography of Vadian, Rudolf Gamper, *Joachim Vadian, 1483/84–1551: Humanist, Arzt, Reformator, Politiker* (Zurich: Chronos, 2017).

51. Andrea Strubind, *Eifriger als Zwingli: Die frühe Täuferbewegung in der Schweiz* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 2003) represents this trend while also representing internal shifts in Anabaptist studies. See also the discussion in James M. Stayer, "A New Paradigm in Anabaptist/Mennonite Historiography?," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 78 (2004): 297–302, online at <https://www.goshen.edu/mqr/2004/10/april-2004-strubind/>.

52. Amy Nelson Burnett, Emidio Campi, ed., *A Companion to the Swiss Reformation* (Leiden: Brill, 2016). German edition: *Die schweizerische Reformation: Ein Handbuch* (Zurich: TVZ Verlag, 2017).

took place over two days in the halls of the Institute, located in the very Grossmünster complex where Zwingli himself had preached and taught. Professor Peter Opitz, who organized the event, invited scholars working in theological, church historical, and profane historical perspectives, though with a definite preponderance of the first two categories, and also arranged a special showing of the new Zwingli movie (discussed below) for the participants, crowned by a discussion that included the director Stefan Haupt. The conference's approach was firmly post-confessional, and included contributions that took Catholic and Anabaptist perspectives on the events in Zurich after 1519. Equally, Opitz sought to include contexts beyond Switzerland for the analysis of Zwingli's actions, inviting the participants to explore the Reformation "as a complex emergent phenomenon [als komplexes Emergenzgeschehen]": "We should inquire into the contributions of the Zurich Reformation in relation to its Swiss and European interconnections and networks. [Es soll nach dem Beitrag der Zürcher Reformation in ihren eidgenössischen und europäischen Wechselbeziehungen und Vernetzungen gefragt werden.]"⁵³ The presenters responded in kind, setting the Zwingli movement into both regional and international perspectives that ranged from the sixteenth century to the present. While certainly very much in the subdisciplinary tradition of Reformation history, the conference itself and the volume to come are not confined to Reformed or Swiss angles on the larger questions.

The *Companion/Handbuch* project approaches our knowledge of Reformation in a slightly different way, even though many of the themes heard during the Zurich conference resonate on its pages as well. A key difference, which connects it in certain ways with the more public-facing events in commemoration of 1519 that are discussed below, is that the *Companion* clearly places its contributions into a Swiss national frame of reference. The volume opens with a superb essay by Regula Schmid on "The Swiss Confederation Before the Reformation," and closes with an equally magisterial survey of "Religious Stalemate and Confessional Alignments: Dynamics and Stagnation in the Confederation from 1531 to 1618" by Thomas Maissen. Although most of the chapters between these two come from authors who focus primarily on religious history, the editors's choice of framing essays from leading secular historians of late medieval and early modern Switzerland, respectively, makes concrete the volume's orientation to a specifically "Swiss Reformation," as indicated by the title. The body of the book is divided into two sections. The

53. Peter Opitz, E-mailed call for papers, 11 December 2017. Both authors of this article participated in this conference.

first treats Reformation movements and outcomes around Switzerland by region (starting from Zurich), while the second addresses the entire movement thematically (with chapters on theological profile, polity and worship, education, social dimensions, and culture). Tellingly, Andrea Strubind's closely-argued chapter on "The Swiss Anabaptists" is placed at the end of the regional section, at the boundary of the thematic section, manifesting once again the ongoing challenge of treating the early radicals who spurred the emergence of a distinct Anabaptist tradition as integral, rather than marginal contributors to the entire Reformation movement.

In addition to these moments of collaboration and synthesis, a number of new publications on more specific topics have appeared in the last few years, some building on long research trajectories but nevertheless stimulated by the increased attention to Reformation history that followed from the 2017 Luther quincentenary and its ongoing resonances more generally. For example, work on the role of printing in the Swiss Reformation was advanced in a special issue of the journal *Zwingliana* in 2018 that offered a series of highly substantive articles on various aspects of this critical means of disseminating Reformed ideas.⁵⁴ Edited by two leading bibliographer-scholars from the Zurich central library, Urs Leu and Christian Scheidegger, the articles cover the major Swiss cities with Reformation movements and presses, including Zurich, Bern, Basel, Geneva, and Chur (as well as St. Gallen, which as Rudolf Gamper observes, lacked a press of its own) with up-to-date evidence and interpretations. Leu and Sandra Weidmann also published a meticulously detailed study of Zwingli's own library in 2019, which provides a biographical sketch of Zwingli as reader and book-owner, with extensive documentation on how he obtained, marked, and disposed of books across his adult life.⁵⁵ Two other edited collections, one co-edited by Peter Niederhäuser and Regula Schmid for the Zurich *Antiquarische Gesellschaft* in 2018, the other by Niederhäuser alone for a new society, the Verein *Schatten der Reformation*, addressed the early Reformation thematically and in a more distanced way.

The first, entitled *Querblicke: Zürcher Reformationsgeschichte*, explores the experiential complexity of the events in Zurich from multiple perspectives that

54. Urs B. Leu, Christian Scheidegger, ed., *Buchdruck und Reformation in der Schweiz*. Special Issue of *Zwingliana* 45 (2018). Two notable contributions in the volume with respect to Zwingli are Urs B. Leu, "Reformation als Auftrag: Der Zürcher Drucker Christoph Froschauer d. Ä. (c. 1490–1564)"; and Lothar Schmitt, "Zürcher Buchholzschnitte zwischen Inkunabelzeit und früher Reformation: Ein Überblick."

55. Urs B. Leu, Sandra Weidmann, *Huldrych Zwingli's Private Library* (Leiden: Brill, 2019).

avoid both elite and triumphal perspectives. In their introduction, the editors first recount the canonical narrative of the Zurich Reformation, from Zwingli's influence beginning by 1522 to the city's military debacles at Kappel and the Gubel in 1531, but immediately note that "there are certainly also other narratives and perspectives."⁵⁶ The short essays that follow are tightly organized into sections that focus on alternative narratives about the Reformation in Zurich, often anchored in studies of material objects. Thus, the opening section on *Stiftungs-Geschichten* considers diverse endowed objects and their fates into the 1520s, while the next section on *Schrift-Geschichten* looks at written testimonies that complicate the canonical narrative of the Reformation. Zwingli's weapons, Zurich's flags lost at Kappel, and the choir screen in the Zurich Grossmünster all spark articles in richly-illustrated and often playful sections labeled *Streit-Geschichten*, *Aufbruchs-Geschichten*, and *Erinnerungs-Geschichten*. Rather than directly challenging Zwingli's role as founder or prophet, this volume seeks to establish that contemporaries "often acted or reacted in ways that could be planned or spontaneous, well-informed or heedless."⁵⁷

The second essay collection, sponsored by a critical group that consolidated in 2012 to lay out the stakes in the upcoming jubilees by interrogating issues of tolerance and human rights in the sixteenth and twenty-first centuries, carries the ominous title *Verfolgt, Verdrängt, Vergessen? Schatten der Reformation* (Persecuted, Repressed, Forgotten? Shadows of the Reformation).⁵⁸ The book accompanied an exhibition in Zurich. In addition to provocative modern assessments of Zwingli's reputation, the volume's essays address diverse actors who suffered under Zwingli's preaching and prophecy, or who have been excluded from canonical narratives of a liberal and tolerant Reformation in Zurich. Sybille Knecht, for example, considers the cloistered women of Zurich and their fates after 1523, Michael Baumann brings the early Anabaptists – conceived as "hostile brothers" – back into discussion, and Peter Niederhäuser reviews how Jews continued to face discourses of alienation and hostility through the Reformation period. The individual articles are nuanced and superbly researched, with several delving into less menacing themes, including Urs Leu's essay on Erasmus's visit to the city, and two thoughtful essays by Sebastian Brändli and Thomas Maissen that seek to differentiate modern from pre-modern understandings of religious liberty. In looking back at Zwingli from 2019,

56. Peter Niederhäuser, Regula Schmid Keeling, ed., *Querblicke: Zürcher Reformationsgeschichten* (Zurich: Chronos, 2019), 10.

57. Niederhäuser, Schmid, *Querblicke* (see note 56), 10.

58. Peter Niederhäuser, ed., *Verfolgt, verdrängt, vergessen? Schatten der Reformation* (Zurich: Chronos, 2019).

these scholars have been careful to avoid confessional triumphalism as well as all-too-familiar stories, seeking instead to recognize the contingency and the deep tensions that the tumultuous and ultimately violent decade from 1519 to 1531 brought with it.

Indeed, the marking of the Zwingli anniversary of 2019 in his adopted city has been a fascinating mixture of irony and historical reckoning. Thomas Maissen, professor of early modern history in Heidelberg and currently director of the German Historical Institute in Paris, robustly argued in a 2015 interview that Zwingli was the most significant figure in Swiss history, and that his Reformation was the most important Swiss contribution to world history. In an online interview with a Reformed media publication, Maissen was clear that “he [Zwingli] is the most important contribution of the Swiss to world history. He was a humanist thinker, he had a religious vision, a conviction for which he was prepared to die. No other reformer died on the battlefield. The other reformers worked in their church rooms. The Swiss Reformation came first from Zurich and later became a successful worldwide export through Calvin’s Geneva.”⁵⁹ Maissen’s generally optimistic assessment of Zwingli fits into a longer narrative that posits Zwingli as the founder of a Reformed tradition whose ultimate shape depended primarily on John Calvin. In contrast, Maissen’s peer André Holenstein, professor in Bern, published a guest essay in the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* in February 2019 that portrayed Zwingli’s Reformation as “a fundamentalist revolution in the early sixteenth century.” Holenstein argues that “like most revolutions, the Reformation released an enormous potential for violence” that polarized society and politics, and soon provoked not only “vile insults” but also “material violence, whether in assaults on altars and sacred images, or in attacks against dissidents up to the point of their exclusion, or in the incitement of wars.” Even though Holenstein also addressed positive outcomes from the Swiss Reformation movement, the contrast between his and Maissen’s perspectives illustrates the ambivalence about Zwingli found even among specialist scholars.

59. <https://www.ref.ch/news/zwingli-ist-der-wichtigste-beitrag-der-schweiz-zur-welt-geschichte/> (accessed 7 December 2019). See also Thomas Maissen, “Der einzige Schweizer Beitrag zur Weltgeschichte,” *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 13 May 2015.

V. CONTEMPORARY VIEWS AND THE *EREIGNISSE* OF 2019

In public perceptions, Zwingli's relationship with contemporary Zurich and Swiss society also continued to be characterized by ambivalence as the events planned to commemorate the fifth centenary of his arrival in the city were planned. In 2003, for example, the Swiss author, dramatist, and theatre director, Lukas Bärfuss, who grew up in the Protestant church, reflected on his image of the Swiss reformer: "The Zurich in which I live is no longer Zwingli's Zurich. Life in my neighborhood is colorful and wild, by no means Protestant. Here one finds more confessions [*Bekenntnisse*] than I could have imagined in my childhood, and few of them are Christian. There are Jews, Muslims, Hindus, Christians, and Buddhists. There are also heathens and tribalists. The shades run from ultraorthodox to extreme liberals. My quarter is close to an ideal in which each has their own religion and possesses their own book, and in each book there is at least one prayer for the poor Zwingli and his dreadful fate on some field in the Zurich hinterland."⁶⁰ This tendency to characterize Zwingli as a dreary puritan or religious warrior has flowed into the 2019 agenda as well. For example, in the above-mentioned volume *Shadow of the Reformation*, the politician Markus Notter, once responsible for church-state relations, offered a contribution entitled "Nobody wants to return to Zwingli": "Zwingli stands for hatred of enjoyment, music, theatre, images, and entertainment. He stands for morals mandates, proscriptions, early curfews and even earlier starting of the workday, few breaks, strong work ethic, elderberry juice, verveine tea, decaffeinated coffee, non-alcoholic beer, and vegan bratwurst."⁶¹ Much like in contemporary Scotland, where Calvinism is widely regarded as what was wrong with the country, liberal Zurich had by the early twenty-first century come to regard its reformer as the founder of the city's puritanical tendencies.

Zurich's tourist office, attempting to find a more upbeat way of presenting the Reformation, asked the question "Affluent Switzerland Thanks to the Reformation?" Among his numerous achievements, this intervention continued, Zwingli brought strict moral laws to the city. Striking a remarkably confessional tone based on a popularized version of the Weber thesis, the tourist office offered the following interpretation: "At first sight, this seems very strict

60. Lukas Bärfuss, "Ich mag den Reformator Huldrych Zwingli nicht. Warum," in Lukas Bärfuss, *Stil und Moral: Essays* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2015), 19–24, here 24 (originally published in *Du Magazin* 63.738 [*Zwinglis Zürich: Das Perfekte Alibi*] [July/August, 2003]: 119).

61. Niederhäuser, *Schatten der Reformation* (see note 58), 16.

and disagreeable, but at the same time these rules and regulations laid the foundations for the affluent Switzerland that we know today. Zwingli advocated a new work ethic – diligence, discipline, thrift, and frugality – and introduced a social welfare system to look after the poorest and most disadvantaged people. And while subsequently the first factories, new commercial enterprises and international trade established themselves in the Protestant areas, the Catholic cantons continued to be characterized by impoverished farming communities, which had to give their already meagre income to the all the more ostentatious Catholic churches.”⁶² Similarly, contradictions characterize an animated film for children that the Zurich Reformed church produced in 2019, entitled “Always those Zwinglis.”⁶³ In the video, Zwingli’s children Regula, Wilhelm, and Ueli encounter numerous Zurich residents angry at their father and seemingly at them, as well. A series of encounters allows the children to discover their father’s notable accomplishments even as they are scorned as “sausage-eaters,” learn about his approval of Felix Manz’s execution, and defend a boy being bullied in school. Although the irony remains subtle, and the film ends by praising Zwingli, it nevertheless conveys the ambivalence that Zwingli’s actions have aroused in twenty-first as well as in sixteenth-century terms.

A related combination of irony, public relations work, and historical distance characterized many of the public art projects surrounding the 2019 commemorations, which (in characteristic Swiss style) were carried out with energy, precision, and a great deal of public funding. An illuminating example appears in the city tour undertaken by Natter’s 1885 statue (discussed above), a pilgrimage that began when the original bronze was dismounted from its pedestal at the Wasserkirche so that it could stand at ground level during the annual *Züri-Fäscht* (Zurich-Festival), accompanied by a pop-up Zwingli bar serving Zwingli beer and Zwingli sausages, and available for selfies.⁶⁴ The dismounting was followed by a tour around the city and canton of twelve full-size polyester replicas, which followed a path pioneered by full-size fiberglass cows in the city.⁶⁵ Each traveling Zwingli was decorated to highlight some aspect of the city and its reformer, and presented at a public discussion or *Zwingli-Gspröäch* with speakers from city politics, the economy, and the Reformed church. The ver-

62. <https://www.zuerich.com/en/visit/500-years-of-reformation> (accessed 29 December 2019).

63. <http://immerdiesezwinglis.ch/wordpress/> (accessed 29 December 2019).

64. Helene Arenet, “Zwingli hebt ab,” *Tages-Anzeiger*, 3 July 2019, <https://www.tagesanzeiger.ch/zuerich/stadt/zwingli-hebt-ab/story/24224349> (accessed 7 December 2019).

65. See Walter Baumann, Marcel Warren, *Zürcher Kub-Kultur* (Interlaken: Neptun, 1998).

sions included a silver “climate Zwingli” who helped inaugurate the annual techno-music Street Parade in August, a “housing Zwingli” standing with a giant Monopoly board, and a “worker Zwingli” who had apparently stepped out of a locomotive factory to stand in a square in Oerlikon.⁶⁶

The most visible and far-reaching public event associated with the commemorations of 2019 was the new film, *Zwingli*, generously funded and opening on 17 January 2019. Directed by Stefan Haupt, presented primarily in Swiss dialect, and produced with enormous efforts to remain historically accurate and authentic, the film reached a wide audience, immediately becoming one of the top 20 Swiss films, in terms of box office, of the last two generations (not to mention its wide dissemination to schools, churches, and other public venues). As a commercial production heavily subsidized by public and church resources, the film inevitably faced multiple, largely incommensurate expectations from its audiences. Historical accuracy of the events portrayed was one widely expressed priority, which was not necessarily compatible with the hope – largely fulfilled, it seems – that the film could help rehabilitate Zwingli as an individual from his modern reputation as a puritanical prig. The film received a special prize for costume design at the annual Swiss film awards, although, slightly controversially, it was not nominated for best picture.⁶⁷

The production team sought to build a narrative arc that could seize viewers's attention and provide appropriate tension and catharsis about the hero's struggles and fate, which they achieved largely by narrating much of the film as a love story seen from the perspective of Zwingli's wife, Anna Reinhart – even though we know almost nothing about the early details of this relationship. The final product also demonstrated a laudable if very modern desire to avoid covering up or apologizing for Zwingli's participation in the execution of Felix Manz and the persecution of other early Zurich Anabaptists, or for his encouragement of and participation in a holy war against the Catholic Confederates in 1529 and 1531. The battle at Kappel and Zwingli's violent death are not portrayed, however – perhaps because an authentic battle scene would have ruptured any Swiss-scale budget. In the end, multiple, not to say conflicting motivations ultimately produced a film that has received rather mixed reviews, ranging from modestly positive to critical from diverse viewpoints. Zwingli's ambivalences do not lend themselves to the constraints of narrative filmmaking nearly as well as Luther's, it seems: whereas the parts of the Saxon reformer's life that most trouble modern audiences, such as his virulent anti-Semitism, mostly

66. All 12 versions are pictured in action at <https://www.zhref.ch/zwinglistadt>.

67. <http://www.schweizerfilmpreis.ch/de/spezialpreis-2019/> (accessed 7 December 2019).

appeared later in his life (which has rarely if ever appeared in film), Zwingli's prophetic zeal and support for religious violence were central to his most active years and to his dramatic death.⁶⁸

VI. ZWINGLI STUDIES IN THE WAKE OF AN AMBIVALENT *EREIGNIS*

Commemorations of Zwingli as a reformer inevitably come a few years after those dedicated to Martin Luther, as Rudolf Steck already observed in 1917.⁶⁹ In addition, Zwingli's life lacked a dramatic moment to compare with the posting of the Ninety-Five Theses, unless it was his catastrophic death in 1531 – hardly something that his successors and the Swiss Reformed church would be eager to commemorate. As a result, even when Zwingli's previous centenaries were conducted in a more celebratory mode, they never took on the heroic dimensions of the various Luther anniversaries since 1617. Whether connected to the date of 1519 (if only in search of propinquity to the larger and better-funded Luther events), or associated with other important dates in the Zurich Reformation such as 1523 (First Zurich Disputation), Zwingli centenaries inevitably stand in relationship with, and at least potentially as a reevaluation of the commemorations of his more famous German antecessor. This troubled association between the two reformers certainly applied in 2019; the ambivalence and sometimes uneasy balance between celebration, rehabilitation, and critique that characterized many of the year's events in Switzerland serve as a commentary not only on the tense relationship between the Saxon and Swiss Reformations in the sixteenth century, but also on the meaning of centenary commemorations altogether in the early twenty-first century.

In the United States, where the educated public has been sensitized by hot political debates over statutes celebrating Confederate war heroes, centenary events involving sword-bearing statues are likely to appear in a rather different light than they did a century ago. Similar arguments apply to the many European countries that experienced their own tensions over memorial iconoclasm after 1989. In this context, the ironic tenor and suspicion of canonical or apologetical historical narratives that characterized many *Zwingli 500* events

68. *Zwingli*, directed by Stefan Haupt. C-Films, 2019. The film's funders include the Reformed church in Zurich, Julius Bär Bank, and numerous foundations.

69. Rudolf Steck, "Luthers Bedeutung für die Schweizerische Reformation," *Zwingliana* 3 (1917): 306–314, here 306.

seems more contemporary than many aspects of the celebrations organized around Luther's quincentenary.

It will certainly take a few years to discover how much impact the 2019 events discussed here will have in the longer term. On the Swiss scale of affairs, it seems significant that despite ambivalences and some disagreements, the entire year of events seems to have had far less public impact than the very political debate that broke out over the quincentenary of the Battle of Marignano (1515–2015), which became a signal moment in Switzerland's ongoing history wars. Even though few Europeans, not to mention overseas historians, know much about one episode in the long string of Italian War battles, Marignano and its meaning became weighted with political meaning in Switzerland because of its canonical role in the emergence of Swiss neutrality (which serves very well as a metonym for opposing EU membership). In addition to highly visible television debates and the publication of several polemical books, the Marignano debate culminated in a jam-packed public disputation in Bern between Thomas Maissen, the historian, and Christoph Blocher, the head and ideological guide of Switzerland's largest (and highly populist) political party.⁷⁰ No similar events emerged in 2019. This might be because Zwingli is too closely linked to Zurich, but also perhaps because his evident national pride went together with deep engagement in European cultural developments such as humanism (making him a less apt hero for isolationists). Or it might be that his ambivalent character and actions simply resist mythologization of the kind practiced on right and left alike, as examined in this essay.

If recent scholarly developments are any clue, Zwingli will remain an unstable figure in Swiss and Reformation history into the future. The latest issue of the *Schriftenreihe der Gesellschaft für militärhistorische Studienreisen*, for example, reports on a systematic investigation of the sword, helmet, and axe that have long been purported to be Zwingli's weapons, recovered by the Catholics at Kappel in 1531, preserved in Lucerne, and transferred to Zurich in 1848, where they eventually entered the collection of the National Historical Museum after 1890. In today's atmosphere, scarcely anyone will be surprised that these objects's attribution to Zwingli is entirely fictional.⁷¹ What were viewed first as

70. See e.g. Stefan von Bergen, "Neues Gefecht um alte Schweitzer Schlachten," *Berner Zeitung*, 21 March 2014, <https://www.bernerzeitung.ch/schweiz/standard/neues-gefecht-um-alte-schweizer-schlachten/story/27368597> (accessed 7 December 2019).

71. Adrian Baschung, Hans Rudolf Fuhrer, Jürg A. Meier, *Der Tod des Reformators – Zwinglis Waffen* (Wettingen: Schriftenreihe der Gesellschaft für militärhistorische Studienreisen, 2019). See also Adi Kälin, "Die angeblichen Zwingli Waffen waren ein grosser Bluff Luzerns – und die Zürcher sind darauf hereingefallen," *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 15 August

“Catholic trophies,” then as “Protestant relics” have gone through a seemingly inevitable transformation into invented history. Commemorations share in processes of invention, too. The 1819 and 1919 versions sought to purify and simplify Zwingli into a liberal and national hero. 2019’s repetition has rendered Zwingli more complicated, and perhaps less satisfying, but also points towards the wide range of questions that his life, and the early Reformation altogether, still offer to both professional historians and to historical publics.

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ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Dass Huldrych Zwingli schon lange im Schatten Martin Luthers steht, haben die zurückhaltenden Gedächtnisfeiern seiner Ankunft in Zürich 1519, die im Jahr 2019 stattfanden, erneut bewiesen. Durch seine Befürwortung von Zwang in religiösen Angelegenheiten, durch seine Zustimmung zur Hinrichtung der Wiedertäufer sowie auch durch seinen gewaltsamen Tod auf dem Schlachtfeld bleibt Zwingli für das 21. Jahrhundert eine rätselhafte Figur, die weder für die Rolle des Helden noch des Märtyrers geeignet zu sein scheint. Durch die Jahrhunderte ist er von manchem als Vorbote des Calvinismus, als Vorläufer des liberalen Protestantentums, als Schweizer Patriot oder aber als Kämpfer für soziale Erneuerung hochgehalten worden. Von anderen wird er weiterhin als unduldsames und kampflustiges Symbol von Formen des Eifers, die auch moderne, liberale Gesellschaften beunruhigen, betrachtet. Die verschiedenen Gedächtnisstätten und -feiern, öffentlich und populär wie auch akademisch und kirchlich, des Jahres 2019 beweisen, dass Zwingli eine faszinierende und entscheidende, aber auch schwer fassbare Gestalt der Reformation darstellt, deren unvereinbare Eigenschaften jeder eindimensionalen Interpretation trotzen.

The *Comunero* Revolt and Luther's Impact on Castile: Rebellion, Heresy, and Ecclesiastical Reform Impulses, 1520–1521

By Claudio César Rizzuto

In the *Antijovio* (1567), explorer and conqueror of the Colombian territories Gonzalo Jiménez de Quesada described the number of revolts and riots in the kingdoms of Charles V and globally at the time of the *Comunidades* of Castile in 1520–1521. He employed a “cosmological” explanation, asserting that the movement of the planets or another celestial phenomenon was the cause of such upheavals.¹ Seeing causal relationships between the uprisings occurring during the early 1520s was not unique to Gonzalo Jiménez de Quesada. This article analyzes primary sources that linked Martin Luther to the *Comunero* Revolt of 1520–1521 in Castile. First, the article will examine the early impact of news about Luther on Spain and its possible relationship to the revolt of the *Comunidades*. Then, it will discuss certain sources that made *a posteriori* comparisons or established a direct relationship between Luther and the *comuneros*. I argue that the inaccuracies likely involved in making these assumptions should be contextualized within a traditional discourse on heresy and rebellion. As is often pointed out, the falsehoods or fictions of a culture can tell us as much about this culture as its “truths” can.² Finally, the article will discuss the

1. “porque los vbo en España, como hemos visto, húbolos andando el tienpo más adelante en algunas ciudades de Flandes; húbolos ansímesmo en su ynperio de Alemania corriendo más el tienpo en Ytalia y especialmente en su rreyno de Nápoles [...] Y en fin, no quedó señorío suyo que alcançase en él esta plaga [...] lo debió de causar también algún ynflujo çeleste que por aquellos años aconteçio de rreynar sobre el huniberso orbe de acá abajo, porque [...] no hubo provincia, ni rreyno de christianos ni de ynfieles, ni de ningún género de gente de los que abitan la rredondez de la tierra, en los quales desde el año beinte que començaron las Comunidades en España hasta el año treinta, no hubiese rrebeliones y Comunidades contra sus señores y rreyes.” Gonzalo Jiménez de Quesada, *El antijovio*, ed. Rafael Torres Quintero, preliminary study by Manuel Ballesteros Gaibrois (Bogotá: Instituto Caro y Cuervo, 1952), 41–42. According to prophecies and almanacs from the late fifteenth century, many authors predicted the years around 1520 to be catastrophic because of the movements of the planets. See Denis Crouzet, *Charles Quint: Empereur d'une fin des temps* (Paris: Odile Jacob, 2016), 70–71.

2. On this problem see Carlo Ginzburg, *Threads and Traces: True, False, Fictive* (Berkeley, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2012), esp. 5–6.

comunero rebels's interest in church reform as a reason for the early reception of the Reformation in Spain.

THE *COMUNERO* REVOLT AND THE INITIAL IMPACT OF LUTHER ON CASTILE

Historians have approached the Reformation's influence on Spain in multiple ways. Nonetheless, it still is difficult to find general descriptions of the impact of Reformation ideas on Castile beyond those analyzing inquisitorial records. The relatively small number of available primary sources outside of the inquisitorial corpus has resulted in a predominance of the latter in research on "Protestantism" in the history of the Iberian kingdoms. Some early sources referring to the "Luther matter" do exist because of the uncertainty in the years immediately following the publication of Luther's "Ninety-Five Theses." The later context of censorship, rejection, and persecution make similar sources impossible to find.³ As discussed below, an overlap between references to Luther and to the activity of the *comuneros* is not a mere chronological coincidence. Some sources strongly assert the presence of Luther's ideas in the *Comunero* Revolt, and the influence of the *Comunidades* on the diplomatic development during the early Reformation. This article traces that connection through presentation of the *comuneros* in European politics.⁴

3. On the impact of Luther and Protestantism in Spain, see Augustin Redondo, "Luther et l'Espagne de 1520 à 1536," *Mélanges de la Casa de Velázquez* 1 (1965): 109–165; John E. Longhurst, *Luther's Ghost in Spain (1517–1546)* (Lawrence, KS: Coronado Press, 1969); José C. Nieto, "Luther's Ghost and Erasmus' Masks in Spain," *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance* 39 (1977): 33–49; Claude Larquie, "Le protestantisme en Espagne au XVI^e siècle," *Bulletin de la Société de l'Histoire du Protestantisme Français* 129 (1983): 155–182; Jaime Contreras, "The Impact of Protestantism in Spain 1520–1600," in Stephen Haliczzer, ed., *Inquisition and Society in Early Modern Europe* (New Jersey: Barnes & Noble Books, 1987), 47–63; Arthur Gordon Kinder, "Spain," in Andrew Pettegree, ed., *The Early Reformation in Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 215–237; Werner Thomas, *La represión del protestantismo en España 1517–1648* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2001); Werner Thomas, *Los protestantes y la Inquisición en España en tiempos de Reforma y Contrarreforma* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2001); Frances Luttkhuizen, *España y la Reforma Protestante (1517–2017)* (Vigo: Editorial Academia del Hispanismo, 2017); Michel Boeglin, Ignasi Fernández Terricabras, David Kahn, ed., *Reforma y disidencia religiosa: La recepción de las doctrinas reformadas en la Península Ibérica en el siglo XVI* (Madrid: Casa de Velázquez, 2018).

4. Research into the representations of the *comuneros* usually does not cover their image outside of Spain. For a synthesis, see David Torres Sanz, "Las Comunidades de Castilla en la opinión de los contemporáneos," in István Szászdi León-Borja, María José Galende Ruiz, ed.,