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The Political Dimension of Religious Catechisms in Fifteenth and Sixteenth Century Europe

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The Political Dimension of Religious Catechisms in Fifteenth and Sixteenth Century Europe

La dimension politique des catéchismes religieux dans l'Europe des XV^e et XVI^e siècles

Robert J. Bast

- 1 Let me begin by making two observations as starting points. First, in the later Middle Ages, an ambitious program for comprehensive religious instruction began to take shape in the minds (and later the texts) of Church reformers. Though their reach exceeded their grasp, such a program did indeed take shape in parts of Western Christendom. The impetus behind it was not dissipated but rather intensified by the Protestant and Catholic Reformations of the 16th century, so much so that catechisms became nearly ubiquitous¹. The matrix of these programs can be broadly labeled “Church Reform”. Yet it is not enough to imagine this era as the age of “religious” catechisms alone, for the catechetical programs of the pre-modern era were intensely political from the very beginning. While the term “catechism” usually evokes the image of a *text*, contemporaries always thought of such artifacts as ancillary to a pedagogical *process* of formal religious instruction. In the emerging Christian church, such a process had been institutionalized no later than the 2nd century, together with a full vocabulary of technical terms to describe it. “Catechists” – specially trained members of the clergy, sometimes in lower orders -- worked with adult converts called “catechumens”, conveying to them mastery of a body of fundamental doctrines the knowledge of which was prerequisite to full communion. By the third century “catechesis” had evolved into a more or less formalized period of instruction for which each bishop was responsible in his own diocese². The content consisted of a core of teachings organized around various creedal statements, the Lord’s Prayer, the sacraments, and ethical mandates derived from a variety of biblical sources. As much else did, however, this system gradually eroded as the Church weathered the decline of Roman imperial control in the West. In theory the system remained in place throughout the Middle Ages. But it was dependent on capable, conscientious bishops with the

education and fiscal resources to ensure that each parish had its teaching clergy. And the peculiar political and economic entanglements into which the episcopal system was drawn would present profound obstacles to effective parish instruction throughout the Middle Ages³.

- 2 The decline of this teaching function was an acknowledged source of anxiety that surfaced regularly during medieval reform movements, as demonstrated by the influential primer for parish priests, attributed to Archbishop John Pecham (fl. 1279-92), known by its incipit, “Ignorantia Sacerdotum”: the “ignorance of priests” was plunging the laity into error⁴. And as such texts emerged in the context of institutional fears of popular heresy (e.g. that of the Cathars)⁵, such ignorance was always assumed to be destabilizing to church and society alike. It was precisely that kind of fear that would finally produce more than merely regional efforts to catechize the laity, though this did not take place until the early fifteenth century. This might seem unlikely: standard narratives later Middle Ages tend to emphasize the era’s multiple manifestations of dysfunction: plague, war, pogrom and rebellion; the Church paralyzed by schism, defensive in the face of conciliarism, mismanaged by Renaissance popes, and unwilling or unable to attend to the pastoral care of the laity. Many of these problems were quite real, of course, though composite portraits of the late-medieval Church often risk running into caricature. Regardless, it was the *perception* of crisis that finally led Church reformers to turn renewed energy to lay catechesis. This trend is best illustrated through the career of Jean Chatellier Gerson (1363-1429). Though his name is unfamiliar to most non-specialists today, Gerson was an extraordinarily important figure, not only in his own lifetime but in the century that followed. Chancellor of the University of Paris during the high-water mark of the Great Schism, Gerson became a leading force in the Conciliar movement, which aimed not merely for the resolution of the standoff between rival popes, but for the *reformatio ecclesiae in capite et membris*. In the first decades of the 15th century he was arguably the most influential public intellectual in Western Christendom⁶. In 1400 Gerson called for a campaign to revive parish catechesis, a move he justified by declaring a spiritual state of emergency akin to the great pandemic of the previous century:

“...[I]n these constricted times, so dangerous to souls, [...], just as the schools of medicine once wrote pamphlets to instruct people how to manage in times of plague, so now it would be good if a short work were written... dealing with the chief points of our religion, and especially the Ten Commandments, for the sake of the simple folk.”⁷

- 3 In fact Gerson himself had already been at work on just such a project. Eventually known at the *Opusculum Tripartitum*, the work contained explanations of the Ten Commandments, the Virtues and Vices, the Apostle’s Creed, the Lord’s Prayer, and a guide to preparation for death. It was an influential work throughout the 15th and 16th centuries, copied, translated into several vernaculars, and eventually printed⁸. But Gerson himself cannot begin to account for the explosion of catechisms and related literature produced in the generations before the Reformation. Munich’s *Staatsbibliothek* alone contains more than 126 different texts, many of them preserved in dozens of separate manuscripts comprising, according to one estimate, around 14,000 pages of catechetical literature, to say nothing of other forms of communication, e.g. painted wooden placards posted in churches, popular songs, school primers, sermons and guides to preaching, and so forth⁹. On this foundation, the Protestant and Catholic reformations of the next century would build prodigiously. Martin Luther’s Large and Small catechisms became standards throughout the Lutheran churches (though Gerald Strauss has shown that an

extraordinary number of Lutheran pastors continued to write their own). Calvinists and members of the so-called Reformed Churches would employ the work of Leo Jud, and later the Heidelberg Catechism. Catholics made use of the pedagogical texts created by the German Jesuit Petrus Canisius, and later, the Roman Catechism authorized by the Council of Trent¹⁰. Within this diverse array of materials, authors and confessions, and across the conceptual barrier that separates the later Middle Ages from the age of European Reformations, several common tendencies may be noted.

- 4 First, the use of the vernacular. Consciously and in overwhelming number, the authors of catechisms openly acknowledged their adoption of the vernacular “for the sake of the simple folk”, or sometimes “for simple priests.” In the words of one anonymous author:

“Today few people know Latin. Thus... we must translate Latin into German and other tongues, so that the laity may be brought to devotion. Whoever opposes this, opposes God”.
- 5 Second, systematic attempts to make sure that such texts were used, through persuasion or coercion or both. Throughout the 15th and 16th centuries, many reform-minded Catholic bishops issued diocesan legislation requiring that parish priests teach the catechism regularly; some offered indulgences or other incentives to lay folk who attended. In the 1420s the bishop of Bologna distributed oranges to compliant children¹¹; later generations of Lutheran pastors gave out pennies¹². By the 1530s Protestant magistrates in some regions had passed coercive legislation requiring parents to ensure their children’s participation or to face escalating punishments that ran from small fines to a day in jail¹³. We should not assume that such measures were successful; the frequent repetition over time of such mandates suggests that compliance was hard to establish. But these efforts do illustrate is the singular importance that authorities, secular and religious, had come to attach to catechesis.
- 6 Third, over the centuries in question a silent consensus was reached on the core of the catechism, with explanations of the Ten Commandments gradually coming to dominate all other moral codes for lay instruction¹⁴. And of the Ten Commandments, none received as much attention as the fourth: “Honor your Father and Your Mother, that your days may be long in the land that the Lord your God gives you.”¹⁵ As I have argued elsewhere, this commandment enjoyed disproportionate emphasis in the teaching schemes of late-medieval and early modern Catholics and Protestants because it gave contemporaries a rubric for the articulation of moral directives with which authorities expressly hoped to strengthen the fundamental institutions of society: home, church and “state”¹⁶.
- 7 Fourth, throughout the era under consideration here, and on all sides of the 16th centuries doctrinal divides, the growing emphasis on catechesis took shape amidst expressions of crisis. Three examples must suffice here. We have already heard Gerson’s own diagnosis of a state of emergency around 1400, a perception surely formed by the major events his generation struggled with: the Great Schism, the Hundred Years’ War, and the political/dynastic crisis of the French monarchy. A century later, as German Lutherans attempted to assess and consolidate the growth of Protestantism in their domains, Luther too would preface a catechism with a note of alarm: “So help me God, what pitiful things I saw [when visiting rural parishes]... the common man knows nothing about Christian doctrine, especially in the countryside, and a great many of our pastors are just as ignorant”¹⁷. On the other side of the confessional divide, however, it was the success rather than the failure of Protestantism that would strike fear in reformers like Georg Witzel. In 1560 Witzel prefaced his catechism with a long, dramatic jeremiad that

decried not only the destabilizing Protestant heresy, but also the perceived inaction of his own Roman church:

“So many years fly by, so many days and hours pass, but the year, the day, the hour does not come in which we might see the reformation of our Christendom (now transformed into Heathendom). Rather, it falls more and more into the horrifying abyss of all errors, all heresy, all burdens, all divisions, all blasphemy, all faithlessness, falseness, bitterness, stubbornness, vengefulness, enmity, ill will, murder, theft, arson, brutality, drunkenness, excess, greed, self-interest, lies, deception, pride, and every other manner of inhuman wickedness, whatever its name. And there is more of this now than our ancestors ever saw or heard of...”¹⁸.

- 8 While there is no reason to doubt the sincerity of each of these representative clerics, we should also understand that the language of crisis was rhetorical and strategic, and that it was marshaled by members of the ecclesiastical estate in response to the first rumblings of revolutionary discontent that were challenging its hegemony. The catechisms they wrote, and the ambitious ancillary programs of indoctrination they sought to create, must be recognized as elements in a programmatic effort to strengthen traditional loci of authority, already in the age of “religious” catechisms. Jean Gerson said so openly, in a revealing passage from 1417 that stressed the utility of the Ten Commandments, here identified as the *lex Christi*:

“The Law of Christ not only regulates the actions of man toward God, but also toward his neighbor, his rulers and his prelates... All things must be regulated and ordained according the commands and ordinances of superiors, so that the hierarchy is not confused”¹⁹.

- 9 Gerson was thinking of one commandment in particular, the 4th, “honor your father and your mother”. Under this rubric catechists regardless of time or confessional context would articulate a series of recurring norms intended to regulate Christian society under the godly governance (as they defined it) of fathers of the household, fathers of the Church, and father of the body politic, the *patres patriae*. Given our present interests, I will restrict my observations to this last group. The political lessons embedded in catechisms articulated an ethic of reciprocal responsibility: those things that subordinates/children owed the authorities/fathers, and vice versa. Many expositors of the catechism insisted that the 4th Commandment required subjects to show deference to political authorities, and some catechists illustrated this in detail. One such was Theodoric Engelhuß, a university-trained cleric working in 15th-century Vienna:

“You shall willingly greet everyone according to their station. You shall fall at the feet of a pope, emperor, cardinal or king; kneel before a bishop, abbot or lesser lord; remove your hat for a priest or knight; politely touch your hand to your cap for the village headman, a city councilor, or other honorable folk”²⁰.

- 10 Such graphic insistence on habituating the mind and body to deference toward authority is not unique, nor was it left entirely to chance. Increasingly, as the Commandments came to dominate the penitential system, priests availed themselves of a tool with which to require deference and to count the failure to do so as sin. This trend is evident in the person and practice of the Frankfurt chaplain Johannes Wolff, who, inspired by his reading of Gerson, authored a guide to confession based on the Commandments that he employed with his own parishioners, who would find themselves faced with pointed questions when meeting their pastor in the sacrament of confession:

“How many times have you failed to remove your cap in the presence of your master, your priest or your city magistrates? [...] Have you disobeyed the

commands of your civic officials? Have you murmured against them? Have you wanted to know their secrets? Have you thought yourself wiser than they?"²¹.

- 11 Elsewhere the Viennese cleric Thomas Peuntner, preacher at the archducal Habsburg court, inquired of his penitents whether they had “done injury to the authorities, and especially to your prince, with words or works? Have you withheld your taxes or scorned his decrees or commands?”²². Catechists also anticipated and pre-empted objections that subjects might make on grounds of merit: what if one’s prince is a tyrant? The Carthusian monk Werner Rolevinck, author of a catechism specifically designed for use with peasants, deflected this sort of objection directly and firmly: “Every faithful and God-fearing peasant must humbly obey his lords”, regardless of whether or not such “fathers” were wicked and tyrannical (Rolevinck counseled oppressed subjects to take solace in the thought that the Divine Judge will one demand reckoning from rulers who oppress the poor)²³. Similar sentiments were expressed near the end of the century by Augustinian canon Stephen von Landeschron, whose devotional treatise “The Heavenly Path”, a book-length, vernacular exposition of the Ten Commandments, became a best-seller in southern Germany. Stephen’s exposition cited Exodus 22:28 (“You shall not revile the rulers, nor curse the princes of the people”) as a point of departure for an exasperated warning:

“Oh merciful God! How many there are who earn guilt by judging, cursing scolding and condemning the authorities, and especially their princes, rather than looking within themselves and recognizing their sin that has brought upon them such rulers. For as God said through the prophet, ‘I will give them a king in my wrath and a prince as I see fit’ ”²⁴.

- 12 This sort of counsel was no anomaly; a generation later, Martin Luther would express himself in similar terms:

“The Law [of God] says ‘you must not revile the princes of the people’... And one must beware that one does not slander them... thus although rulers tax, plague, and oppress peasants, citizens and even priests, we must still endure them as if they were the hand of God, who punishes us for our sins...”²⁵.

- 13 Such tropes enjoyed a remarkably broad ecumenical currency. Luther’s bitterest life-long enemy was Johannes Eck, a German Catholic theologian and professor at the University of Ingolstadt, and as biting, irascible and bellicose as the Wittenberg reformer himself. Eck worked tirelessly for the duration of his life to smash the growing Protestant challenge to the Roman Church. In the 1530s he produced a massive five-folio set of vernacular preaching guides on the catechism, explicitly designed to provide loyal priests with the intellectual weapons with which to combat Protestantism in all its pernicious forms. And yet when Eck explained the 4th commandment, he did so in terms that could have from Luther himself:

“Those who have harsh rulers should remember that God sometimes sends these because of the sins of the people... You complain much about princes and authorities, about taxes, about the use of force, about the lord’s officials, about the duties and services you owe your rulers. You say that these have never been so harsh as they are now. I answer: perhaps subjects have never been so wicked, bold and presumptuous, forcing God in his wrath to give them such rulers and lords”²⁶.

- 14 Catechists were not indifferent to the problems of bad government, and indeed some of the longer expositions of the Commandments pointedly admonished the fathers of the body politic for sins characteristic of rulers. Here too is evidence of a larger program, for reformers expressly hoped either to mold the present generation or to shape a new one into the image of godly governors from the (idealized) biblical past. Thus catechists

enumerated and denounced transgressions most common to archdukes, margraves, princes, lords and other magistrates: oppressing subjects with irregular taxes, forcing people into servitude; failing to protect the rights of the weak and poor; making war often and for selfish reasons; failing to govern for the common good²⁷.

- 15 These were traditional *topoi* in sermons and texts intended especially for the ruling class. But they took on a new immediacy in the 15th and 16th centuries as reformers pushed the boundary of the definition of “the common good” in new directions dictated in part by the times. The language of crisis that pervades the catechetical program served to justify appeals to secular magistrates to use their God-given authority, coercively if necessary, to create a godly society by repressing sin and promoting reform. Failure to do so, it was alleged, would inevitably lead to the fate of Israel as recorded in the Scriptures²⁸. Humbert of Romans, whose 13th century model sermon collections provided outlines for generations of Dominican sermons to rulers, dwelt at length on the meaning of Numbers 25 : 4. “The chiefs of the people will be hung from the gallows on account of the fornication of the people”. On the basis of this verse, Humbert and the generations of Dominicans who used his preaching manual argued that God would hold the ruling class accountable for failure to punish not only crime but sin²⁹. This message made it into the catechetical programs of the 15th and 16th centuries not by accident but by design. Those programs gained strength in the midst of broad structural changes in societal and institutional relationships, as old patterns were breaking down and new ones emerging. *Precisely* when the weakness of a papacy divided by schism and challenged by conciliarism was making it easier for secular authorities to expand their authority into the traditional jurisdiction of the Church, catechists invited that encroachment by urgently warning that the fate of nations rested on coercive policing of the lives of its subjects.
- 16 This process was already under way in the 15th century³⁰. What changed in the next one was the new element added when Protestants joined theology to morality, insisting that God required Christian magistrates to abolish false doctrine and to impose the pure teaching of the Gospel. In the hands of Philip Melanchthon, this principle too was illustrated by recourse to the Ten Commandments: the magistrate as “custodian of the two tables of the Law of Moses”, one governing morality, the other dogma³¹. If the fathers of the Church could not or would not ensure pure preaching, then that task was to be appropriated by the fathers of the land. In very short order, Catholic opponents of Protestantism were echoing this argument, especially those in Germany who watched with alarm as the unchecked Lutheran heretics gobbled up princedoms, cities, monasteries and bishoprics. Thus Catholic theologians like Johannes Eck, who opposed on principle every doctrinal innovation made by his Protestant rivals, would find himself joining them on this procedural one, urging new powers on the Archdukes of Bavaria in the cause of punishing heresy and preserving Catholic society.
- 17 It is here that we must pause to ask after the effectiveness of the program for indoctrination that grew up with the catechisms. How successful were catechists in changing hearts and minds? In crafting better Christians who internalized not merely the chief points of religious knowledge but who acted on them in the ways prescribed by reformers? The answers are elusive and perhaps beyond the reach of the historian. What can be shown, however, is that in late-medieval and early modern Europe, catechists and reformers created an ideological system that perfectly met the needs of secular authorities already engaged in vastly increasing their reach in the name of religious reform. And the end of that story was nowhere in sight at the centuries’ close.

NOTES

1. Robert James BAST, *Honor Your Fathers. Catechisms and the Emergence of a Patriarchal Ideology in Germany, 1400-1600*, Studies in Medieval and Reformation Thought, LXVIII, Leiden: Brill Academic Publishers, 1997.
2. For an overview of the early institutional history see Milton M. GATCH, "Basic Christian Education from the Decline of Catechesis to the Rise of the Catechisms", in John H. WESTERHOFF and O. C. EDWARDS (eds.), *A Faithful Church. Issues in the History of Catechesis*, Wilton, 1981, p. 79-107.
3. See Lawrence DUGGAN, "Fear and Confession on the Eve of the Reformation", *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 75, 1984, p. 153-175, who memorably summarizes the systemic flaws as "ignorance, pluralism, non-residence and hard times", p. 157.
4. On the impact and significance of this work see Eamon DUFFY, *The Stripping of the Altars. Traditional Religion in England, c. 1400-c. 1580*, New Haven, 1992, 53 ff.
5. Cf. Hubert JEDIN, *Ecumenical Councils of the Catholic Church. An Historical Outline*, Freiburg, 1960, p. 78.
6. Daniel Hobbins MAGUIRE, "The Schoolman as Public Intellectual: Jean Gerson and the Late Medieval Tract", *American Historical Review* 108/5, 2003, p. 1308-1337.
7. "...in tanta angustia temporis et inter tot animarum pericula... Item forte expediret sicut olim tempore quarundam pestilentiarum facultas medicorum composuit tractatulum ad informandum singulos, ita fieret per facultatem vel de mandato ejus aliquis tractatulus super punctis principalibus nostrae religionis, et specialiter de praeceptis, ad instructionem simplicium", Letter of 1 April 1400 to Pierre d'Ailley, in Palemon GLORIEUX (ed.), *Jean Gerson. Oeuvres Completes* Paris, 1960-73, II, p. 23-28.
8. On the genesis, dissemination and influence of this work see BAST, *Honor Your Fathers*, *op. cit.*, p. 13-23, and the literature cited in note 50, p. 14-15.
9. P. EGINO WEIDENHILLER, *Untersuchungen zur deutschsprachigen katechetischen Literatur des späten Mittelalters*, Munich, 1965 ; Dieter HARMENING, "Katechismusliteratur. Grundlagen religiöser Laienbildung im Spätmittelalter", in Norbert R. WOLF (ed.), *Wissensorganisierende und wissensvermittelnde Literatur im Mittelalter*, Wiesbaden, 1987, p. 91-102.
10. The development of confessionally specific catechisms is documented in BAST, *Honor Your Fathers*, *op. cit.*, p. 36-39; on the steady production of catechisms by Lutheran clergy see Gerald STRAUSS, *Luther's House of Learning. Indoctrination of the Young in the German Reformation* (Baltimore, 1978), 160f.
11. Paul F. GRENDLER, *Schooling in Renaissance Italy. Literacy and Learning, 1300-1600*, Baltimore, 1989, p. 333-34.
12. So ordained for example in the 1558 parish visitation instruction issued in the name of Count Eberhard of Hohenlohe : see Emil SEHLING (ed.), *Die Evangelischen Kirchenordnungen des XVI. Jahrhunderts*, Leipzig, 1902, vol. XV, p. 131a ; further examples in STRAUSS, *Luther's House of Learning*, p. 174.
13. For examples drawn from territorial church and/or discipline ordinances (*Polizeiordnungen*) see Bast, *Honor Your Fathers*, *op. cit.*, p. 226-28.
14. John BOSSY, "Moral Arithmetic: Seven Sins into Ten Commandments", in Edmund LEITES (ed.), *Conscience and Casuistry in Early Modern Europe*, Lanham, 1990, p. 214-43.
15. This development is traced at length in chapter 1 of BAST, *Honor Your Fathers*, with additional literature there. It should be noted that what Catholics and Lutherans would count as the 4th

commandment (Exodus 20:12), Zwingli, Calvin and other representatives of the Reformed Tradition, together with Anglicans, would count as the 5th: *ibid.*, xn2.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 32-53.

17. Quoted in STRAUSS, *Luther's House of Learning*, *op. cit.*, p. 160. The citation comes from the preface of Luther's *Kleine Catechismus* (1529).

18. "So vil jar verfliesen, so viel tag und stunde verlaufen, das jar aber, der Tag, die Stund wil nicht kommen, daß man sehe, daß sich unser Christenthumb (welchs schier in Heidenthumb transformiert ist) doch ein wenig zur besserung schicket; fällt aber darfur jhe mehr und mehr zu erschrecklichem abgrund aller jrthummen, aller heresy, aller laster, aller trennung, aller lesterung, aller untrew, falschheit, bitterkeit, halstarrigkeit, feindschafft, abgunst, morderery, rauberey, brennerey, schinderey, saufferery, unzucht, geitz, eigennutz, lug, betrug, hochmut und alleerey unmenschlicher bösheit, wie sie namen haben mag. Und diß alles mehr, wedder in vörigen zeiten unserer Vörfahren jhe erhört noch geschehen ist".

19. *Lex Christi*.

20. "Gherne saltu groten vnd enen yuweliken na synen state: pawese, keiser, cardinale, konigen saltu to vote vallen; Suffraggannen eder wiggelbischopen, Abbaten, Banrossen saltu to nygen, Papen vnde ridders saltu dyne kogelen, dynen hoet aff doen; Schulten vnde schepenen vnde andeen ersamen luden saltu sunderlinge groten vnde de hant an de kogelen setten", Theodoric ENGELHUß, *Der Leyen Regele* in Rudolf LANGENBERG, *Quellen und Forschungen zur Geschichte der deutschen Mystik*, Bonn, 1902, 98 ll. p. 15-21.

21. Wolff's manual for confession included model questions and answers for both confessors and penitents. The former were expected to craft questions around the sample declarative responses Wolff provided, e.g.: "...geyn minen meynstern, priestern raitheren han ich nit bij czehen malen myne kogel abezogen." [...] Ich byn yren geboden nit gehorsame gewest. Ich han wider sie gemurmelt. Ich han yte heymlicheyt wollen wissen.... ich han mich wiser geducht, dan sie...", Johannes WOLFF, "Untitled manual for parish priests", in Franz FALK (ed.), *Drei Beichtbüchlein nach den zehn Geboten aus der Frühzeit der Buchdruckerkunst*, Münster, 1907, p. 19 ll. p. 1-3; 34, ll. p. 26-29.

22. "...ob du die obrosten haupt vnd sunderlichen dinin weltlichen fürsten mit worten oder mit wercken gelaidiget habest; ob du dinin zynß nit gegeben habest, oder sin auff saczung oder sine gepot verschmecht habest", Thomas PEUNTNER, *Christenlehre*, Stuttgart LB Cod. Theol. et phil. 4* 52, 2r-143v, here 139r, p. 6-11.

23. On Rolevinck and his unique catechism, see BAST, *Honor Your Fathers*, p. 71-72 ; p. 118 ; p. 157-160.

24. "O barmhertziger gott, wie gar vil menschen verschulden sich an jren oebristen besonderlich an den weltlichen fürsten die sy richten vnd urtaillen, verflaechen, schelten vnd verdampnen vnd nicht selber woellen ansehen noch in selber die schuld geben das sy soelich oebristen haben.... Unser [Herr] spricht durch den propheten. Ich wird dir geben ein künig in meinem zorn oder grymmen vnd ein fürsten in meinem wille." J. Gerardus Jaspers, *Stephan von Landskron. Die Hymelstrasz. Mit einer Einleitung und vergleichenden Betrachtung zum Sprachgebrauch in den Frühdrucken (Augsburg 1484, 1505 und 1510)*, Amsterdam, 1979, 60r ll. 14-21; ll., p. 23-25.

25. "Dann es spricht das gesatz. 'Du solt nit übelreden dem fürsten des folcks.'... vnd darumb wiewol die oebren schetzen vnd plagen / vnderdruecken die buwern vnd burger oder auch die priester / noch sol man sy tragen / glych als die hand gottes / die vns strafft vmb vnser suend willen..." D. Martin Luthers Werke: *Kritische Gesamtausgabe, Abteilung Werke* (Weimar, 1883-1990) I.460, 1-10.

26. "Das sollen aber auch gedencken die ain straefflich oberkait haben / das Gott zuo zeit ihn zuo schickt von wegen ihr boßhait: / ... / Du klagst vil von fürsten und oberer / von den steür / vom gwild / von amptleutten / von scharwecken und fronen / von ungelten und zoellen / das vor nie so schwaer gewesen: Ich antwort: Villeicht seind uerrthanen nie alß boeß / üppig / unnd kostlich gewaesen: das Gott auß zorn / den fürsten unnd herren sollich eingibt und

verhengt.” Johannes Eck, *Der Funfft und letst Tail Christenlicher Predig von den Zehen Geboten wie die zuo halten / und wie die übertretten werden / Zuo wolfart den frummen Christen des alten glaubens*, Ingolstadt, 1539, 34r col. 1, 38-40; col. 1, 48-col. 2, 3.

27. BAST, *Honor Your Fathers*, *op. cit.*, p. 163-167.

28. Cf. Ulrich von Pottenstein’s massive exposition of the Ten Commandments, written c. 1400 for count Reinprecht II of Wallsee, which outlines the four reasons that kingdoms are overthrown (disobedience to God, idolatry, unjust injury to neighbor, cruelty toward subjects), all of them illustrated by examples drawn from the Old Testament: *ibid.*, 165-166.

29. On Humbert and his treatise see *ibid.*, p. 171-172.

30. See Manfred SCHULZE, *Fürsten und Reformation. Geistliche Reformpolitik weltlicher Fürsten vor der Reformation*, Tübingen, 1991.

31. Robert J. BAST, “From Two Kingdoms to Two Tables : The Ten Commandments and the Christian Magistrate”, *Archiv für Reformationgeschichte/Archive for Reformation History* 89, 1998, p. 79-95.

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