

Siegfried Bräuer's lesser known articles.

By Peter Matheson

Siegfried Bräuer's contribution to our knowledge of Thomas Müntzer's life and theology through his countless articles, books and editions is incalculable, well known and acknowledged in the Festschrift dedicated to him in 2010.¹ He has always collaborated closely with other scholars, not least the late Helmar Junghans and Günter Vogler, but he may well be the single most influential figure in revising and expanding our understanding of Müntzer.

How did he achieve this? By endless hard work, of course, stolen from his so-called free time after a busy work-day. He never, until retirement, had the luxury of a full-time scholarly position. Many other factors, though, contributed to his flow of seminal work, which continues even now as he is well into his eighties. His superb linguistic skill in relation to Müntzer's very difficult German was crucial, together with a command of the Latin of the period. He was, and remains, moreover, a meticulous stickler for the facts. The Germans favour the word *Akribie* for exactness, and it certainly applies to him. Everything was checked, tested, and double-checked, always going back to the primary sources. He haunted the archives, was a *Quellenfresser*. The title of many of his articles, characteristically, begins with a quote. He was a formidable myth-buster, precisely because he trusted the sources, and them alone, though of course he weighed up the sources very cautiously, too. He took all secondary authorities with a ton of salt. Hence the sober, prudent judgements which won him lasting respect not only among his fellow church historians, but among Marxist colleagues in the DDR period. Hence the gleam in his eye when he unearthed new material.

He was of course theologically trained, and had a discriminating eye for crucial issues in doctrine, but he also instinctively set any and every theological statement within its socio-cultural and political context. As a result his scholarship has an endearingly holistic character. Over against the Marxists he insisted on the weight

¹ Johannes Schilling, "Siegfried Bräuer – Reformationshistoriker, Verleger, Kirchenmann..."; Marion Dammaschke, "Siegfried Bräuers Beitrag zur Erforschung und Vermittlung von Leben und Werk Thomas Müntzers. Eine Bibliographie", in Hartmut Kühne, Hans-Jürgen Goertz, Thomas T. Müller und Günter Vogler (ed.) *Thomas Müntzer – Zeitgenossen-Nachwelt. Siegfried Bräuer zum 80. Geburtstag* (Mühlhausen, 2010), 9-22; 311-318.

of theological, pastoral, and liturgical considerations. Over against many religious historians, on the other hand, he embedded the history of ideas and piety in a deep appreciation of archaeological, economic, juridical, genealogical, artistic and a host of other factors. Poetry and other literature, contemporary and early modern, were his own personal passion, and illuminated all his writing.

Recently I have moved house, which involved sifting through a life-time of reading, and has nudged me to look at some of Bräuer's less-well known writings, less known, anyway, in the non German-speaking world. The range of his interests that emerges is extraordinary, driven partly by his indignation at any *suppressio veri*, partly by a Renaissance style *curiositas*, partly by sheer delight. The raconteur in him is never far away. At countless conferences, anniversaries, speaking engagements his skill in dialogue, receptivity to new insights, impatience with the conventional wisdom has flowed into his own research.

One of my hunches, therefore, is that his specialist interest in Müntzer and his world has benefited hugely from his own pastoral experience in the tough post-war years in Germany, and by decades of deft, delicate but utterly determined negotiations on behalf of the Evangelische Verlagsanstalt in an alien, and at times hostile cultural environment. His research on the church personalities and issues under Hitler and then in the DDR may well stem from this existential background.

His wide-ranging interest in virtually every aspect of German reformation history, not only in reference to Luther and Melanchthon and Bucer but to countless lesser Reformers, pamphleteers, printers, artists and to the rulers of the period is signaled by his own remarkable collection of sources (and by an enviously good memory). He had a special interest in liturgical matters and in the reception of the Reformation at the various anniversaries in which Germany revels (!), in censorship, and in the intersection of language, theology and politics. The following articles, which I happen to have to hand, may give some indication of how Bräuer's mining of the archives in a wide variety of areas has elicited new information and perspectives, often in relation to neglected and even unsavoury areas, and encouraged others to dig away for themselves! They are listed chronologically within the three themes.

Reformation.

“Hermann Botes Werk aus kirchengeschichtlicher Sicht,” in Herbert Blume Eberhard Rohsee (ed.) *Hermann Bote. Städtisch-hansischer Autor in Braunschweig 1488-1988* (Tübingen 1991, 68-95. Poet and author prior to Reformation, wrote *Radbuch Braunschweiger Weltchronik, Eulenspiegelbuch*, B. notes the widespread neglect of poetry and literature in Reformation historiography.

“Bucer und der Neukarsthans” in Christian Krieger, Marc Lienhard (ed.), *Martin Bucer and sixteenth century Europe* (Leiden, 1993) 103-127. attribution of Neukarsthans dialogue to Bucer must remain uncertain.

“Die Reformation in der Grafschaft Mansfeld,” in Gerlinde Schlenker (ed.) *Protokoll Band zum 1000 Jahre Eisleben* vol. 1 (Eisleben, 1995), 33-47.

“Luthers Zwei-Reiche-Lehre im Ernstfall. Der Konflikt Graf Albrechts von Mansfeld mit seinen Vettern wegen reformatorischer Neuerungen 1524/25,” in Uwe John Josef Matzerath (ed.) *Landesgeschichte als Herausforderung und Programm* (Stuttgart 1997) 285-304. Includes edition of Albrecht’s fascinating 1525 response to criticism, which highlights the initiative of his wife.

“Das Melanchthonjubiläum 1960 in Wittenberg und Halle,” *Lutherjahrbuch* 64 (1997) 87-126. Documents tensions between church and Marxist historians in preparation and course of the anniversary; Steinmetz a positive figure.

“Der hinkende Prediger von Schneeberg. Georg Amandus und seine Flugschrift von christlichen Ritter aus dem Jahre 1524,” *Neues Archiv für sächsische Geschichte* 68 (1997) 67-99.

“Die beiden Erfurter Drucke zur Judentaufe von 1539”, in Michael Ludscheidt Kathrin Paasch, ed.) *Bücher und Bibliotheken in Erfurt* (Erfurt, 2000) 47-61. Remarkably there was no anti-Jewish polemic in the pamphlets; Dannauer was baptized naked in a cask.

“ ‘ohnehin mehr ein Bekenntnisbuch’ Melanchthons Loci communes von 1521”, *Blätter für pfälzische Kirchengeschichte und religiöse Volkskunde* 68 (2001), 345-362: Melanchthon gives unprecedented access to the central questions of faith from a biblical base; focus on heart and conscience.

“Wallfahrt als Defizit der reformationsgeschichtlicher Arbeit. Exemplarische Beobachtungen zu Darstellungen der Reformation und zu Quellengruppen”, in Hartmut Kühne etc. (ed.), *Spätmittelalterliche Wallfahrt im mitteldeutschen Raum* (Berlin, 2002), 15-50. Treasury of detailed examples.

‘ ‘ich begere lauttern vnd reinen wein/ So vormischt er mirn mith wasser’. Der Flugschriftenstreit zwischen dem Eilenburger Schuhmacher Georg Schönichen und dem Leipziger Theologen Hieronymus Dungersheim”, in Jörg Hausstein und Harry Oelke ed.), *Reformation und Katholizismus. Beiträge zu Geschichte, Leben und Verhältnis der Konfessionen* (Hannover, 2003), 97-140. Edition of Schönichen’s pamphlet.

“Umgestaltung und Übergänge. Beobachtungen zu den Anfängen des reformatorischen Gottesdienstes,” *Revue Histoire de Philosophie Religieuses* 85/1 (2005) 51-71; notes role of pre-Reformation initiatives and focuses on the problems of transition.

“Paul Schreckenbach und der Deutschesten der Deutschen. Ein typisches Lutherbild um 1917,” *Luther* 78/3 (2007), 164-179. Highly patriotic picture of Luther in his novels but his illustrated biography significant for use of illustrations as independent sources.

“Die Stadt Mansfeld in der Chronik des Cyriacus Spangenberg,” in Rosemarie Knaape (ed.), *Martin Luther und Eisleben* (Leipzig, 2007), 307-341

“Wallfahrt in reformationsgeschichtlicher Perspektive, Forschungsgeschichte und Desiderata,” in Jan Hrdina Hartmut Kühne, Thomas Müller (ed.) *Wallfahrt und Reformation. Pout' a reformace. Zur Veränderung religiöser Praxis in Deutschland und Böhmen in den Umbrüchen der Frühen Neuzeit*, (Frankfurt am M, 2007), 29-62. Points to need for more contextualized approach to influence of Reformation.

“Kartographie-Luthermemorie-Sequestration. Die Mansfelder Geschichtskarte von Tilemann Stella/Johannes Mellinger 1571,” in Hartmut Kühne und Erdmute Nieke (ed.) *Kirche-Kunst-Kultur. Beiträge aus 800 Jahren Berlin-Brandenburgischer Geschichte*. (Frankfurt a. Main etc., 2008) 215-235. No proof that map prepared for Spangenberg's *Chronik*; probably intended to further the Gnesio-Lutheran cause.

“Luthers Reise in das Bauernkriegsgebiet”, in Günter Vogler (ed.) *Bauernkrieg zwischen Harz und Thüringer Wald* (HMRG Beiheft 69), 2008, 299-312. Luthers fierce language in his pamphlets about the peasants was theologically based, not an exasperated reaction to his abortive campaign.

“Mansfeld- Grafschaft, Schloss, Stadt” in Harald Meller (ed.), *Fundsache Luther. Archäologen auf den Spuren des Reformators* (Halle, 2008), 54-66.

“Wie man über die Verstorbenen in Christo trauern und sich wiederum trösten soll,” in Armin Kohnle und Siegfried Bräuer, *Von Grafen und Predigern. Zur Reformationsgeschichte des Mansfelder Landes*. (Leipzig 2014), 197-228.

Thomas Müntzer

“Müntzers Feuerruf in Zwickau” *Herbergen der Christenheit*. 8 (1971), 127-153.

Thomas Müntzer und der Allstedter Bund”, in Jean-Georges Rott, Simon R. Verheus (ed.), *Täuferium und radikale Reformation im 16. Jahrhundert* (Baden-Baden, 1987), 85-101.

“Die Kirche der Auserwählten. Thomas Müntzers Beitrag zur Reformation,” *Evangelische Kommentare* 22/7(1989) 34-36.

“Selbstverständnis und Feindbild bei Martin Luther und Thomas Müntzer. Ihre Flugschriftenkontroverse von 1524.” In Günter Vogler (ed.) *Wegscheidender Reformation. Alternatives Denken vom 16. bis zum 18. Jahrhundert*, (Weimar, 1994), 57-84. One of the most original and influential of Bräuers writings.

“Simon Hoffmann - ‘ein lybhaber ewangelischer warheytt’ ”, in Ulman Weiß (ed.), *Erfurt Geschichte und Gegenwart* (Weimar, 1995), 297-321. Analysis of H’s 1523 sermon in Erfurt; not clear why in 1525 he was attracted to Müntzer and present in Frankenhausen; includes complaint from Erfurt Council to Duke John of Saxony, H’s defence, and H’s appeal for Erfurt’s support and weapons at Frankenhausen.

“Thomas Müntzers Te Deum in den Erfurter Drucken von 1524/1525 und die Umgestaltung des Gottesdienstes”, in Ulman Weiss (ed.) *Flugschriften der Reformationszeit*. Colloquium im Erfurter Augustinerkloster 1999 (Tübingen, 2001), 173-233. Reception of worship material in the Reformation is largely unresearched. Liturgies often uninterested in authorship; TM’s Te Deum used in Erfurt into 1540’s.

“Die beiden Briefe des Grebelkreises an Thomas Müntzer vom 5. September 1524” *Mennonitische Geschichtsblätter* 57(2000), 147-174. Revised edition with extensive annotation.

“Protestierende- Protestanten. Zu den Anfängen eines geschichtlichen Grundbegriffs im 16. Jahrhundert” in Erich Donnert (ed.) *Europa in der Frühen Neuzeit* Vol. 6, 91-113. Emergence of term “Protestant”.

“Thomas Müntzers Kontakte zum Erfurter Peterskloster 1511/2 und zu Heiligenstädter Persönlichkeiten 1522,” in Irene Dingel, Wolf-Friedrich Schäufele, (ed.) *Zwischen Konflikt und Kooperation. Religiöse Gemeinschaften in Stadt und Erzstift Mainz in Spätmittelalter und Neuzeit* (Mainz, 2006), 103-122.

“Wittenberg und die Prototäufer in Zürich. Erhart Hegenwalds Brief an Konrad Grebel und seinen Kreis vom 1. Januar 1525.” *Mennonitische Geschichtsblätter* 64 (2007), 79-103. Edition in modernised German; H. knew Grebel from Zürich, was a strong supporter of Zwingli; his version of Psalm 51 was popular, also in England.
“Das Mansfelder Land”, in Günter Vogler, *Bauernkrieg zwischen Harz und Thüringer Wald* (HMRG Beiheft 69, 2008) 179=192

Zeitgeschichte

Martin Luther in marxistischer Sicht von 1945 bis zum Beginn der achtziger Jahre Berlin, 1984. A differentiated, highly influential essay of less than 50 pages, following up the SED’s 1981 Theses, with their cultural and political repositioning of Luther; paved the way for future dialogue.

“Wir erheben aufs Tiefste entrüstet Einspruch”. Die Luther-Ehrung der Deutschen Christen 1933 in Sachsen und der Protest von Dresdner Schülerinnen. *Neues Archiv für sächsische Geschichte* 64 (1993) 151-174. The remarkable protest of school girls against a crude DC sermon and its weird Christology.

“Das Zensurverfahren bei der Festschrift zur Tausendjahrfeier des Bistums Meißen 1968,” *Herbergen der Christenheit* 18 (1993/4), 131-146. Detailed description of unusual censorship of medieval history due to suspicion of ecumenical resistance following 1968 Czech revolt.

“ ‘...dass die Zeitschrift eine progressivere Tendenz erhält’. Der Herausgeberwechsel bei der Theologischen Literaturzeitung 1958-1960. Gründe u. Hintergründe.” *Theologische Literaturzeitung* 119 (1994), 568-600.

“ ‘Gehorsam gegen den in der völkischen Geschichte wirkenden Gott’ Hanns Rückert und das Jahr der nationalen Erhebung 1933,” in Joachim Mehlhausen (ed.) ... *und über Barmen hinaus. Studien zur Kirchlichen Zeitgeschichte* (Göttingen, 1995), 204-233.

“ ‘Der urdeutsche und tief christliche Reformator’. Zur Planung und Vorbereitung der Wittenberg Luther-Festtage 1933,” in Stefan Oehig (ed.), *700 Jahre Wittenberg Stadt Universität Reformation* (Weimar, 1995), 545-563. A careful review of a neglected and embarrassing topic.

“Zensur im Kampf gegen die ‘ideologische Diversion’. Die Ablehnung von Veröffentlichungsvorhaben der Evangelischen Verlagsanstalt durch das Kultusministerium der DDR von 1967 bis 1989”, *Herbergen der Christenheit* 21 (1997), 221-238.

“Hanns Rückert (1901-1974)”, in Rainer Lächele, Jörg Thierfelder (ed.) *Wir konnten uns nicht entziehen. 30 Porträts zu Kirche und Nationalsozialismus in Württemberg* (Stuttgart, 1998) 379-397; reviews tragedy of this fine church historian, deeply influenced by Karl Holl, swept away initially by NS enthusiasm in 1933; never acknowledging error after 1945.

“‘David’. Franz Fühmanns Gedicht zu Karl Hofers Gemälde”, in Heike Krötke, (ed.) *“Ein Wort – ein Glanz, ein Flug, ein Feuer...” Theologen interpretieren Gedichte* (Stuttgart, 1998), 17-28.

“Friedrich-Wilhelm Krummacher”, in Wolf-Dieter Hauschild (ed.) *Profile des Luthertums. Biographien zum 20. Jahrhundert* (Gütersloh, 1998) 427-462. Tension in K’s relations to SED.

“ ‘Offen antisowjetisch, DDR-feindlich, revanchistisch’ Die Theologische Literaturzeitung im Visier der SED (1963 bis 1971)” in Simone Barck etc. (ed.) *Zwischen Mosaik und Einheit. Zeitschriften in der DDR* (Berlin, 1999), 611-619.

“Die Dresdner Frauenkirche und die Anfänge des Kirchenkampfes “in *Die Dresdner Frauenkirche. Jahrbuch zu ihrer Geschichte* (Weimar, 2000, 2001) vol.. 6, 171-195; vol. 7, 137-183; Bishop Coch: “mit Luther und Hitler für Glauben u. Volkstum,” provokes the opposition of the Pfarrernotbund and Sup. Hugo Hahn; illustrations, extensive documentation, including a remarkable list of the names and occupations of the 802(!) members of the ‘Bible Study congregation’ who supported Hahn.

“Die Lutherfestwoche vom 19. bis 27. August 1933 in Eisleben. Ein Fallbeispiel en detail, ” in Stefan Laube, Karl-Heinz Fix (ed.) *Lutherinszenierung und Reformationserinnerung* (Leipzig, 2002), 391-451. 50,000 present, incl. formations of SA and Stahlhelm, parts of programme fairly traditional; Luther as forerunner of Hitler.

“ ‘...nach möglichst vielen Seiten ein Gespräch mit der Welt’ Die evangelische Akademie in Meißen 1949-1980,” *Herbergen der Christenheit* 24, (2000), 123-161.

2004 “Ich bin bereit, mich zu verantworten.” Superintendent Ludolf Müller und der Kirchenkampf nach 1933 in Heiligenstadt. *Eichsfeld-Jahrbuch* 12 (2004), 183-216. Heiligenstadt was Prot. Diaspora. M. pastor from 1927 and Superintendent. Documents stubborn resistance of M., partly through clever use of law, to DC attempts to remove him from office; his phone and mail tapped. Use of new archive material.

Mit Heiner Lück, “Zensur”, *Theologische Realenzyklopädie* 36/4-5 (2004) 633-644.

“Carl Einsteins Lesedrama ‘Die schlimme Botschaft’ und die Kirche. Der erste Gotteslästerungsprozess in der Weimarer Republik,” in Adolf Martin Ritter etc. (ed.) *...zur Zeit oder unzeit* Studien zur spätantiken Theologie, Geistes- und Kunstgeschichte und ihrer Nachwirkung (Mandenbachtal, 2004), 279-306.

“ ‘Kein Freund unserer Republik, sagt aber, was er meint’. Der Berliner Kirchenhistoriker Walter Elliger (1903-1985),” *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche* 102/4 (2005), 435-471. Differentiated und detailed account of a significant biographer of Müntzer.

“Die Kirchenhistoriker in der DDR und die marxistischen Beiträge zur Reformationgeschichte bis zum Jubiläum 1967”, in Tanja Posch- Tepelmann, *Mitteilungen der Evangelischen Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Kirchliche Zeitgeschichte* 28 (2010), 69-96.

“Informelle Kontakte zwischen marxistischen und nichtmarxistischen Reformationshistorikern. Die Frühphase zwischen 1969 und 1979,” in Jan Scheunemann (ed.), *Reformation und Bauernkrieg* (Berlin, 2010, 116-130.

“Die Gewalt soll gegeben werden dem gemeinen Volk. Die Thomas Müntzer – Ehrung der DDR im Jahr 1989” *Theologische Literaturzeitung* 137/10 (2012), 1023-1029. Insights on the shift in Marxist historiography by a uniquely positioned observer.