

sector of Christian society at a time of rapid change and challenges. It provides a useful direction to the study of spiritual and intellectual life in the critical period of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries.

Matthew Z. Heintzelman, *Hill Museum and Manuscript Library*
doi:10.1017/rqx.2018.70

Oswald Myconius: Briefwechsel 1515–1552. Regesten. Rainer Henrich, ed.
2 vols. Zurich: Theologischer Verlag, 2017. viii + 1,284 pp. €108.

Oswald Myconius is not a familiar figure even among Reformation historians. Born in Lucerne in 1488, Myconius attended the university of Basel and then became a schoolmaster there, associating with the humanist circle around Erasmus of Rotterdam. Like many of Erasmus's supporters, Myconius embraced the Reformation, and by 1523 he had become a schoolmaster in Zurich and an ardent supporter of Huldrych Zwingli. He would remain in Zurich until shortly after Zwingli's death in October 1531, when he moved to Basel. There he succeeded Johannes Oecolampadius as leader of Basel's church, a position he held until his death in 1552. Myconius was neither an important theologian nor an influential churchman, but he corresponded with men who were both, and his letters enable readers to follow the course of the first generation of the Swiss Reformation through the eyes of its participants.

The volume's introduction provides a detailed overview of Myconius's life, updating and correcting older biographies. His surviving correspondence consists of 1,338 letters, which are published in two consecutively paginated volumes. This is about the same size as the surviving correspondence of Zwingli and somewhat larger than that of Oecolampadius (ca. 950 letters). A significant proportion of Myconius's correspondence has already appeared in editions of correspondence of other Swiss and South German Reformers, particularly that of Heinrich Bullinger, and so rather than reproducing each letter, the editor provides detailed summaries that are virtual translations into German. Since most of the older correspondence editions, including those of Zwingli and the francophone Reformers, contain only the Latin letters, the summaries in this new edition make the letters easier to use. Annotations are kept to a minimum, and there are instead in-text parenthetical references to the published editions where further information can be found.

Myconius's early correspondence displays a typically humanist interest in new publications of patristic and contemporary works, and it reflects the eager reception of Luther's ideas, which were not clearly differentiated from those of Erasmus. Few letters survive from Myconius's years in Zurich, and the majority of the letters date from after his move to Basel. From this point on, he was a full member of the broad epistolary network stretching through Switzerland and South Germany that enabled the exchange of ideas and the spread of news—as well as of rumors and misinformation. Even after he

left Zurich, Myconius's ties with that city remained strong. His most frequent correspondent was Heinrich Bullinger, but he also wrote to Bullinger's colleagues Leo Jud, Konrad Pellikan, Theodor Bibliander, and Rudolf Gwalther. Other correspondents included Martin Bucer in Strasbourg, Jean Calvin in Geneva, Ambrosius Blarer in Constance, Joachim Vadian in St. Gall, and a host of lesser figures in these and other cities. It is the exchange with some of the minor figures that makes Myconius's correspondence so interesting. Because many of these individuals were not writing in an official capacity, their letters are more candid and personal, and they can be quite revealing of daily life in the sixteenth century. Particularly striking is the warmth and gratitude seen in the letters from Myconius's former students.

Myconius's correspondence is especially important for the light it sheds on the religious and political situation of the Swiss Confederation. The Reformers often discuss both the practical difficulties of building new Protestant churches and the theological controversies, especially concerning the Lord's Supper, that destabilized those churches. After the estrangement between Bucer and Bullinger in the mid-1530s, Myconius tried to mediate between the two, and he served as an important conduit of information between Strasbourg and Zurich. Particularly striking for their detail are the letters written from 1546 and after that follow the rise and fall of Protestant fortunes during the Schmalkaldic War and the reaction in Switzerland to the Augsburg Interim. From them one sees the details of troop movements, the human costs of war, the circulation of false rumors about the outcome of battles or the emperor's death, and the political dilemma of the Swiss Protestants, who wanted to support their German coreligionists but were deterred by fears that this would push the Catholic confederates into war on the emperor's side.

The letters also contain much information on schools and education, whether curriculum, staffing, students, or funding. As might be expected, most of this relates to the university of Basel, but Myconius received reports from Baslers studying in Wittenberg, Leipzig, Marburg, and Paris about their living conditions and studies at those universities. It is striking to see how closely the Swiss Reformers followed developments outside the German-speaking lands, and the Turkish threat to Europe, whether through its army in Hungary or its fleet in the Mediterranean, was often discussed. The letters contain news of distant disasters, such as earthquakes in Sicily and the explosion of a tower used for storing gunpowder in Mecheln, as well as reports of omens and portents, such as the black dog that allegedly appeared to one of the cardinals presiding over the Council of Trent, who died shortly afterward.

Myconius's correspondence demonstrates how important letters were for the transmission of news and information in the early modern period. For that reason its publication should be welcomed not only for those interested in Swiss history but by scholars of the early modern period more generally.

Amy Nelson Burnett, *University of Nebraska–Lincoln*
doi:10.1017/rqx.2018.71