The Italian Reformers and the Zurich Church, c.1540-1620

Mark Taplin

St Andrews Studies in Reformation History

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For my parents

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MARK TAPLIN

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Abbreviations

ADB	*Allgemeine deutsche Biographie* (56 vols, Leipzig, 1875–1912)
AERSG	Archiv der Evangelisch-Rhätischen Synode Graubündens
ARG	*Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte*
Basel UB	Universitätsbibliothek Basel
BHR	*Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance*
BM	*Bündner Monatsblatt*
BSSV	*Bollettino della società di studi valdesi*
CCSL	*Corpus Christianorum: Series Latina* (Turnhout, 1954–)
CO	*Ioannis Calvini opera quae supersunt omnia*, ed. G. Baum, E. Cunitz, E. Reuss et al. (Braunschweig, 1834–60)
Correspondance	*Correspondance de Théodore de Bèze*, ed. F. Aubert et al. (Geneva, 1960–)
CTJ	*Calvin Theological Journal*
DBI	*Dizionario biografico degli italiani* (Rome, 1960–)
EA	*Amtliche Sammlung der ältern eidgenössischen Abschiede, 1245–1798*, ed. A.P. von Segesser et al. (8 pts, Lucerne and Berne, 1839–78)
ET	*Epistolae Tigurinae de rebus potissimum ad ecclesiae Anglicanae Reformationem pertinentibus* (Cambridge, 1848)
FA Orelli	*Familienarchiv von Orelli*
HBBibl	Staedtke, Joachim, *Heinrich Bullinger Bibliographie: Beschreibendes Verzeichnis der gedruckten Werke von Heinrich Bullinger* (Zurich, 1972)
JHGG	*Jahresbericht der Historisch-antiquarischen Gesellschaft von Graubünden*
NRS	*Nuova rivista storica*
PG	*Patrologiae cursus completus … Series Graeca …*, ed. J.P. Migne (Paris, 1857–87)

PL	*Patrologiae cursus completus [Series Latina]* …, ed. J.P. Migne (Paris, 1844–55)
RCP	*Registre de la Compagnie des Pasteurs de Genève*, ed. R.M. Kingdon, J.-F. Bergier et al. (Geneva, 1964–)
RSI	*Rivista storica italiana*
Schiess	*Bullingers Korrespondenz mit den Graubündnern*, ed. T. Schiess (3 vols, Basle, 1904–06)
SCJ	*Sixteenth Century Journal*
StAG	Staatsarchiv Graubünden
StAZ	Staatsarchiv Zürich
Wotschke	*Der Briefwechsel der Schweizer mit den Polen*, ed. T. Wotschke (Leipzig, 1908)
Z	*Huldreich Zwinglis sämtliche Werke*, ed. W. Köhler et al. (Leipzig, 1905–)
ZB	Zentralbibliothek Zürich
ZL	*The Zurich Letters*, ed. H. Robinson (2 vols, Cambridge, 1842/5)

Maps

Introduction

Over the past 30 years, our understanding of the reception of Protestantism in 16th-century Italy has been transformed. What was previously regarded as merely a sideshow to the main drama of religious change that was being played out north of the Alps has begun to be recognized as a significant movement for reform in its own right. Work on the archives of the Roman Inquisition – in Venice, Modena and elsewhere – has shed new light on the popular dimension of Italian 'evangelism', revealing the existence of a network of conventicles across the peninsula which met to read the Bible, to exchange Protestant literature and even to celebrate the reformed Lord's Supper.[1] Eva-Maria Jung's definition of the Italian movement for religious reform as undogmatic, aristocratic and transitory is simply no longer tenable: rather, Italy was home to a vociferous minority of genuine Protestants, committed to the northern reformers' understanding of salvation and drawn from a reasonably broad section of society, until concerted repression began to take its toll in the 1560s.[2] The work of Massimo Firpo and Dario Marcatto on the trial of Cardinal Giovanni Morone has shown that even the 'spirituali', that group of reform-minded senior clerics which has been seen to stand for a middle way between schismatic Protestantism and the harshly defined orthodoxy of the Tridentine Counter-Reformation, were more directly implicated in introducing reformist ideas to the Italian reading public than is traditionally assumed.[3] Now, following the appearance of several excellent local studies – particularly for the north Italian cities, where evangelical ideas had the greatest appeal – a comprehensive picture of the Italian response to Protestantism is emerging.[4] General surveys of

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1 The formal opening to scholars of the archives of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in 1998 has provided a welcome boost to research in this field, even though the records of most Inquisition trials were destroyed in the 19th century. See F. Beretta, 'L'archivio della Congregazione del Sant'Ufficio: bilancio provvisorio della storia e natura dei fondi d'antico regime', *Rivista di Storia e Letteratura Religiosa*, 37 (2001), pp. 29–58.

2 E.-M. Jung, 'On the Nature of Evangelism in Sixteenth-Century Italy', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 14 (1953), pp. 511–27.

3 M. Firpo and D. Marcatto (eds), *Il processo inquisitoriale del cardinal Giovanni Morone*, 6 vols (Rome, 1981–95).

4 The most significant are V. Marchetti, *Gruppi ereticali senesi del Cinquecento* (Florence, 1975); S. Peyronel Rambaldi, *Speranze e crisi nel Cinquecento modenese:*

what we must now call 'the Italian Reformation' have been published by Manfred Welti, Salvatore Caponetto and Massimo Firpo,[5] while the work of future scholars has been made a great deal easier by John Tedeschi's long-awaited bibliography of secondary literature on the subject.[6]

Protestant or crypto-Protestant ideas may have attracted more popular support in Italy than was previously realized, but Italian magistrates remained committed to the Catholic status quo (despite occasional wavering that raised evangelical sympathizers' hopes for a state-sponsored Reformation along German or English lines). Emigration was the only option for those Italian evangelicals unwilling to conform outwardly, but fearful of persecution. From the early 1540s, Italian exile communities emerged in the Swiss Reformed cities, in Geneva, in the Rhaetian Freestate and in London. Like their French, Dutch and English equivalents, the Italian evangelical exiles – who included virtually the entire intellectual leadership of the movement – helped sustain the cause of reform in their homeland, producing Protestant devotional and polemical literature for Italian consumption. As one might expect, their contribution has come to figure prominently in the study of the Italian Reformation. Of the various Italian exile communities, that of Geneva – which at its height boasted around 1,000 members, 5 per cent of the city's total population – has received most attention from scholars, although a definitive modern study is still lacking.[7] Some work has also been done on the much smaller Italian

Tensioni religiosi e vita cittadina ai tempi di Giovanni Morone (Milan, 1979); A. Olivieri, *Riforma ed eresia a Vicenza nel Cinquecento* (Rome, 1992); J. Martin, *Venice's Hidden Enemies: Italian Heretics in a Renaissance City* (Berkeley, 1993); S. Adorni-Braccesi, <<*Una città infetta*>>: *La repubblica di Lucca nella crisi religiosa del Cinquecento* (Florence, 1994); and G. Dall'Olio, *Eretici e Inquisitori nella Bologna del Cinquecento* (Bologna, 1999).

[5] M. Welti, *Kleine Geschichte der italienischen Reformation* (Gütersloh, 1985); S. Caponetto, *La Riforma protestante nell'Italia del Cinquecento* (Turin, 1992); M. Firpo, *Riforma protestante ed eresie nell'Italia del Cinquecento: Un profilo storico* (Rome, 1993). Firpo's work is reviewed at length in E. Campi, 'Remarques sur l'histoire de la Réforme en Italie', *BHR*, 56 (1994), pp. 495–507.

[6] J. Tedeschi, *The Italian Reformation of the Sixteenth Century and the Diffusion of Renaissance Culture: A Bibliography of the Secondary Literature (Ca. 1750–1997)* (Ferrara, 2000). See also the bibliographical essays in Firpo, *Riforma protestante*, pp. 181–94; and Martin, *Venice's Hidden Enemies*, pp. 249–71.

[7] See A. Pascal, 'La colonia piemontese a Ginevra nel secolo XVI', in D. Cantimori et al., *Ginevra e l'Italia* (Florence, 1959), pp. 65–133; E.W. Monter, 'The Italians in Geneva, 1550–1600: A New Look', in L. Monnier (ed.), *Genève et l'Italie: Etudes publiées à l'occasion du 50e anniversaire de la Société genevoise d'études italiennes* (Geneva, 1969), pp. 53–77; and S. Adorni-Braccesi (ed.), *Vincenzo Burlamacchi: Libro di ricordi degnissimi delle nostre famiglie* (Rome, 1993).

church in London.[8] More abundant still is the literature on individual exiles, which extends not only to such celebrated emigrés as Bernardino Ochino, Celio Secundo Curione and Pier Paolo Vergerio, but to a host of minor figures. Over recent years there has been a huge expansion of interest in Peter Martyr studies.[9]

This book offers a new assessment of the activities of early modern Italian religious exiles through an investigation of their relationship with the Reformed church of Zurich. The Zurich church has long been recognized, along with Geneva, as one of the two mainsprings of the Reformed tradition within Protestantism, but historians' attention has tended to be concentrated on the early years of the Zurich Reformation, before Huldrych Zwingli's death at Kappel in October 1531. More recently, there has been a welcome revival of interest in Zwingli's successor as *Antistes* (senior minister), Heinrich Bullinger. Although a full-length modern biography of Bullinger has yet to appear, thanks to historians such as Hans Ulrich Bächtold, Pamela Biel and Bruce Gordon we now know far more about the institutional development of the Zurich church under his leadership.[10] This work has been complemented by the ongoing publication in Zurich of Bullinger's voluminous correspondence.[11] Bullinger's international role has also been brought more sharply into focus: although, for obvious reasons, events in the Swiss Confederation were uppermost in his mind, there can now be no doubt that the *Antistes* saw his pastoral office as extending far beyond Zurich and its immediate neighbours.[12] Correspondents from across

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8 L. Firpo, 'La chiesa italiana di Londra nel Cinquecento e i suoi rapporti con Ginevra', in *Ginevra e l'Italia*, pp. 307–412; O. Boersma, *Vluchtig Voorbeeld: de nederlandse, franse en italiaanse vluchtelingenkerken in Londen, 1568–1585* (n.p. [Kampen], 1994); and O. Boersma and A.J. Jelsma (eds), *Unity in Multiformity: The minutes of the coetus of London, 1575 and the consistory minutes of the Italian Church of London, 1570–1591* (Amsterdam, 1997).

9 See J.P. Donnelly and R. Kingdon, *A Bibliography of the Works of Peter Martyr Vermigli* (Kirksville, Mo., 1990).

10 H.U. Bächtold, *Heinrich Bullinger vor dem Rat: Zur Gestaltung und Verwaltung des Zürcher Staatswesens in den Jahren 1531 bis 1575* (Berne, 1982); P. Biel, *Doorkeepers at the House of Righteousness: Heinrich Bullinger and the Zurich Clergy 1535–1575* (Berne, 1991); and B. Gordon, *Clerical Discipline and the Rural Reformation: The Synod in Zürich, 1532–1580* (Berne, 1992).

11 U. Gäbler et al. (eds), *Heinrich Bullinger Briefwechsel* (Zurich, 1973–), henceforth cited as *HBBW*. In total some 12,000 letters to and from Bullinger survive, compared with around 10,000 for Melanchthon, and just over 4,000 each for Luther and Calvin (F. Büsser, 'Die Überlieferung von Heinrich Bullingers Briefwechsel', in Büsser, *Wurzeln der Reformation in Zürich: Zum 500. Geburtstag des Reformators Huldrych Zwingli* (Leiden, 1985), pp. 125–42 [126]).

12 See A. Mühling, *Heinrich Bullingers europäische Kirchenpolitik* (Berne, 2001) (especially for the Empire); A. Schindler and H. Stickelberger (eds), *Die Zürcher*

Europe sought his advice, commendation and support, and translations of works such as the *Decades* appeared in most major European vernaculars.[13] Bullinger's crowning theological achievement, the Second Helvetic Confession (1566), was adopted by Reformed believers throughout the continent alongside their own national statements of faith.[14]

In his classic study *Eretici italiani del Cinquecento* – still an essential point of reference for students of the Italian Reformation – Delio Cantimori suggested that the theology of the Zurich church exercised a special hold over the imaginations of Italy's evangelicals.[15] Although one ought not to exaggerate the extent to which the latter had imbibed Zwinglian doctrine prior to their emigration – the Italian evangelical movement was subject to a wide array of theological influences, as we shall see – there can be no doubt that Bullinger's special concern for fellow believers who had suffered persecution or hardship for the sake of the faith provided a basis for close relations between the Zurich church and those Italian-speaking exiles who settled in the Swiss Confederation and Graubünden. Bullinger's correspondence contains around 500 letters to and from Italian-speaking evangelicals, many of which have yet to be published. Besides this correspondence, I draw on a variety of materials from Swiss sources, including theological works – both published and unpublished – by the Zurich divines and their Italian associates; council and synodal records; and the records of Zurich's own Italian-speaking community.

A central concern of this study is the role of the so-called 'heretics', that group of doctrinally heterodox exiles whom Cantimori describes as 'rebels against every form of organized and ecclesiastical religious

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Reformation: Ausstrahlungen und Rückwirkungen (Berne, 2001). The key source for relations between Zurich and England remains the correspondence published by the Parker Society in the 19th century. On Bullinger's contacts with the French Reformed, see A. Bouvier, *Henri Bullinger, réformateur et conseiller oecuménique, le successeur de Zwingli, d'après sa correspondance avec les réformés et les humanistes de langue française* (Neuchâtel, 1940).

13 See J. Staedtke, *Heinrich Bullinger Bibliographie: Beschreibendes Verzeichnis der gedruckten Werke von Heinrich Bullinger* (Zurich, 1972).

14 J. Staedtke (ed.), *Glauben und Bekennen: Vierhundert Jahre Confessio Helvetica Posterior: Beiträge zu ihrer Geschichte und Theologie* (Zurich, 1966).

15 D. Cantimori, *Eretici italiani del Cinquecento e altri scritti*, ed. A. Prosperi (Turin, 1992), p. 98: 'I zurighesi dovevano avere agli occhi di quegli italiani … il pregio di aver per primi posto in atto la <<libertà christiana>> com'essi la intendevano, osando porre la verità al di sopra dell'unità, e resistendo all'autorevolezza e alla violenza di un Lutero. E i libri del Bullinger, con la loro dottrina, con le loro argomentazioni umanistiche che risentivano la preparazione erasmiana, con la loro preoccupazione di chiarezza e semplicità, dovevano attrarre particolarmente gli intelletti italiani.'

community'.[16] Cantimori took the heretics as his principal subject, identifying their radicalism, which reached its apogee in Socinianism, as Italy's unique and original contribution to the Reformation: a contribution that owed more to the legacy of Quattrocento humanism than to the ideas of the northern reformers. Subsequent scholarship has made clear that heresy of the kind emphasized by Cantimori – whose approach was much influenced by his own ideological development towards Marxism during the 1930s – was a minority tendency.[17] The religious landscape of 16th-century Italy was not dominated by Anabaptists or antitrinitarians, although the largely informal structure of the Italian evangelical conventicles did create space for a diversity of theological viewpoints unseen in those countries whose Protestant communities were subject to a process of 'confession-building' from an early stage. At least as many Italian exiles distinguished themselves by their commitment to Reformed orthodoxy as did by the profession of heretical ideas, and the majority of emigrants swiftly accommodated themselves to the doctrinal and disciplinary regimes prevalent in the northern Protestant churches. However, the impact of the heretics' activities, both on the exile communities which harboured them, and on relations between the exiles and their Swiss, German or English hosts, was out of all proportion to their numbers. Their criticisms of Reformed orthodoxy – and the Zurich church's response – form the centrepiece of this study, because they influenced how Italian evangelicals as a whole came to be perceived by the Protestant establishment: as intellectually restless, quarrelsome, and resistant to discipline.

The characterization is one associated particularly with Calvin, whose 'dogmatism' is sometimes played off against the 'free thinking' of the heretics.[18] It was accepted less readily by the Zurich church, whose definition of orthodoxy was comparatively flexible in some areas – notably predestination – up until the early 1560s. Bullinger was averse to doctrinal hair-splitting and the acrimonious disagreements between theologians to which it often led: as we shall see, he was prepared to make concessions to tender consciences in private, in the interests of preserving the public unity of the church. Such moderation goes some way towards explaining why Bullinger and the church over

16 Cantimori, *Eretici*, p. 5. I use the term 'heretic' in this specific Cantimorian sense throughout.

17 See *Eretici*, pp. xi–lxii; and Massimo Firpo's historiographical introduction to Tedeschi, *Italian Reformation*, especially pp. xliv–xlvi.

18 But see the criticisms of this approach by V. Subilia, 'Libertà e dogma secondo Calvino e secondo i riformatori italiani', in Cantimori et al., *Ginevra e l'Italia*, pp. 191–214.

which he presided continued to be held in high regard by some Italian radicals long after they had become alienated from other Reformed leaders. However, it should not be confused with modern conceptions of religious tolerance: Bullinger's record of fighting Anabaptism, and his unabashed support for the execution of Michael Servetus, provide evidence of his determination to combat heresy wherever it manifested itself openly. His initial reluctance to move swiftly from correction to condemnation when dealing with the Italian radicals seems to have stemmed from a basic misunderstanding of the heretics' intentions – often articulated as a desire for clarification rather than as open criticism of Reformed doctrine – and from a failure to comprehend the extent to which their radical reconception of the Reformation enterprise differed from his own, essentially conservative, vision. Once the incorrigibility of the heretics had become apparent, Bullinger and his colleagues were as vigorous as any in their efforts to combat dissenting activity. This book is an attempt to explain how they moved towards that position.

The study is divided into six chapters. After a brief examination of the Zurich church's contribution to the spread of Protestant ideas in Italy itself, Chapter 1 summarizes the initial contacts between the Zurichers and Italian evangelical exiles, beginning with the arrival in Switzerland of the first significant wave of religious refugees in the early 1540s. In the final part of the chapter, I discuss the Zurich divines' early clashes over doctrine with such heterodox exiles as Camillo Renato, Celio Secundo Curione and Lelio Sozzini, and assess the implications of these exchanges for future relations between the two groups.

Chapter 2 opens with an account of the events which led to the formation of an Italian-speaking church in Zurich, made up primarily of evangelical refugees from the Swiss-ruled territory of Locarno. Consideration is given to the role of Bullinger and his fellow ministers in persuading the Zurich authorities first to receive the Locarnese exiles, and then to fund the establishment of a semi-autonomous Italian congregation in the city, led by Bernardino Ochino; this episode offers one of the most graphic examples of the Zurich church's commitment to the international Reformed cause in general, and to the plight of its Italian-speaking co-religionists in particular. Building on the work of earlier historians of the Zurich Locarnesi, such as Ferdinand Meyer,[19] I examine the make-up and organization of Zurich's Italian church, its contacts with other Italian exile communities (in Geneva, Graubünden

[19] F. Meyer, *Die evangelische Gemeinde von Locarno, ihre Auswanderung und ihre weitern Schicksale: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Schweiz im sechszehnten Jahrhundert* (2 vols, Zurich, 1836).

and Basle), and its relations with the Zurich authorities and population during the eight years of its separate existence (1555–63).

Chapter 3 offers a reassessment of what I term the 'Ochino affair': the controversy triggered by the unauthorized publication in spring 1563 of Bernardino Ochino's *Dialogi XXX*, which resulted in Ochino's dismissal and the end of formal Italian-language worship in Zurich. Particular emphasis is given to this traumatic episode because it provides clear evidence for the Zurich church's adoption, from around 1560, of a much less indulgent attitude towards those Italian exiles who refused to give unqualified assent to Reformed teaching on matters such as soteriology and the Trinity.

The 'treachery' of Ochino, who had been lionized by the Reformed following his conversion to Protestantism in August 1542, and who had since earned himself a considerable reputation as a preacher and propagandist, was not easily forgotten by Bullinger and his colleagues. It influenced the stance that they took in other doctrinal disputes generated by Italian exiles in eastern Europe and Graubünden during the 1560s and early 1570s. Those disputes are the subject of Chapters 4 and 5, which provide a counterweight to the traditional perception of the Zurich theological tradition as eirenic and undogmatic by highlighting the increasing 'confessionalism' of Bullinger and younger Zurich divines such as Josias Simler. Both Simler and the later Bullinger emphasized the need for an explicit and comprehensive definition of orthodoxy, which would safeguard the doctrinal integrity of the church against subversion by the sort of queries and veiled criticisms that the Zurichers had previously been prepared to tolerate from some of their Italian associates. This stance was endorsed by a vociferous group of clerics drawn from among the exiles themselves (for example, Agostino Mainardi, Scipione Lentolo and Giulio da Milano). In the Reformed churches of Italian-speaking Graubünden those ministers were able, with the active support of the Zurichers, to ensure that dissenting elements were either eliminated or silenced.

The defeat of the heretics did not end the Zurich church's association with the Italian exiles: rather, the alliance forged between the Zurichers and orthodox ministers in Graubünden during the struggle against religious radicalism became the basis for renewed co-operation over subsequent decades. Because of scholars' understandable fascination with the dramatic confrontations of the earlier period, this later phase of the relationship has not been adequately explored in the existing literature, leaving the impression that doctrinal conflict was a consistent feature of the Zurich church's relations with those Italian evangelicals with whom it had contact. However, that was true only for the years

prior to 1570, and even then only in part (the close working relationship which developed between Bullinger and Peter Martyr Vermigli is a case in point).[20] Chapter 6 identifies ways in which Bullinger's successors in the Zurich church continued to offer the Italian congregations of Graubünden practical assistance and encouragement, through an examination of their correspondence with exiles based in Chiavenna and the Valtellina (principally Scipione Lentolo, Scipione Calandrini and Ulisse Martinengo). The relationship was interrupted only by the 'sacro macello' of July 1620, which destroyed the once thriving Reformed communities of the Valtellina.

Through this study, I aim to contribute to the ongoing reassessment of Zurich's role in the wider European Reformation, which is itself testimony to scholars' increasing awareness of the multicentredness of 16th-century Reformed Protestantism. Thus far, interest has been focused on Bullinger but many of the *Antistes*' colleagues and successors were also significant figures within the international Reformed movement. It is to be hoped that in future years some of the churchmen who feature prominently in the pages of this book – Rudolf Gwalther, Johannes Wolf, Josias Simler, Johann Wilhelm Stucki and Kaspar Waser – will become objects of study in their own right. There is still a chronic shortage of secondary literature on the history of the Zurich church after Bullinger, which is only now beginning to be addressed.[21]

The book also feeds into the wider literature devoted to the phenomenon of exile *religionis causa* during the 16th century,[22] which historians such as Ole Peter Grell have deemed 'of paramount importance in providing Calvinism with an international character'.[23] More generally, it offers insights into the process by which a distinctive and precisely articulated Reformed 'confession' became established around the middle part of the century. The case of Bernardino Ochino, which is pivotal to the entire study, is particularly instructive in this

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20 Michael Baumann of the University of Zurich is currently preparing a doctoral thesis on Vermigli in Zurich. In the meantime, see M. Anderson, *Peter Martyr: A Reformer in Exile (1542–1562): A chronology of biblical writings in England and Europe* (Nieuwkoop, 1975); '*Vista Tigurina*: Peter Martyr and European Reform (1556–1562)', *Harvard Theological Review*, 83 (1990), pp. 181–206.

21 A number of useful articles are available on Gwalther. See K. Rüetschi, 'Rudolf Gwalthers Kontakte zu Engländern und Schotten', in Schindler and Stickelberger, *Zürcher Reformation*, pp. 351–73, with further bibliographical references.

22 This is best exemplified by A. Pettegree, *Foreign Protestant Communities in Sixteenth-Century London* (Oxford, 1986).

23 O.P. Grell, 'Merchants and ministers: the foundations of international Calvinism', in A. Pettegree, A. Duke and G. Lewis (eds), *Calvinism in Europe, 1540–1620* (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 254–73.

regard. During the 1540s and early 1550s, Ochino's eclectic brand of Protestantism, anchored in justification by faith but not easily reducible to a single confessional system (hence, perhaps, his ability to move between such different contexts as Geneva, Basle, Augsburg and England) had proved broadly acceptable in Reformed circles. By 1563 that was no longer the case: the trend within Reformed theology was towards systematization, towards reconstructing a precise doctrinal framework into which the exegetical achievements of Reformed biblical scholarship could be incorporated. Ochino, and the other heterodox Italian exiles whose relations with Zurich are considered here, were casualties of that process. To that extent, their fate illuminates a crucial phase in the development of Reformed orthodoxy.

Note on Orthography, Translations and Some Terms Used

Most of the quotations in this study are taken from sources in one of three languages: Latin, German and Italian. The use of u/v has been adjusted throughout to conform to modern usage. In Latin quotations, i/j has usually been rendered as i. In quotations from Swiss German, certain forms of the vowel have been simplified, with superscript 'e' being rendered as an umlaut. Original punctuation has been retained where possible, but occasionally changes have been made for the sake of clarity.

Longer quotations appear in translation in the main body of the text, and in the source language in the footnotes (except where the passage cited is available in a modern edition). Translations are my own, unless otherwise stated.

Following established practice, I have used the term *Antistes* to designate the senior minister of the Zurich and other Swiss Reformed churches. The 16th-century federation – and modern Swiss canton – often known in English as the Grisons is here referred to as either Graubünden, the Rhaetian Freestate, or simply Rhaetia.

CHAPTER ONE

Zurich and the Italian Reformers to 1555

During the late medieval period, Zurich's contacts with the Italian peninsula were comparatively limited in scope. Some economic ties are documented: Zurich exported basic commodities such as cattle, hides and tallow to northern Italy, and was in turn supplied with iron and steel (from Como) and wine (from the Valtellina).[1] The city's geographical position, along the vital north–south axis linking the commercial centre of Nuremberg with Como, Milan and Genoa, also provided some Zurich merchants with an opportunity to engage in transalpine trade; between 1479 and 1517, for example, the important Ravensburg-based trading company known as the *Humpisgesellschaft* was represented in Genoa by Zurichers (Hans Kloter the Elder and Younger).[2] However, activities of this sort were confined to a handful of individuals and did not contribute greatly to what was, by the late 15th century, a more or less self-contained economy.

In strategic terms, too, Italy was of peripheral interest to Zurich's ruling elite, whose expansionist ambitions had historically been directed eastwards, towards the shores of Lake Constance and such territories as the Thurgau, Toggenburg and St Gallen. Although the Swiss Confederation emerged as a major player on the Italian political and military scene in the mid-1490s, the driving force behind the Swiss Italian campaigns of the early 16th century was not Zurich, but the inner states of Uri, Schwyz and Unterwalden, which were eager to secure control of the southern approaches to the Gotthard. In any case, military involvement in the affairs of Italy does not in the first instance seem to have been accompanied by enhanced intellectual or cultural ties. During the 15th and early 16th centuries, Italian universities ceased to attract Swiss students in large numbers, as they flocked to the newer centres of higher education springing up across the Empire (Basle, Vienna, Heidelberg and Erfurt were among the more popular choices).[3]

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[1] H. Peyer, *Vom Handel und Bank im alten Zürich* (Zurich, 1968), p. 11; W. Schnyder, *Handel und Verkehr über die Bündner Pässe im Mittelalter zwischen Deutschland, der Schweiz und Oberitalien* (2 vols, Zurich, 1973/5), I, pp. 55, 59.

[2] Schnyder, *Handel*, I, pp. 96–7.

[3] S. Stelling-Michaud, 'La Suisse et les universités européennes du 13ème au 16ème

Throughout this period Zurichers continued to study in Italy, sometimes with the assistance of papal scholarships,[4] but Zurich itself was largely untouched by the new learning of the Italian Renaissance.[5] Culturally, the city remained in the shadow of Basle, with its flourishing printing industry, and Berne, which had succeeded in attracting the humanists Heinrich Wölfli, Valerius Anselm and Melchior Volmar to teach at its Latin school.[6] Even printing was slow to take root in Zurich: only two printers, Sigmund Rot and Hans Rüegger, were active in the city before 1517, and their (modest) production consisted in the main of papal bulls of indulgence and other traditional material.[7]

With the onset of the Reformation in the early 1520s, new opportunities for contact between Zurich and Italy manifested themselves. The establishment in June 1525 of the Zurich *Prophezei*, which served as the prototype for Reformed academies across Europe, provided a huge impetus for the development in Zurich of a humanist intellectual culture which appropriated many of the ideals and philological techniques of Italian Renaissance scholarship. Significantly, two of the early lecturers at the *Prophezei*, Jakob Ammann (1500–73) and Rudolf Collin (1499–1578), had studied in Milan prior to their conversions.[8] Zwingli himself owned an impressive collection of Italian humanist texts, among them works by Sabellicus, Poliziano, Ficino, and Giovanni and Gianfrancesco Pico;[9] one scholar has even been tempted to draw comparisons between elements of his mature theology and

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siècle: Essai d'une statistique de fréquentation', *Revue universitaire suisse* (September 1938), pp. 148–60.

4 M. Sieber, *Die Universität Basel und die Eidgenossenschaft 1460 bis 1529* (Basle, 1960), p. 69.

5 P. Bänziger, *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Spätscholastik und des Frühhumanismus in der Schweiz* (Zurich, 1945), p. 85. According to Potter, 'the three Regular Orders represented in Zurich – Dominicans, Franciscans and Augustinians – did almost nothing for scholarship' (G.R. Potter, 'The Renaissance in Switzerland', *Journal of Medieval History*, 2 (1976), pp. 365–82 [371]).

6 U.M. Zahnd, 'Lateinschule-Universität-Prophezey: Zu den Wandlungen im Schulwesen eidgenössischer Städte in der ersten Hälfte des 16. Jahrhunderts', in H. Dickerhof (ed.), *Bildungs- und schulgeschichtliche Studien zu Spätmittelalter, Reformation und konfessionellem Zeitalter* (Wiesbaden, 1994), pp. 91–115 (95–6).

7 M. Vischer, *Bibliographie der Zürcher Druckschriften des 15. und 16. Jahrhunderts* (Baden-Baden, 1991), pp. 27–31.

8 C. Bonorand, 'Mitteleuropäische Studenten in Pavia zur Zeit der Kriege in Italien (ca.1500 bis ca.1550)', *Pluteus*, 4–5 (1986–87), pp. 295–357 (326–7).

9 Some of these works contain extensive marginal annotations dating from Zwingli's time in Glarus, on which see A. Schindler, 'Zwinglis Randbemerkungen in den Büchern seiner Bibliothek: Ein Zwischenbericht über editorische Probleme', *Zwa*, 18/1 (1989/1), pp. 1–11; and I. Backus, 'Randbemerkungen Zwinglis in den Werken von Giovanni Pico della Mirandola', *Zwa*, 18/4 (1990/2), pp. 291–309.

Florentine Neoplatonism.[10] Zwingli's successor as leader of the Zurich church, Heinrich Bullinger, had less direct exposure to Italian Renaissance thought – the formative influences on his theology were Netherlandish (the *devotio moderna*) and north German – but that did not prevent him from placing a high value on the intellectual achievements of figures such as Manuel Chrysoloras, Lorenzo Valla and Angelo Poliziano. In particular, he commended the Florentine revival of Greek studies, which had made possible Erasmus' recovery of the original text of the New Testament.[11]

More importantly for our purposes, Italy provided the Zurich reformers with a potential mission-field. From as early as 1518, when Luther's *Appellatio ad Concilium* was reprinted in Venice,[12] there is evidence that evangelical ideas were attracting support from sections of the Italian reading public; the works of northern reformers were relatively easy to come by in both Latin and (often disguised) vernacular translations. In the first part of this chapter, I shall offer a brief assessment of the Zurich church's contribution to the spread of Protestantism in Italy, and attempt to piece together what is known of its relations with the nascent Italian evangelical movement. Those contacts formed the backdrop to the relationship between the Zurich divines and the increasing number of Italian evangelicals who, from around 1540, began to settle in the Swiss Confederation, Geneva and the Rhaetian Freestate. As will become clear, this was a relationship which, almost from its inception, oscillated between co-operation and conflict: co-operation based on a shared commitment to the principle of reform, conflict as a minority of exiles struggled to come to terms with Protestantism as it had been institutionalized north of the Alps.

i. The Zurich church and the Reformation in Italy

The first reference to contacts between the Zurich reformers and evangelical sympathizers in Italy is tantalizingly vague. In the prefatory

10 Schindler detects echoes of Giovanni Pico's *Oratio de dignitate hominis* in the opening to Zwingli's *De providentia*, although the anthropology of the work as a whole is pessimistic and unmistakably 'Reformed'. He also notes Zwingli's openness to the possibility of extra-biblical revelation in the pre-Christian dispensation, reminiscent to some degree of Pico's syncretistic approach. See A. Schindler, 'Huldrych Zwingli e Giovanni Pico della Mirandola', in *Dall'accademia neoplatonica fiorentina alla Riforma: Celebrazione del V centenario della morte di Lorenzo il Magnifico* (Florence, 1996), pp. 51–65 (60–63).

11 J. Staedtke, *Die Theologie des jungen Bullinger* (Zurich, 1962), pp. 29–34.

12 U. Rozzo and S. Seidel Menchi, 'The book and the Reformation in Italy', in J.-F. Gilmont (ed.), *The Reformation and the Book* (Aldershot, 1998), pp. 319–67 (321).

epistle to his *Commentarius de vera et falsa religione* of 1525, Zwingli describes the work as a response to requests for a concise summary of Christian doctrine from fellow-believers in Italy and France, but offers no clue as to the identity of these Italian 'brethren'.[13] Soon after the publication of the *Commentarius*, however, Zwingli received a letter from an Augustinian monk based in Como, Egidio da Porta, in which the latter made clear his disenchantment with Catholicism and requested instruction in the Reformed faith.[14] Zwingli's reply has not survived, but one can assume that it was encouraging, because in December 1526 Da Porta again wrote to the Zurich reformer, this time with the news that he and his colleagues had set to work on a vernacular translation of the New Testament. Da Porta also asked that Zwingli write to his superiors in the order, to request a relaxation of discipline, and to the duke of Milan, to press the case for religious and social reform.[15]

Little is known about the subsequent fate of Da Porta's evangelical circle,[16] but there is every reason to believe that his enthusiasm for Zwinglian reform was shared by other members of the Augustinian order, which in Italy (as elsewhere) produced numerous converts to Protestantism.[17] Of particular interest in this connection is a letter addressed to Zwingli in August 1529 from Sondrio in the Valtellina. Its author, who went under the pseudonym 'Augustinus Saturnius' (Augustine the Italian), sought Zwingli's help in publishing a (Latin?) grammar that he had written; he also made no secret of his evangelical sympathies, praising the reformer for his 'supercelestial gifts in Christ'. According to the editors of Zwingli's correspondence, 'Saturnius' was none other than Agostino Mainardi, who held a series of senior positions within the Lombard province of the Augustinian Hermits before coming under suspicion of heresy towards the end of the 1530s.[18] Later we shall encounter him as minister to the Reformed congregation

13 See the editors' comments in Z, III, 591, n. 1.

14 Z, VIII, no. 421.

15 Ibid., no. 558. These letters are discussed at length in W. Köhler, 'Zwingli und Italien', in *Aus fünf Jahrhunderten Schweizerischer Kirchengeschichte: Festschrift zum 60. Geburtstag von Paul Wernle* (Basle, 1932), pp. 21–38 (30–32).

16 Da Porta himself was later reconciled to the church, eventually serving as vicar general to the Mantuan chapter of the Augustinian Hermits (S. Peyronel Rambaldi, *Dai Paesi Bassi all'Italia: <<Il sommario della sacra scrittura>>: Un libro proibito nella società italiana del Cinquecento* (Florence, 1997), p. 79).

17 On the Reformation and the Italian Augustinians more generally, see ibid., pp. 73–109; Caponetto, *Riforma*, pp. 24–8.

18 Z, X, no. 884. See also P. Ricca, 'Zwingli tra i Valdesi', *Zwa*, 16/3 (1984/1), pp. 247–62 (254–6); and Köhler, 'Zwingli und Italien', p. 33. The standard biography of Mainardi is still A. Armand Hugon, *Agostino Mainardo: Contributo alla storia della Riforma in Italia* (Torre Pellice, n.d. [1943]).

of Chiavenna. In his letter, Mainardi refers Zwingli for further information to a certain 'presbyter Bartolomeus', probably the former Dominican Bartolomeo Maturo, who is credited with having introduced the Reformation to the Valtellina.[19]

These first tentative exchanges were nipped in the bud by Zurich's disastrous defeat in the Second Kappel War (October 1531). The defeat forced a reassessment of priorities in Zurich. Under pressure from a rural population that laid the blame for Kappel squarely at the door of meddling foreign clerics, the city's rulers – who had never been comfortable with Zwingli's vision of Zurich as the fulcrum of an anti-papal alliance stretching from the Adriatic to the Baltic – returned to a more conservative foreign policy. This change in direction was reflected in the Zurich church, which as the price for continued magisterial commitment to the Reformation was forced to accept a more limited political role and restrictions on its 'prophetic' office.[20] Under the leadership of Heinrich Bullinger, the Zurich church remained an important player in the ecclesiastical politics of Reformed Switzerland and of the Empire more generally, but before 1540 Bullinger and his colleagues do not appear to have given much thought to the progress of the Reformation further afield, especially in Italy; indeed, news of any kind from Italy barely features in Bullinger's correspondence for this period.[21] Superficially at least, this lack of interest appears to have been reciprocated from the Italian side. During the 1520s and early 1530s, Italian responses to the Reformation, whether hostile or sympathetic, centred for the most part on the figure of Luther, the 'monster of Saxony'.[22] Whereas 14 Italian editions of Luther's works have been identified for the period 1525 to 1566, Italian translations of works by Zwingli are conspicuous by their absence. This lacuna is difficult to account for, though Salvatore Caponetto has suggested that the violent circumstances of Zwingli's death caused the many Italian Erasmians who might otherwise have found his theology attractive to distance themselves from it.[23]

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19 See E. Arbenz and H. Wartmann (eds), *Der Vadianische Briefwechsel der Stadtbibliothek St. Gallen* (7 vols, St Gallen, 1890–1913), IV, no. 571.

20 Bächtold, *Bullinger*, pp. 15–24.

21 For a rare example, see Bullinger to Oswald Myconius, 1 September 1537 (*HBBW*, VII, no. 1037), in which the *Antistes* reports rumours of an imminent Turkish invasion of southern Italy.

22 O. Niccoli, 'Il mostro di Sassonia: Conoscenza e non conoscenza di Lutero in Italia nel Cinquecento (1520–1530 ca.)', in L. Perrone (ed.), *Lutero in Italia: Studi storici nel V centenario della nascita* (Casale Monferrato, 1983), pp. 3–25.

23 Caponetto, *Riforma*, pp. 53–4. A list of known Italian editions of the works of northern reformers published between 1525 to 1566 appears in Rozzo and Seidel

On the other hand, there is plenty of evidence to suggest that the works of Zwingli, Bullinger and other Zurich writers were available in Italy in Latin editions. In April 1533 Johannes Comander, the reformer of Chur, informed Joachim Vadian that he had responded to requests for Protestant literature from evangelical sympathizers in Italy by sending copies of works by Zwingli, Oecolampadius and Bucer (although not by Luther, for fear of stirring up controversy over the interpretation of the Eucharist).[24] Some years later Comander's colleague, Philipp Gallicius, reported that he was sending a copy of Bullinger's *Decades* to the Rhaetian magnate Anton Travers to be bound and presented to 'a certain good man' in Italy.[25] In addition, various Italian evangelical exiles are recorded as having read works by the Zurich reformers prior to their conversions. Girolamo Zanchi, for example, claimed to have bought and annotated a copy of Bullinger's *De origine erroris*, after the work was recommended to him by a certain Montalcinus;[26] similarly, Zwingli's *Commentarius de vera et falsa religione* and *De providentia* were among the Protestant works that Peter Martyr Vermigli read during his time as abbot to the Augustinian house of San Pietro ad Aram in Naples.[27] The *Commentarius* was in circulation among the Waldenses of Piedmont (who may have been introduced to Zwingli's doctrine of the Eucharist by Guillaume Farel) as early as 1535.[28]

Zurich-based writers also featured prominently on the Indices of prohibited books which began to be issued by the Italian states from the mid-1540s.[29] Of the 47 authors whose *opera omnia* were proscribed in the 1549 Venetian Index, four were or had been based in Zurich

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Menchi,'The book and the Reformation', pp. 346–54. On the reception of Luther's works in Italy, see also S. Seidel Menchi, 'Le traduzioni italiane di Lutero nella prima metà del Cinquecento', *Rinascimento*, 17 (1977), pp. 31–108.

24 *Vadian BW*, V, no. 732; compare ibid., no. 798.

25 Schiess, I, no. 265.

26 Zanchi to Bullinger, 24 June 1568 (*Epistolarum libri duo*, II, 128–9, in *Clarissimi viri D. Hieronymi Zanchii omnium operum theologicorum tomi octo* (Geneva, 1619); StAZ E II 356a, 833–5). 'Montalcinus' is to be identified with the Franciscan Conventual Giovanni Buzio da Montalcino, who was executed for heresy in Rome on 4 September 1553 (*DBI*, XV, 632–4; Caponetto, *Riforma*, p. 76).

27 J. Simler, *Oratio de vita et obitu Petri Martyris Vermilii, Sacrarum literarum in Schola Tigurina Professoris* (Zurich, 1563), fol. 7^{r}; P. McNair, *Peter Martyr in Italy: An Anatomy of Apostasy* (Oxford, 1967), p. 149. Vermigli later praised the *De providentia*, but J.P. Donnelly doubts whether the Florentine's understanding of predestination was influenced by his reading of this work (Donnelly, *Calvinism and Scholasticism in Vermigli's Doctrine of Man and Grace* (Leiden, 1976), pp. 128–9).

28 Ricca, 'Zwingli tra i Valdesi', pp. 249–51.

29 The Indices are analysed fully in P. Grendler, *The Roman Inquisition and the Venetian Press, 1540–1605* (Princeton, 1977), pp. 71–127.

(Zwingli, Bullinger, Konrad Pellikan and Theodor Bibliander).[30] Titles deemed worthy of specific censure included Zwingli's *Commentarius* and *Religionis antiquae capita* (in an edition published under the pseudonym of Charieus Cogelius); Rudolf Gwalther's *Antichristus*; and Bibliander's *Ad omnium ordinum reipublicae Christianae principes viros populumque Christianum relatio*.[31] The 1554 Index added Gwalther, Konrad Gesner, Leo Jud, Johannes Fries and Otto Werdmüller to the list of condemned authors.[32] New to appear among the proscribed works were Zwingli's *Supplicatio ad Hugonem Episcopum Constantiensem* and *Ad Matthaeum Alberum epistola*, the Zurich Latin Bible of 1539, Leo Jud's large and small catechisms, Gwalther's *Apology for Zwingli*, Bullinger's *Utriusque in Christo naturae assertio orthodoxa*, and an unspecified *Confessio ecclesiae Tigurinae de coena domini*. The Indices do not in themselves provide an accurate guide to what Italian evangelicals were reading,[33] but inventories of books seized by the Inquisition from suspected heretics confirm that works by Zurich churchmen were the subject of interest in Italian philo-Protestant circles. Among the texts owned by the Augustinian preacher Giulio da Milano at the time of his arrest in Venice in late 1540, for instance, were Bullinger's commentaries on the Pauline epistles and Acts, and Pellikan's *Repertorium Bibliae*.[34] The leading Venetian evangelical Francesco Stella also owned exegetical works by the Zurich divines, in this case Bullinger and Bibliander.[35]

Assessing the theological impact that such works may have had on their readers is no easy task. The Italian evangelical movement lacked a precise confessional identity, and its adherents did not obviously discriminate between 'Reformed' and 'Lutheran' writers in their choice of reading. Ugo Rozzo and Silvana Seidel Menchi have described the movement as tending towards 'an evangelical syncretism' – that is to say, an eirenical outlook that emphasized fundamental areas of doctrinal

30 Grendler, *Roman Inquisition*, p. 86; J.M. De Bujanda (ed.), *Index des livres interdits III: Index de Venise 1549; Venise et Milan 1554* (Geneva, 1987), with an introduction by P. Grendler.

31 For details, see De Bujanda, *Index*.

32 Grendler, *Roman Inquisition*, p. 95.

33 Bibliander, for instance, was one of 14 authors incorporated into the 1549 Venetian Index en bloc from the Paris Indices of 1544 and 1547 (De Bujanda, *Index*, p. 75). Konrad Gesner's *Bibliotheca universalis* was the source for many of the new titles included on the Index of 1554 (ibid., pp. 94–8).

34 Rozzo and Seidel Menchi, 'The book and the Reformation', p. 339.

35 See the inventory published in L. Perini, 'Ancora sul libraio-tipografo Pietro Perna e su alcune figure di eretici italiani in rapporto con lui negli anni 1549–1555', *NRS*, 51 (1967), pp. 363–404 (387–94).

agreement over divisions.[36] The popularity in Italy of works by the Augsburg reformer Urbanus Rhegius has been attributed precisely to the fact that his theology spanned the Lutheran–Reformed divide.[37]

The influence of views associated specifically with the Zurich church is most easily discerned in relation to the controversial topic of the Eucharist. By the early 1540s, it is clear that Zwingli's alleged 'sacramentarianism' had become a subject of debate (and a source of disagreement) within the north Italian conventicles. In the aftermath of the colloquy of Regensburg, the Strasbourg reformer Martin Bucer tackled the issue in a series of letters to certain 'Italian brethren', first in Bologna and Modena, and subsequently also in Venice and Ferrara.[38] In these letters, Bucer warned his correspondents against emulating the example of Germany's Protestants, now hopelessly divided over the sacrament. He argued that the incompatibility of the Lutheran and Zwinglian positions was more apparent than real, although both sides were guilty of using inappropriate language (with opposing results) when discussing the mode of Christ's presence in the Eucharist. Thus 'when [Luther] says that the bread is the body of Christ, or that the body of Christ is really present in the bread, it seems to me at any rate that – even if he himself does not understand this in a corporeal sense exactly – he is using language that might induce others to think that the Lord's body is in some crude sense united with or enclosed in the bread'. Zwingli, by contrast, while correctly teaching a form of spiritual presence in the sacrament, 'often spoke in such a watered-down fashion of the Lord's presence … that he seemed to many to acknowledge in the Lord's Supper only a symbol of something absent'.[39] In place of the 'extremes' of Wittenberg and Zurich, Bucer offered his own mediating interpretation of the sacrament: any suggestion of a fleshly presence or of the *manducatio impiorum* was refuted (against Luther), but the true communion of believers with the body and blood of Christ, dispensed with the elements, was firmly upheld.[40]

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36 Rozzo and Seidel Menchi, 'The book and the Reformation', p. 343.

37 S. Cavazza, 'Libri in volgare e propaganda eterodossa: Venezia 1543–1547', in A. Prosperi and A. Biondi (eds), *Libri, idee e sentimenti religiosi nel Cinquecento italiano* (Modena, 1987), pp. 9–28 (20–21).

38 For the first two letters, dated 17 August and 10 September 1541, see *Martini Buceri Scripta Anglicana fere omnia …* (Basle, 1577), pp. 685–9. The complete text of the third letter, dated 23 December, is published in P. Simoncelli, 'Inquisizione romana e Riforma in Italia', *RSI*, 100 (1988), pp. 5–125 (107–12).

39 Simoncelli, 'Inquisizione romana', p. 111.

40 *Scripta Anglicana*, p. 687: 'Panem … quem frangimus, non panis tantum: sed etiam corporis sui esse communicationem, et calicem gratiarum actionis sanguinis sui, non vini tantum.'

Bucer's appeal to his Italian co-religionists to avoid 'a spirit of curiosity and contention' appears to have fallen on deaf ears. The following year, the Venetian evangelical Baldassare Altieri informed Luther that, to his dismay, the German Eucharistic schism had now infected the Italian philo-Protestant movement.[41] In the first instance, Venice's evangelicals appear to have conformed to Luther's understanding of the sacrament. In August 1543, Altieri assured the Wittenberg reformer: 'We love, respect and are joined in the same spirit with those who, like you, hold the correct opinions [on this matter], and refuse to have any dealings with others who profane the word of God.'[42] Elsewhere in northern Italy, however, there was more sympathy for the Eucharistic teachings of Zwingli and other Swiss reformers. This was certainly the case in early 1540s Lucca where, under the leadership of Peter Martyr Vermigli, the Lateran convent of San Frediano had become a centre for the discussion and dissemination of evangelical ideas. Some of Vermigli's more enthusiastic followers made no secret of their 'sacramentarian' views. One, Girolamo da Pluvio, is reported to have celebrated the Lord's Supper after the Reformed fashion and to have instructed those involved 'that they must receive it solely in memory of Christ's passion'; another, Ottaviano da Verona, described the Eucharist as no more than a 'commemoration of the passion and death of Jesus Christ'.[43] Evidence for the spread of 'Zwinglianism' can also be cited for Cremona, where in November 1537 one Filippo Nicola made public his denial of the real presence by attacking the host.[44] That Nicola's act was more than simply an expression of popular materialism is suggested by the fact that a priest from the same area, Girolamo di Serafino Teggia, later confessed to having preached that the Eucharist was 'a memorial of the benefits that we have received from Jesus Christ'.[45]

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41 Evangelicals of Venice, Vicenza and Treviso to Luther, 26 November 1542 (*D. Martin Luthers Briefwechsel* (11 vols, Weimar, 1930–48), X, no. 3817): 'Quaestio illa de Coena Domini, in Germania primum orta, deinde ad nos quoque delata, proh dolor! quot turbas excitavit! quot dissidia peperit! quantum offendiculorum dedit infirmis! quantum iacturae ecclesiae Dei! quantum impedimenti gloriae Christi propagandae!'

42 Ibid., no. 3907. For evidence that Altieri's views were not shared by all Venetian evangelicals, see F. Ambrosini, *Storie di patrizi e di eresia nella Venezia del '500* (Milan, 1999), p. 216.

43 Adorni-Braccesi, <<*Una città infetta*>>, pp. 130; 262.

44 F. Chabod, *Per la storia religiosa dello stato di Milano durante il dominio di Carlo V: Note e documenti* (Rome, 1962), pp. 115–16.

45 Teggia revealed this in conversation with Domenico Morando, formerly chaplain to Cardinal Giovanni Morone (Firpo and Marcatto, *Morone*, II, pp. 904–8). See also the letter from Giovanni Domenico Sigibaldi to Morone dated 4 April 1541: 'El nostro don Domenico Morando ha ritrovato de la setta zuingliana circa la santissima eucharistia, et quello bravo, nepote de messer Baptista, lo perseguita e li guarda per obliquo: anchor lui ha la sua croce' (ibid., p. 971).

During the first half of the 1540s, opinions such as these rapidly gained ground in the Italian evangelical movement. In a letter to Konrad Pellikan dated 28 January 1545, the Polish student Samuel Micanus noted the popularity of Zwingli's works and Eucharistic theology among the evangelicals of Bologna:

> All the Italian brethren approve of [Zwingli's] writings and freely assent to them. In the matter of the Eucharist many are Lutherans, but far more, if not almost all, of them think along the lines of Zwingli and ourselves. Your works are available here and are highly prized (as God is my witness, I am not lying). But if the truth be told, they [the Italians] value above all other recent authors Huldrych Zwingli, who wrote most divinely and sincerely.[46]

As others have pointed out, Micanus' testimony needs to be treated with caution, given his pro-Zwinglian bias and understandable desire to flatter his Zurich mentors. However, there is plenty of independent evidence for the 'sacramentarian' orientation of the evangelical community of Bologna, as well as of its counterpart in nearby Modena.[47] The merchant Giovanni Battista Scotti, who played a key role in disseminating Protestant literature (including works by Zwingli) in Bologna, is said to have taught 'that the sacrament of the Eucharist is nothing but an example, constituted of bread, water and wine' and that the words 'Hoc est corpus meum' referred not to the host, but to 'the actual body and blood of our redeemer Jesus Christ'.[48] One of Scotti's associates, Angelo Ruggeri, took the view 'that the body of Christ was not in the consecrated host, but that it was like a sign'.[49] Some Modenese evangelicals showed a detailed grasp of Zwingli's symbolical interpretation of the words of institution: in 1544, the Franciscan Bartolomeo della Pergola, himself facing charges of heresy, argued in his defence that he had always sought to demonstrate the real presence of Christ in the sacrament against those who contended that the word 'est' was to be understood as '"significat", "repraesentat" vel

46 The full text of the letter is published in A. Rotondò, 'Anticristo e Chiesa romana: Diffusione e metamorfosi d'un libello antiromano del Cinquecento', in Rotondò, *Aspetti della propaganda religiosa del Cinquecento* (Florence, 1991), pp. 19–164 (161–3). In May 1546, another of Pellikan's correspondents in Bologna, Thomas Erastus, reported that when preaching on predestination a local Dominican had seemed 'ipsissima Huldrici Zwinglii verba recitare' (ibid., pp. 72–4).

47 In his important recent study of the Reformation in Bologna, Guido Dall'Olio notes that 'diversi indizi … fanno pensare a una netta e precoce predominanza di dottrine zwingliane e sacramentarie' in the 'churches' of Bologna and Modena (Dall'Olio, *Eretici e Inquisitori*, p. 116).

48 Ibid., pp. 111–12.

49 Ibid., p. 119.

"demonstrat"'.[50] Confirmation of Micanus' claim that the Bolognese evangelicals had direct access to the works of Zwingli and other Zurich reformers comes from Benedetto Accolti, who testified to having read 'some works of Zwingli addressed to the king of France' (probably the *Commentary on True and False Religion* and the *Fidei expositio*) while studying in Bologna during the early 1540s, and from the Franciscan Giovanni Antonio da Cerva, who admitted to buying a copy of Pellikan's commentaries on the Pauline epistles from a local bookseller.[51]

Micanus' letter was one of several from foreign visitors to Italy commenting on the emergence of an evangelical movement in the Italian cities that the Zurichers received during the 1540s. Early in the summer of 1543, Hans Ratgeb, a Zuricher in the service of the Duke of Ferrara, wrote to Bullinger about the difficulties which local Protestants faced. In the current climate, Ratgeb observed, anyone who dared speak of Christ, Paul or scripture risked being branded a 'luterano'. Various evangelical books had also been banned, notably Celio Secundo Curione's *Pasquino in estasi* and the sermons of Bernardino Ochino. Nevertheless, many continued to profess the Gospel 'here and in Bologna and in Venice and in all of Lombardy, but secretly, out of fear of the Antichrist'.[52] A rather more optimistic assessment of the Reformation's prospects in Italy was offered by the English bookseller Thomas Knight who, writing to Bullinger in January 1547, reported a steady growth in the number of believers in Venice. Not only that, the Venetian authorities had ordered a daily sermon to be preached 'in palatio maiore' during the forthcoming Lenten season, 'something not seen since the foundation of the city'. Knight remarked that Bullinger's commentaries were also increasingly popular in Italy and would be easier to sell were they not so large and expensive.[53]

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50 Firpo and Marcatto, *Morone*, III, p. 255. Even more striking is the testimony of the Modenese weaver Geminiano Callegari, who reproduced faithfully Zwingli's comparison of the sacrament to the ring given by a husband to his wife (Peyronel Rambaldi, *Dai Paesi Bassi all'Italia*, p. 248).

51 Dall'Olio, *Eretici e Inquisitori*, pp. 123–4. For further evidence of the availability of Pellikan's works in Bologna, see Firpo and Marcatto, *Morone*, II, p. 430.

52 StAZ E II 355, 104^{v}–5^{r}; published in *Zwa*, 2/2, pp. 60–3: 'Allso bald das ein von kristus, oder von paullus redt, oder von der hellgen schrifft, so sprechen sy, er sey ein luterano. Doch sind yren fil, hie und zů bolognia und zů vinedig und ym ganzen lombadia, aber haimlich vor vorcht des anticrists.'

53 StAZ E II 343, 358: 'Evangelium in dies multo sincerius hic quam alibi in Italia praedicatur, Senatusque consulto decretum est concionem habere cotidie in palatio maiore futura quadragesima: quod nunquam ab urbe condita visum est. Crescit numerus fidelium magis ac magis. Tua commentaria indies pluris fiunt apud italos et nisi essent tam magna et chara nulla essent magis vendibilia.' Knight is perhaps to be identified with the 'Thomas Anglus' whose activities are alluded to in Rotondò, 'Anticristo', p. 75.

Some leading figures within the Zurich church were able to see for themselves the progress that the Reformation was making south of the Alps. In summer 1543, the Zurich professor of natural sciences, Konrad Gesner, visited Venice in order to collect information for his celebrated *Bibliotheca universalis*.[54] Two years later, the Zurich schoolmaster Johannes Fries made the same trip, with a view to purchasing books for his brother-in-law, Konrad Pellikan, and for Gesner. A brief account of Fries' itinerary (which took him to Milan, Pavia, Verona and Trent as well as Venice) survives.[55] It is likely that Gesner, at least, was in contact with local Protestant sympathizers during his visit; indeed, following his return to Zurich he appears to have assumed responsibility for supplying the Venetian evangelical community with prohibited books.[56] Similar links were forged by another Zuricher, Georg Keller, who spent part of the early 1550s in Padua studying medicine. In a letter to Rudolf Gwalther dated 7 June 1551, Keller commended the bearer, an evangelical from Naples who was planning to visit Switzerland to purchase Protestant works for distribution among his compatriots.[57]

Epistolary contacts between the Zurich church and philo-Protestant circles in Italy were also resumed around this time. In a letter to Joachim Vadian of September 1550, Bullinger gives a detailed account of the persecution to which Italian Protestants were subject, noting as the source of his information 'scriptum N. Itali ex Italia'.[58] Both Bullinger

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54 C. Bonorand, *Vadian und Graubünden: Aspekte der Personen- und Kommunikationsgeschichte im Zeitalter des Humanismus und der Reformation* (Chur, 1991), pp. 62–3. In Venice, Gesner was able to inspect the library of the imperial envoy Diego Hurtado de Mendoza (*Bibliotheca universalis, sive Catalogus omnium scriptorum locupletissimus* (Zurich, 1545), fol. *6^{v}).

55 Bonorand, *Vadian*, pp. 194–6; C. Zürcher, *Konrad Pellikans Wirken in Zürich 1526–1556* (Zurich, 1975), p. 235.

56 In a letter to Bullinger dated 6 December 1543, Baldassare Altieri writes: 'De libris … non est, cur tibi in ea re molesti simus, cum praestantissimus, et humanissimus Gesnerus noster, ut scribis, hanc provinciam pro nobis ultro obierit' (StAZ E II 369, 2). Gesner's *Bibliotheca* contains entries for a number of Italian evangelicals, including Francesco Porto, Antonio Brucioli, Aonio Paleario and Marcantonio Flaminio. He was also in communication with the Dutch printer Arnold van Egenhouts (Arnoldo Arlenio) who operated out of Bologna and acted as a conduit for the supply of prohibited literature to evangelical activists in the city (Bonorand, *Vadian*, p. 63; Dall'Olio, *Eretici e Inquisitori*, p. 126).

57 ZB Ms. F 38, 52^{r}: 'Qui ad vos proficiscitur librorum sacrorum emendorum gratia quos Neapolim vehendos curabit, nam et ipse Neapolitanus est, inde cum quodam famosissimo ditissimo et Christianissimo viro nobili evangelii causa recessit propter suspiciones aliquot …'. See T. Schiess, 'Briefe aus der Fremde von einem Zürcher Studenten der Medizin (Dr. Georg Keller) 1550–1558', *Neujahrsblatt herausgegeben von der Stadtbibliothek Zürich*, 262 (1906), pp. 1–38 (8–9).

58 *Vadian BW*, VII, no. 98.

(one letter) and Pellikan (15 letters covering the period July 1540 to July 1548) were in correspondence with the evangelical secretary to the imperial chancery in Milan, Pietro Merbelio, who was able to provide them with an account of attempts by the local ecclesiastical and secular authorities to crack down on the spread of proscribed literature and on religious dissent more generally.[59] From Merbelio's letters, it would seem that the Zurich church was also in contact with the important Reformed conventicle in Cremona; on several occasions, Merbelio passes on greetings from one Petrus Manna, whom he describes as 'a Cremonese physician and a man with right opinions of Christ' ('phisico Cremonensi viro rectissime de Christo sentienti').[60] In February 1550 another Cremonese, Giacomo Susio, sent Gwalther a manuscript translation into Italian of the latter's *Antichristus*, with the request that he arrange for its publication.[61] Further evidence of the Zurich church's links with Cremona comes from the exile Paolo Gaddi, who on 28 October 1553 thanked Bullinger for sending a letter of support to the beleaguered evangelicals of his native city.[62]

Also documented is the relationship between the Zurichers and evangelical sympathizers in Venice. Although initially their spokesman Baldassare Altieri favoured a Lutheran interpretation of the Eucharist, this did not prevent him from seeking to establish good relations with Zwingli's successors in Zurich. In August 1543, for example, Altieri wrote to Bullinger outlining the difficulties faced by the local faithful, who lacked affordable Protestant literature and suitable pastors, and to request copies of the Zurich Latin Bible, Calvin's *Institutes*, and other works by the Genevan reformer.[63] Later he informed Bullinger of his plans for an alliance between Venice and the Schmalkaldic League, which he believed would pave the way for the triumph of the Gospel in Italy.[64] That prospect evaporated after the defeat of the German princes at Mühlberg in April 1547, which prompted the Venetian authorities to

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59 See Zürcher, *Pellikan*, pp. 74, 295–6; Merbelio to Bullinger, 18 May 1544 (StAZ E II 365, 36–7).

60 Merbelio to Pellikan, 23 July 1540 (ZB Ms. F 47, 39) and 13 May 1543 (ibid., 72–3); Pellikan to Merbelio, 31 March 1545 (ibid., 111).

61 The work appeared from the presses of Oporinus in Basle later that year as *L'Antichristo di M. Ridolfo Gualtero, ministro della Chiesa Tigurina*; Susio's letter is edited in Rotondò, 'Anticristo', pp. 163–4.

62 Schiess, I, no. 231; A. Pastore, *Nella Valtellina del tardo Cinquecento: fede, cultura, società* (Milan, 1975), p. 98.

63 StAZ E II 369, 3.

64 Altieri to Bullinger, 13 November 1546 and 29 January 1547 (StAZ E II 365, 447; 449–50). On this scheme, see A. Stella, 'Utopie e velleità insurrezionali dei filoprotestanti italiani (1545–1547)', *BHR*, 27 (1965), pp. 133–82.

take steps to suppress Protestant proselytizing in the city. Faced with removal from his position as secretary to the English ambassador in Venice, Altieri visited Switzerland in an attempt to secure an alternative diplomatic post that would leave him free to continue his activity on behalf of the Reformation. Despite receiving support from Bullinger, he was unable to persuade the Swiss Diet to accede to this request, and on returning to Italy he was forced to seek sanctuary on the estates of Giovanni Andrea degli Ugoni near Bergamo. From there, Altieri continued to correspond with Bullinger until his death in August 1550.[65]

The Zurichers were keenly aware of the pressures to which evangelical believers in Italy were subject. Their pastoral concern for these embattled communities is perhaps most evident in two letters, from Gesner and Bullinger respectively, dated 6 January 1561. The first of these was prompted by news of the imprisonment of the Sienese evangelicals Dario and Cornelio Sozzini, while the second is addressed more generally to 'the faithful suffering persecution in Italy'.[66] Both Zurichers exhort their correspondents to remain steadfast in the faith and to draw comfort from the knowledge that their tribulations were foretold by Christ. According to Bullinger, persecution is to be understood as a sign of God's favour, even of election; citing Hebrews 12:5–6, he argues that it is to be expected that God, like any loving parent, will sometimes chastise his children.[67] In his letter, Gesner calls on the Sozzini to draw strength from the witness of the martyrs who have preceded them, so that they themselves may be an example to subsequent generations. He warns them against being tempted to abjure their faith, as to deny the Lord having once known him is either the sin against the Holy Spirit or something very close to it. Evangelicals may

65 See *DBI*, II, 559. Degli Ugoni was also in correspondence with Bullinger; in a letter to the *Antistes* dated 13 January 1550, he defended Altieri against accusations of bigamy (StAZ E II 335, 2172). For further evidence of his evangelical leanings, see Ambrosini, *Storia di patrizi*, pp. 94–6.

66 The text of Gesner's letter is published most recently in V. Marchetti and G. Zucchini (eds), *Aggiunte all'Epistolario di Fausto Sozzini 1561–1568* (Warsaw, 1982), pp. 106–10. For Bullinger's, see StAZ E II 342, 398–401.

67 StAZ E II 342, 398v–99r: '… non prohibet, imo permittit ut homines pravi (qui tamen non amplius quam ille velit possunt) nos divexent. At qui hoc facit, non modo Deus est omnipotens et omnia gubernans, sed Dominus quoque noster, qui nos condidit, cui nos obedire debemus: Quinimo pater est benignissimus, qui quae agit nobiscum, ad salutem nostram et in bonum nostrum agit, amans nos et nuspiam deterrens aut negligens. Licet itaque dura nobis videantur, quae nunc nos exercent in mundo cogitabimus tamen illa nobis imposita esse a patre, adeoque nos non hominum, sed Dei Patris benigna manu ita tractari, scriptura sancta hoc diserte testatur. An non Paulus Christi Apostolus manifeste clamat, Fili mi ne neglexeris correptionem Domini, neque deficias cum ab eo argueris. Quem enim diligit Deus corripit, flagellat autem omnem filium quem recipit.'