

DIALOGUE AND
DISPUTATION IN THE
ZURICH REFORMATION

UTZ ECKSTEIN'S *CONCILIUM*
AND *RYCHSZTAG*

EDITION, TRANSLATION AND STUDY

Nigel Harris and Joel Love

Peter Lang

This volume contains the first modern critical editions of *Concilium* (1525) and *Rychsztag* (1526), two vernacular verse dialogues by the Zurich-based Zwinglian author Utz Eckstein, together with translations of both into English prose. These works are of interest not just for their literary qualities (which differ markedly from those conventionally associated with ‘Reformation dialogues’), but also because of what they reveal about Zwingli’s theological and socio-political priorities in the mid-1520s. Along with many other aspects of the contemporary Swiss context, these features are examined in an introduction and in extensive elucidatory notes. An underlying thread of the authors’ interpretation is that, for all their evident desire to express and establish Evangelical perspectives, the *Concilium* and *Rychsztag* make imaginative and constructive use of specifically Swiss traditions of dialogue, which were expressed, for example, both in the consultative decision-making processes of rural communities and in the increasingly influential procedures of the formalized urban disputation.

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Preliminary remarks

The idea for the present book arose out of doctoral research into Utz Eckstein funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council, carried out by Joel Love, and supervised by Nigel Harris. While significant parts of the introduction, and several of the elucidatory notes, draw on the resulting 2008 thesis, our editions and translations of Eckstein's texts represent an entirely new and fully collaborative project. Moreover a considerable amount of additional research, particularly into Eckstein's life, the textual history of the *Concilium* and *Rychsztat*, and various aspects of their theological and cultural environment, has been undertaken by Nigel Harris in the context of a period of study leave awarded by the University of Birmingham.

We would like to thank our academic colleagues, particularly Graeme Murdock, who helped to supervise an earlier piece of research; David Hill and Ulrike Zitzlsperger, who examined the PhD thesis and gave crucial advice about the 'next stage'; the late Ben Benedikz for philological support; Ron Speirs and Robert Swanson for practical help; and Sania Reddig, Alan Suter, Antje Pieper, Robert Evans, Elystan Griffiths, and Joanne Sayner for many timely morale-boosts.

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Hall Green and Lancaster
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Introduction

The sixteenth century was a time of rapid socio-political change, far-reaching religious conflict, and an explosion of new media. The intermingling of these and other factors resulted in a substantial increase in the quantity of literature produced in the major European vernaculars, in the number of people who came into contact with it, and hence in the importance of texts for the shaping and nurturing of public opinion. This is why the vernacular literature of the time is of interest not just to students of literature, but also to those concerned with social, religious, or intellectual history. Much of this literature, however, remains in practice impenetrable, not least to readers of English, because of a lack of reliable editions and translations, and indeed of approachable analytical studies. A case in point is provided by the works of the Swiss Reformation author Utz Eckstein (c. 1490–1558), whose dialogues,¹ all datable to the mid-1520s, have much to tell us about the priorities and perspectives specifically of the Zurich (Zwinglian) Reformation, as well as representing a unique moment in the development of the dialogue as a literary and polemical form – but which have, nevertheless, hitherto been largely neglected by scholars.

With the exception of Johann Scheible's uncritical and unreliable reprints in his self-published compendium *Das Kloster*,² Eckstein's works have not been edited since the sixteenth century. Moreover the only really substantial study of him remains the book-length article of

- 1 We use this term throughout for convenience only. *Dialogus* is one of the many names applied to such texts by contemporaries, though clearly what they understood by it differs from our own assumptions, deriving as these do from later theatrical and cinematic conventions.
- 2 Johann Scheible, *Das Kloster: weltlich und geistlich; meist aus den älteren deutschen Volks-, Kinder-, Curiositäten- und vorzugsweise komischen Literatur*, 12 vols (Stuttgart: the author, 1845–9). The Eckstein texts are in vol. 8 (1847), pp. 705–826 (*Concilium*) and 827–92 (*Rychsztag*).

Salomon Vögelin, published as long ago as 1882.³ Vögelin's work remains invaluable, particularly as an introductory guide to Eckstein's life and writings (the contents of which are summarized with abundant quotation from the originals); and he also situates Eckstein accurately within the context of contemporary intellectual debates in Switzerland (notably, for example, those involving the Alsatian Humanist and polemicist Thomas Murner). His account of Eckstein's biography needs updating, however; and, when considering Eckstein's literary achievement, he is apt to fall prey to the prejudices of his age. Almost at the outset, for example (p. 93), Vögelin refers to Eckstein's works as 'Reimereien' ('doggerel'), and he several times characterizes them as markedly inferior to the dramas of the Zurich author's Berne-based contemporary Niklaus Manuel.⁴ Eckstein was, one fears, always destined to frustrate the attempts of such nineteenth-century scholars as Vögelin and Jakob Baechtold to celebrate the Swiss dramatic tradition, for the simple reason that his dialogues are not plays.⁵

Since Vögelin, substantial progress in Eckstein research has been made only with regard to the author's life. Four articles, all based on newly discovered original documents, have fleshed out our knowledge of Eckstein's biography considerably. First, in 1926, Adrian Corrodi-Sulzer established that, in 1535, Eckstein was appointed to the post of

3 Salomon Vögelin, 'Utz Eckstein', *Jahrbuch für schweizerische Geschichte*, 7 (1882), 91–264.

4 See Vögelin, pp. 93, 179, 225. The works of Manuel have recently benefited from an excellent modern edition, whose appearance is indeed one of the motivating factors behind the production of this volume: Niklaus Manuel, *Werke und Briefe. Vollständige Neuedition*, ed. by Paul Zinsli and Thomas Hengartner (Berne: Stämpfli, 1999).

5 See Baechtold's *Geschichte der deutschen Literatur in der Schweiz* (Frauenfeld: Huber, 1892), pp. 293–7. For him, Eckstein's 'pamphlets' have only the outward form of dramas ('haben vom Drama lediglich die äußere Form'). Rather, they are 'crude conversations', which are 'inappropriately weighed down with theological ballast, repetition of Zwingli's arguments, and quotations from the Church Fathers and secular history' ('derbe Gespräche, mit theologischem Ballaste, Wiederholung Zwinglischer Argumente, Zitaten aus den Kirchenvätern und der Profangeschichte ungebührlich beschwert' – p. 247). Given that nearly all of Eckstein's quotations are in fact from the Bible, these last words already make one question how well Baechtold knew the texts.

Deacon in Niederwenigen.⁶ Ten years later, Oskar Vasella published a revealing document, from the *Induzienverzeichnis* of the Diocese of Chur, which gives us information about Eckstein's place of origin (Esslingen am Neckar, in Swabia), his whereabouts in 1522 (Weesen, in the Canton of St. Gallen), his material poverty, and indeed his domestic arrangements.⁷ In 1953, Peter Hegg's study of documents in the Staatsarchiv Zürich enabled him to pinpoint the dates of Eckstein's death (7th October 1558) and burial (two days later, in the city's leading church, the *Grossmünster*);⁸ and, building on another discovery by Hegg, in 1960 Paul Zinsli published and interpreted the only surviving letter in Eckstein's own hand, dating probably from 1531 or 1532, in which he appeals for help from Zwingli's successor Heinrich Bullinger.⁹ Subsequent accounts of Eckstein's life have merely summarized the known material, rather than adding to it.¹⁰

With regard to the study of Eckstein's works, there is sadly little to report. No twentieth- or twenty first-century scholar has undertaken a substantive reassessment of these, and the brief treatments that have appeared in histories of literature have tended to rehearse, apparently uncritically, the judgements of Vögelin and Baechtold.¹¹ This is true

6 Adrian Corrodi-Sulzer, 'Zu Utz Eckstein', *Zwingliana*, 4 (1926), 337–40.

7 Oskar Vasella, 'Neues über Utz Eckstein, den Zürcher Pamphletisten', *Zeitschrift für schweizerische Kirchengeschichte*, 30 (1936), 37–48.

8 Peter Hegg, 'Ein unbekannter Apiarius-Druck', *Schweizerisches Gutenbergmuseum [sic]*, 39 (1953), 51–65.

9 Paul Zinsli, 'Notvolles Prädikantendasein', *Reformatio*, 9 (1960), 327–33. Peter Hegg's own story, meanwhile, was a tragic one: he died in 1955 at the age of 27. This represented a major loss to Eckstein studies, not least in that Hegg was planning, in the context of his doctoral thesis, to edit his works.

10 See notably Willy Müller, 'Der Reformationsdichter Utz Eckstein' (unpublished *Lizenziatsarbeit*, University of Zurich, 1970), pp. 3–24; Hans Ulrich Bächtold, 'Eckstein (Acrogoniaeus), Utz (Ulrich)', in *Biographisch-Bibliographisches Kirchenlexikon*, vol. 17 (Herzberg: Bautz, 2000), pp. 296–9 – with excellent bibliography.

11 This is broadly true, for example, of the following: Frida Humbel, *Ulrich Zwingli und seine Reformation im Spiegel der gleichzeitigen, schweizerischen volkstümlichen Literatur*, Quellen und Abhandlungen zur schweizerischen Reformationsgeschichte, 4 (Leipzig: Heinsius, 1912), especially pp. 17–18, 140–6; Josef Nadler, *Literaturgeschichte der deutschen Schweiz* (Leipzig: Grethlein, 1932), pp. 158–9; Emil Ermatinger, *Dichtung und Geistesleben der*

even of relatively recent publications. In his 1984 history of German Reformation drama, for example, Wolfgang F. Michael continues to speak the language of the nineteenth-century *geistesgeschichtlich* tradition in characterizing Eckstein as a direct follower of Manuel, who however failed to understand the latter's 'actual instrument', the stage, producing instead 'pure, sometimes long-winded dialogues' or 'really boring pamphlets' wholly lacking in action or theatricality, but including 'uncouth' attacks on their opponents.¹² Moreover, in what is probably the most recent published comment on Eckstein, Claudia Brinker echoes Jakob Baechtold in referring to his dialogues as 'theologically overloaded' ('theologisch überfrachtet').¹³

Only two post-war Germanists have published substantial work on Eckstein. In a 1961 thesis, Hans Stricker uses his works, and those of other sixteenth-century dramatists, as sources for material about contemporary Swiss life and *mores*.¹⁴ He describes and briefly discusses, for example, Eckstein's perspectives on peasants (pp. 88–92), modish clothing (p. 17), and the Turkish Emperor (pp. 25–7), as well as what he sees as Eckstein's self-presentation as a Swabian (n. 103, p. 157). Some of Stricker's conclusions are highly questionable, however, such as his assertions that Eckstein's works show no influence of the social ethics of Zwingli or that, as a Swabian, he was incapable of

deutschen Schweiz (Munich: Beck, 1933), pp. 159–63; and (notably less prejudiced) Hans Rupprich, *Die deutsche Literatur vom späten Mittelalter bis zum Barock: Das Zeitalter der Reformation, 1520–1570. Geschichte der deutschen Literatur von den Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart*, ed. by Helmut de Boor and Richard Newald, IV, 2 (Munich: Beck, 1973), pp. 64–5.

- 12 'In das unmittelbare Gefolge Manuels gehört Utz Eckstein [...] Aber Eckstein verkannte Manuels eigentliches Instrument: die Bühne. Seine Werke sind reine, z. T. langatmige Dialoge geworden. An eine Aufführung hatte Eckstein offenbar nicht gedacht. Zudem werden seine Angriffe pöbelhaft. Aus dem Mangel an Handlung, dem Fehlen des Bühnengerechten entstanden hier recht langweilige Pamphlete': Wolfgang F. Michael, *Das deutsche Drama der Reformationszeit* (Berne: Lang, 1984), pp. 38–9.
- 13 Claudia Brinker, 'Von den Anfängen bis 1700', in *Schweizer Literaturgeschichte*, ed. by Peter Rusterholz and Andreas Solbach (Stuttgart: Metzler, 2007), p. 44.
- 14 Hans Stricker, *Die Selbstdarstellung des Schweizers im Drama des 16. Jahrhunderts*, Sprache und Dichtung, n. s., 7 (Berne: Haupt, 1961).

understanding the ‘deep meaning’ (‘tiefen Sinn’) of the Swiss ‘national Reformation’ (p. 115).

Somewhat more persuasive, finally, is the work of Ninna Jørgensen, whose prime interest is in the typology of peasants, fools, and priests in Reformation literature, but who discusses Eckstein in two sections of her 1988 monograph.¹⁵ In the course of her treatment of fools (pp. 34–41), she sets Eckstein’s presentation of himself as Balaam’s ass, and of Murner as a false prophet, in the context of other contemporary uses of this biblical motif. Then, in a later discussion of peasants (pp. 117–26), she points especially to the significant discrepancy that obtains in Eckstein’s works between the (generally) admirable ‘symbolic’ peasant disputants and the more negatively conceived ‘real life’ peasants whose attitudes they talk about. Furthermore she examines the farmers’ (in her view, idealized) consultation at the beginning of the *Rychsztat* – an analysis to which our delineation of the three main ‘ground rules’ that undergird this consultative process is considerably indebted (see below, pp. 33–6).

The foregoing should already have demonstrated that the time for an adequate modern assessment of Eckstein and his achievement is ripe; and it is clear to us that such an assessment can realistically only begin on the basis of an edition and appropriately annotated English translation of his two most extensive and important works, *Concilium* (‘The Council’, 1525) and *Rychsztat* (‘The Diet’, 1526). The bulk of this volume is therefore devoted to those tasks. It is supported by an index of people, places, and subjects, and by the present introduction, which will discuss Eckstein and his works, and situate them within the wider religious, social, and cultural context in which they were produced. More specific questions of local, biographical, or literary detail are discussed in the elucidatory notes that accompany the translations.

15 Ninna Jørgensen, *Bauer, Narr und Pfaffe: Prototypische Figuren und ihre Funktion in der Reformationsliteratur*, Acta Theologica Danica, 23 (Leiden: Brill, 1988).

Utz Eckstein (c. 1490–1558)

In spite of the assiduous researches mentioned above, we still know almost nothing of Eckstein's background or education: his works show, for example, that he must have received some kind of university education, but we have no idea where or when. His birthplace is established beyond reasonable doubt, however, in the document from Chur printed by Vasella.¹⁶ This begins with a reference to a 'Dominus Ūdalricus Ekgstein de Eßlingen, parcium Sueuorum' – a formulation that seems designed specifically to indicate that this Ulrich Eckstein originated in Esslingen 'of the Swabians', i.e. Esslingen am Neckar (near Stuttgart), rather than the identically named town in the Canton of Zurich. Dated 26th November 1522, the document also indicates that Eckstein was active as a Catholic priest in Switzerland before the beginning of the official Zurich Reformation in 1523: he is described as a chaplain active at the church of St Nicholas in Weesen (a place which, coincidentally or not, held considerable importance also for Zwingli).¹⁷ Eckstein's personal circumstances, however, were clearly far from uncomplicated: the annual payments he is recorded as having to make to the Bishop of Chur include three gulden for the absolution of the sin of 'public fornication' committed with a concubine, with whom he has also sired children ('absolucionē publice fornicacionis sue prolis procreationis cum soluta non coniuncta'). Moreover this is a sum that he was clearly ill-equipped to pay: the Bishop is recorded as having allowed him to get away with paying just one gulden, on account of his learning and poverty ('ob doctrinam et paupertatem'), and on condition that he is not subsequently appointed to a more remunerative benefice ('melius beneficium') elsewhere.

Notwithstanding such generous treatment, however, Eckstein must have committed himself to the Evangelical cause relatively soon after 1522: certainly by 1525 he is recorded in Zurich as the author of

16 Vasella, p. 42. A translation into German is given by Müller, p. 3.

17 His uncle Bartholomaeus was parish priest and rural dean there, and it was the site of the small school at which he received his initial education.

the *Concilium*, a polemical work that is absolutely shot through with Zwinglian perspectives.

For whatever reason, Eckstein's literary career seems already to have ceased by 1527 at the latest, but there is abundant evidence to suggest that he remained dedicated to the Evangelical cause. This is implied especially strongly by his often short-term occupancy of a number of benefices: at Thalwil (1527–8), Rorschach (1528–31), Zollikon (1534–5), Niederwenigen (1535), and Uster (1535–58), from which post he retired shortly before his death 'due to old age and illness'.¹⁸ The reason for the rather nomadic nature of Eckstein's career is not altogether clear. Certainly all the places in which he ministered were strategically important locations for the implementation of Zurich's policy of spreading reformed spirituality throughout the surrounding rural areas, and hence it seems possible that Eckstein was regarded as something of a pioneer, or even a 'troubleshooter'. On the other hand, at least some of his moves may have been dictated by poverty, the demands of a numerous (if eventually legitimate) progeny,¹⁹ and by a somewhat restless and difficult temperament. Certainly Vögelin's detailed account of Eckstein's career in Rorschach (pp. 234–46) reveals a pastor who was initially successful in furthering the Zwinglian cause, but who provoked some opposition due to a certain excess of zeal, and who was eventually forced to leave by events beyond his control – namely the reimposition of Catholicism by Diethelm Blaarer, the new Abbot of St. Gallen, in 1531 (also the year of the Second Kappel War, and Zwingli's death).

The nature of Eckstein's personal relationship with Zwingli has given rise to much speculation. The only actual evidence of it that we have is, however, a somewhat ambiguous letter by Zwingli, dated 9th December 1528, to the St. Gallen Humanist and reformer Vadianus (Joachim von Watt): 'We have sent Ulrich Acrogoniaeus ['Eckstein'] to the people of Rorschach', Zwingli writes, 'mainly because he has been tried by many misfortunes and, at the same time, has seen a great deal. His judgement [or 'natural understanding'] is greater than his

18 Quoted by Vögelin, p. 259, from a document in the Staatsarchiv Zürich.

19 In the letter to Bullinger printed by Zinsli (p. 370), Eckstein pleads for assistance on behalf of a pregnant wife and six children.

learning, though this latter is greater than his happiness. He wants us to recommend him to you'.²⁰ Overall these words come across as something of a backhanded compliment, in which recognition of Eckstein's judgement and experience is mitigated by doubts as to his intellectual abilities and a hint that he is a somewhat demanding, 'high maintenance' colleague. Certainly it is hard to see in them any hint of a warm or close relationship between the two men.

In spite, however, of his later peripatetic career 'in the provinces', his apparent personal distance from Zwingli, and indeed his position as a Swabian 'outsider', there can be no doubt that, at least for the duration of his brief literary career, Eckstein was close to the centre of things in Zurich and wrote primarily for a locally defined Swiss readership. Even though, for example, both the *Concilium* and the *Rychsztag* ostensibly depict supranational fora, their focus remains firmly Swiss. They include frequent allusions to recent events in Zurich, such as Zwingli's brandishing of a 'rabbit cheese' before Johannes Faber at the First Zurich Disputation of 1523 (C 448–50/93), 945–6/123, 1352–4/147),²¹ or the abolition of the Mass there in 1525 (C 3239/257); they often mention important theologians and polemicists known throughout the Holy Roman Empire (Murner, Johannes Faber, Andreas Karlstadt, Johannes Bugenhagen, and others), but only in relation to their involvement in specifically Swiss matters, and by nicknames that were presumably transparent to Zurich readers 'in the know',²² and they make patent allusions not just to the *Karsthans* dialogue and to Murner's *Geuchmat*, but also to less well-known texts that were produced and printed specifically in Zurich.²³ Luther, by

20 Quoted by Müller, p. 14: 'Rorschachensibus Huldrychum Acrogonieum hac potissimum causa misimus, quod multis malis exercitus est, ac simul multa vidit. Iudicio prestantior est quam eruditione, quamquam et illa maior est foelicitate. Hic cupit tibi per nos commendatus esse'.

21 References to the *Concilium* and *Rychsztag* are given throughout in this form: 'C' or 'R' as required, followed by the line number(s) of our German edition and, after the forward slash, the page number(s) of our English translation.

22 Murner, for example, is often called 'Murnarr', Faber is always 'Hans Schmid', and Bugenhagen is 'Pomerantz'.

23 Notably Erhard Hegenwald's *Handlung der verfamlung in der löblichen statt Zürich, vff den xxix tag Ienners / vonn wegen des heyligen Euangelij*; and *Das*

contrast, is conspicuous only by his absence – with the exception of the briefest of accounts of his views on the Eucharist (C 2778–88/229–31) and some critical references at the very end of the *Concilium* (C 4154–87/307–9). Furthermore, Eckstein reaches for local Swiss examples when trying to explain theological concepts, such as the relation of the colours and livery of Basle to the city itself, which he uses as a model for the relation between bread and wine and the body and blood of Christ (C 3137–43/251). This is anyway, of course, a quintessentially Swiss perspective on the Mass, and one of many examples in his dialogues that enable us to discern the strong influence of Zwingli, and indeed of Erasmus as mediated by Zwingli.²⁴ So strong is this influence, indeed, that Murner took the *Concilium*, apparently seriously, to be the work of Zwingli himself (in his *Responsio* to it of 1525);²⁵ and it is both the strength and perhaps the weakness of Eckstein’s dialogues that they were singularly appropriate for a very specific place and time – Zurich in the early years of its Reformation.

gyren rupffen. halt inn wie Johans Schmid Vicarge ze Cofientz / mit dem büchle darinn er verheißt ein waren bericht wie es vff den. 29. tag Jenners. M.D.xxiiij. ze Zürich gangen fye (both Zurich: Froschauer, 1523). There has long been a school of thought to the effect that Zwingli himself wrote the *Handlung der verfamlung*; and Keith Dennis Lewis has suggested, with reasonable but inconclusive evidence, that the *Gyrenrupffen* may be the work of Ulrich von Hutten: see his ‘Johann Faber and the First Zürich Disputation: 1523. A Pre-Tridentine Catholic Response to Huldrych Zwingli and his Sixty-Seven Articles’ (unpublished PhD thesis, Catholic University of America, 1985), pp. 316–47.

- 24 For a survey of the complex relationship between these two great figures see Gottfried W. Locher, ‘Zwingli und Erasmus’, *Zwingliana*, 13 (1969–73), 37–61.
- 25 See the title: *Murneri responsio libello ciuda[m] insigniter & egregie stulto Vlrici Zvuyngel apostate / heresiarche, ostendens Lutheranam doctrinam infamiam irrogare / & verbum dei humanum iudicem pati posse* (Lucerne: the author, 1525).

Eckstein's works

Eckstein seems to have written exclusively in German. Indeed, in the *Rychsztag* he berates his opponent Thomas Murner (at least via the words of the privileged speaker Weybel Reychart, R 2005–10/427) for preferring to use Latin. Plainly he also had a strong preference for verse dialogues (which he sometimes also refers to, revealingly, as 'disputations'). His two most important works, which both fall into this category, are edited and elucidated at length in this volume: the *Concilium* is a fictionalized, indeed highly imaginative representation of a Council of the Church, whereas the *Rychsztag* draws on procedures associated with arbitration or the legal tribunal. Both texts feature peasant characters (especially in the Swiss context, they ought really to be called 'farmers') who dispute with representatives of ecclesiastical and/or secular authority; and they both disclose the framework and rhetorical structures of a formal urban disputation. As such, they use their dialogue structure to reflect particularly tellingly the Swiss predilection for ordered communal consultation – as a means not only of resolving differences, but also of providing both a platform and a forum for the expression of divergent views.

For all their manifest fictionality, though, both *Concilium* and *Rychsztag* are firmly wedded to, and directly inspired by, identifiable contemporary events and processes. It is therefore hardly surprising that the actual subjects discussed in them will hold relatively few surprises for the reader who knows about the early years of the Zurich Reformation. The agenda to be considered at Eckstein's *Concilium* is stated at the work's outset: prayers to the saints, the authority of the Pope, the doctrine of purgatory, the nature of the Mass, tithes and other payments to the Church, and auricular confession. Other issues which subsequently arise as it were unannounced are fasting, pilgrimages, and the validity of canon law. Several of these questions were of course major preoccupations for progressive thinkers throughout the German-speaking lands around 1525, though one is struck by Eckstein's relative lack of interest in indulgences, in justification by faith, and for that matter in the characteristically Swiss issue of images and

icons. The *Rychsztag*, for its part, reflects the extent to which the reformers' agenda was changed, at least temporarily, by the farmers' uprising of later 1525. Accordingly it foregrounds issues of authority and rebellion, and features a lengthy debate between the farmer Pur Eygennutz and his influential opponents about the justifiability of tithes, interest, and taxes.

Within Eckstein's oeuvre the *Concilium* and *Rychsztag* stand out for their length, literary quality, and importance as contributions to the contemporary theological and political debate. They also make a coherent pair, in that they speak into essentially the same set of circumstances and indeed make a number of cross-references to each other. Such considerations, along of course with limitations of time and space, have led us to focus our attention in this volume primarily on these two texts. In what follows, however, we propose briefly to summarize and discuss his other works, with particular reference to points relevant also to the *Concilium* and *Rychsztag*.

Eckstein wrote two other dialogues, generally known as the *Dialogus Christus mit Adam* ('Dialogue of Christ with Adam') and the *Klag des Gloubens* ('Lament of Faith').²⁶ The relative chronology of these four works is difficult to establish with any confidence. Certainly the *Concilium* and *Rychsztag* must have originated late in 1525 and in 1526 respectively. The former text features, for example, the marginal date 'Anno M. D. XXV' adjacent to a reference to events that occurred 'this year' ('in difem jar', C 3283–4/259); a statement that, since the First Zurich Disputation (of 29th January 1523) 'the third year has almost turned' ('das jar schier drümal vmmhar ift', C 454/93); and references both to events that were at their zenith in the first half of 1525 (notably the 'Peasants' War'), and to others that happened only in the September or early October of that year – such as Karlstadt's return to Saxony and the publication of Johannes Bugenhagen's *Contra novum errorem de sacramento corporis et sanguinis*

26 The full titles are *Dialogus. Ejn hüpfche disputation / Die Chriftus hat mit Adam thon* ([Zurich]: [Froschauer], [1525?]), and *Klag des Gloubens der Hoffnung vnd ouch Liebe, über Geyftlichen vnd Weltlichen Stand der Chriſtenheit*. (Zurich: Froschauer, [1525?]).

Domini.²⁷ The *Rychsztag*, meanwhile, is quite explicitly a sequel written almost immediately after the *Concilium* (see Pur Eygennutz's opening remarks, R 104–57/319–23); moreover it repeatedly refers to the 'Peasants' War' as having been raging 'last year' (see R 728/355, 865/363, 2201–2/439), and indeed to Eck and Luther's 1519 encounter in Leipzig as having happened seven years previously (R 2035/429).

Eckstein's other two dialogues, however, are more difficult to date, not least because they contain far fewer references to contemporary socio-political developments. Arguing *ex silentio*, Vögelin suggests that the absence, in the *Dialogus*, of any concerted discussion of the subjects debated at the First Zurich Disputation of late January 1523 indicates that the work's composition must have pre-dated that gathering. Given that we now know that Eckstein was still ministering in Weesen under the authority of the local Catholic bishop almost exactly two months previously, however, this analysis no longer seems tenable. On the other hand, Müller's view that the *Dialogus* must *post-date* the *Concilium* and *Rychsztag* because its 'more conciliatory, milder tones' and avoidance of 'crass contrasts' render it Eckstein's 'most mature work' seems to us to constitute a misreading of all three texts.²⁸ On the contrary, the *Dialogus*'s almost exclusive concentration on broader theological questions, relative lack of lexical creativity, and absence of any real engagement with other texts or views imply to us that it is, if anything, a *less* mature piece than the works edited here. The same is largely true also of the *Klag des Gloubens*: although it uses a greater number of enlivening dramatic

27 See Doctor Gryff's speech at C 2757–822/229–33; and, especially, Volker Gummelt, 'Die Auseinandersetzung über das Abendmahl zwischen Johannes Bugenhagen und Huldrych Zwingli im Jahre 1525', in *Die Zürcher Reformation: Ausstrahlungen und Rückwirkungen*, ed. by Alfred Schindler and Hans Stickleberger, Zürcher Beiträge zur Reformationsgeschichte, 18 (Berne: Lang, 2001), pp. 189–201. On the many negotiations and machinations concerning Karlstadt's return to Saxony from exile in Rothenburg ob der Tauber see Hermann Barge, *Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt*, 2 vols (Leipzig: Brandstetter, 1905), vol. 2, pp. 312–72.

28 Müller, p. 62 ('versöhnlichere, milder gestimmte Töne') and p. 70 ('Wahrscheinlich Ecksteins reifstes Werk [...] Wir finden nicht mehr so krasse Gegensätze').

devices and a broader range of characters than does the *Dialogus*, it too lacks the level of individual characterization evinced by the *Concilium* (in which seven different farmers speak to named Catholic theologians) and, again, allows less scope for the foregrounding of alternative voices and opinions that we see as particularly characteristic of the mature Eckstein. Towards its end the *Klag* does, however, give us at least one revealing clue as to when it might have originated. A representative of the aristocracy makes a clear reference to the ‘Peasants’ War’ and to his class’s need to kill and stab those who are rebelling, citing as he does the authority of ‘many doctors throughout the German lands’ and, in particular, ‘one who writes that hell is now empty and that devils have entered into the peasants’.²⁹ It is hard not to see in this a reference to Luther’s notorious treatise *Wider die mörderischen und reuberischen Bawren*, written in April 1525.³⁰

On the basis of these considerations, then, we are inclined to suggest that the *Dialogus* was composed in 1524 or (more likely) early 1525,³¹ the *Klag* and the *Concilium* in the first and second halves of 1525 respectively, and the *Rychsztag* in 1526. This is in line at least with the relative chronology suggested by Vögelin and, much more recently, by Hans Ulrich Bächtold in his 2000 entry in the *Biographisch-Bibliographisches Kirchenlexikon* (pp. 297–8). Moreover it reinforces the view expressed by Bruce Gordon that 1525 was a particularly ‘remarkable’ (if frenetic) year for Zwingli, in which he was supported by men who ‘employed their diverse talents in a vast array of tasks’. He cites as examples Leo Jud, Kaspar Megander, and Hein-

29 ‘So hoffen ich wir habind gwalt / Das wirs thoetind vnd erftaechind / wie wir moegind vns an jnn raechind / Denn wir habend deffe gstand / von vil Doctorn durch Tütfche land / Eyner schrybt er meyne doch / es lüge laer das hellifch loch / Tüfel fygind in Puren gschloffen’ (Miv’).

30 See *D. Martin Luthers Werke* (‘Weimarer Ausgabe’), 120 vols (Weimer: Böhlau, 1883–2009; hereafter *WA*), vol. 18, pp. 357–61.

31 On the slight but possibly significant evidence adduced by Vögelin (p. 101) to the effect that the ‘E’ initial and other typographical features that appear in Froschauer’s edition of the *Dialogus* are not found in the printer’s output before 1525. Froschauer’s prints are, however, often difficult to date.

rich Uttinger; but one wonders whether, at least in respect of that single year, Eckstein too might justifiably be added to the list.³²

It is time to turn to individual texts. The *Dialogus Christus mit Adam*, which we take to be Eckstein's first published work, remains true to its title by imagining a discussion between Christ and Adam. The title page sets love, faith, and good works in opposition to prayers, images, and 'what God demands from us'³³ in a confrontational *mise en page* that will reappear in the *Concilium* and *Rychsztag*, thereby preparing the reader for a polemical attack on the traditional piety of the old Church and a call for repentance. The key to this dialogue is straightforward: every word uttered by Christus conveys spiritual wisdom, while Adam's speeches are to be understood as 'fleshly' (*Dialogus*, Aiiii^v). The work as a whole, then, is informed by a marked dualism, derived ultimately from the habitual opposition of $\piνευμα$ and $σαρξ$ in the New Testament,³⁴ as interpreted in the light of Greek philosophy. It is a distinction that underpins all of Eckstein's thought³⁵ and can also be found, for example, in Erasmus's *Enchiridion* and in Zwingli's understanding of the Eucharist.

Inevitably, then, the conversation recorded in the *Dialogus* is very one-sided, Adam's role being to ask questions, while Christus offers comprehensive answers.³⁶ Moreover this monologic³⁷ didactic-

32 Bruce Gordon, *The Swiss Reformation* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), p. 68.

33 'was Gott von vns erfordere' (Aiⁱ).

34 See for example John 3:6 and Galatians 5:16.

35 Fascinatingly, it is even hinted at in his letter to Bullinger: 'jn Summa, Der trüw gott welle fürston, das min fleysch nit thüge / Darzû es lust hätte, wie wol der jnner mensch / vß gottes krafft fast kempfft vnd widerstaat' (Zinsli, p. 370). When it comes to defending and fighting for the Gospel, in other words, the inner man is willing (and indeed active), but the flesh is weak.

36 As such, the text fits Schwitalla's (generic) description of a *Befragung*. See Johannes Schwitalla, *Deutsche Flugschriften 1460–1525: Textsortengeschichtliche Studien*, Reihe Germanistische Linguistik, 45 (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1983), pp. 97–8.

37 The terms 'monologic' and 'dialogic', which derive ultimately from Mikhail Bakhtin, are important for our conception of Eckstein's approach and achievement. Most 'Reformation dialogues' are, in spite of their form, in Bakhtinian terms 'monologic': that is, they tend to reduce the 'multiple voices and

ism is enhanced by the use of examples,³⁸ many of which draw direct parallels between the contemporary situation and the biblical narrative (the clergy, for example, are compared to the Pharisees – Avi^v).

Adam begins by asking why so many people remain unmoved by the reformers' preaching, and Christus replies that, since human beings are 'fleshly', spiritual truth does not appeal to them. Indeed, many even amongst those who call themselves Christians do not actually follow God's teaching;³⁹ and those who do preach the truth are rejected by the world, just as Christ himself was. Christus goes on to assure Adam of the reality of future judgement with a reference to Sodom (Aviii^r);⁴⁰ but Adam misguidedly infers from his words that good works will be enough to guarantee entry into heaven (Bi^v). Using a formula from the Epistle of St James, rather than St Paul (something a Lutheran would be reluctant to do), Christus argues, in reply, that only faith makes human works pleasing to God: 'If you but believe in me, that is a pure work before my father' (B^v),⁴¹ whereupon Adam asks why anyone should bother with good works, if salvation comes by grace and Christ has already paid the penalty for sin (Ci^r). The answer Christus gives is simple, and consistent with Luther's principle of justification by faith (if somewhat misogynistically phrased): human religiousness is 'like a cloth soiled by a menstruating woman'

consciousnesses within a text to a single version of truth imposed by the author' (Phyllis Margaret Paryas, in *Encyclopaedia of Contemporary Literary Theory. Approaches, Scholars, Terms*, ed. by Irena R. Makaryk (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), p. 596). Parts of Eckstein's dialogues are clearly like this. We maintain, however, that, for their time, they also include a very high level of 'dialogicity': they are, for example, manifestly in dialogue with the 'truths' of other works and authors, allow these some prominence, ascribe to them some validity, and allow their own truths to be shaped or modified by them.

38 These are usually highlighted in the margins using the word 'Exempel' (see Avii^r and Aviii^r, for instance).

39 Cf. Matthew 25:31–45. Using a metaphor that will occur repeatedly in the *Concilium*, Christus says that the clergy 'devour widows' houses' (cf. Luke 20:46–47 and Matthew 23:14).

40 This is also an echo of Christ's words in the Gospels (Matthew 10:15 and 11:24; Luke 10:12).

41 'So man an mich gloubt alleyn / das werck ist vor mym vatter reyn'.

(Ci^v).⁴² By contrast, faith in the grace of God will lead to the sharing of Christ's righteousness with all who are drawn to him (Ciiii^v).

Eventually, the dialogue turns to familiar Reformation questions regarding images and cults of the saints. Relatively little is said about the latter, though Christus argues in favour of venerating those saints who feature in the Bible, in preference to more recent ones (Dii^f). As to images, Adam initially defends their use with the apparently reasonable remark that people are forgetful and need physical reminders, for example of Christ's sufferings (Cvii^f). Nevertheless, Christus is unambiguous in his response: 'seeking help where there is none is the greatest idolatry' (Di^f).⁴³ Ultimately, he says, images are a human invention, designed to maximize the temporal wealth of the Church.

As a whole, then, the *Dialogus* is concerned with *theological*, rather than *political* questions;⁴⁴ what is missing is any real practical element, since the dialogue makes no direct reference to specifically Swiss circumstances or events. This is not the case with the *Concilium* and *Rychsztag*, which, as we have seen, not only deal in specifics, but also avoid the one-sidedness of Christ's dialogue with Adam by presenting a greater diversity of opinions and variety of perspectives.

The *Klag des Gloubens*, which we regard as Eckstein's second dialogue, uses personified virtues, chief among them Faith and Hope, to expose the moral and theological failings both of the papal curia and of the secular nobility of the Empire. This takes place in a Council of the Church that also functions as an Imperial Diet – fora which recur, the former in the *Concilium* and the latter in the *Rychsztag* (with the difference that, in place of personifications, named Catholic and Evangelical figures are used). Faith and Hope go to Rome, where they are met by the Pope and his knights in great pomp.⁴⁵ On hearing their

42 'Wie ein blschiffen tuoch / Das da kumpt von einer zytigen frouwen'. Cf. Isaiah 64:6.

43 'Das man [...] fuocht hilff da keine fy / das ift die gröft abgöttery'.

44 This is also noted by Vögelin, p. 100 (the emphases are his).

45 This scene echoes Manuel's *Vom Papst und Christi Gegensatz* (1522), and possibly even Melanchthon and Cranach's *Passional Christi und Antichristi* (1521), which both contrast the wealth and luxury of the papal curia with the poverty and simplicity of Christ. Not that this was exactly an uncommon trope

complaints, the Pope calls a general Council,⁴⁶ at which two more virtues, Truth and Righteousness, debate with a papal official, the ‘Fiskal’, about the innovations of Evangelical teaching. Among the items discussed is Eucharistic theology, a central aspect of the Zurich Reformation that will also reappear in the *Concilium* (which however, uses biblical proof-texts much more than does the *Klag*).⁴⁷

Next comes a confrontation between Truth (representing the common people) and two representatives of the nobility of the Empire, at ‘Rappsburg’ in the ‘German lands’ (Jvi^v). Subjects discussed include taxes levied in anticipation of a Turkish invasion, the harsh treatment that the common people receive at the hands of their lords (which is compared to the tyranny of Pharaoh, Saul, and Nero), and the general lasciviousness of the nobility.⁴⁸ This section is much more detailed than the corresponding passage in the *Rychsztag*, although in both the actions of the nobility are partly excused with reference to positive royal role models from the Hebrew Bible. It is suggested that according to biblical precedent (King David, for example), lords are entitled to subdue peasant uprisings by any means whatsoever, including the use of violence.⁴⁹ However, Truth argues that such actions overstep the God-given limits of feudal authority: God has given the ‘sword’ of punishment to the nobility, but they may only use it in his name and in the pursuit of justice (thus anticipating the political views we will find expressed in the *Rychsztag*). Truth even

at the time – it also undergirds much of Erasmus’s *Moriae encomium* (1511), for example.

46 This means of settling theological disputes was in reality widely advocated by reformers and Catholics in the Empire and beyond throughout the 1520s. See for example G. R. Potter, *Zwingli* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), pp. 124–5.

47 Vögelin (p. 105) notes that the speeches of Truth and Righteousness are so scurrilous and polemical that the possibility of mutual understanding is excluded from the beginning. He also argues, however, that this is not the point of the scene; rather, Eckstein is concerned ‘to spit out all his poison against the priests of Baal’ (‘dass der reformirte Autor sein ganzes Gift gegen das Baalspriesterthum [...] ausspeien könne’).

48 Vögelin (p. 107) notes the obvious delight with which Eckstein enumerates stories of adultery from the Bible and classical literature at this point (Li^v).

49 Miv^r: it is at this point that the passage quoted above (in n. 29) appears.

dares to suggest that the ideal form of government would be a republic under a leader like Moses, Samuel, or a Roman Consul (Mv^{r-v}).

Unlike the *Dialogus*, then, the *Klag* does concern itself – at times in a decidedly radical way – with practical matters. Some of these recur in the *Concilium* and *Rychsztag*, although the later texts focus on a different set of even more local circumstances.

In addition to these four dialogues, three satirical songs from 1526/7 have been attributed (albeit for the most part only on the basis of their titles and dates) to Eckstein. They are more overtly polemical in tone, and either thematize the Baden Disputation of 1526 or respond to the intertextual debate that followed it.⁵⁰ As such, they have a different function from that of the dialogues, which anticipate and prepare for that disputation. The songs are: (a) *Die Badenfahrt*; (b) *Ein Anders Lied, von Hansen Faber Vicari*; and (c) *Vff Doctor Thomas Murners Calender, Ein Hübsch Lied*.

Taken together, these songs are an exercise in Evangelical ‘spin’, claiming as they do that the Baden Disputation of 1526 (at which Eck, in Zwingli’s absence, scored an emphatic triumph over Evangelical representatives led by the Basle reformer Johannes Oecolampadius) actually constituted an Evangelical victory. Hence they are in many ways more ‘closed’ or monologic texts than are Eckstein’s dialogues (as well as being arguably inferior in literary terms). If their attribution to Eckstein is genuine, this suggests that, later in 1526 and in 1527, he may have felt the need to turn away from a literary form that proved useful in the Zurich context only during the lead-up to a disputation. We are inclined to wonder, however, whether these songs have only become associated with Eckstein’s name because they very obviously censure three figures of whom he had already shown marked disapproval in his dialogues. Faber and Murner are, after all, mentioned in the titles of (b) and (c) respectively; and (a) not only alludes sarcas-

50 For a full account of this disputation see the standard account of Leonhard von Muralt, *Die Badener Disputation 1526*, Quellen und Abhandlungen zur schweizerischen Reformationgeschichte, 6 (Leipzig: Heinsius, 1926); also, more recently and in English, Irena Backus, *The Disputations of Baden, 1526 and Berne, 1528: Neutralizing the Early Church*, Studies in Theology and History, 1/1 (Princeton: Princeton Theological Seminary, 1993).

tically, in its title, to Murner's *Ein andechtig geistliche Badenfahrt*, but proceeds to denounce both Murner and Eck. They seem, then, to contain the sort of thing that Eckstein *might* have wanted to say; and so the opportunity to attribute them to Eckstein might simply have seemed too attractively plausible an opportunity to miss.

Eckstein, contemporary Zurich, and beyond

The remainder of our introduction will be concerned primarily with issues that we see as centrally important for the understanding and interpretation of Eckstein's works, and especially of the *Concilium* and *Rychsztag*. We will consider in turn their reception and thematization of the Swiss tradition of communal consultation; their essentially Zwinglian theology; their social and political perspectives; and their literary qualities. In this short preparatory section, however, it is important to delineate, however lightly, certain key aspects of Eckstein's context, both in Zurich and in the German-speaking lands more generally, in the hope of enabling the reader to situate the discussions to come more precisely within a broader picture.

One must remember first of all that, in essence already since the high-profile First Zurich Disputation of late January 1523, Zwingli had been 'very much in control'⁵¹ of religious life in Zurich. His rise, since his appointment as *Leutpriester* ('People's Priest') of the *Grossmünster* in 1518, had been swift and, for the most part, sure-footed. Zwingli built on widespread calls for reform in the Church, not only from Humanists (including Faber, Murner, and Eck),⁵² but also from

51 Gordon, p. 61. His chapter 'Zwingli and Zurich' (pp. 46–85) is a good introduction to the early years of the Zurich Reformation.

52 It is easy for us to be misled by the pervading *ad hominem* viciousness of early sixteenth-century polemics into thinking that its various authors had always been strangers and enemies. In fact, Zwingli and Faber were on cordial terms until about 1522, having made common cause over the issue of the irresponsible preaching of indulgences by the Franciscan Bernardino Sansone in 1518–19;

Luther and other radical thinkers; and his preaching came increasingly both to reflect and to influence the religious thinking of his fellow burghers. His calls for changes to the language and style of worship, as well as to the administering and ordering of other areas of life that had until then been within the purview of the Catholic hierarchy, won many supporters also among Zurich's city council. Indeed, above all by means of the Disputation of 1523, which exonerated Zwingli of all charges of theological error, the council could be said to have initiated the implementation of his ideas. From 1523, changes came not without hesitation or resistance, but nevertheless at an impressive pace: in the space of a very few years ornaments were removed from churches, the Mass was abolished, the veneration of saints largely condemned, monasteries dissolved, and many of the day-to-day appurtenances of late-medieval and early sixteenth-century Christianity *de facto* eliminated (pilgrimages, processions, auricular confession, and extreme unction, to name but a few). In many ways, then, Eckstein, as a Zwinglian, was writing from a position of strength, and one which had been made possible not least by the effective use of a process of disputation not altogether dissimilar from the ones portrayed in his own *Concilium* and *Rychsztag*.

One must bear in mind also, however, that this early stage of the Zurich Reformation had multi-layered implications that reached far beyond the city itself. Initially, it gave rise to a protracted and embittered literary controversy, the first stage of which raged between the First Zurich Disputation of 1523 and the Baden Disputation of 1526. The proceedings of the 1523 Disputation were initially publicized in Hegenwald's partisan (if theoretically eyewitness) pro-Zwinglian account,⁵³ but this prompted an angry reply from Faber, pointedly called *Ain warlich vnderrichtung*, in which he accuses Hegenwald,

until then also, Faber had been a personal friend and correspondent of Vadianus; and all three, along with Eck, continued to revere Erasmus, and had at least attempted to befriend him. Meanwhile Eck taught not only Faber, but also such later Protestant luminaries as Urbanus Rhegius and the Anabaptist Balthasar Hubmaier. Murner seems, it is true, to have been something of a waspish outsider; but often the world of Reformation polemics must have seemed, in personal terms, a small and bizarrely close-knit one.

53 The *Handlung der verfamlung* (as n. 23 above).

amongst many other things, of deliberately presenting him as a satan, rather than an angel, and as a denier of Christ ('vß einem engel ein Sathanam machen / vnnd villeycht das ich ouch Chriftum verleugnet hette', Aiv^v).⁵⁴ The *warlich vnderrichtung* in turn inspired another polemic composed from a Zwinglian perspective, the *Gyrenrupffen*. Meanwhile a pamphlet war developed between Eck and the Schaffhausen pastor Sebastian Hofmeister; and Murner entered the fray on numerous occasions, in both Latin and German, not least by means of his *Responsio* to Eckstein's *Concilium*.⁵⁵ One must not forget, indeed, that the latter was very much part of this literary war: he takes up many of the issues from the original disputation and from the pamphlets that discussed it; and much of the last third of the *Rychsztag* is occupied by what amounts to a reply to Murner's *Responsio*. Certainly Eckstein saw his works as active contributions to an ongoing intertextual debate in the German-speaking lands.

A further layer of tension and conflict arising from the Zurich Reformation was that between the city and its neighbouring cantons, especially in those rural areas which were under joint control (such as nearly all of the parishes to which Eckstein was subsequently sent). It is true that Schaffhausen, Appenzell, and St. Gallen embraced Zwinglianism as early as 1523, but most of the areas surrounding Zurich (such as Zug, Schwyz, Lucerne, Uri, and Unterwalden) remained staunchly Catholic, and became increasingly opposed to the Zurich Reformation after several notorious acts of iconoclasm had been perpetrated there in the closing months of 1523. Moreover the situation was soon complicated still further by the implementation of comparable – though far from identical – reformations in Basle (under Oecolampadius) and Berne (where Manuel played a role analogous to, if maybe more important than, that of Eckstein in Zurich). In short, the Zurich Reformation and its repercussions 'had put before the Swiss Confederation an unfamiliar problem. For all its regional diversity and local identities, the Confederates had been bound by one religion. It was perhaps the one thing that united them, and now one of the most

54 *Ain warlich vnderrichtung wie es zû Zürich auff den Neünundtzwentzigsten tag des monats Ianuarij nechstuerfchynen ergangen sey* ([Freiburg]: [Wörlin], 1523).

55 Backus (pp. 1–17) provides a valuable summary of this sequence of events.

powerful of the Confederates had fallen into heresy'.⁵⁶ It is against this troubled backcloth that, in the mid-1520s, calls for a representative disputation to resolve these differences became increasingly urgent. The much anticipated disputation did, of course, eventually take place, at Baden in 1526, though when Eckstein was writing the *Concilium* and *Rychsztag* its exact location had not yet been decided. The contemporary debates surrounding the desirability and efficacy of the traditional Swiss practice of consultative decision-making go a long way, however, towards explaining Eckstein's use of such a model in both of the texts presented in this volume. The ways in which he does this will be explored in greater detail in our next section.

Meanwhile the theological implications of Zwingli's utterances and actions were also occupying many minds, not just in Switzerland, but also in the wider Empire. Theologians were quick to compare Zwingli's views with those that had informed the various Lutheran reformations which were then being established, especially in such imperial free cities as Augsburg and Nuremberg – and they were finding many similarities. Whilst it is true that 'Zwingli probably owed more to Luther than he imagined or was willing to allow',⁵⁷ shrewd minds were also able, however, to detect from an early stage some crucial differences between the two – notably in the matter of the Eucharist, and in Zwingli's much greater indebtedness to Humanism in general and to Erasmus in particular. Gordon (p. 68) identifies Eck, 'the best Catholic mind in the German-speaking lands' (not that he is exactly presented as such in the *Concilium*), as someone who readily discerned ways in which a wedge might be put between Luther on the one hand and Zwingli (and Oecolampadius) on the other. Not that these reformers, or indeed Eckstein, were exactly reluctant to distance themselves from Luther. In part, no doubt, such an attitude reflects the fact that the relationship of their cities to the Pope differed greatly from that of Luther and the cities of the Empire, for reasons of Realpolitik involving Rome's reliance on Swiss mercenaries for the protection of the papal states.⁵⁸ Hence it was

56 Gordon, p. 69.

57 A. G. Dickens, *Reformation and Society in Sixteenth-Century Europe* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1966), p. 111.

58 See for example Potter, pp. 30–2; Gordon, p. 27.

relatively easy for Swiss reformers to present themselves as offering, as it were, a ‘third way’ that was distinct both from traditional Catholic and from German Evangelical perspectives. Certainly Eckstein can and does distance the Zurich Reformation from Lutheran ones, while simultaneously lambasting Catholicism and arguing that his views are thoroughly grounded on Scripture. The ways in which he does this will, in turn, be discussed in greater detail below.

Finally we must mention that the Zurich Reformation, along with others particularly in the South and West of the Empire, had profound socio-political implications. These became crystallized in the so-called ‘Peasants’ War’ of 1525 (better thought of as a series of loosely connected farmers’ and artisans’ uprisings). Whilst, in Switzerland, the physical damage caused by these uprisings was insignificant compared to what happened elsewhere, and there was little if any loss of life, they nevertheless clearly surprised and shocked both the reformers and their territorial rulers – we can see this also in Eckstein, whose *Rychsztag* evinces a rather different perspective on the farmers and their relationship to secular authority from that which informs the earlier *Concilium*. Specifically in Zurich and its hinterland, the farmers’ principal grievance concerned their obligation to pay tithes and taxes to the city government and to other interested parties – such as nearby abbeys (see for example R 310–15/331, 624–6/349). Rather as with Luther in Saxony, the arguments used by the Swiss farmers placed Zwingli in a difficult position: he did not support the abolition of tithes, but was conscious that those who did often used aspects of his theology, or at least of his language, in support of their claims.⁵⁹ In particular, numerous pamphleteers argued that the spiritual freedom enjoyed by an Evangelical Christian ought also to release him or her from the obligation to make onerous financial payments. Rightly or wrongly, the response of Zwingli and his supporters was generally to pin the blame for such theological confusion on the radical Anabaptists who were beginning, in the mid-1520s, to influence

59 Zwingli’s most authoritative statement about tithes and interest payments is a section in his *Wer Ursache gebe zur Aufruhr*. See *Huldrych Zwinglis sämtliche Werke*, ed. by Emil Egli and others, 14 vols, *Corpus Reformatorum*, 88–101, III (Leipzig: Heinsius, 1914), pp. 355–469 (especially pp. 388–404).

public opinion in and around Zurich. Eckstein does this in the *Concilium* and *Rychsztag*, as well as presenting substantial debates about authority, rebellion, tithes, taxes, and interest payments. These and other aspects of his political and social ideology are therefore discussed in greater detail in our third section below.

Eckstein and the Swiss communal consultation

As we have stated, both the structure and the content of Eckstein's *Concilium* and *Rychsztag* are informed by specifically Swiss forms of decision-making. Many members of the Swiss Confederation (*Eidgenossenschaft*), both urban and rural, had long since – and in marked contrast to the many feudal territories of the Empire – developed models of government that relied on the active participation of a large number of their (male) citizens. Not only were the voices of individuals taken into consideration at the village level, but the same principle was also applied to the dealings of the constituent parts of the Confederation with one another. We can see this tradition reflected in various ways in both the *Concilium* and the *Rychsztag*. Moreover Eckstein casts his *Concilium* also as a supranational organ of corporate decision-making, namely a Council of the Church – a forum that, especially in the fifteenth century, had been put forward by many canon lawyers as embodying a higher authority even than that of the Pope; and the *Rychsztag* draws on procedures associated with arbitration or the legal tribunal, in which various parties state their rival claims and await judgement from a magistrate. Finally, in addition to these long-established models for airing disagreements and arriving at a decision, Eckstein draws on the newer conventions of the urban disputation (such as the presence in the *Concilium* of two officers whose role is to facilitate the debate, the 'Herold' and 'Weybel').⁶⁰

60 'Herold' is close in meaning to English 'herald'; but 'Weybel' is not really translatable. It could be used to designate persons fulfilling an enormous range

Given both the importance and the diversity of these various channels of influence, it is perhaps hardly surprising that Eckstein begins his *Concilium* by articulating a number of ‘ground rules’. The first of these is the acknowledgement by all parties of the authority of the Council as a competent judge in the questions to be discussed. Eckstein thus presents it, at least at first, as precisely the sort of authoritative tribunal demanded by Faber at the First Zurich Disputation. This ground rule initially takes the reader by surprise: for one thing, Eckstein seems, through it, to be breaking with one of the central principles of Zwingli and almost all the other Evangelical reformers, namely that they will not submit to any arbitrator but the Word of God – a position which Zwingli did indeed articulate at the First Zurich Disputation. Moreover the spiritual authority of the Council is itself almost immediately called into question by the Weybel (normally a voice whom Eckstein privileges), when he states: ‘Often in a Council, someone asks another person to put him right. The Holy Spirit doesn’t do this: he does not regret tomorrow what he does today. His power endures for ever. Christ has told us what to do; and if we now do what he has commanded, we need no human rules (C 879–86/119)’. Here, in other words, he seems to be undermining the foundations of the very form of conciliarism which has just been established, by showing that its authority is merely human and its decisions are not definitive.

We are, then, presented early on with rather a confusing state of affairs: the overriding principle of *sola scriptura* is mitigated to a degree by the need to defer to a human decision-making body, which, however, is itself intrinsically flawed. And this paradox, or tension, is not really resolved as the text progresses – any more than it was, one suspects, in the ‘real life’ politics of 1520s Zurich. Eckstein will certainly have accepted Zwingli’s view that biblical interpretation is not contingent and does not depend upon any human authority; on the

of administrative, legal and/or economic functions, on behalf of a lord or a community. See *Schweizerisches Idiotikon*, 17 vols (Frauenfeld: Huber, 1881–[2022]), XV, 109–22 (hereafter *SI*). In Eckstein’s works, the Weybel’s main roles are to introduce participants and to summarize their arguments, but in practice he frequently does more than this, to the extent of seeming to act at times as the mouthpiece of the author.

other hand, he will have been well aware that, in practice, ‘religious truth was determined by Protestant ministers in dialogue with their magistrates: the ministers interpreted Scripture, and the magistrates sat in judgement on their interpretations’ – so that ‘in actual fact, it was magisterial sanction of Protestant interpretations of Scripture that institutionalized the Reformation’.⁶¹ Ultimately, then, through his first, deceptively simple ground rule, Eckstein is both problematizing and acknowledging the process by which Zwingli’s interpretation of Scripture actually came to be established as the norm for Zurich in the 1520s.

Certainly Eckstein seems to see no intrinsic conflict between his first ground rule and his second, namely that Scripture alone is to constitute the admissible evidence. He presents this principle, perhaps bizarrely, as a local Swiss custom: ‘take up God’s Word – that’s what we use in our valley’ (C 507–8/97).⁶² While such an approach to authority in 1520s Zurich can only have been a recent development (unless it be understood as aspirational or anachronistic), the statement we have quoted undeniably presents the community as consciously and deliberately choosing the terms of the debate. And in what follows, in fact, the *Concilium* contains a remarkably high level of biblical argumentation and interpretation from both sides of the argument, Evangelical and Catholic. This alone is enough to set it apart from other dialogue texts of the German-speaking reformations, most of which show no such willingness to ‘hear otherness’. For example, in the discussion of the Mass in the *Concilium*, both the Catholic doctor and the Evangelical farmer urge one another to restrict themselves to the text of Scripture, which to a large extent they do – something that suggests furthermore that Eckstein possessed an almost ‘modern’ awareness of the ambiguity of much Scripture.

The third ground rule governing the *Concilium* is the underlying assumption that the debate it contains will be conclusive, resolving the

61 Steven E. Ozment, *The Reformation in the Cities. The Appeal of Protestantism in Sixteenth-Century Germany and Switzerland* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1975), p. 146.

62 The reference to ‘our valley’ is naturally suggestive of Swiss topography and identity.

issues concerned once and for all. In this respect Eckstein is for certain reflecting the utopian hopes of many struggling with the uncertainties and complexities of 1520s Switzerland, rather than depicting anything that was likely actually to happen. Even though, as Jørgensen points out (p. 122), the specific ground rules of the *Concilium* correspond to those identified by Moeller as typical of the urban disputation,⁶³ in practice, after the First Zurich Disputation, no Catholic spokesperson would ever agree to such conditions. In the *Concilium*, Eck (as the initial speaker for the Catholic cause) is, quite simply, doomed to defeat from the moment he agrees to them (C 515/97).

In addition to these ground rules, further local decision-making principles and processes appear as the disputations progress. A notable example of the latter is the village consultation, or ‘vmbfraagen’ (cf. R 397/337). This procedure is hinted at in the *Concilium*, as, one by one, the farmers are encouraged to offer their advice ‘according to the custom of our land’ (C 770/113); but it is played out above all in the early part of the *Rychsztag*. The ‘vmbfraagen’ is in essence an open oral conversation, in which the village Weybel actively seeks to elicit different or (in his words) ‘better’ opinions (R 398–9/337); and it is informed by the understanding that every villager is a stakeholder with the right to contribute. The farmers who speak argue from experience as well as principle, and occasionally make *ad hominem* attacks on one another. When no unanimous decision emerges, the Weybel suggests a simple show of hands (R 802–3/359). Unsurprisingly, the majority favours Eygennutz’s proposal, namely that he should represent their interests before the Diet at Richtal⁶⁴ – this is, after all, the outcome demanded by the logic and the drama of the text (and by Eckstein as the author). Nevertheless the decision is shown to be reached only through a discussion that includes opportunities for hearing other points of view; and the absence of the (normally ubiquitous)

63 Bernd Moeller, ‘Zwinglis Disputationen: Studien zu den Anfängen der Kirchenbildung und des Synodalwesens im Protestantismus’, *Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte*, Kanonistische Abteilung, 56 (1970), 275–334; 60 (1974), 213–364.

64 Notwithstanding the inherent irony involved in sending a character called ‘Eygennutz’ to represent the interests of the whole community.

Bible references in this part of the text implies that many of the views expressed may be at odds with Eckstein's position as expressed in the prologue. It would seem, then, that Eckstein found it important to depict the workings of this village consultative process, even though doing so might militate against a straightforward communication of his own (monologic) views.

A further stipulation of the debate in the *Concilium* is that a matter must be established by the testimony of two witnesses (see C 803–6/115). This is both a biblical principle⁶⁵ and a recognition of the consultative nature of the urban disputation. Consensus is sought, in order that a binding decision may be reached. This principle is, however, carefully balanced against the demands of fairness. As Amma Krüg observes: 'it's not our way to have two against one, I've never seen that before' (C 1427–8/151). Eckstein, indeed, makes some show of not being one-sided both in the *Concilium* and in the *Rychsztag*, where Iohann Schydman, the town clerk ('Stattschryber'), emphasises the fairness of the Imperial Diet in finding guilt on both sides (see the speech beginning R 1674/409).

Finally, there is the principle of appropriate behaviour. In the *Concilium*, the Herald criticizes Luther and Karlstadt for their unchristian disunity, apparently distinguishing between proper ways of dealing with disagreement (such as a disputation) and improper ones, characterized as 'bickering like a pair of washerwomen' (C 4156/307).⁶⁶ Similarly, in the *Rychsztag*, Murner is roundly rebuked by Weybel Rychart for 'raging' and 'shouting', rather than seeking sound, rational arguments from God's Word (R 2021–3/429).

All, or nearly all of these various principles reflect contemporary reality, and, if followed, would create the conditions necessary for a genuinely consensual model of decision-making. To that extent they reflect both Swiss habits and Swiss aspirations, and do so in ways that

65 In Deuteronomy 19:15: 'A single witness shall not suffice to convict a person of any crime or wrongdoing in connection with any offence that may be committed. Only on the evidence of two or three witnesses shall a charge be sustained'. In Matthew 18:16: 'Take one or two others along with you, so that every matter may be confirmed by the evidence of two or three witnesses'.

66 This is one of several examples of Eckstein phrasing his polemic in gendered terms.

will doubtless have heightened the appeal of Eckstein's texts to a Swiss audience. In spite of all this, however, we must never forget that Eckstein ultimately wishes to use the apparently 'open' dialogic format of both the *Concilium* and *Rychsztag* as monologic platforms for his own views. This tension is never resolved; and one suspects that the texts would be weaker if it were.

Eckstein's Zwinglian theology

The principal theological positions reflected in the *Concilium* and *Rychsztag* are, in our opinion, a pervasive if not unproblematic biblicism, an integrated approach to soteriology centring on Christ and the cross, a distinctively Zwinglian approach to the Eucharist, and a broad-based challenge to the authority of the Pope and his clergy. These will now be addressed briefly in turn, along with some matters of less central significance, which however also contribute to our understanding of Eckstein's, and Zwingli's, theological project.

As we have seen, Eckstein follows Zwingli in making Scripture the explicit starting point for his theology. This was a fundamental tenet of all Evangelical reformations, including the Lutheran reformations of the imperial free cities and those at Berne and Basle. In English, the principle tends to be referred to as 'biblicism', and in German as *das Schriftprinzip*. Certainly both *Concilium* and *Rychsztag* are characterized by a thoroughgoing biblicism, which is reflected not only in the many references to biblical passages (more accurately, chapters) printed in their margins, but also in frequent appeals to 'God's Word' within the texts themselves. Having said that, Eckstein can appear inconsistent in his application of the principle. For example, the prologue to the *Concilium* imagines God rebuking his people for having served him in vain with the words: 'I did not tell you: "Pay for lots of Masses"' (C 223/79); but later in the same work we find the Herald (with whom it is reasonable to assume Eckstein normally agrees) declaring that 'what is not at odds with his

commands, all Christians should adhere to rigidly' (C 3992–4/299). The first passage suggests, in other words, that one should only do what is positively commanded by God, whereas the second implicitly deems anything that is not prohibited by Scripture to be permissible. In Zwinglian terms, this discrepancy is reasonable and defensible, in the light of the reformer's clear differentiation between religious matters (such as the former) and political, social, or economic ones (such as the latter); it differs markedly, however, from Luther's approach, which is to treat both theological and other questions on the basis of an 'inclusive' *Schriftprinzip* (i.e. whatever the Bible does not forbid can be admitted).

To an unusual degree, and perhaps especially in the *Concilium*, a conscientiously biblicist approach is pursued both by Evangelical farmers and by their Catholic opponents. Indeed they compete to see who can adduce the fullest and most explicit range of Scriptures to support their positions – not that the verses chosen are by any means always apt or persuasive. The Catholic Doctor Fritz is proud, for example, to offer seven sayings ('sprüche') from Scripture as evidence for purgatory (C 1934–6/181). Moreover, following Zwingli,⁶⁷ characters from both sides state repeatedly that the words of Scripture are 'clear' (usually 'klar' or 'heiter'). This is asserted more frequently by the Evangelical speakers, however; and it is noticeable that Catholic representatives are apt to stress the clarity of Scripture when they are arguing in favour of something to which Eckstein (and presumably most of his readers) will have been unequivocally opposed: Doctor Gryff does this when promoting transubstantiation, for example, Fridle Landfarer when advocating purgatory, and Faber when claiming that Job prayed to a saint.⁶⁸ Such misuse of the *Schriftprinzip* is far from pervasive amongst the Catholics (Doctor Stroubutz, for example, argues very ably, also from Scripture); but there are certainly occasions where the reader is persuaded to reflect that a biblicist approach can be dangerous when adopted by the 'wrong' people, and to acknowledge again Eckstein's subtle use of irony. At times, in other

67 Especially his treatise *Von Klarheit und Gewißheit des Wortes Gottes*, edited in *Sämtliche Werke*, I, 328–84.

68 See, respectively, C 2810–15/231; 1847–51/175; 1198–1203/137.

words, he is able simultaneously to pursue both an open, dialogic agenda and a closed, monologic one.

There is no reason to suspect authorial irony, however, in the occasional statements made by the farmers about their own exegetical practice and/or the extent of their literacy (and hence ability to access God's Word). One thinks, for example, of Joß Hechelzan's exemplary awareness that passages need to be interpreted in context: 'the verse provides its own interpretation, if you look at what comes before it in the same chapter' (C 1994–6/183–5). And Hans Ofenrûß's pride in being able to tell Doctor Lentz that he too 'can find all the scriptures you've mentioned' (C 2321–2/203) will similarly strike most readers as justifiable, rather than in any way arrogant or ignorant.

With regard to the parts of the Bible that Eckstein's characters use, one can perceive a particular emphasis on the Hebrew Scriptures: the marginal references tell their own story in this respect, as do several individual speeches, such as that of Rüdolff Fürsichtig in the *Rychsztat* (R 1265–1350/385–91). This is, of course, a markedly different 'canon within a canon' from that of Luther, with his special fondness for the Pauline epistles. Like Luther and Zwingli, however, Eckstein appears to have held a low view of the Apocrypha: no one gainsays Joß Hechelzan's dismissive comment on the Maccabees, 'which isn't part of the canon: even a farmer like me knows that [...] that book has no authority at all with the Jews' (C 1947–51/181). Nevertheless the *Rychsztat* modifies this impression somewhat, with its occasional use of the apocryphal parts of Daniel and, especially, its series of quotations from the Wisdom of Solomon (R 1419–43/395).

When considering Eckstein's soteriology, the reader especially of the *Concilium*, and indeed of the *Dialogus mit Adam*, readily notices that he adopts a more integrated approach than is commonly found in other contemporary Evangelical texts. That is to say, he combines an emphasis on the importance of justification by faith with a theology of the Eucharist, and of good works, that also reflects his soteriology. Much of what he says for example in his (monologic) prologue to the *Concilium* is, admittedly, fully in line with Luther: he presents salvation as a free gift that cannot be bought, sold, or earned (for example, by 'good works'); and nor can God's grace be confined to any particular place (cf. C 2985/241, 3046–7/245), a perspective which of

course has distinct implications for the Eucharist and for pilgrimages. Equally reminiscent of Luther is a hermeneutic that draws a distinction between ‘law’ and ‘grace’, based on the fulfilment of the law in the death of Christ.⁶⁹ On the other hand, the *Concilium* prologue also contains an impassioned call to repentance in stark language taken from the Hebrew prophets; and Eckstein is apt to imply elsewhere also that salvation is in some way conditional both upon repentance and upon certain forms of Christian behaviour. A good example would be the Weybel’s disquisition about penance (C 2630–67/221–3), which draws heavily on the law, the prophets, and the more legalistic parts of Matthew’s Gospel. In line with this, perhaps, Eckstein emphasises only the eternal aspects of salvation: in this life it seems to entail only duties, and there is little sense that the gospel transforms, excites, or liberates.

His soteriology does unequivocally resemble Luther’s, however, insofar as it is built on a theology of the cross, in which the death of Christ is taken as a unique and sufficient sacrifice not to be repeated in the Mass (see C 1611–18/163). In a polemical *coup de grâce*, Eckstein even has the Catholic Murner agree to something very much like this (C 1539–44/157–9), when he cites Isaiah 53:4 to the effect that Christ has borne our sins. His opponent Cleywi Fenchmul, here for certain speaking on Eckstein’s behalf, is quick to follow this logic through to its conclusion, by emphasizing the sacrificial implications of such a statement, and asserting that, in consequence, the only ‘sacrifices’ God requires of us are those of praise and of ourselves (C 1657–9/165). The centrality of Christ for salvation, and the role of the individual in responding to it are moreover contrasted with many areas of Catholic practice which Eckstein regards as clerical inventions used to exploit the people. When discussing purgatory, for example, Joß Hechelzan says that no such place can exist, although the judgement to which it points is real enough (C 1939–44/181); rather, salvation is

69 This allows Eckstein to sidestep some of the commands of the Hebrew Scriptures, although he retains others. See for example Hans Ofenrûß’s statement: ‘Circumcision need no longer concern you, and nor need sacrificing the blood of cattle to God; the blood of Christ has done away with all other sacrifices’ (C 2581–3/217–19).

a free gift that cannot be earned, either by saints or by the suffering of souls in purgatory. The Weybel therefore suspects that purgatory is the brainchild of the Antichrist (a rare reference in Eckstein's works to this ultimate polemical figure), or at least thought up by the greed of the priests (C 2141–50/193).

Vögelin argues, reasonably enough, that the principal focus of Eckstein's 'theological exposition' is the Mass.⁷⁰ This is hardly surprising, given that the Eucharist presented a particular problem to the Zwinglian reformers of the 1520s: their theology of it was, after all, their most obvious departure from the faith and practice both of their Catholic neighbours and of their Lutheran fellow reformers. Whilst Luther detects the real presence of Christ in or around the consecrated elements ('consubstantiation'), and the Catholics understand them to be transformed literally into his body and blood ('transubstantiation'), Zwingli thinks that the bread and wine are merely symbols of Christ's death (a 'memorialist' view of the Eucharist).⁷¹ A true farmers' Mass, in the words of the *Concilium*, therefore involves always thinking of Christ's sufferings, rather than engaging in any sacrifice (C 1697–8/167). Or, in the rather more sophisticated language of Lee Palmer Wandel, 'Zwingli's position, labelled 'symbolist' or 'spiritualist' by his opponents, held that a cognitive and somatic connection existed between the bread of the ritual and Christ's body, but not a physical connection autonomous of human perception'.⁷²

It is indeed in the *Concilium*'s debates about the Eucharist that the sharpness of Eckstein's dualistic distinction between the flesh and the spirit is at its clearest. A good example is the exchange between the Catholic Doctor Gryff and the farmer Claus Rebstock about the

70 Vögelin, p. 133: 'Die Messe ist das Hauptinteresse der theologischen Exposition [...] für den Verfasser'.

71 See also Cyril Charles Richardson, *Zwingli and Cranmer on the Eucharist* (Evanston: Seabury-Western Theological Seminary, 1949).

72 See her book *The Eucharist in the Reformation: Incarnation and Liturgy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 72–3. Also Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Reformation: Europe's House Divided* (London: Allen Lane, 2003), pp. 147–8; and Walther Köhler, *Zwingli und Luther: Ihr Streit über das Abendmahl nach seinen politischen und religiösen Beziehungen*, 2 vols (Leipzig: Eger & Sievers, 1924).

interpretation of 1 Corinthians 11 (C 2940–85/239–41). The former insists on a literal, physical interpretation of Scriptures such as Mark 14:22 and Luke 22:19, and argues that St Paul supports such a reading through his specific references to the *body* of Christ in 1 Corinthians 11: 24, 27, and 29.⁷³ Claus Rebstock, however, claims that this text also supports *his* view of the Eucharist, since St Paul's instructions to 'proclaim' (v. 26) and 'remember' (vv. 24–5) can be interpreted as evidence for Zwingli's Eucharistic theology; and he proceeds to tell Gryff: 'you really are a foolish man to see bread as flesh [...] You have to eat him only in the spirit' (C 2998–3003/243). Ultimately, indeed, Eckstein seems to regard the Catholics' arguments about the Eucharist as simply the best example of their pervasive tendency to confuse flesh with spirit. He, by contrast, habitually resolves both biblical and practical paradoxes by distinguishing the physical from the spiritual sense, often radically. For example his spokesman Rebstock anticipates a possible counter-argument from Matthew 28:20 ('remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age') by saying that Christ is 'with us' spiritually, even though he also said that he would *not* always be with us in physical terms (C 3020–43/245).

For all his concern for 'correct' Evangelical doctrine, however, Eckstein's objections to many Catholic practices frequently come across as not so much theological, as pastoral. A certain pastoral urgency already informs his calls for repentance at the beginning of the *Concilium*; and he objects to the Catholic system of financial payments surrounding the Mass (including tithes, fines, and the endowment of Masses for the dead), not least because they are backed up by the threat of excommunication, and hence weigh heavily on the people in a variety of ways. These points are made strongly, and at this stage credibly, by Eygennutz in the *Rychsstag* (R 833–48/361, 936–41/367); and, in the *Concilium*, the privileged speaker Amma Krûg complains (in a tirade whose rhetoric is reminiscent of Manuel and of another contemporary Swiss dramatist, Pamphilius Gengenbach) that the clergy have not just deceived farmers, but also robbed them of their

73 Far from post-dating the gospel accounts, as Eckstein and his contemporaries believed, St Paul is actually our earliest source on first-century Eucharistic practices.

houses and fields (C 1702–51/167–71). Worst of all, the Mass stands as a symptom of a Catholic soteriology that locates grace in a physical place and seeks to control it corruptly by means of money and outward works, thereby distracting people dangerously from the spiritual work of faith and repentance. Eckstein's intermittent use, here and elsewhere, of the first person plural shows the extent to which he identifies with the plight of the common people.

Such criticisms of Catholic theology and practice as these inevitably also involve criticisms of the papacy as an institution. We have seen above in our discussion of the *Klag des Gloubens* that Eckstein, like many of his contemporaries, enjoyed highlighting the discrepancies between the humility of Christ and the simplicity of his apostles on the one hand, and the pomp and power of the papacy on the other. He does this also in the *Concilium*, as well as challenging the fundamental legitimacy of the papal office. The stakes are high here, because, if the Catholic theology of the papacy is correct, then Zwingli is proved to be a heretic on his own terms (as was pointed out at the First Zurich Disputation and reiterated in the *Rychsztat*). In the *Concilium*, Eck attempts a demonstration from Scripture of the validity of the Pope's claims, but is immediately condemned by his own mouth when, in the space of six lines, he reveals his almost complete reliance on the Fathers and refers to the Pope by a (Freudian) slip of the tongue (or rather, of Eckstein's pen) as his 'god' (C 515–20/97). Meanwhile Thoman Klotz refutes Eck's use of the classic pro-papal proof-text, Matthew 16:18–19, by playfully appropriating the words of Christ: 'I will break down the gates of your church using your own words' (C 672–3/107).

Furthermore there are hints in this section, and indeed throughout the *Concilium*, that the farmers (who after all frequently refer to themselves in the first person plural) are developing their own nascent sense of ecclesial identity, defined by adherence to the authority of Scripture (as opposed to the Pope, the Fathers or canon law, which define the Catholic position). Paule Kachelmûs describes what amounts to an alternative church which, in stark contrast to the confusions of the Catholics, might be able to bridge the gap between the visible and the invisible, the temporal and the eternal. And this Church needs no earthly head, which is why Paule is able to ridicule the very idea of a

truly authoritative papacy, by asking which of the historical Popes will be the head of the Church when God finally reveals it in heaven (C 824–30/115).

Some less central theological issues (at least in the Swiss context) are also discussed from time to time. These include the veneration of relics at pilgrimage shrines, of which Eckstein essentially disapproves. Pilgrims only end up with tired legs and empty purses, the Weybel argues, while the real beneficiaries are the priests who dreamed up the relevant saint or miracle in the first place (C 2680–7/225). Moreover the plenary indulgences that could be obtained on some pilgrimages are rejected on theological grounds. Following the pattern in which Catholic abuses are criticized and an Evangelical corrective is suggested, the Herald reminds us that, instead, ‘God does not sell indulgences, and forgives sin and guilt free of charge’ (C 427–9/91).⁷⁴ Further, cults of saints in general are rejected, on the basis of Eckstein’s christocentric soteriology, but also because they too result from a confusion between the physical and the spiritual realms (St Antony’s burdensome cosmic responsibility for all pigs, discussed by Knüchel Fritz in C 1114–23/133, furnishes a good example of how ridiculous the implications of early modern Catholic practices could become).

Two important Catholic practices are not so easy to ridicule, however. Confession and fasting are both taught in Scripture, and hence cannot be rejected; but they too need to be reinterpreted. In an attempt to do this, Hans Ofenrûß insists that no biblical evidence can be found for the practice of auricular confession, and that there is certainly no warrant for charging a fee to hear someone’s confession. Hans’s Evangelical alternative is in line with both Scripture and Eckstein’s communalism: one farmer should confess his sins to another, or to God (C 2331–72/203–5). True penitence, meanwhile, is a matter of the heart (C 4095–7/303–5); and, of course, God’s forgiveness is free.

Fasting, for its part, was a delicate issue in the Zurich context, not least because the Swiss Reformation could be said to have begun when several supporters of Zwingli ostentatiously broke the Lenten

74 See also n. 358 on the *Concilium* (p. 227 below).

fast of 1522 by eating sausages at the house of the printer Christoph Froschauer.⁷⁵ In his speech on fasting to the *Concilium* (C 1352–421/147–51), the Weybel shows that he is not opposed to fasting *per se*, quoting Zwingli (at the First Zurich Disputation) as asserting that we are not told not to fast. Such a double negative is of course far from a wholehearted endorsement, but the Weybel's (and Eckstein's) biblicism constrains him to say that Christ did indeed teach his disciples how to fast (cf. Matthew 6:16–18). The important thing is that Jesus says fasting should be done secretly, in marked contrast to the public practices and controls surrounding late-medieval fasting. Again, the purpose of the rules (and fines) that surrounded fasting is identified as clerical greed; and, through the Weybel, Eckstein also points to the corrupt paradox that regulations about fasting are enforced more rigorously than those regarding more serious moral infringements, such as adultery.

It is important to point out, however, that, for all of his anti-clericalism, Eckstein is plainly aware of the existence of well-intentioned Catholic clergy. This can be seen not least towards the end of the *Rychsztat*, where the Herald offers advice on how to spot such priests, and how to treat them appropriately (R 2332–52/445–7). After all, there were learned and well-intentioned Humanists on both sides of the confessional divide, and both Zwingli and Eckstein had been Catholic priests before the Zurich Reformation. Eckstein is no doubt concerned to uphold the integrity of the better of his former colleagues, whilst also keeping the channels of communication with enlightened Catholics open – at least in principle, and until after the proposed Swiss disputation had taken place. There is no doubt that in this as in so many other respects Eckstein will have identified himself with Zwingli's position. Certainly, whilst nuances differ and priorities are not identical, it is entirely reasonable to describe his theology as essentially Zwinglian in nature.

75 Zwingli claimed to have been present on the occasion, but not to have eaten any sausage – though 'he also raised no objection' (Potter, p. 75). The best source for the reformer's views on fasting in general is his *Von Erkiesen und Freiheit der Speisen*, in *Sämtliche Werke*, I (Berlin: Schwetschke, 1905), 74–136.

Eckstein on politics and society

Eckstein's views on socio-political matters also reflect positions current in Zurich in the mid-1520s. These issues come to the fore towards the end of the *Concilium*, and are taken up again in the opening two sections of the *Rychsztag*. The main subjects discussed are the financial obligations placed on the common people, the legitimacy and nature of temporal authority, the immoral and socially damaging behaviour of both the clergy and the farmers, and an assortment of wider social ills.

The terms used by Eckstein to denote obligatory financial payments made by farmers to lords appear in various combinations, and are frequently impossible to translate (or differentiate from each other) with confidence. The two most commonly employed, however, are 'zins', which tends to refer to interest payments, but can also imply taxes or other duties owed to the Church; and 'zähend', whose basic meaning is 'tithe'. The principal locus for the discussion of problems associated with these is the final section of the *Concilium*, in which the farmer Pur Eygennutz (whose name means, significantly, 'selfishness' or 'self-interest')⁷⁶ encounters Doctor Stroubutz. Their discussion differs from the preceding sections from a structural point of view, not only because of its greater length, but also because Eygennutz is the only farmer character to speak first, before his educated opponent. In every other section, it is the Catholic doctor (the representative of the incorrect opinion) who begins, and the second, Evangelical speaker who then offers superior arguments from Scripture and undermines his interlocutor through polemical attacks. From the very outset of this section, then, there are clear indications that Eckstein may wish to distance his own views from those of Eygennutz.

The latter begins by expressing his inability to understand why the farmers must continue to pay tithes that were previously levied by

76 This was an important term for Zwingli, which he used as a kind of shorthand to describe egotistical and/or stubborn opposition to the cause of reform. See especially *Eine treue und ernstliche Vermahnung an die Eidgenossen*, in *Sämtliche Werke*, III, 97–113, especially 107–11.

the old Church. He perceives the current situation to be different in three respects: firstly, there has been a huge religious upheaval (he now considers himself to be ‘Evangelisch’); secondly, he feels that ‘God’s Word’ has freed him from all previous obligations; and thirdly, he has formed the expectation that ‘all things would be held in common’ (C 3226–40/255–7). It is important for Eckstein to address arguments such as these because of their topicality in the context of the ‘Peasants’ War’, and also because they represented a certain danger to the cause of the Zurich Reformation: they suggest, after all, a need to go beyond the reforms instituted by Zwingli and the Zurich council, and as such represent ‘radical’ or ‘Anabaptist’ views of a kind that were increasingly threatening the newly established orthodoxy in Zurich.⁷⁷ Doctor Stroubutz counters them here by arguing that Eygennutz has mistaken the freedom proclaimed in Scripture for a holiday from his debts, because he has failed to interpret the Bible spiritually, and is motivated purely by temporal considerations (C 3269–84/ 257–9); the charge is reminiscent of similar statements made by Christus in the *Dialogus*. In reply, Eygennutz alludes to the law of Moses, which stipulates that all debts should be cleared after seven years, and to St Luke’s injunction (6:35) to ‘lend, expecting nothing in return’ (C 3361–8/263). It is of course clear that he understands this passage from the perspective of a debtor, rather than that of a lender. In any event Stroubutz denies the validity of such biblical statements for the Christian life, insisting that Eygennutz’s very status as a borrower points to God’s judgement upon him: he quotes Deuteronomy’s statement (15:6) to the effect that the faithful will lend to many nations, but will not borrow (C 3370–87/263–5).⁷⁸ Instead of worrying about temporal matters, Stroubutz argues, a Christian should trust God and continue paying tithes and taxes, since these will not affect his or her eternal life (C 3339–52/261–3). Finally, in a passage that amounts to an apology for usury, Stroubutz points out that society could not

77 Pur Eygennutz, indeed, readily admits his indebtedness to the Anabaptists, in C 3259–64/257 and C 3625–30/277.

78 In appropriating this promise, Stroubutz personalizes it by making the relevant pronoun singular rather than plural (the biblical text refers to a whole nation).

function if people did not repay their debts (C 3660–74/279–81).⁷⁹ Throughout, then, the Catholic apologist Stroubutz⁸⁰ evinces a certain economic conservatism – with which, however, perhaps surprisingly for the modern reader, Eckstein and for that matter Zwingli are likely to have been broadly in agreement.⁸¹

With regard to temporal authorities also it is easy to see Stroubutz as Eckstein's mouthpiece. He notes that authorities are not explicitly forbidden by Scripture, and are indeed mandated to protect widows and orphans (a favourite trope throughout the *Rychsztag* as well), and to keep the peace (C 3309–16/261). On this basis, he characterizes the uprisings of the common people as contrary to God's Word and motivated by self-interest ('von Eygnem nutz', C 3316). Instead, he argues, the farmers should submit to God, who will punish whom he will; and he contrasts the self-interest of Eygennutz with the simplicity and pacifism of Christ, in a harangue that draws heavily on the Psalms and the Gospels⁸² and, in its rhetoric, is frequently reminiscent of Luther (C 3722–73/283–5). With regard to the rule of law, the paying of taxes and repaying of debts, and submission to temporal authorities – even corrupt ones (C 3632–45/279) – Stroubutz is (like Eckstein and Zwingli, and again like Luther) something of an idealist. For all of them, rich and poor are equal in the face of divine judgement; and this should guarantee a spirit of mutual dependence as well as of individual responsibility before God. In a phrase that echoes Luther's *Von der Freiheit eines Christenmenschen*, for example, Stroubutz urges Eygennutz to 'be subject to all human creatures' (C

79 Cf. Lewis Hyde, *The Gift: How the Creative Spirit Transforms the World* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 2006 [1983]), pp. 111–42.

80 There is no justification for regarding Stroubutz as an Evangelical (*pace* Müller, p. 26), though Jørgensen is right to point out (p. 124) that his views are doubtless similar to those formed by the Zurich Council when faced by unrest in their own rural hinterland.

81 See for example Dieter Demandt, 'Die Wirtschaftsethik Huldrych Zwinglis', in *Beiträge zur Wirtschafts- und Sozialgeschichte des Mittelalters. Festschrift für Herbert Helbig zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. by Knut Schulz (Cologne: Böhlau, 1976), pp. 306–21.

82 Gospel idealism such as this may also be a sign of Erasmus's influence (cf. the *Enchiridion*).