

Myths and Reality about Heinrich Bullinger's Wife Anna

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The truths and myths about Anna Bullinger Adlischwyler are representative of an enigmatic phenomenon – the missing life stories of the 16th century women who lived at the epicenter of the Zurich Reformation. Writing Anna's life is like projecting the hologram of a prototype housewife; however, by painting the world around Anna, the substance of a real woman does emerge, and a reconstructed narrative appears – a narrative that represents the choices women made in 16th century Zurich. After considering the sources available – including Heinrich Bullinger's correspondence with Anna,¹ his *Diarium*,² *Eheschriften*,³ Anna's only handwritten letter,⁴ and my exegesis of some writings about her – I aim to suggest that the narrative reconstruction of Anna's life is not only a contribution to social history, but also that a gender-inclusive historical theology of marriage is incomplete without narratives of praxis.

¹ Heinrich Bullinger Briefwechsel, eds. Ulrich Gäbler et al., Zurich 1973– [HBBW], vol. 1: Briefe der Jahre 1524–1531.

² Heinrich Bullingers Diarium (Annales vitae) der Jahre 1504–1574, ed. Emil Egli, Basel 1904 [HBD].

³ Heinrich Bullinger: Pastoraltheologische Schriften, ed. Detlef Roth, Zurich 2009 [HBPS], 79–188.

⁴ Zurich Zentralbibliothek, Ms. F 59, 259.

1. Anna Adlischwyler

Anna was the daughter of Elisabeth Stadler (–1529)⁵ and Hans Adlischwyler (–1512) von Rapperswil, a citizen of Zurich since 1491. Hans was the reputable cook of Mayor Waldmann and the luxury loving guild master Ulrich Trinkler: the *Obrigkeitcher Weinschek zum Elsässer*. Hans Adlischwyler belonged to the social elite, as he was the manager of the *Zunft zum Weggen* and *Zunft zur Meisen*, two guilds where Zurich politics and power games played out.⁶ Typical of the facts in Anna's sketchy biography, her birth date remains approximate. The domestic court protocol of 2 July 1528 locates Anna's birth in 1505, while the *Glückshafenrodel* register contains a record of »Anneli Adattschwiler's« birth in 1504.⁷

Anna had one half-brother, Johannes Adlischwyler (–1564), from Hans Adlischwyler's first marriage. Their father died in Pavia as a cook for a field captain in 1512, leaving Anna with a sizable inheritance of three hundred and twenty *rheinische Gulden* in four securities, 1785 *Pfund* of good coins from Zurich in fourteen securities, a house worth one-hundred pounds, some cash and silver dishes worth seventy pounds, three beds, and other household effects.⁸ Anna was not poor.

2. Zurich and Cloister Oetenbach

On 22 July 1522, the council of Zurich ratified the Disputation⁹ mandating that Huldrych Zwingli (1484–1531) preach according to scripture. The Council also considered it negligence to keep the

⁵ HBBW 1, 137, n. 232.

⁶ HBBW 1, 126, n. 1.

⁷ HBBW 1, 126, n. 1.

⁸ Rainer *Henrich*, Heinrich Bullingers privates Testament: Ein wiederentdecktes Selbstzeugnis des Reformators, in: Zürcher Taschenbuch 130 (2010), 20. Information on the prenuptial agreement in the contract from 1529, in H[einrich] *Bruppacher*, Zürcherische Ehekontrakte von 1441–1830, in Zürcher Taschenbuch 29 (1906), 47–77, here 58–60.

⁹ Huldreich Zwinglis sämtliche Werke, eds. Emil Egli et al., Berlin 1905–1959 (Corpus Reformatorum 88–101) [Z], vol 1, 103.

truth from the women in the convents of Zurich; thus, in the summer of 1522, Zwingli preached, *Of the Clarity and Certainty of the Word of God* to the nuns in Zurich.¹⁰ No original sources indicate any particular reason why Anna chose to serve in Zurich as a nun in cloister Oetenbach, however, 19th century historians, including Carl Pestalozzi, claim that Anna's mother placed her in Oetenbach to honor her father after his death in 1512.¹¹ However, there is also no indication whatsoever that Anna was one of the nuns who moved into Oetenbach around 1525 after the convents of Grimmenturm, Selnau, and St. Verena were closed.¹² In fact, even if Anna had chosen to avoid Zwingli's teachings or she was a member of the Dominican Reformation resistance movement, Anna certainly knew of Zwingli's vigorous apologetic. Nonetheless, records indicate that she did not join the Dominican Order until 1523, well into the Reformation.¹³ Anna's circumstances are most curious considering the documents evidencing that since late 1524 the cloister Oetenbach was an oppositional strong hold where meetings were held to plot against the reform. In fact, Küngolt von Breitenlandenbergh, the prioress, did not leave Oetenbach until 1525 when she and several other nuns sought asylum in Roman Luzern.¹⁴

Also due to the Zurich reform, Katharina von Zimmern (1478–1547) the abbess and most powerful woman in Zurich resigned her position in 1525, the same year in which an agreement of rescission was reached concerning Oetenbach, and the convent building was left to the discretion of the state.¹⁵ Bruce Gordon summarizes the situation with the words, »Zwingli had raised the status of marriage to one of the most revered aspects of the Christian faith, but there is no doubt that the Reformation closed off to

¹⁰ Z 1, 338–341.

¹¹ Carl *Pestalozzi*, *Heinrich Bullinger: Leben und ausgewählte Schriften*, Elberfeld 1858, 15.

¹² Annamarie *Halter*, *Geschichte des Dominikanerinnen-Klosters Oetenbach in Zürich 1234–1525*, Winterthur 1956, 161.

¹³ G. W. *Bromiley*, *Zwingli and Bullinger, selected translations with introductions and notes*, Philadelphia 1953, 49–58.

¹⁴ *Halter*, *Geschichte des Dominikanerinnen-Klosters Oetenbach*, 158–160.

¹⁵ *Halter*, *Geschichte des Dominikanerinnen-Klosters Oetenbach*, 160–168.

women all careers other than the household.«¹⁶ In 1875, the historian Raget Christoffel claimed that without question Anna had listened to Zwingli's sermon in 1522 and became a champion of Evangelical truth.¹⁷ If Christoffel is correct, then, why was Anna Adlischwyler still living in Oetenbach in 1527, two years after its closure?

3. Anna Adlischwyler and Heinrich Bullinger, a well documented courtship

Heinrich Bullinger II¹⁸ (1504–1575) began courting Anna with his letter of intent on 30 September 1527.¹⁹ He wrote in the spirit of the Zurich moral Reformation in which marriage was essential to the translation of society into a scripturally founded practical system intended to transform the culture of Zurich. Indeed, Bullinger also had an acute personal and familial interest in the concept of matrimony. Heinrich Bullinger's own father Heinrich Bullinger I (1469–1533) from Bremgarten was ordained as a priest in 1493, but he had been forced to live in exile from his home in Bremgarten because he lived out of wedlock with the beautiful Anna Wiederkehr (–1541), whose two brothers threatened to kill Heinrich I if they ever got their hands on him. It was not until 1506, a year after Heinrich I was born, and after Anna Wiederkehr's brothers became war casualties, that Heinrich Bullinger I and his concubine Anna Wiederkehr returned to Bremgarten where Heinrich II grew up as the youngest of five brothers born to Heinrich Bullinger I, the priest.²⁰

¹⁶ Bruce Gordon, *The Swiss Reformation*, Manchester 2002, 266.

¹⁷ Raget *Christoffel*, *Heinrich Bullinger und seine Gattin nach ihrem segensreichen Wirken in ihrer Familie, Gemeinde und gegen verfolgte Glaubensgenossen*, Zurich 1875, 20.

¹⁸ People were often named after their parents during the 16th century; thus, the reformer Heinrich Bullinger referred to here was named after his father, and subsequently named his own son Heinrich. In order to avoid confusion, for the duration of this article, whenever there could be confusion, I will use the names Heinrich Bullinger I, Heinrich Bullinger II – the reformer – and Heinrich Bullinger III – the reformer's son.

¹⁹ HBBW I, 126–141.

²⁰ HBBW I, 134, n. 171.

Heinrich Bullinger II, the reformer, was interested in marriage from a pragmatic theological point of view but was also a romantic – even authoring a love song for his wedding.²¹ Already in February 1525, the twenty-one year-old Bullinger shared his expert advice on marriage in a reply to a letter from his student Marx Rosen.²² Bullinger specifically defined masculine marital behavior in his letter to Rosen, depicting the woman as a mere object and portraying her to be the weaker vessel, as he pieced together a picture of the female sex using Bible citations. He also made it clear to Rosen that a woman was not to be beaten.²³

By personally pursuing Anna Adlischwyler, Bullinger created an interesting legal situation when he ignored the social mores of marriage and its usual third party facilitation. Instead, Bullinger sent Anna a very lengthy letter asking for her hand. With logical and forceful arguments for marriage and the Reformed faith, Bullinger pressed his intentions, trying to convince Anna that life in the convent was neither biblical, nor God's will for her future. After declaring his personal integrity, financial situation, and love for Anna, Bullinger, who was all of twenty-three years old, wrote: »Yes, you are young, and God did not give you such a body, and did not create you so that you remain an eternal madam and do nothing so that fruit comes from you.« He tells her not to stay a virgin stuck between the walls of a convent,²⁴ and closes with instructions: »Read my letter three or four times, think about it, and ask God so that he tells you what his will is in this matter.«²⁵ Bullinger's first letter is remarkably similar to *The Complete Teaching on Christian Marriage*,²⁶ a tract that he had begun to write two months previously on his 23rd birthday, 18 July 1527.

On 29 October 1527, Bullinger wrote in his *Diarium*²⁷ that he had met with Anna Adlischwyler in the Grossmunster Church on

²¹ Fritz Blanke, *Der junge Bullinger (1504-1531)*, Zurich 1942, 113-115.

²² HBBW 1, 57-66.

²³ Compare Monika Gsell, *Hierarchie und Gegenseitigkeit: Überlegungen zur Geschlechterkonzeption in Heinrich Bullingers Eheschriften*, in: *Geschlechterbeziehungen und Textfunktionen*, ed. Rüdiger Schnell, Tübingen 1998, 93-95; HBBW 1, 57-66.

²⁴ HBBW 1, 138,28-139,4.

²⁵ HBBW 1, 138,16-20.

²⁶ See *Vollkommne underrichtung desz christlichenn eestands*, in: HBPS, 1-78.

²⁷ HBD, 11-17.

27 October 1527 where she had promised him marital faithfulness. In contrast, the next *Diarium* entry is: »Her mother was still living as a widow, aged, and invalid. To her the very mention of our marriage was extremely detestable. Thence, for a while, we kept it a secret.«²⁸ Some discrepancy exists concerning the mother-in-law. Fritz Blanke contends that Elisabeth Adlischwyler (–1529) was living with her daughter in Oetenbach at the time of Bullinger’s proposal, but the editors of Bullinger’s correspondence footnote that Anna’s mother moved into Oetenbach a few weeks before her death in 1529.²⁹ Notwithstanding, Anna must have communicated with Bullinger sometime after October 1527 asking him to release her from their prenuptial agreement. Despite the fact that Anna’s letter is lost, Bullinger’s next correspondence with Anna refers to her written renege; albeit, an engagement in 1527 was a legally binding contract to be spoken in the presence of witnesses. Not so with Anna and Heinrich; there were no witnesses to their engagement.

Bullinger’s second letter to Anna, written at the end of 1527 or in the first half of 1528,³⁰ is less melodious, even rather salty. Bullinger replied like a jilted suitor and applied pressure on Anna to reassess her position. In his reply, he mentions the letter that Anna sent telling him that she did not want to leave the convent. Bullinger, armed with Bible texts, informed Anna that God wants people to be married. He asked her not to bring ridicule upon him by refusing to marry him. In addition, Bullinger asserted political power to achieve his intent. Pestalozzi tells us Bullinger sent Huldrych Zwingli (1484–1531)³¹ to Oetenbach to have a word with the twenty-two year-old Anna. Then, Prior Peter Simler (1486–1557), another leader from Zurich, read a letter seeking domestic jurisdiction for the case – at Bullinger’s request.³² Blanke writes that in June of 1528, Bullinger presented his two witnesses, both Huldrych Zwingli and Peter Simler, to the domestic court in order to

²⁸ HBD, 11.

²⁹ Compare Fritz Blanke, Heinrich Bullinger: Vater der reformierten Kirche, Zurich 1990; HBBW 1, 126, n. 1.

³⁰ HBBW 1, 145–149.

³¹ Compare Blanke, Der junge Bullinger, 105–106; Pestalozzi, Heinrich Bullinger, 53–54.

³² HBBW 1, 126, n. 1.

defend the legality of his engagement to Anna; he suggests that Simler read Anna's letter to the court. This letter from Anna is also lost.³³ The court ruled that the engagement was binding. Even after the court ruling, Anna lingered behind the walls of the convent for almost two years, perhaps considering her options, or perhaps fearing her mother's reprisal.

On 24 February 1528, Bullinger sent Anna a third letter, actually more of a tract. Anna supposedly requested his letter of behavioral instructions defining the responsibilities and virtues of a wife, but Anna's reply, too, has been lost. Bullinger's didactic letter can be divided into two sections. The first part concerns women's behavior and virtues, including humility, chastity, and silence. The second section focuses on gender roles in family arrangements. The letter ends with an exegesis of 1 Corinthians chapter 7, which highly praises marriage. Bullinger's emphasis on how men should behave is unusual considering that his letter was addressed to a woman.³⁴ It can be argued that Bullinger did not write the material in this letter specifically for Anna, but actually used lecture material from a series of lectures for pastors that he gave that same year at the *Klosterschule* in Kappel on Albis.³⁵ Bullinger's tract places great emphasis on Psalm 127 and 128, both of which propagate procreation, and Proverbs 31,10–31 that stresses female virtue and selflessness.

On 17 August 1529, just six weeks after her mother passed away on 24 June, Anna Adlischwyler wed Heinrich Bullinger in Birmensdorf at the home of Bullinger's brother, Johannes (1496–1570). Pastor Peter Simler officiated the ceremony, and the celebration was held in private at the dinner table. The groom did not want a big fuss, nor a celebration that would stir up the town of Bremgarten where he was pastor. Bullinger's parents, Heinrich Bullinger I (1469–1533) and Anna Wiederkehr (–1541) were also married

³³ Compare HBBW 1, 145, n. 1; *Blanke*, Heinrich Bullinger, 86.

³⁴ Gsell does a fine and credible job defending this thesis in her own exposition of Bullinger's »Handbook on Marriage«. See *Gsell*, Hierarchie und Gegenseitigkeit, 95–98.

³⁵ *Gsell*, Hierarchie und Gegenseitigkeit, 98.

quite publically that same year on 31 December in Grossmunster, Zurich.³⁶

There can be no doubt that Anna, who Bullinger nicknamed his »beloved *hausfrau*«,³⁷ choose to literally model her life after the wife of Psalm 127: »children are a gift of the Lord, the fruit of the womb is a reward ... how blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them.« Anna adopted Bullinger's Bible exegesis and instructions and was fruitful like a vine within her house. Little Anneli was born to the Bullingers in 1530, and Margarethe in 1531.³⁸ Anna also had the assistance of a maid named Britta Schmid who passed away after thirty-four years of service on 11 February 1565.³⁹

4. Myths and Anna Bullinger

The folklore surrounding Anna Bullinger begins with the Second War of Kappel in 1531 and appears in 19th and early 20th century Bullinger historiography. The rendition of the Bremgarten events where Bullinger fled to Zurich in 1531 provides an example of these. The historians – Pestalozzi (1858),⁴⁰ Christoffel (1875),⁴¹ Good (1901)⁴² and Blanke (1942)⁴³ – interpreted Anna's life with romantic formalism. In their histories they reiterate the 16th century mythological narrative. The story goes that a mysterious white woman was seen ghosting around in Bremgarten when Zwingli conferred with Bullinger on a night shortly before Zwingli lost his life in the Battle at Kappel on 11 October 1531.⁴⁴

³⁶ HBD, 18.

³⁷ HBD, 77.

³⁸ HBD, 19.

³⁹ HBD, 82.

⁴⁰ *Pestalozzi*, Heinrich Bullinger, 312; Friedrich Otto *Pestalozzi*, *Aus der Geschichte des Geschlechts der Bullinger von Bremgarten und Zürich*, in: *Zürcher Taschenbuch* 50 (1930), 24.

⁴¹ *Christoffel*, Heinrich Bullinger und seine Gattin.

⁴² James Isaac *Good*, *Famous Women of the Reformed Church*, [s.n.] 1901.

⁴³ *Blanke*, Heinrich Bullinger.

⁴⁴ Cf. for instance *Blanke*, Heinrich Bullinger, 126. – Bullinger's account in: *Heinrich Bullingers Reformationsgeschichte*, ed. Johann Jakob Hottinger and Hans Heinrich Vögeli, vol. 3, Frauenfeld 1840, 49.

In the night of 20–21 November 1531, Christoffel and Pestalozzi say that Bullinger fled Bremgarten together with his father, his brother Johannes, and pastor Gervasius Schuler (ca. 1495–1563) to take refuge in Zurich, leaving Anna, Britta, the infant Anneli, and baby Margarethe behind.⁴⁵ As the story goes, the Roman insurgents plundered Bullinger I's home, but not so much the house of Bullinger II; however, thirty soldiers did move in with Anna, Britta, and the children. Anna was determined to join Bullinger in Zurich when she ordered her maid to serve the soldiers, before she headed toward the city gates, children in tow. The guards had sealed the gates, but with Amazonian vigor, Anna wrestled the keys from the guards, left the city, and walked twenty miles, carrying her girls to join Bullinger in Zurich. Pestalozzi reports: »Bullinger rejoiced heart fully to once again embrace Anna in his arms.«⁴⁶ The 19th century myths are not included in Büsser's Bullinger biography from 2004.⁴⁷

5. A fruitful »Hausfrau«

After Bullinger's installation in Grossmunster on 9 December 1531, the life-writing concerning Anna grows mundane, modeled especially after Psalm 128 as Bullinger had suggested in his letter of instruction, »your children like olive plants around your table.«⁴⁸ Anna bore Heinrich eleven children in eighteen years. She gave birth to Anneli in 1530, Margarethe in 1531, Elisabeth 1532, Heinrich 1534, Hans Rudolf in 1536, Christof 1537, Hans in 1539 and Diethelm in 1541, but both died in 1541, Veritas 1543, Dorothea in 1545, and Felix who was born in 1547, died in 1553.⁴⁹ Anna continued to be fruitful until she was forty-three

⁴⁵ Pestalozzi, *Heinrich Bullinger*, 67; Christoffel, *Heinrich Bullinger und seine Gattin*, 54 f.

⁴⁶ Compare and note discrepancies between Pestalozzi, *Heinrich Bullinger*, 67; Christoffel, *Heinrich Bullinger und seine Gattin*, 54 f.; Good, *Famous Women*; Felix von Orelli, [Anna Bullinger], Zurich 1860 (*Neujahrsblatt der Zürcherischen Hülfs-gesellschaft* 60).

⁴⁷ Fritz Büsser, *Heinrich Bullinger: Werk und Wirkung*, vol. 1, Zurich 2004.

⁴⁸ HBPS, 171.

⁴⁹ Pestalozzi, *Heinrich Bullinger*, 68.

years old. She evidently embraced her role as a *Hausfrau* and followed Bullinger's instructions to model herself after the virtuous woman of Proverb 31, who »rises also while it is still night and gives food to her household and portions to her maidens.«⁵⁰

The Bullinger's kitchen table provided for orphans, students, persecuted reformers, and their families. Already living in the Bullinger household by 1536 were at least five of the Bullinger's own children, Bullinger's mother, the English student Nicholas Partridge, the maid Britta, Bullinger's charge Rudolf Gwalther (1519–1585), and probably Anna Reinhart (1484–1538), Zwingli's widow, and their two daughters Regula (1524–1565) and Anna born in 1530.⁵¹ Bullinger's correspondence is graced with praise for Anna's hospitality, including greetings to Anna from a long list of men and women. In April 1544, Johannes Gast's (–1552) wife Apollonia sent Anna a pair of knives as a gesture of thanks for her kindness,⁵² and Pastor Heinrich Lüthi from Winterthur sent his greetings to Anna along with four roosters.⁵³ Even Calvin was more than likely a guest at Anna's table during his 1537 visit with Bullinger in Zurich. Both the Italian Secondo Curione (1503–1569) and the German Wolfgang Musculus (1497–1563), along with their large families, found refuge in Anna's home for extended periods. Notwithstanding, the fragments of Bullinger's bookkeeping going back to 1555, as well as bills and shopping lists from between 1561–1564, indicate that he controlled the finances, how much bread the family ate, and made sure that they drank good wine.⁵⁴

Bullinger called his family a joy.⁵⁵ Logically, the daily care and responsibility for family functionality fell on Anna. She certainly experienced sorrow at the loss of her babies Hans, Diethelm, and Felix. While Anna was surly worried about her nephew Hans Adlischwyler, who was jailed for raping a girl – the news of which

⁵⁰ HBBW 1, no. 28, 172.

⁵¹ *Henrich*, Heinrich Bullingers privates Testament, 19.

⁵² Johannes Gast to Bullinger, HBBW 14, 172.

⁵³ Heinrich Lüthi to Bullinger, HBBW 14, 437.

⁵⁴ Zurich Staatsarchiv, E II 453, 205–239.

⁵⁵ HBD, 77.

killed his mother in 1544⁵⁶ – Anna was anxious about her own children. On 20 December 1553, Bullinger wrote to their son:

»Your mother makes big eyes when you already speak of needing another pair of shoes for the winter. It is hardly fifteen weeks since you left us, when you took three pairs with you, the red, the gray, and black. At this rate, you will need six pairs a year. I have more than enough with two. Do not let your shoes go to pieces, but get them mended on time.«⁵⁷

Furthermore, along these same lines, the only surviving handwritten letter by Anna reads:

»My friendly greetings my dear, and know that it makes me completely happy that you are so well provided for. I ask you to be sound, hard working, and to clean yourself, fearing God, honorable toward God, and all people. I ask you to always think about why you are in a foreign place and to watch the time for doing what needs to be done, not being slothful, and praying without ceasing, loyally. And protect yourself from bad company and enjoy staying home. In addition to this, let me know how your clothing is, and if you have enough shirts or how they are being washed. They must be soaped or given to the woman again sometimes. It is so hot. Write it down, and greet her from me. And do not let your shoes fall apart, give them to be cleaned, and be domestic. May God not only protect you from suffering. From me. Anna Bullingerin. Your mom.«⁵⁸

At the end of Anna's letter, there is an addendum in Bullinger's handwriting:

»Greetings from daddy too.«

In 1564, the plague conquered Zurich; Bullinger was deathly ill when he called the church leaders together on 17 September, blessed them, told them to be longsuffering and loyal, and finally entrusted them with the church. A few days later, he wrote in his *Diarium*:

⁵⁶ Hans Jakob Adlischwyler to Bullinger, HBBW 2, no. 711, 37.

⁵⁷ Translation from *Good, Famous Women*, 38. The final sentence of Good's translation of this letter was also part of Pestalozzi's text attributed to Anna, but in reality, it is text from Anna's one and only letter melted together with Bullinger's own. The phenomenon of opportunistic textual and historical license in recording historical narratives of 16th century women will be discussed in more detail in my forthcoming dissertation. Compare Zentralbibliothek Zurich Ms. F 59, 252 and Ms. F 59, 259.

⁵⁸ Zentralbibliothek Zurich, Ms. F 59, 259.

»That night the plague also took my beloved *Hausfrau* Annen Adlischwylerin. She was ill for nine days, called out faithfully to God, and died blessed. She was buried around noon the next day, Monday, 25 September, with wonderful participation of the town's people, the good and honorable people of the entire city. She was carried to her grave and buried next to Mr. Hansen Escheren the city notary and Mr. Dr. Peter Martyr, at the place where you come into the choir and down the long stairs to the gate that closes the courtyard.«⁵⁹

The recovering Bullinger was too ill to attend the funeral of his *Hausfrau* who had attended to him for thirty-five years.⁶⁰ The pest was relentless, killing his daughters Anna and Margareth as well as his maid Britta, in addition to many others. On 11 November 1564, he wrote to Ambrosius Blarer (1492–1564): »You know that the Lord has taken the staff of my old age, my loyal, chosen, and exquisitely godly wife. But the Lord is righteous and his judgment is righteous.«⁶¹

Anna chose to marry Bullinger and to embody his scriptural ideal, and the olive plants around her table did grow to be powerful trees.⁶² Rudolf Gwalther, the orphan whom the Bullinger's sponsored, married Regula Zwingli and became the pastor of St. Peter's Church in Zurich. Huldrych Zwingli II, who married Anna Bullinger II, became the hospital pastor and a professor of theology; their children included Rudolf, Ulrich, Verena, Margareth and Regula. Josias Simler (1530–1576) married Elisabeth Bullinger and was professor of theology at Zurich. Ludwig Lavater married Margaretha Bullinger and became deacon at Grossmunster; their children were Felix, Heinrich, Anna, Katharina, and Regula. Heinrich Bullinger III married Anna Gwalther, the daughter of Rudolf Gwalther and Regula Zwingli, and was a preacher at Zollikon and St. Peter in Zurich. Dorothea Bullinger looked after her father until his death in 1575 and married Alexander Stockar in 1578.⁶³ Anna can be compared to a tree that bore much fruit.

⁵⁹ HBD, 77.

⁶⁰ HBD, 77.

⁶¹ Briefwechsel der Brüder Ambrosius und Thomas Blarer 1509–1567, ed. Traugott Schiess, vol. 3, Freiburg i.Br. 1912, no. 2637, 834.

⁶² See above footnote 48.

⁶³ *Heinrich*, Heinrich Bullingers privates Testament, 21.

6. Myths, truths or reconstructing narratives?

Many 19th century historians enlarged on Anna's life, her suffering, and her hospitality; thus, they created an Anna persona or myth. Christoffel refers to Anna as »an angel of comfort«. ⁶⁴ Pestalozzi is the originator of a quote from Anna that Christoffel also cites, in which Anna comforted her sister-in-law, but I have not found any original traces of it in the archives. ⁶⁵ In addition, Pestalozzi also, however, seems to have confused the letters from Anna Adlischwyler Bullinger and her daughter Anna Bullinger Zwingli. ⁶⁶

Yet, it is no wonder that Christoffel featured Anna as a social model and moral construct in his 1875 history of Anna and Heinrich Bullinger, and that the *Neujahrsblatt der Zürcherischen Hülfs-gesellschaft* of 1860 was dedicated in its entirety to *Frau Mutter* and »The Mother of Zurich«, with a silverpoint portrait of Anna wearing a dress fashioned in 1860, three-hundred years after her death. This publication is definitely an example of hagiography that glorifies Anna, propaganda to the youth of Zurich, and useful for constructing gender roles. ⁶⁷

Disconcerting, however, are the words in the *Zürcher Taschenbuch* of 1930 that dismiss Anna: »Heinrich Bullinger wrote nothing about his wife, except that she died.« ⁶⁸ More disturbing is that so little historiography includes analysis of the choices that Anna and other 16th century women made when they invested themselves in the Reformation and the people at their kitchen tables.

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Abstract: An attempt to reconstruct Anna Adlischwyler Bullinger's 16th century biography, leaning heavily on contextual history, while taking Heinrich Bullinger's correspondence, *Diarium*, *Eheschriften*, and Anna's only handwritten letter into consideration. Identifying and including the elements of myth and hagiography that fill Anna's

⁶⁴ Christoffel, Heinrich Bullinger und seine Gattin, 58.

⁶⁵ Compare: Pestalozzi, Heinrich Bullinger, 481–482; Christoffel, Heinrich Bullinger und seine Gattin, 100.

⁶⁶ This confusion has carried to contemporary times, see HBBW 1, 126, n. 1.

⁶⁷ Orelli, [Anna Bullinger].

⁶⁸ Pestalozzi, Aus der Geschichte des Geschlechts der Bullinger, 24.

biographies from other centuries, although little can be traced to original sources, enables a lively narrative about Anna Bullinger's life with a window into the lives of women in Reformation Zurich and a view of how historians perceived them.

Keywords: Anna Adlischwyler, Heinrich Bullinger, Zurich, Reformation, history of women, Christian marriage, cultural history, narrative reconstruction