Anne Eusterschulte / Hannah Wälzholz (ed.)

Anthropological Reformations – Anthropology in the Era of Reformation

Refo500 Academic Studies 28

V&R

V&R Academic

ISBN Print: 9783525550588 — ISBN E-Book: 9783647550589

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Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht

ISBN Print: 9783525550588 — ISBN E-Book: 9783647550589

With 7 colour and 12 b/w-Fig.

Gefördert mit Mitteln der Beauftragten der Bundesregierung für Kultur und Medien.

Bibliographic information published by the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek
The Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliografie;
detailed bibliographic data available online: http://dnb.d-nb.de.

ISSN 2198-3089
ISBN 978-3-647-55058-9

You can find alternative editions of this book and additional material on our Website: www.v-r.de

Typesetting by Konrad Triltsch Print und digitale Medien GmbH, Ochsenfurt

ISBN Print: 9783525550588 — ISBN E-Book: 9783647550589

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Introduction: Anthropological Reformations – Anthropology in the Era of Reformation

The present volume is comprised of papers submitted to the third annual RefoRC conference, which took place in Berlin in 2013. The general topic of this conference "Anthropological Reformations – Anthropology in the Era of Reformation" marks the cardinal point of interdisciplinary discussions on the state of anthropological questions. It was our aim to ask for the (pre)conditions of the reformatory process, its historical embedment and transformative dynamics with regard to the establishment and the debates on anthropological concepts and their changes in the age of Reformation. To analyse these developments and the different areas of conflict in a comprehensive way, we intended to confront features of special research fields (Medicine, Musicology, History, Literature, Art History, Politics, Ethics, Theology and History of Religion) enabling us to compare the conceptualizations of the *conditio humana* according i. e. to the relation of body and soul, definitions of self-consciousness, knowledge or the understanding of free will, to concepts of body and theories of passions or emotions. How did theologians reflect on the scientific explanation of man's affective nature and the role of emotions? In which way did contemporary scientific knowledge on the one side, the humanistic reception of ancient sources, pagan literature and philosophy on the other side influence the theological issue of humans' godlikeness, the comprehension of virtues, guilty pleasures or sin? How were anthropological concepts, based on philosophical discourses, founded by the explorations of the contemporary empirical sciences or on travelling records with regard to the so-called new worlds received by theologians? And how did anthropological questions touch the interrelation of law and grace, justification and salvation? To which degree does the influence of reformatory theological debates (i. e. the interpretation of Christ's passion, death, redemption, resurrection) modify the conception of man's state? Looking into the relevance of anthropological reformations in a broader sense, we not only examine shifts in the structure of theological systems, the strategies to legitimize the true church or to substantiate the reformatory understanding of faith. Analyzing the theological approaches and appropriations of contemporary thought

ISBN Print: 9783525550588 — ISBN E-Book: 9783647550589

as well as the wisdom of rediscovered traditions, we also want to investigate to what extent and in which way theological debates on human nature have found resonance in works of art, poetry, literature, music, scientific knowledge etc. Is it possible to describe a reformation of aesthetic concepts, that means a shift in theories and practices of art (literature, music, architecture, the art of painting, up to performative arts)? And what does this mean for religious and liturgical practices?

How can we describe the interrelation or the reciprocal transfer of concepts and ideas in the wake of Reformation and in the long run with regard to the period of confessionalization? This perspective also focuses on political and social changes, for example the review of monastic life, the criticisms of the papal church and the emergence of religious movements. The impact of the Reformation and the later Counterreformation manifests the influence of religious thought on political as well as social theories and had a practical impact on social life, on debates focusing the true Christian conduct of life and their ethical implications. But it also leads to legitimation strategies to confirm the theological substantiation of political governments.

On the whole, all these questions concentrate on the complexity of anthropological reformations. The conference papers combined in this volume attempt to give answers to these questions. But first and foremost they explore the deeper dimensions of anthropological changes and open our mind for different perspectives on anthropology in the era of Reformation.

The volume combines selected papers of relevant experts with the research work of young graduate or postgraduate scholars. It tries to encourage a transdisciplinary, international discussion focused on exemplary case studies as well as systematic points of view. Thanks to the outstanding commitment of all participants of the conference, we are able to present the results of this discussion, a rich and comprehensive spectrum of research work, which will encourage further research.

First of all we have to thank the contributors of this volume for their inspiring papers, shedding light on anthropology in the era of Reformation. They lead to a deeper understanding of the transformative forces, historical changes and sociopolitical developments which characterize the role of anthropological debates within the process of Reformation and may initiate a continuing research with regard to a plurality of consequences and conflicts concerning not only theological or confessional conceptualizations of the *conditio humana* but, as the transdisciplinary conference has shown, taking into consideration anthropological Reformations in a comprehensive way. It is this exchange across disciplinary borders that allows us to see how anthropology in the era of Reformation spreads out in all fields of sciences and arts, politics, ethics or human self-

ISBN Print: 9783525550588 — ISBN E-Book: 9783647550589

conception and substantiates claims of the only true church as well as apprehensions of resurrection and the promised afterlife in Christian thought.

We are deeply grateful that the *Bundesbeauftragte für Kultur und Medien* supported the international conference generously and made a prompt publication of the conference papers possible. We also thank the publishing house Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht for accepting the volume as part of a series of RefoRC-conference-paper-editions and we especially thank Jörg Persch and Christoph Spill for supporting the publication of this volume. Last but not least we want to thank Pawel Kaliszewski, who assisted the editors in preparing all the manuscripts so unfailingly and reliably.

Sincere thanks are given to them all.

Berlin, December 2014 Anne Eusterschulte/Hannah Wälzholz

ISBN Print: 9783525550588 — ISBN E-Book: 9783647550589

ISBN Print: 9783525550588 — ISBN E-Book: 9783647550589

I. Dimensions of Anthropological Reformations: Keynote-Lectures

ISBN Print: 9783525550588 — ISBN E-Book: 9783647550589

ISBN Print: 9783525550588 — ISBN E-Book: 9783647550589

Risto Saarinen

Weakness of Will: Reformation Anthropology between Aristotle and the Stoa

The so-called weakness of will, sometimes called with the Greek term *akrasia* or the Latin term *incontinentia*, belongs to those perennial topics of Western philosophy that each new generation wants to elaborate and discuss. Akrasia means acting against better judgment, that is, the situation in which one knows what good one ought to do but nevertheless does something else.[1]

The theme of akrasia is usually considered to have its origins in Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, (EN, Book VII), in which Aristotle discusses the phenomenon of acting against one's own better judgment. Since knowledge is stronger than opinions or emotions, and since better judgments represent this knowledge, no rational person should act against what he or she considers best. Aristotle is, however, not only intellectualist but also realist; therefore, he remarks that often people nevertheless seem to act akratically. How can this phenomenon be explained? Aristotle presents a lengthy elaboration and explanation. Later philosophers and theologians have debated what Aristotle is actually saying and whether he is right in saying what he says.[2]

Akrasia in Aristotle and the Stoa

As one crucial part of his explanation, Aristotle launches the practical syllogism, a calculative model of the emergence of human action. The practical syllogism consists of a major premise that expresses a general principle and a minor premise that states a particular observation. Given the intellectualist framework, rational beings should follow the conclusion implied by the two premises. Aristotle's famous example in EN VII concerns eating: 'Sweet things are to be

1 Tobias Hoffmann, ed., *Weakness of Will from Plato to the Present*, Washington 2008. Jörn Müller, *Willensschwäche in Antike und Mittelalter*, Leuven 2009. Risto Saarinen, *Weakness of Will in Renaissance and Reformation Thought*, Oxford 2011.

2 Müller, Willensschwäche (see n. 1), pp. 109–151; Saarinen, Weakness (see n. 1), pp. 8–12.

ISBN Print: 9783525550588 — ISBN E-Book: 9783647550589

avoided' (major); 'this is sweet' (minor); 'this should be avoided' (conclusion). The conclusion is not only propositional, but also functional and in some sense the action itself. Hence, a person's acts result from his or her calculative deliberations in terms of practical syllogism. (EN VII, 1145a – 1147b).

The standard Aristotelian answer to the problem of akrasia is that the akratic person knows the good in a universal sense but his grasp of the minor premise is impeded or imperfect. Thus, the akratic person eats the sweets, knowing that sweet things should generally be avoided, but cheating himself to ignore the particular case at hand. (EN VII, 1147a – b). Obviously, the next thing to ask is whether the ignorance in question is voluntary or not. A great range of different answers has been presented, and sometimes the same author has presented many answers. Thomas Aquinas, for instance, says that philosophically such behavior is like involuntary forgetting, but theologically it is voluntary.[3]

In addition to Aristotle, there is a Stoic tradition of akrasia of which the scholars have become better aware during the last fifteen years.[4] The Stoic tradition is quite fragmentary; we have some texts of Chrysippus and Galen, and uncertain mentions from Plutarch, Epictetus and Origen. I am also arguing in my new book that Augustine is in some ways connected to this tradition.[5]

The Stoic tradition survives in some examples, of which the two most popular are, first, 'the runner who cannot stop running' and, second, the literary figure of Medea who falls in love and kills her children against her better judgment. Both Medea's love and her rage are used as example of akrasia. The Stoics introduced the concept of assent to their anthropology. This assent was no free will in the modern sense, but something that is immediately attached to the judgment of the mind. According to the Stoics, our emotions are assented judgments. When we feel an emotion, we have already judged to assent to it. Emotions are no innocent desires but assented judgments. Thus the Stoics are in some sense even more intellectualist that the Aristotelians who taught that the emotions stem from the lower parts of the soul, being in themselves no rational judgment or voluntary consent of higher mental powers.[6]

As strict intellectualists, the Stoics are unwilling to admit that there exists something like akrasia. Motivational mental conflicts only mean that the assented judgment oscillates and changes in both directions so rapidly that we cannot notice the individual instances of this rapid change. However, in each individual instance of this very rapid oscillation there is a coherence of assent, judgment and the emotion representing them.[7]

3 So Saarinen, Weakness (see n. 1), pp. 28–30. More discussion about Aquinas is listed here.
4 Müller, Willensschwäche (see n. 1), pp. 155–193 offers a broad overview.
5 Saarinen, Weakness (see n. 1), pp. 19–27.
6 Saarinen, Weakness (see n. 1), pp. 12–17.
7 Saarinen, Weakness (see n. 1), p. 15 and Müller, Willensschwäche (see n. 1), p. 167–171.

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However, the Stoics discuss two possible options of akrasia. First, there may be so-called prepassions, which emerge already before judgment. If I see a box of sweets in the shop window, this impression may cause tiny physical changes within me before the judgment, assent and emotion are fully formed in the soul. Such tiny changes could be labeled as akratic, and we may have them for a very brief time before the conscious judgment emerges. Although the doctrine of prepassions became prominent in later Christian monastic spirituality, the other option is more interesting for the purposes of this paper. In some cases, the agent may be so strongly predetermined by some earlier habits that the new information cannot change his or her course of action immediately but only after delay. This is what the example of the 'runner who cannot stop running' illustrates. After the assented judgment to stop running, the runner proceeds at least for some meters. This proceeding might be called akrasia, acting against one's own better judgment.[8]

This was also how Medea's love and her rage came to be interpreted. In Ovid's *Metamorphoses* Medea claims to 'see the better and approve it, but follow the worse'. This means, according to the Stoic view, that she saw that it was better to stay at her father's home, but her love nevertheless caused her to continue with Jason. Although she intellectually decided to stay with her father, her earlier course of life was still so predominant that in her love she actually followed Jason.[9]

Jörn Müller has meticulously analyzed the Stoic tradition of akrasia; he also discusses its relationship to some early Christian mental conflicts, for instance, Paul's introspection in Romans 7. In my own book, I present two new arguments concerning Augustine's very complex role in this story. First, I claim that Augustine's famous conversion story in *Confessions* 8 displays similarities with the example of the 'runner who cannot stop running'. Here Augustine wonders why the commandment of the mind to will does not bring about a will-act, calling this powerless will a monstrosity. He explains the phenomenon by saying that, though the mind is lifted up by truth, it is also weighed down heavily by habit, and it is this old habit which causes the person to act against his better will and judgment.[10]

Second, I interpret the late Augustine's pessimistic lines of the remaining sinfulness of Christians as saying that Augustine there regards concupiscence not only as irrational emotion but also in terms of an assented judgment. Because we feel concupiscence, we have somehow already assented to it; therefore, the awareness of one's feeling concupiscence is already in itself sinful, involving preceding consent in some sense. In fact, the case of Augustine is very complex.

8 Saarinen, Weakness (see n. 1), p. 16 and Müller, Willensschwäche (see n. 1), pp. 171–179.
9 Saarinen, Weakness (see n. 1), pp. 16–17; Müller, Willensschwäche (see n. 1), pp.173–176.
10 Müller, Willensschwäche (see n. 1), pp. 211–241 (Paul); Saarinen, Weakness (see n. 1), pp. 17–26 (Augustine).

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His doctrine of desire, consent and free will cannot be reduced to Stoicism but it also exemplifies new developments. At the same time, the notion of consent/assent stems from Stoicism and we may ask to what extent this shapes Augustine's thinking. Timo Nisula discusses Augustine in detail, without fully agreeing with my views regarding his Stoicism.[11] For my purposes, it is sufficient to show that Augustine can be read in somewhat Stoic terms. This is relevant in the reception history irrespectively of whether this was the case with the historical Augustine.

Other Introductory Perspectives

Some introductory perspectives need to be stated clearly, before I can enter the topic.

First, it is evident that since Melanchthon the Reformation authors knew much more about Stoicism than was the case in late medieval scholasticism. Several Reformation authors knew well the non-religious Greek sources and could thus compare their theology competently with the classical heritage. Thus, we have not only Aristotelianism but also a kind of Neo-Stoicism as an available option in the Reformation era.

Second, I will not claim that the Reformation authors were either Aristotelians or Stoics. They differed from both in many important respects. However, some of them are Aristotelian in their explanation of akrasia, whereas others employ distinctly Neo-Stoic features. While they all remain somewhere between Aristotle and the Stoa, it is worthwhile to discover the individual affinities and differences.

Third, to verify such discoveries we need a clear framework of relevant comparisons. For this purpose, I will employ a categorization of the different models of akrasia as being either Aristotelian or Stoic. The use of practical syllogism as explanatory model is typical of Aristotelianism. Within this model, one may have slightly different explanations as to how the syllogism can go wrong, but I will not address them in the following. The Stoic models are characterized by the use of the concepts of assent/consent/free will. They proceed from strictly Stoic intellectualism towards Augustinianism, and further from Augustinianism towards voluntarism. While the full-fledged free will models are no longer Stoic, the Augustinian models that employ the interplay of desire and consent still display some Stoic features.[12]

Fourth, the role of Martin Luther in this history needs to be explained. In some sense, he does not belong to it, since he did not write anything on akrasia. In my

11 Timo Nisula, *Augustine and the Functions of Concupiscence*, Leiden 2012, esp. pp. 259–262.
12 A detailed categorization is presented in Saarinen, Weakness (see n. 1), pp. 42, 217.

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new book, I ask the inevitable question: why not, given that he knew Aristotle well and was so interested in the so-called bondage of the will. My answer is that, for Luther, akrasia was not a conceptual option in the first place.[13] Why is this so? For Aristotle, akrasia and *enkrateia*, the strength of will, are imperfect stages of virtue and vice. Imperfectly good people act virtuously but have temptations to do otherwise. They are called enkratic or (in Latin) continent. Imperfectly evil people commit sins but they act against their better judgment, being akratic. In Aristotle, we thus have four moral states, virtue, continence, akrasia, and vice.

For Luther, however, all people without grace are wholeheartedly evil and sinful; there are no alleviating factors. For this reason, people who claim to be akratic are just normally evil and maybe hypocrites. When people are justified and live a Christian life, they act rightly but their ruled sin nevertheless tempts them all the time. They are righteous and sinner at the same time. In Aristotelian terms, they are continent rather than virtuous. If Christians lapse from the good course of life, they re-enter the state of normal sinners. When they return to the path of faith and Christianity, they become righteous sinners or continent in Aristotelian terms. Only in heaven can they become really good and virtuous. The four Aristotelian moral states are thus reduced to two in Luther, namely, vice and continence. Given this, Luther need not write anything concerning people who without grace nevertheless have good judgment: there are no such people.

Early Lutheranism

We can also bluntly say that Luther kicked Aristotle out of the door. The philosopher starts to creep back from one window opened by Melanchthon and another opened by Calvin. Melanchthon does not write much thematically on akrasia. For the most part, he shares Luther's view that only sinfulness and continence are the real Christian options. Melanchthon's portrayal of the human will is Lutheran rather than Erasmian or Humanist.[14]

In the second *aetas* of the *Loci communes*, however, Melanchthon undertakes some moderations to Luther's teaching concerning the natural powers of humanity without grace. He considers that people can have a remnant of judgment with which they can proceed to externally good works. The weakness of our nature frequently overcomes any good judgment, so that we follow evil affects. Medea's words: I see the better and approve it, but follow the worse, exemplify this situation.[15]

13 See Saarinen, Weakness (see n. 1), pp. 115–132.
14 So Timothy Wengert, *Human Freedom, Christian Righteousness*, Oxford 1998.
15 Melanchthon, *Corpus Reformatorum* (CR, Halle, 1834–1860) v. 21, p. 374: 'Hanc ipsam

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Medea's words are not used in medieval theology and philosophy, but they are reintroduced by Josse Clichtove in his influential ethics textbook around 1500 as an illustration of akrasia. After Clichtove and Melanchthon, they are used by practically all later writers.[16] More importantly, they were used as an example of weakness of will, not as any example whatsoever. Melanchthon is very fond of Medea's example; he interprets Medea's love and her rage in several different works throughout his later career as Reformer.[17] Let us keep in mind that Medea's words are non-Aristotelian: if Medea really saw the better, without any ignorance or forgetting, she, according to Aristotle's intellectualist theory, should have followed this course. Medea exemplifies something that is called clear-eyed akrasia in philosophical literature.

We know today how the example of Medea was employed in the Stoic discussion on akrasia.[18] Therefore, we need to ask whether the reintroduction of this example by Clichtove and Melanchthon implies the reintroduction of Stoicism into the discussion on weakness of will. Several qualifications are here needed, as Medea's example can be understood as being simply voluntarist. In some respects, Melanchthon's interpretation resembles Aristotelianism: the akratic Medea ignores the good judgment at the very moment of her sinful action. Melanchthon sometimes says that the devil causes this ignorance of particulars.[19]

On the other hand, Melanchthon knew the Greek sources so well that he probably realized that the example of Medea manifests Stoic rather than Aristotelian action theory. The frequent use of this example turns, I think, his action theory to some extent towards the Stoa. Melanchthon's significance in the interpretation history of akrasia lies, however, primarily in his ability to reconnect the classical discussion with the emerging Lutheran theology. His use of the relevant examples is eclectic and rhetorical rather than fully consistent.

The first Lutheran to develop a sophisticated, original and highly tradition-conscious notion of akrasia is Melanchthon's pupil Joachim Camerarius. He is clearly a major figure not only in Lutheranism, but also in the entire interpretation history of akrasia in Western philosophy. His insights radiate far and

libertatem efficiendae civilis iustitiae saepe vinci naturali imbecillitate, saepe impediri a Diabolo. Nam cum natura sit plena malorum affectuum, saepe obtemperant homines pravis cupiditatibus, non recto iudicio. Sicut inquit apud Poetam Medea: Video meliora proboque, deteriora sequor. Praeterea Diabolus captivam naturam impellit ad varia flagitia etiam externa, sicut videmus summos viros, qui tamen conati sunt honeste vivere, lapsus turpissimos habere. Sed tamen inter has difficultates, utcunque reliqua est aliqua libertas efficiendae iustitiae civilis.'

16 Saarinen, Weakness (see n. 1), pp. 79–83 (Clichtove).

17 Saarinen, Weakness (see n. 1), pp. 132–142.

18 Müller, Willensschwäche (see n. 1), pp. 165–179.

19 See above n. 15.

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deep, up to such founding fathers of modernity as Spinoza and Leibniz.[20] Here I can only very briefly sketch some basic features of Camerarius's *Exposition of Nicomachean Ethics*.

Camerarius knows well the Platonic and Stoic traditions, but he adheres to Aristotelianism, which he attempts to harmonize with Melanchthon's theological and philosophical insights. He keeps the structure of the practical syllogism and argues, in keeping with the Aristotelian tradition, that the particular facts of the minor premise are not grasped properly in the akratic deliberation. Thus, some ignorance precedes akratic acts. Unlike the former Aristotelians, however, Camerarius considers that the uncertainty related to our perception of empirical particular is nothing less than 'the cause of all evil'.[21]

He gives three new and non-Aristotelian examples of akrasia, which signify this circumstance in a very broad manner. A medical doctor knows well the general regularities regarding how to treat fever. However, it is very difficult to know which general principle applies to this particular case of fever. Therefore, he often fails to heal, as the medical knowledge concerning particulars is not certain. The second example concerns political leadership, in which even wise men often fail for the same reason: they know the general rules, but they cannot foresee whether they work properly in this particular case. A third example concerns the composition of literary texts: even very skillful authors make all kinds of blunders, as the procedure from general stylistic and rhetorical rules to concrete cases of writing convincingly is so hard to accomplish.[22]

The error of the akratic person thus concerns the particular circumstances: the devil is in the details. In some sense, this is close to the Aristotelian syllogistic model, but Camerarius is so focused on the uncertainty of particulars that we cannot call him Aristotelian.[23] The neglect of the particulars is also voluntary, as the following quote shows:

> The [akratic] argument goes as follows: this desire is harmful. Harmful things are to be avoided. Therefore, one should not be seized by this desire. But covetousness carries the person away, so that he is ordered by this last proposition concerning perception: this is pleasant and joyful. Therefore, I enjoy the present pleasure. The person does not want to hear or follow the knowledge-based truth, which argues that such deeds are wicked and blameworthy. In the same manner, one can explain other cases in which one acts against true knowledge and right reason.[24]

20 Saarinen, Weakness (see n. 1), pp. 142–151 (Camerarius), pp. 225–229 (Spinoza, Leibniz).
21 Joachim Camerarius, *Explicatio librorum Ethicorum ad Nicomachum,* Frankfurt 1578, p. 325. Saarinen, Weakness (see n. 1), pp. 147–148.
22 Camerarius, Explicatio (see n. 21), pp. 325–326; Saarinen, Weakness (see n. 1), p. 148.
23 Camerarius, Explicatio (see n. 21), p. 326; Saarinen, Weakness (see n. 1), p. 148.
24 Camerarius, Explicatio (see n. 21), p. 326; Saarinen, Weakness (see n. 1), pp. 149–150.

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These considerations of Camerarius advance significantly from the schematic treatments of Luther and Melanchthon. At the same time, they differ from the earlier Aristotelian tradition. The weight of empirical particulars and the uneasiness provided by small changes is something that we encounter later in Leibniz, for instance, but it is not a main theme before Camerarius. Because of the voluntary nature of the neglect of details, Camerarius is closer to late medieval voluntarism than to either Aristotle or the Stoa. It is worthwhile to note that while Luther denies akrasia completely and Melanchthon offers it a minor role in our external behavior, Camerarius makes akrasia the cause of all evil. The topic that has no conceptual place in Luther thus soon becomes prominent in Lutheranism and receives new significance as a ground of empirical observation.

After Camerarius, Lutherans start to write extensively on akrasia. They often return to the Aristotelian and even Thomistic doctrines and do not display much originality. They aim to make Aristotelianism compatible with the theological doctrines of the Reformation, sometimes even managing to do some creative work towards this goal. Theophilus Golius of Strasbourg and Wolfgang Heider of Jena can be mentioned as examples of this development. They return to the Aristotelian anthropology, although they continue to use the example of Medea and stress the sinful nature of all human beings. In reality, however, their Aristotelian anthropology is clearly distinct from Luther's reductionist doctrine of all humans being either wicked or enkratic.[25]

Early Calvinism

The Calvinist interpretation history of weakness of will is fascinating for many reasons. First, Calvin himself launches this history through discussing akrasia already in the 1539 edition of his *Institutio*. Second, Lambert Daneau undertakes an original systematic interpretation of akrasia and enkrateia in his *Ethices Christianae*. Third, the Neo-Stoic influence on this discussion seems to be stronger in Calvinism than in the Catholic and Lutheran interpretation history.

Calvin's treatment shows familiarity with the basic Reformation ideas of Luther and Melanchthon. Calvin discusses akrasia in the context of the so-called theological use of the law. This use brings the knowledge of sin. He emphasizes the role of conscience as an instance that exercises some influence even in corrupted human minds. Calvin concludes therefore, in keeping with Melanchthon, that although sinners try to evade their inner power of judgment, the mind at least sometimes opens itself to the judgment of conscience. This means that we do not only sin from ignorance and that genuine acting against better judgment is

25 Saarinen, Weakness (see n. 1), pp. 151–163 (Golius and Heider).

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possible because of the remaining power of conscience to produce such jugdments.[26]

This leads Calvin to present an Aristotelian solution to the problem of akrasia in terms of practical syllogism. Although he attributes this model to Aristotle's pupil Themistius, it can be found in the standard Aristotelian commentaries, for instance, in Thomas Aquinas or Calvin's contemporary John Mair.[27] Calvin says:

> Themistius more correctly teaches that the intellect is very rarely deceived in general definition or in the essence of the thing; but that it is illusory when it goes farther, that is, applies the principle to particular cases. In reply to the general question, every man will affirm that murder is evil. But he who is plotting the death of an enemy contemplates murder as something good. The adulterer will condemn adultery in general, but will privately flatter himself in his own adultery. Herein is man's ignorance: when he comes to a particular case, he forgets the general principle that he has just laid down.[28]

In this manner, the conscience illuminates the major premises but not the minor ones and the sin is indeed to some extent due to ignorance. However, Calvin adds another perspective to this discussion as follows:

Themistius' rule, however, is not without exception. Sometimes the shamefulness of evil-doing presses upon the conscience so that one, imposing upon himself no false image of the good, knowingly and willingly rushes headlong into wickedness. Out of such a disposition of mind come statements like this: 'I see what is better and approve it, but I follow the worse.' To my mind Aristotle has made a very keen distinction between incontinence and intemperance: where incontinence reigns, he says, the disturbed mental state or passion so deprives the mind of particular knowledge that it cannot mark the evil in its own misdeed, which it generally discerns in like instances; when the perturbation subsides, repentance straightway returns. Intemperance, however, is not extinguished or shattered by the awareness of sin, but on the contrary, stubbornly persists in choosing its habitual evil.[29]

Calvin now employs the favorite example of Melanchthon, namely, Medea's love. As clear-eyed wrongdoing, Medea is for Calvin not a case of akrasia but of intemperance, which in the Aristotelian scale is a standard vice. The passage is somewhat idiosyncratic or at least non-Aristotelian, as for Aristotle, people performing such wrongdoing are not conscious of the better alternative but their mind is entirely fixed on wrongdoing. For our interpretation history it is nevertheless significant that the topic of akrasia is discussed by Calvin and that he

26 *Institutio christianae religionis*, 2, 2, 22. The following English quotes are from *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (ICR, Louisville 2006). In Saarinen, Weakness (see n. 1), pp. 164–174 I pay detailed attention to the different editions of *Institutio*.

27 For Mair, see Saarinen, Weakness (see n. 1), pp. 83–95.

28 *Inst.* 2, 2, 23 (ICR, p. 282).

29 *Inst.* 2, 2, 23 (ICR, p. 282). Saarinen, Weakness (see n. 1), p. 166.

ISBN Print: 9783525550588 — ISBN E-Book: 9783647550589