

## A small country between two lakes

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The territory of the canton of Zug is small, compact and varied. It covers 238.8 square kilometres, of which, according to the land-use statistics of 2006, some 107 square kilometres were agricultural land, 66 square kilometres were forest and 29 square kilometres were settlements.<sup>1</sup> The canton borders Zurich to the north, Aargau to the west, Lucerne to the south-west and Schwyz to the south and east.<sup>2</sup> Two lakes shape it. Lake Zug stretches along the western foot of the Zugerberg and the Rossberg towards the Rigi. Lake Ägeri lies higher up, in a valley enclosed by hills, on the border with Schwyz. The river Lorze drains Lake Ägeri, cuts through a gorge towards Baar, flows into Lake Zug at its northern end and leaves the lake again at Cham on its way to the Reuss.<sup>3</sup> Its water power became the motor of the first industrialisation, as Chapter III shows.

The landscape falls into two parts. The lowlands along the lake and the Lorze plain, around Zug, Baar, Cham, Steinhausen, Hünenberg and Risch, were suitable for grain, orchards and meadows. The uplands of Menzingen, Neuheim and the Ägeri valley were given over to cattle and dairy farming. This division between valley and mountain appears in the constitutional structure of the old canton, in the conflicts between town and rural communes, and in the different paths that the communes followed during industrialisation.

The territory lies on the route between Zurich and Lucerne, and beyond Lucerne towards the Gotthard pass and Italy. Its position between the largest city of the Confederation and the heartland of the original cantons of central Switzerland defined its political history. Zurich and Schwyz both sought to control it. After Zurich had besieged the town in 1352, Schwyz conquered it in 1365.<sup>4</sup> The same position, once the railway connected Zurich with Lucerne through Zug in 1864, made the canton an attractive seat for companies and residents who wanted to be close to Zurich without living there.<sup>5</sup>

## 1 Notes

1. HLS, "Zug (Kanton)", version of 24 April 2019, section on territory: total area 238.8 km<sup>2</sup>; forest 66.1 km<sup>2</sup>; agricultural land 107.0 km<sup>2</sup>; settlement area 29.2 km<sup>2</sup> (land-use statistics 2006). ↩
2. Wikipedia (English), "Canton of Zug", section on geography. ↩
3. Renato Morosoli, "Lorze", Historical Dictionary of Switzerland (HLS), version of 10 July 2008, hls-dhs-dss.ch: the Lorze flows out of Lake Ägeri for about 16 km through the Lorzentobel and the plain of Baar into Lake Zug, leaves the lake at Cham and flows into the Reuss after about 11 km. ↩
4. HLS, "Zug (Gemeinde)", version of 5 May 2020, chronology of the medieval period. ↩
5. HLS, "Zug (Gemeinde)", recording the opening of the Zurich–Lucerne line through Zug in 1864; Zug in der Welt, "Zugs zweite Industrialisierung 1880–1913", recording the opening of the Zug–Zurich–Lucerne line in 1864. ↩

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