

PHILIP MELANCHTHON'S RHETORICAL
CONSTRUAL OF BIBLICAL AUTHORITY

Oratio Sacra

John R. Schneider

Texts and Studies in Religion
Volume 51

The Edwin Mellen Press
Lewiston/Queenston/Lampeter

Table of Contents

(with subtopics in sequence)

Acknowledgments	ix
Introduction: The Unknown Melanchthon	1
Chapter 1: The Years as a Student at Pforzheim and Heidelberg	13
Childhood and Pforzheim	
Early influences at school	
A new name—"Melanchthon"	
Heidelberg—Spangel and Wimpfeling	
South German humanism and Heidelberg nominalism	
Chapter 2: The Years as Student and Teacher at Tübingen	25
Tübingen and its intellectual climate	
Philip and the <i>via moderna</i>	
Stadian and a new Aristotle	
Stöffler and natural science	
Melanchthon's study of theology	
The press of Thomas Anselm	
The influence of Erasmus	
Published works at Tübingen	
Melanchthon and philosophy	
Dialectic and rhetoric	
"Natural piety" in the young Melanchthon	
Chapter 3: Melanchthon's Inaugural Speech at Wittenberg	51
The call to Wittenberg	
The decline of letters	
A corrupted Aristotle	
Dialectic and truth	
Dialectic and rhetoric— <i>sermo proprius</i>	
Aristotle, language and truth	
Language, truth and sacred theology	
Overtures to Luther	

Chapter 4: Melanchthon's Rhetoric of 1519

65

A theory of dialectic and rhetoric
 Precise language, *caussae communes* and the power of words
Inventio, the *genus demonstrativum* and Aristotle's *Categories*
Loci communes in Melanchthon's rhetoric
 Melanchthon's use of history
Dispositio and the *partes orationis*
 The *scopus dicendi* as the *status caussae*
Confirmatio and the force of logic
 Biblical writings as rhetoric
 Paul's epistle to Titus
 The epistle to the Hebrews—*exempla vs. allegoriae*
 Paul's epistles to the Romans and Galatians as rhetoric
 The Psalms as *oratio*

Chapter 5: The Prefaces to Luther's Psalms and Galatians

97

The influence of Luther
 The preface to Luther's *Operationes in Psalmos*
 A new hermeneutic
 The Psalms, Romans and biblical unity
 David as rhetorician
 The triumph of Scripture over philosophy
 The philosophical character of Scripture
 Melanchthon and Luther on the unity of Scripture
 The preface to Luther's commentary on Galatians
 The intensified critique of philosophical *felicitas*
 A radical doctrine of the fall
 Galatians as rhetoric—an outline
 Exegetical foundationalism—differences from
 Luther's technique
 The problem of form and content in Melanchthon's
 critique of philosophy

Chapter 6: Melanchthon and the Leipzig Disputation

115

Background to the debate
 Melanchthon's role
 The letter against Eck
 Good works and free will
 Papal authority and the "unus et simplex sensus scripturae"
 Purgatory and the nature of the canon
 Biblical authority as Lutheran rhetoric
 Inspired truth as rhetorical truth

Emerging problems of "natural theology" and "intellectualism"
 The "external perfection" of Scripture—
 contrasts with Luther and Erasmus
 The perfections of Scripture and later Lutheranism

Chapter 7: Melanchthon's Beginning as a Theologian 129

The baccalaureate degree in theology
 Rhetorical modalities of Lutheran authority
 The *Summa* on Romans—a rhetorical outline
 Paul's *confirmatio*—divine truth and the force of logic
 A *locus didacticus*—law, sin and grace
 The problem of exegetical induction and foundationalism
 Scripture and the properties of a tradition
 Similarities and differences with Erasmus on Scripture as rhetoric
 The *Theologica institutio*—dogmatics in outline
Inventio theologica—a rhetorician's theology of the cross
 The divine difference of Scripture—its effect upon the passions
 The complex nature of truth as *doctrina efficax*

Chapter 8: The Annotations on St. Matthew's Gospel 147

Law and gospel as a conceptual scheme
 Christ as an orator
Exempla legis et gratiae—history as truth for then, now and always
 "Intellectualism" and the passions
 The problem of diachronic biblical unity
 Similarities and differences with Luther and Erasmus
 Harmonizing biblical differences
 Old and New Covenants as *promissio*
 Matthew and the divine difference of Christ's doctrine
 The philosophical nature of the divine difference

Chapter 9: The Orations on Paul's Doctrine 163

Scripture and the divine difference from philosophy
 Scripture, philosophy and self-knowledge
 The implied affirmation of metaphysics
 The efficacy of Paul's doctrine—Paul and Pericles
 Biblical doctrine as word-event
 The *sensus scripturae*—the rhetorical modalities of its
 perspicuity and coherence as a whole
 The canon as a literary tradition
 Paul and the *beneficia Christi*

- The problem of diachronic perspicuity and a
"canon within the canon"
- Scripture as an *oratio sacra*
- The socio-theological problem of authority—
consensus through induction
- A scholar's perspicuity against the scholars
- Perspicuity, authority and grace through rhetoric
- The divine difference of Scripture from church tradition
- The fusion of pre-Lutheran and Lutheran criticism—*sola scriptura*

Chapter 10: *Didymi Faventini adversus Thomam Placentium pro Martino Luthero Théologo Oratio* 189

- Exsurge Domini*—Luther and the charge of heresy
- Melanchthon to the defense
- Faith and reason—the logic of Christian concepts
- Metaphysics and the *mysteria coelestia*
- The question of speculative theology and
Melanchthon's ambivalence
- Christ as the *scopus* of theology
- A Lutheran critique of Aquinas and Occam
- Christian doctrine and moral truth
- The law and philosophy
- Sin and grace and philosophy
- The *scopus* of Scripture as its *status*—a model for interpreting
Melanchthon's critical affirmation of reason

Chapter 11: *The Loci Communes* of 1521 205

- Composition and text
- The "finding" of topics—the logic of Melanchthon's method
- Anthropocentrism and double-truth theory?
- Inventio*, the mysteries of heaven and knowing Christ's benefits
- The doctrine of free will
- The doctrine of sin and *oratio sacra*
- The law and *oratio sacra*
- The gospel and *oratio sacra*
- Grace, justification and faith and *oratio sacra*
- The *dispositio* of Scripture
- Melanchthon and "intellectualism"
- Melanchthon and "natural theology"—critique and vindication

Selected Bibliography 263

Index of Names 273

Index of Subjects 276