1. Introduction

The recent growth in scholarship on Heinrich Bullinger that emerged around the four hundredth anniversary of his birth in 2004 owes much to the leadership of Emidio Campi, who during his tenure as director of the Institute for Swiss Reformation History in Zurich has overseen a series of outstanding projects, including the ongoing publication of the Bullinger correspondence and a critical edition of the »Decades« by Peter Opitz.¹ Over the past years it has been my pleasure to work with Professor Campi on a number of projects as part of an agreement between Zurich and the Institute for Reformation Studies in St Andrews, Scotland, including a jointly-edited volume on Bullinger.² Most recently, this relationship has extended to the study of Protestant Latin Bibles of the sixteenth century, a project begun in 2006 with the support of the Arts and Humanities Research Council in the United Kingdom. Zurich was a leading centre in creating these hitherto little-studied works, which were of enormous importance to the development of biblical culture in the Reformation, and I wish in this short paper to address one aspect of the bond between the Protestant Latin Bible and Zurich.

¹ Heinrich Bullinger, Sermonum Decades quinque de potissimis Christianae religionis capitibus (1552), ed. by Peter Opitz, 2 vols, Zurich 2008 (Heinrich Bullinger Werke III/3). See also Peter Opitz, Heinrich Bullinger als Theologe: Eine Studie zu den »Dekaden«, Zurich 2004.

In 1539 the press of Christoph Froschauer in Zurich produced a Latin Bible entitled »Biblia Sacra utriusque Testamenti«. The work was not a direct product of Zurich scholarship for it was a composite of Sebastian Münster’s Old Testament, first printed in 1534/35 in Basle, and Erasmus’ New Testament. This 1539 Bible marked a new direction in Zurich: not only was it the first Latin Bible to be produced in the city, but it signalled a decisive turn away from the Vulgate, which had remained in use following the Reformation. Münster’s Old Testament was one of the most influential scholarly works of the Swiss reformation. With its extensive use of rabbinical material and detailed philological notes, Münster’s translation was intended to provide scholars with the most up-to-date learning. His favourable engagement with the rabbinical sources was highly controversial, earning him the ire of both Martin Luther, who, although he admired Münster’s work was deeply suspicious of his »Judiaizing« tendencies, and of his teacher Konrad Pelikan. During the 1530s, Pelikan, one of the leading Hebraists of his day, produced in Zurich an extensive commentary on the books of the Old and New Testament. In the preface to his commentary on the Pentateuch he declared himself entirely satisfied with Jerome’s Bible, though he felt there was need to correct those errors which had accumulated over time.