

Gesamtauseinandersetzung. – MN beschreibt aufgrund intensiven Aktenstudiums anständig, aber doch auch und richtigerweise erbost, wie machtorientiert da seitens der Kirchenleitung Menschenschach gespielt worden ist: Ich sehe Bauernopfer, kleine und grosse Rochaden zur Sicherung eigener Positionen und den stetigen Drang zur Schachmattsetzung des ebenso verteuflten wie letztlich wenig bekannten Gegners. Mit einer ausführlichen Analyse der (späten) theologischen und anthroposophischen Kontroversschriften (7.) und Beobachtungen zum Gesamtverlauf der Auseinandersetzung in Bern (8.) schliesst der historische Teil (und die eigentliche Dissertation) ab; in einem letzten (9.) Kapitel werden Fragen zur gegenwärtigen Spannungslage und einige Handlungsdesiderate ausgesprochen.

Nicht, dass sich das Buch leicht lesen liesse: Vielfache Verzahnungen zwischen den Kapiteln und einige Redundanzen, ergänzt um gelegentliche Lektoratsfehlleistungen, streuen ein wenig Sand ins Langstrecken-Leseauge (481 Seiten bis zur immer noch umfangreichen Anmerkung 1420). Andererseits macht das Buch hellwach, schärft auf historischem Umweg den Verstand für gegenwärtige Spannungsfragen, lädt mit bemerkenswerten Beobachtungen und Analysen (die Anthroposophie als Erweckungsbewegung ...) zum Weiterdenken ein und lässt insbesondere den Konfessionskundler in mir aufmerken: Wem werden Synodalratspräsidentinnen des Jahres 2049 die Hand zur Entschuldigung reichen müssen?

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Several days before his sixty-second birthday in June 1581, Beza noted that he was entering the «climactic year» of his life, the year believed by the ancients to be especially ill-fated and dangerous. However, Christian hope called for a different attitude toward the future: «I would be the happiest of men if this year was for me a stairway into heaven» (# 1481). Dread and hope – these conflicting emotions find frequent expression in the forty-eight letters that comprise Beza's published correspondence for 1581. Nearly two-thirds of these epistolary exchanges are with three long-trusted friends, Rudolf Gwalther (antistes of Zurich), Jean-Jacques Grynaeus (professor

at Basle) and Laurent Dürnhoffer (pastor at Nuremberg). With these men Beza regularly discusses his theological opinions, formulates strategy, and shares his fears. Beza also maintains contact with several high-placed English and Scottish Protestants (William Cecil, George Buchanan) and receives important letters from the French historian La Popelinière and the Huguenot chief (and future French king) Henry of Navarre. The publication of the Lutheran Formula of Concord (1577) – with its explicit condemnation of the «sacramentarians» – continues to send shockwaves through the Reformed world. Beza's letters describe final scenes of this tragedy: Auguste of Saxony has purged moderate Lutherans from the faculty at the University of Wittenberg. Jacob Andreae, the champion of the doctrine of ubiquity, has now become like a pope for Gnesio-Lutherans (# 1454). Even in Strasbourg the ubiquitarians appear to have won:

from their pulpits, city preachers attack Reformed Protestants as worse than Jews and Muslims; in the streets, people angrily denounce the names of Calvin and Zwingli. «Poor, miserable Germany,» Gwalther mourns, «where those who ought to provide healing for others are themselves sick beyond cure» (# 1492). Through much of 1581 Beza and Gwalther attempt to organize a unified response to the German crisis. The Reformed cities of Switzerland apply diplomatic pressure on Strasbourg (Appendix I). More significantly, after several years in discussion, Jean-François Salvard finally completes the *Harmonia Confessionum*. Beza hopes that this harmony of thirteen Protestant confessions (including the Second Helvetic Confession and the Augsburg Confession) will demonstrate the broad appeal of Reformed Christianity and its substantial agreement with Lutheran doctrine. The preface to the *Harmonia* (written by Beza and Salvard) calls for unity and Christian charity. It concludes with the words of Psalm 133:1: *Ecce quam bonum et quam jucundum est consentire fratres in unum* (Appendix VII).

Problems also abound in France. The Peace of Fleix, concluded the previous year between Henry of Navarre and Alençon, the Duke of Anjou (brother of Henry III), has failed to pacify the kingdom. Fighting continues in Dauphiné, not far from Geneva. As before, the Reformed churches survive «under the cross» (# 1499). In his darkest moments Beza fears that conflict in France will soon plunge the entire Christian West into chaos. Only repentance and prayer can exorcise this demon of violence (# 1463). Beza and other Reformed leaders remain suspicious not only of the Catholic Anjou – who is attempting to negotiate a marriage with Elizabeth of England – but also of the Huguenot

prince Navarre, whose moral character appears deficient and military decisions decidedly self-serving (# 1465). In February, Navarre writes a long (clearly defensive) letter to Beza in which he justifies the Peace of Fleix and the behavior of nobles in his household, and solicits the reformer's attendance at the General Synod of Montauban (convened in April). Navarre concludes the letter by encouraging Beza to write him frequently, to speak his mind freely, and «to continue your good admonitions as if you were my father» (# 1460). In the decade to come, Beza regularly acts on this invitation.

Theodore Beza's health in 1581 has improved significantly from the previous year. The Academy flourishes, with record enrollments. So too, Geneva is at peace. But the reformer continues to sense danger. Beza hears rumors that the young Duke of Savoy Charles-Emmanuel is forging an alliance with the pope and the king of Spain to attack Geneva (# 1486). Similarly, he suspects that the Catholic princes are plotting to impose by force the decrees of Trent on France and Protestant Europe (# 1500). As always, the Genevan church remains as vulnerable as «a nest of swallows» (# 1479). Beza's pen is active in 1581, highlighting his various roles as polemicist, biblical exegete, and historian. In the summer he finishes *Pro Corporis Christi Veritate* against the Lutheran ubiquitarian Guillaume Holder. Later in the fall, his written reflections on seven penitential Psalms are published under the title *Chrestienes meditations* (see the letter-preface, # 1496). At the same time, he is busy revising his beloved *Annotationes* on the New Testament. «I prefer by far emending these *Annotationes* to the writing of apologies and rehashing old arguments,» he insists (# 1475). Beza's most important contribution to biblical

studies will be of a different sort: in 1581, the reformer donates to Cambridge University a fifth-century Greek-Latin manuscript of the Gospels and Acts (see Appendix IX). Known today as *Codex Bezae* (cod. D), this uncial manuscript remains one of the earliest and most dependable witnesses available to the text of the New Testament. Finally, Beza's view of historical writing is illustrated in a fascinating epistolary exchange with the French historian Henri Lancelot Voisin, the sire of La Popelinière (see # 1458, # 1472). While Beza affirms La Popelinière's principle of impartiality in the writing of history, he insists that neutrality should never be allowed to obfuscate the pure and simple truth of the past. The nascent conception of the historian's craft once championed by La Popelinière finds mature and impressive expression in this present volume of Beza's *Correspondance*. As in previous volumes, editors Dufour, Nicollier, and Genton have produced a critical edition that is «state of the art.» The introduction provides an

excellent overview of the salient concerns and primary insights of the volume as a whole. Each letter is prefaced by a detailed summary in French. The extensive annotations that follow each letter are rich in historical background and commentary, informed by extensive knowledge of relevant primary and secondary literature. For the first time, the editors have included brief biographical sketches of Beza's chief correspondents at the beginning of the volume to help orient the reader. Beza's premonition of disaster during this «climactic year,» unrealized in 1581, will be actualized the following April when the Duke of Savoy besieged Geneva, commencing the so-called War of Raconis. But already, the letters included in this present volume capture the acute sense of danger experienced by Beza and other Reformed churchmen as they confronted Catholic – and Lutheran – Europe.

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«I am by nature an optimist» – so writes Theodore Beza to his close friend Jean Crato, the personal physician of Emperor Rudolph II, in the summer of 1582 (# 1542). Beza's letters on the whole validate this self-assessment: the reformer's perspective on life is usually positive and hopeful, buoyed by confidence in God's providence, despite physical ailments, personal tragedy, and recurring anxiety for the well-being of Reformed churches. Such optimism is severely

tested in 1582, however, when Geneva is besieged by the armies of her bellicose neighbor, the duke of Savoy. Beza serves the war effort with his pen, soliciting support from powerful allies and friends. Impressive is the list of these potential benefactors to whom Beza writes: Henry of Navarre, François de Châtillon, Matthieu Merle, Peter Beutterich, William Cecil, and Francis Walsingham. Nonetheless, Beza's most trusted correspondents remain Rudolf Gwalther of Zurich, Jean-Jacques Grynaeus of Basle, and Laurent Dürnhoffer of Nuremberg. Nearly half of the fifty-seven letters found in this present volume are addressed to or received from these three men. The so-called War of Raconis between Geneva and Savoy looms large on Beza's