other types of reformatory literature – either written by Melanchthon or other theologians. Even though certain theologoumena – such as the justification-theologoumenon – have consistently been brought up by reformatory theologians, there is no uniform “reformatory Pauline exegesis.” We have to study Luther and Melanchthon differently – we have to look at them as individual theologians and authors and we even need to distinguish between the different types of writings that derive from the same author.

I shall thus in a final step look at a different writing of Melanchthon – dating to 1546 – where he, in contrast to the Loci, approaches Paul’s letter to the Philippians from a rather different perspective.

3. Melanchthon’s interpretation of Philippians in his Oratio (1546)

We will now turn to a text that has generally not been counted among the most central writings of Melanchthon: Melanchthon’s funeral speech on Luther (“Oratio in funere reverendi viri D. Martini Lutheri”). However, this text gives a good impression of Melanchthon’s view on both Luther and Paul in 1546. After a complicated history of transmission that cannot be discussed here,24 the “Oratio in funere reverendi viri D. Martini Lutheri” has been edited again in 1997.

In his funeral speech on Luther, Melanchthon chooses a prominent literary type of an oratio that is known from antiquity: the laudatio funebris. In his speech, Melanchthon though claims several times that he would differ from the ancient prototype (… tantum de mortui laudibus…)25 since he would not intend to hold a laudation. This assertion, however, rather functions as an introductory trope.

Melanchthon starts by placing Luther in the list of de viris illustribus, which reaches from Adam to Johannes Tauler. Hereafter Melanchthon compares the regents of big ancient empires – Solon, Themistocles, Scipio and Augustus – with leaders of the church, such as Isaiah, John the Baptist, Paul, Augustine and Luther who, of course, exceed the former group of ancient figures. Afterwards, Melanchthon portrays Luther as a humanist and a teacher of the church.

In order to show Luther’s humanist profile, Melanchthon uses various proofs: He refers to respective attestations made by Erasmus; he talks about Luther’s virtues – in comparison with ancient ideas of virtues (see Hercules or Cimon);

he claims that Luther was eager to read history-writing in order to interpret on
the basis of *exempla* mentioned there contemporary time and life. In Melanch-
thon’s funeral speech, Luther appears as a true humanist.

Which role does Pauline exegesis play in Melanchthon’s speech and in his
portrait of Luther? Regarding how Melanchthon reads and uses Pauline texts
here and how he summarizes Luther’s theology, two observations are of par-
ticular interest to me: *First*, Luther’s teaching – and this is the main argument
in Melanchthon’s speech – “points to the will of God and the real worship, it
interprets the Bible and the word of God, the Gospel of Jesus Christ.”26 Accord-
ing to Melanchthon’s interpretation, Luther has renewed the true and necessary
teaching, especially in regard to atonement (*poenitentia*). Luther had explained
Paul’s teaching, “which says that Man is justified by belief,”27 as Melanchthon
puts it. Here, again, the *theologoumenon* of justification occurs as a central el-
ement of how Luther conceptualizes Paul’s theology. The *theologoumenon* of
justification, however, is not the only way in which Melanchthon characterizes
in the funeral speech Luther’s achievements as a teacher.

*Second*, how does Melanchthon use Pauline letters in general? How does he
refer to Paul’s letter to the Philippians in particular? There is one direct quo-
tation of Philippians existent in the funeral speech. At first, this quotation could
be a kind of a reference of any sort to an ancient source text – Melanchthon
uses Philippians in a rather unspecific way, in fact in conjunction with other
biblical writings or pagan literature like Vergil. When quoting the Greek text
of Phil 4:8, Melanchthon only refers to the first part of this verse (4:8a)28. Phil
4:8 is the only time that Paul uses the term ἀρετή. The topic of “virtue” reflects
precisely what Melanchthon addresses in the funeral speech and how he wants
to dignify Luther’s lifework.

Melanchthon aims at revealing Luther’s virtues (see above). For that purpose,
he refers to the “short list of virtues” as being presented in Phil 4:8. However,
Melanchthon himself does not make use of the term ἀρετή here. Neither does
he state that already Paul would have had an idea about human or specifically
Christian virtues. Melanchthon rather presupposes that his audience knows this
verse by heart so that Phil 4:8, in fact, acts as a key-element of the whole speech.
Phil 4:8 is in the center of Melanchthon’s valuation of Luther and his *ethos* as a
teacher of the church.

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The role of Paul’s letter to the Philippians for the concept of Melanchthon’s funeral speech is not at all marginal. Philippians rather more appears to be a central source text – an “intertext” which Melanchthon continuously recalls. In the rhetorical frame of lauding Luther and his lifework, it is thus less the theologoumenon of justification that dominates Melanchthon’s argument here, but much more the concept of creating Luther’s paradigmatic role in light of Paul’s self-description.

In the end of his speech, Melanchthon points to various paradigmatic teachers, like Jeremiah, John the Baptist and Paul. He suggests adding Luther to this list of paradigmatic teachers. By fashioning Luther as such a paradigmatic teacher, Melanchthon adequately reflects Paul’s self-conceptualization in Philippians. In no other letter does Paul shape such a clear concept of himself as an exemplum, which should be imitated by his readers. Besides his quotation of Phil 4:8, Melanchthon’s reading of Paul’s letter to the Philippians thus proves to be “appropriate” and in line with Paul’s pragmatics of writing in at least two dimensions:

First, Melanchthon makes Luther to appear as a true imitator of Paul. Hereby, he follows Paul’s pragmatics of letter-writing in Phil 3:17. When Melanchthon talks about Luther’s expectation of being close to God and Jesus Christ – after having been taken out of his body in order to see God’s identity – Melanchthon most obviously alludes to Phil 3:10f.: He makes Paul’s desire of recognizing Christ after being transformed into Christ’s fortune to become Luther’s own desire. Melanchthon actualizes Luther as the paradigm of a Christ-emulator as defined by Paul in his letter to the Philippians.

Second, in pointing to Luther’s virtues and adding him to the list of paradigmatic teachers, Melanchthon explicitly requests of his audience to “imitate” Luther (… Virtutes etiam nobis necessarias pro nostra mediocritate imitemur …). Here Melanchthon obviously alludes another time to Paul’s demand of following or “mimicking” him (Phil 3:17): As Paul admonishes the community in Philippi to “imitate” him by doing what they have learned and received from Paul (Phil 4:9), Melanchthon makes Luther to be a virtue-based object of imitation. In Melanchthon’s speech, Luther becomes nothing less than an impersonation of Paul in his letter to the Philippians.

Melanchthon’s exegesis of Paul has more to offer than a reiteration of a certain hermeneutical key: the theologoumenon of justification. Melanchthon