



The Danzig Mennonite Church: Its Origin and History from 1569-1919

H. G. Mannhardt

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This volume was originally published in 1919 in Germany for two reasons. One was the desire to reflect on three hundred fifty years of congregational history, going all the way back to the initial leadership provided by Dirk Philips, one of Menno Simons' most important co-workers. Celebrating the centennial of the congregation's church building, which stands to this day in Gdańsk, Poland, was the second reason. The author, Hermann Gottlieb Mannhardt, served the congregation as pastor from 1878 to 1927 and was an important leader of the German Mennonite church. Mannhardt's account is important to German history for providing a perspective from the margins of society on the perennial questions of religion, class, and national identity. The triangulation of guild masters, Mennonite artisans and merchants outside the city walls, and the ruling patrician families illuminates how religious and economic interests fed off each other in early modern Danzig. This history also demonstrates the transformation of European society from one that derived status from birth and tradition to one that based status on merit as well as equal rights and equal duties. Mannhardt portrayed Mennonites as courageous outsiders initially and ended with them as valued, if still slightly eccentric, insiders, fitting the liberal expectation that the price of admission to modern, democratic society is checking one's religious commitments at the door of the public sphere. Special features of this translation include an epilogue by Pastor Tomasz Ropiejko, lead pastor of the Pentecostal congregation that has used the former Mennonite church building in Gdańsk since the 1950s. Original maps make the streets and villages of Mannhardt's account easy to locate. Editorial annotations to the original text explain passages that might otherwise remain obscure and highlight as well the places where Mannhardt's nineteenth-century perspectives shaped his interpretations.

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