

Spotlight on the Middle Ages Celebrating the Swiss

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wie vor anfang der Eidgnoschaft die stadt
Luzern gewesen/wie vñ wahar die jr versprung vñ erbinwüg hat.



Celebrating the Foundation of the Old Confederacy

On August 1st the Swiss celebrate what is called the *Schweizer Bundesfeiertag* - *Fête nationale suisse* - *Festa nazionale svizzera* - *Fiasta naziunala svizra*. It is inspired by the date of the *Pacte du Grutli*, the first federal charter concluded in 'early August' 1291 when the three Alpine *Waldstätten*, Schwyz, Uri, and Unterwald swore an oath of mutual military assistance.

wie vor anfang der Eidgnoschaft die stadt
Luzern gewesen/wie vñ wahar die jr vrsprung vñ erbinwug hat.



Petermann Etterlin. *Kronica
von der loblichen Eydtgnoschaft,
Ir harkommen und sust seltzam
stritten und geschichten.*

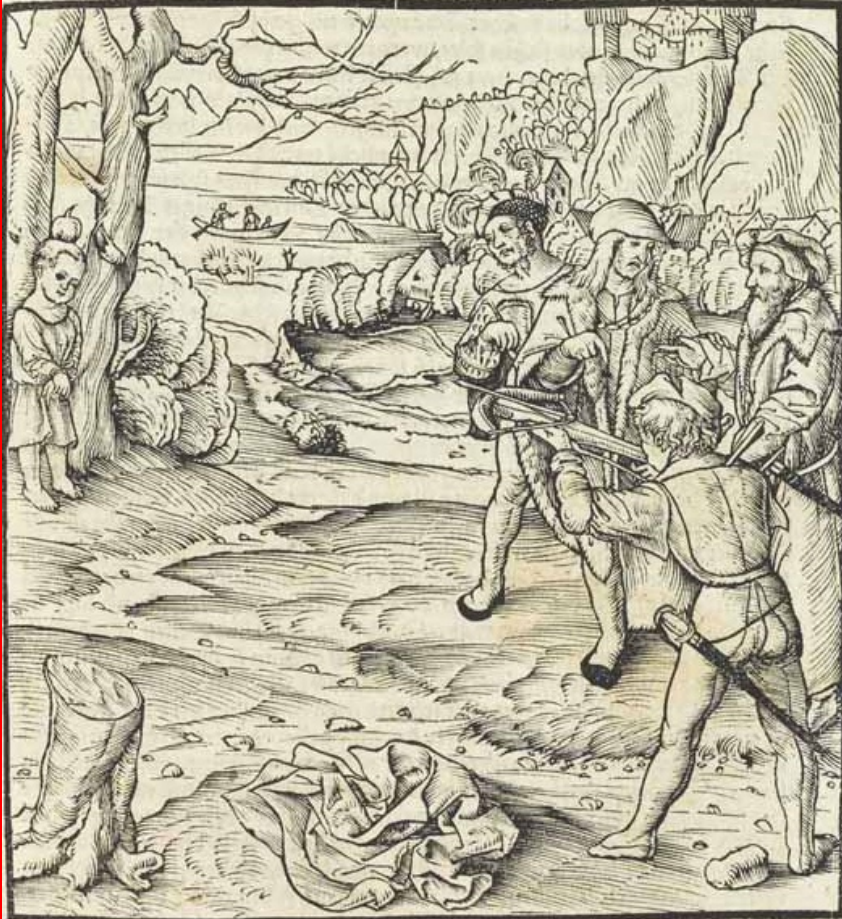
Basel: Michael Furter, 24
December 1507. 1st edition,
2nd issue.

Several pacts of the mid-13th to mid-14th century attest to a growing collaboration between cantons. These pacts marked decisions of pragmatic alliances and initiated what became a permanent, sworn confederacy: the Old Swiss Confederacy.



The *Alte Eidgenossenschaft* began as a loose confederacy of three independent, small states within the Holy Roman Empire. Formed from this nucleus of three oath-takers in central Switzerland, the *Eidgenossenschaft* soon also included the cities of Zürich and Berne.

Das XV blat,
 Von wilhelm Tellen dem frommen landt-
 man der sinem eigen kind ein öpffel müß ab dem houpt schiessen
 vnd wie es im ergieng.



Wen was ein redlicher mā im lande der hies
 wilhelm Tell/der hat ouch heymlichen zū dem stößfacher vñ siner
 gesellschaft geschworen/der selbig gieng nun etwa dick vñ menig
 C iiii

During the 16th century, the figures – or personifications – of the three *Eidgenossen* merged with the legend of William Tell and became known as ‘the three Tells’.

The legend of the hero William Tell is recorded first in the ‘Weissenbuch’ of Sarnen (Obwalden), written by Hans Schriber (1472). Tell, who is said to have shot an apple from his son's head, also appears in the song ‘*Lied von der Eidgenossenschaft*’ (‘*Tellenlied*’ or ‘*Bundeslied*’, c. 1477), dating from the years of the Burgundian wars.

According to legend, the hero William Tell was an expert with crossbow and led the people of the forest cantons into rebellion against the tyrannical Habsburg bailiff, or *Landvogt*.

wie vor anfang der Eidgnoschaft die stadt Luzern gewesen/wie vñ wa har die jr vrsprung vñ erbawūg hat.

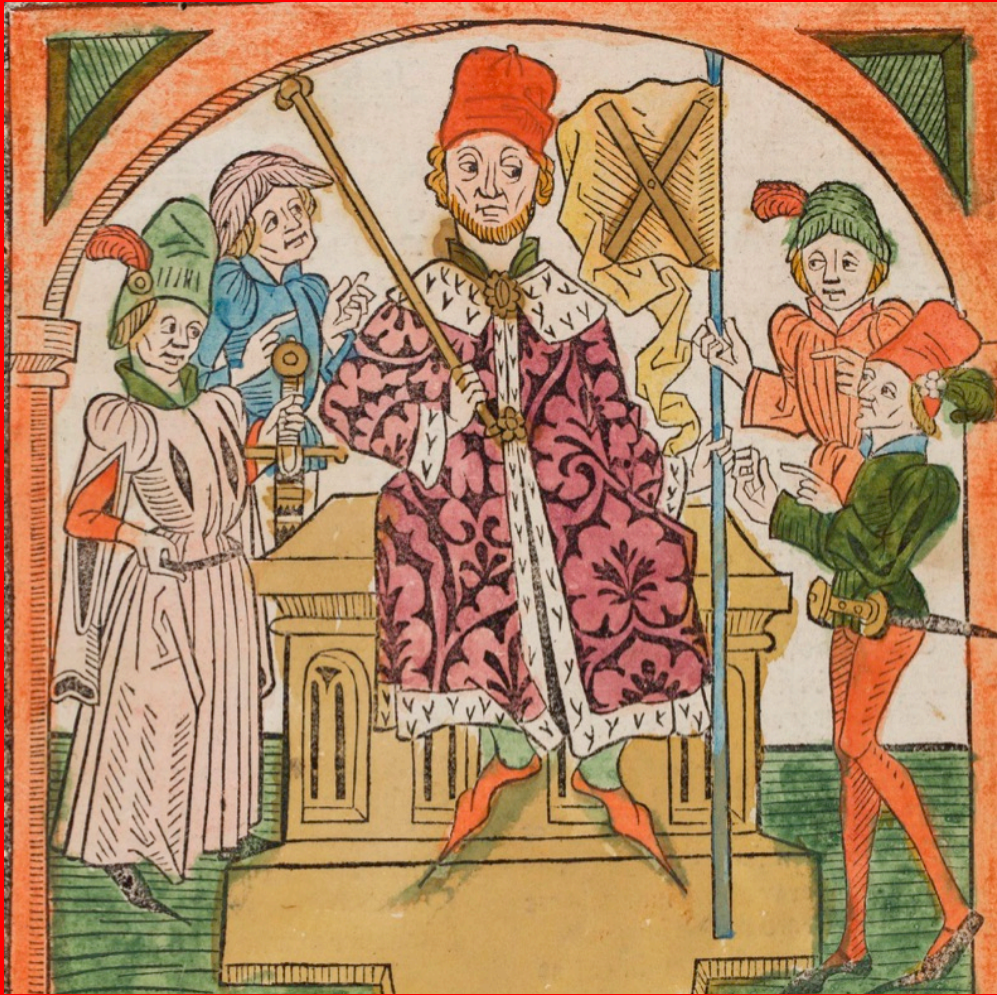
wie vor anfang der Eidgnoschaft die stadt
Luzern gewesen/wie vñ wa har die jr vrsprung vñ erbawūg hat.



The legendary history, which was set in the time of the foundation of the Old Swiss Confederacy, entered the *Lucerne Chronicles* by Melchior Russ and Petermann Etterlin. The latter was first printed in 1507.

The figure of William Tell was immortalized by Friedrich Schiller in his drama of 1804. When the Grimm brothers published the story in their *Deutsche Sagen* (1818), Tell became known worldwide.

Oldest view of Lucerne (mirrored), in: Petermann Etterlin. *Kronica von der loblichen Eydtgnoschaft, Ir harkommen und sust seltzam stritten und geschichten*. Basel: Michael Furter, 24 December 1507.



The story of resistance to a tyrannical baillif finds a parallel in Conrad Pfettisheim's *Geschichte Peter Hagenbachs*, a rhymed chronicle on the Burgundian-Swiss wars, printed in Strasbourg by Heinrich Knobloch, in 1477.

Charles the Bold of Burgundy saw himself as a 'new Alexander', but the Swiss confederates gave history a different turn.

286 x 208 mm, 10 ff., paper with 8 full-page woodcuts by the Strasbourg Monogrammist B. Only hand coloured copy known to exist.



Ein gylt
 Maria
 O an
 Was pe
 Wan l
 Die tün
 Ver n
 Von E
 Der
 Nicht wollen vnd im gome it hat
 Er was ein ritter/gantz on Er
 Des; glichen man kum findet mer
 Er wonet in burgund ein zyt
 Vnd meint die wpl er wer so wpt
 Solt man sin dester e vergessen
 Odit hochmüt w; sin hertz vmesse

Vn statz die stat vnd 100 guldin vñ muste ym stre-
 ke yñ beruffte die fünf stat die ym verpfend woz ad
 uider potuia corz + mltu nez i aremo 70 Et pluuie
 erat collis 21 pñ i 2 p ma fctā 2 pñ 7 yystoie

Zü brpfach vnd zü danne
 Den bösen pfenning wolt er han
 Vnd fing vil nūwer schaczung an
 Der brot trouff im/in pfanne
 Zum Ersten kund er kratzen ipse
 Odit senfftikeit zü gleicher wylse
 Als wer es im/im hertzen
 Do er das grätz hergriffen hat
 Er herstbt zü brpfach in der stat
 Die burger litten smertzen

Hf Be dz die gestalt beschafft
 in dem selbe, 100 w; 100
 mēß meiste zü luen danne
 i de 100 do ma zalt d; 100
 lxxm i octu 100 d; 100
 tan velt d; 100 d; 100
 maist in 100 d; 100 d; 100

Pfettisheim's rhymed chronicle describes the devastating Burgundian-Swiss wars, which ended in victory for the Swiss Confederates.

In a rebellion by towns on the Upper Rhine against his tyranny, the Burgundian bailiff Peter Hagenbach was put on trial, found guilty of war crimes, and condemned to death.

The tribunal, in alliance with the Holy Roman Empire (1474), was the first 'international' recognition that commanders should act lawfully.

This incunable is a first hand witness of Swiss heroism and self-defence.



In the same year, the Swiss Federation declared war on Burgundy and its ally Savoy. Not long after, the the Bernese troops conquered territory in Vaud (County Savoy). With a first success at Héricourt, the Confederates soon had to pay a hard price.



Der bunt also das velt behielt
 Jens her das was zerrissen
 Do fand man silber vnde golt
 Sin sigel ouch do lygenn
 Vñ w3 er heymlichs pflegē wolt



The Swiss had also conquered the castle of Grandson, but soon after had to surrender to the Duke of Burgundy. Charles the Bold then had all the men of the garrison drowned or hanged. Too late, the Confederates forced the Burgundians into flight but made a rich booty: artillery, banners, tapestries, silver, gold, and even the duke's seal.



Banners of Basel and of Bern.

Immediately after the battle of Grandson, the Swiss troops came upon the bodies of their countrymen still hanging from trees. Eyewitness Etterlin described the scene:

“There were found sadly the honorable men still freshly hanging on the trees in front of the castle whom the tyrant had hanged. It was a wretched, pitiable sight. There were hung ten or twenty men on one bough. The trees were bent down and were completely full. [H]ere hanged a father and a son next to each other, there two brothers or other friends. And there came the honorable men who knew them; who were their friends, cousins and brothers, who found them miserably hanging. There was first anger and distress in crying and bewailing”.

Charles the Bold's actions thus united the Swiss as never before.



Atrocities at Grandson, in: Johannes Stumpf, *Gemeiner loblicher Eydgñsschafft Stetten Landen vnd Völkeren Chronik würdiger thaaten besschreybung* [...]. Zürich: Christoph Froschauer 1548. (*not in the collection of JGRB)



At Murten, the Confederates annihilated the Burgundian army. The walled town of Murten today is largely intact, while the batteries and trenches now host the most beautiful gardens.



Next followed the siege of Nancy, where the Burgundian army was again defeated – the duke fell from his horse and was killed by a Confederate who had not recognized him.



A traditional Swiss saying goes:

*Karl der Kühne verlor
bei Grandson das Gut,
bei Murten den Mut,
bei Nancy das Blut.*

(Charles the Bold lost
at Grandson his goods,
at Murten his courage,
at Nancy his blood.)



Two of our manuscripts attest to the same period.

The first, this Breviary (Winter Part), is illuminated with 20 historiated initials and dated 1476, 1477, and 1478. Provenance: St Leodegar im Hof at Lucerne (315 mm x 220 mm, 437 leaves, paper).



Johannes hr

The second is a Missal for use of Zürich, dated 1485 and signed by Johannes Horwer, who made it for Andreas Molitor from Kaiserstuhl for the church of Schwerzenbach, near Zürich.





*Biblia Germanica – Die gantze Bibel
 der ursprünglichen Ebraischen und
 Griechischen waarheyt nach, auff
 aller treüwlichst verteütschet.*
 Zürich: Christoph Froschauer,
 12 May 1531. 1st edition, 2nd issue.

When the Protestant Reformation, first promoted by Huldrych Zwingli, gained support in Zürich in the 1520s, it soon spread to other cantons of the Old Confederacy.



Biblia Germanica – *Die gantz Bibell, auff's aller treüwlichst verteütschet*. Zürich: Christoph Froschauer, 12 May 1531. 1st edition.

The reformed Bible was published even before Luther had finished his translation into German. The editors fused Erasmus' Greek New Testament with Luther's available translations and adjusted them to the Swiss German language.



Although Zwingli had images removed from churches, this Bible is abundantly illustrated with woodcuts, all in contemporary colouring. This edition remains the basis of the 'Zürich Bible' currently used by the Swiss Reformed Church in German-speaking cantons.





During the Thirty Years' war, the cantons managed to maintain neutrality, partly because all major powers in Europe depended upon Swiss mercenaries.

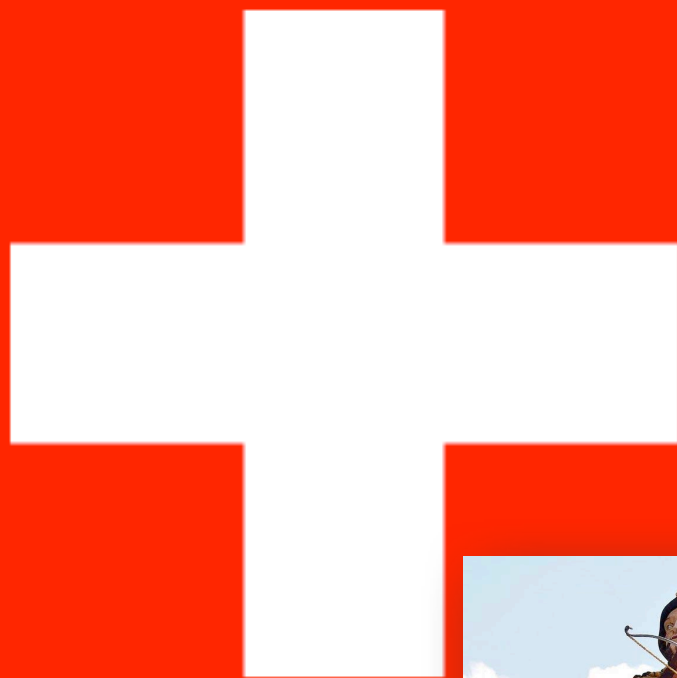
When the Protestant Reformation had gained ground, only seven cantons remained Roman Catholic. However, rapidly inter-cantonal wars and distrust would paralyze common politics until the 18th century.

The Alpine regions played an essential role in what would develop as the Swiss Confederacy. However, Swiss culture, at the crossroads of major European regions and with four spoken languages, was always characterised by great diversity, as varied as the 26 cantons that comprise the country.



Today, this small, mountainous country in the heart of Europe still maintains its neutrality and independence. Being without war since 1815 and being governed by the people who maintain the traditions of the Swiss Confederacy is the reason for the August 1st celebration. We are happy that our books are a part of this illustrious history.

- Petermann Etterlin. *Kronica von der loblichen Eydtgnoschaft, Ir harkommen und sust seltzam stritten und geschichten*. Basel: Michael Furter, 24 December 1507. 1st edition, 2nd issue (bound with: Hartmann Schedel. *Das Buch der Chroniken*. Augsburg: Johann Schönsperger, 1500). **Euro 85'000**
- Conrad Pfettisheim's, *Geschichte Peter Hagenbachs*, a rhymed chronicle on the Burgundian-Swiss wars, printed in Strasbourg by Heinrich Knoblochtzter in 1477. Only known hand coloured edition. **Euro 560'000**
- Breviary (Winter Part), with 20 historiated initials, dated 1476, 1477, and 1478. Manuscript, diocese of Constance, with early provenance at Lucerne. **Euro 98'000**
- Missal, use of Zürich, dated 1485 and signed by Johannes Horwer, made for Andreas Molitor from Kaiserstuhl, manuscript for the church of Schwerzenbach (near Zürich). **Euro 115'000**
- Biblia Germanica – *Die gantze Bibel... auff's aller treüwlichest verteütschet*. Zürich: Christoph Froschauer, 12 May 1531. 1st edition. With numerous woodcuts after Hans Holbein and others, all in contemporary colouring. **Euro 95'000**



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