

# Ilanz



## Places

### Town Hall (*Casa Cumin*)

Today's town hall was built in 1882/85 on the site of the former *Casa Grischa*. Here, the Diet of the Three Leagues ratified the Ilanz Articles (1524, 1526), and here, the second part of the Ilanz Disputation of 1526 took place. The Second Articles ushered in the Reformation's breakthrough. They declared that the parishes were to pay their pastors adequate wages, but also entitled them to appoint and dismiss their pastors on their own discretion. Thus, the sovereignty had shifted from the Bishop to the parishes.

The *Casa Grischa* (Grey House) was built after the town fire of 1483, but probably not completed until 1517. This was not only the gathering place of the Diet of Ilanz until the house was torn down in 1881, but also that of the envoys of the Grey League and of all Three Leagues until 1798. Due to the national impact of the Articles of the Grey League (1523) and the Articles of the Three Leagues (1524, 1526), Ilanz became a key location of the Reformation. Only with the establishment of the Canton of Grisons (1803) as a part of the Old Confederacy did the *Casa Grischa* lose its national significance.

### Church of St. Margreta

A church consecrated to St. Mary probably existed in Lower Ilanz as early as 765. In 1288, a Gothic

church was built at the same site, the Patrocinium of St. Margreta, which fell victim to a town fire in 1483. The present church was built in the Late Gothic style in 1494, but its nave was only completed in 1518. The murals are by an unknown master. One particularly interesting feature besides the nature ornaments are the depictions of death, symbolic of the prevalence of the spiritual powers over the earthly ones, and of the victory of light over darkness. After the Reformation was adopted, these murals were painted over and only rediscovered in 1934 during a renovation effort. The church spire, which is separate from the nave, originally served as a fort tower.

## **Obertor (Upper Gate)**

In the town fire of 1483, most of the old town wall of Ilanz burned down, so that hardly any remnants survive to this day. The rebuilding of the town wall was completed in 1513. At the time, today's *Obertor* (Upper Gate) (without the superstructure, which was added by the Schmid von Grüneck family in the 18<sup>th</sup> century) was the main entrance for the inhabitants of Upper Ilanz, as well as for neighbors and envoys coming from the upper Surselva region, the Lugnez and the Vals Valley.

## **Church of St. Martin**

The Church of St. Martin in Upper Ilanz, mentioned in documents as early as 765, was expanded and equipped with many endowments in the High Middle Ages. Unfortunately, only fragments of the paintings by the so-called Waltensburg Master (ca. 1330) survive. St Martin was the main church of the Lords of Belmont and later the Dukes of Sax. The parish also encompassed Strada, Luven and Flond. Only during the transition to the Reformation did the church lose its significance, and St. Margreta in Lower Ilanz became the new parish church. The altars were removed in the course of the Reformation. Today, St. Martin is owned by the town of Ilanz.

## **History**

At the beginning of the Middle Ages, there were three core settlements: Upper Ilanz around the Church of St. Martin, Lower Ilanz in today's "*Städtli*", and St. Nikolaus on the left bank of the Anterior Rhine. Upper Ilanz was probably the initial town center, but it was soon supplanted by Lower Ilanz. The establishment of the Grey League (1395/1424) provided Ilanz with predominant regional significance; later, it became the gathering place of the Three Leagues State. Finally, the town took on a leading role in the democratization of the Three Leagues. After the Disputation and the Articles of 1526, Ilanz joined the Reformation. The first Protestant pastor was Peter Brun.

The alliance of the Three Leagues (League of God's House, Grey League, League of the Ten Jurisdictions) formed a free state in the region of today's Canton Grisons; it slowly formed in the middle of the 15th century to curtail the Bishop's power, among other things. With the Ilanz Articles (1524, 1526), the Three Leagues declared themselves to be an independent, democratic state that existed until the end of the Ancien Régime (1798). The Diet was the supreme authority of the Three Leagues State, which convened one to three times per year, according to necessity. Ilanz, Chur and Davos took turns hosting the Diet.

After the abbot of St. Luzi and the Cathedral Chapter lodged an official complaint against the pastor Johannes Comander of Chur, originally of Maienfeld, and 40 other clerics, the Diet summoned a Religious Disputation in Ilanz on January 7, 1526. For this occasion, Comander wrote 18 theses and had them printed at Augsburg. The theses addressed issues such as the Eucharist, auricular confession, the celibate, iconography etc. The result of the Disputation was that Comander was not convicted and the Bible continued to be considered the highest authority. The distribution of the theses paved the way for the Reformation in Grisons. Later, Comander's 18 theses would go on to be

the basis for the Bern Disputation (1528).

With the Ilanz Articles of 1524 and 1526, the Free State of the Three Leagues gave itself its own legislation. The First Articles addressed the shortcomings of the church. The Second Articles introduced more radical changes, including the severe restriction of the Bishop's rights. As a consequence, more power shifted to the parishes; e.g., from that time on, parishes were entitled to appoint and dismiss their own pastors. Thus, power shifted from the church and state to the parishes. The Second Articles provided the legal foundation for the expansion of the Reformation.

## **Johannes Comander**

Johannes Dorfmann (1484-1557), called Comander, was the son of a milliner from Maienfeld and attended St. Gallen Monastery School and Basel University. In St. Gallen, he met the later Reformer Vadian; in Basel, he met Zwingli. From 1512 on, Comander was the vicar and from 1521 the pastor of Escholzmatt (LU). In 1523, he was appointed to St. Martin's in Chur by the City Council. His Reformation sermons were soon widely known. At the Ilanz Disputation (1526) he presented 18 theses that later served as a basis for the Bern Theses (1528).

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