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The Educational Roots of Reformed Scholasticism: Dialectic and Scriptural Exegesis in the Sixteenth Century

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1. *Introduction*

Each generation delights in overturning the entrenched positions and judgments of its predecessors. This applies to historians of theology no less than to other people. Over the last twenty years research on later sixteenth- and seventeenth-century theology has led to a reappraisal of Protestant scholasticism and its relation to the Reformation. Earlier historians of doctrine viewed Protestant scholasticism as overly rationalistic at the expense of Reformation biblicism, heavily dependent on Aristotelian philosophy, and organized around a central doctrine such as predestination. The current consensus is that Protestant scholasticism reflected the Orthodox theologians' deep familiarity with and commitment to the scriptural text; that if it did appropriate Aristotle, such appropriation was eclectic rather than slavish; and that the idea of a central dogma organizing all of theology is the creation of the nineteenth, not the sixteenth century. Rather than concentrating on specific content, contemporary discussions emphasize that Protestant scholasticism was at base a method of teaching that was intimately linked to the university lecture hall and given its characteristic "shape" by the use of theological topics or loci arranged in a coherent order.¹

¹ This characterization is drawn from Richard A. Muller, "The Problem of Protestant Scholasticism: A Review and Definition," in *Reformation and Scholasticism: An Ecumenical Enterprise*, eds. W. J. van Asselt and E. Dekker (Grand Rapids, 2001), pp. 45–64, as well as the introduction by the editors in the same volume, pp. 11–43. Muller describes the synthetic order preferred by Reformed theologians. Lutheran theologians, in contrast, preferred an analytic order; see H. E. Weber, *Der Einfluß der protestantischen Schulphilosophie auf die orthodox-lutherische Dogmatik* (Darmstadt, 1969), and Muller's discussion of method in *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics: The Rise and Development of Reformed Orthodoxy, ca. 1520 to ca. 1725, 1: Prolegomena to Theology*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, 2003), pp. 184–86. See also Richard A. Muller, *After Calvin: Studies in the Development of a Theological Tradition* [Oxford Studies in Historical Theology] (New York, 2002), pp. 25–46.

Just as recent research has transformed the characterization of Protestant scholasticism, so it has also raised new questions about its origins. In his recent overview of “the Problem of Protestant Scholasticism,” Richard Muller has called it “the result of the educational as well as the ideological-confessional institutionalization of the Reformation.” Here he points specifically to the impact of both Agricolan dialectic and the Renaissance Aristotelianism of Zabarella and Suarez.² This paper elaborates on Muller’s insight, making more clear the nature of the relationship between the revolution in dialectic and the evolution of Reformed scholasticism in the sixteenth century. Although it owed much to the contributions of Reformers educated in the traditions of late medieval logic (Bucer and Beza) or Italian Renaissance Aristotelianism (Vermigli and Zanchi), Reformed scholasticism was also the unintentional by-product of the German humanists’ enthusiastic embrace of Agricolan topical dialectic and its application to scriptural exegesis.

The return of dialectic to theology is all the more striking because the first generation of reformers had divorced the two disciplines. As a method of determining the truth of propositions, logic played an important role in the speculative theology of the later middle ages. Biblical humanists rejected this use of logic, as they did speculative theology in general, and they believed that the task of the theologian should be the philological analysis of the Scripture text. In the preface to his edition of the Greek New Testament, Erasmus argued that theology was to be rooted in exegesis. The reformers followed his lead and devoted their energies to producing biblical commentaries rather than works of systematic theology; their tools were those of philology and rhetoric rather than dialectic.³

By the last quarter of the sixteenth century, however, dialectic had re-emerged as an essential tool for theologians. Dialectic’s reappearance in theology was due to a transformation of the discipline itself, a process that occurred in four stages. The first stage, from the end of the fifteenth century into the first two decades of the sixteenth, witnessed

² Muller, “Problem” (see above, n. 1), pp. 62–63; see also his discussion of the term “scholasticism” in Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics* (see above, n. 1), 1: 34–37.

³ Erika Rummel, *The Humanist-Scholastic Debate in the Renaissance and Reformation* (Cambridge, Mass., 1995), pp. 96–125; N. Scott Amos, “New Learning, Old Theology: Renaissance Biblical Humanism, Scripture, and the Question of Theological Method,” *Renaissance Studies* 17 (2003), 39–54.

the transformation of late medieval logic from a technical discipline concerned with linguistic analysis into a methodology to be applied more generally to the analysis of texts. The second stage, extending from the 1520s through the 1540s, was a time of transition as new textbooks were written and German universities re-organized to teach this new humanist dialectic. These efforts bore fruit during the third stage, extending through the 1550s and 1560s, when a new generation of future pastors and theologians received ever more intense training in the application of dialectic to the explication of texts. At the same time, future theologians were given more advanced training in dialectic, which increased their proficiency in Aristotelian dialectic far beyond that of the previous generation. These developments paved the way for the fourth and final stage, apparent by the 1570s, when there was a shift away from the more philological and rhetorical exegesis typical of the first generation of the Reformation to a method of exegesis shaped by a dialectic increasingly influenced by direct study of Aristotle’s logical works.⁴ A survey of the changes made to instruction in dialectic over the course of the sixteenth century makes the differences between each of these phases clear.

2. *The evolution of humanist dialectic*

Late medieval logic was a highly specialized, technical branch of philosophy concerned with linguistic precision, in particular the meaning of terms and the validity of propositions. As such it was scorned by humanists as empty speculation without any practical value, practiced by men who were guilty of what was seen as the ultimate sin, the use of barbarous Latin.⁵ By the early fifteenth century, dialectic had re-

⁴ The phases are not quite the same in the development of Lutheran scholasticism, primarily because a large number of important future theologians were trained in dialectic by Melancthon at Wittenberg already in the 1530s and 1540s. Richard Muller distinguishes between the first generation of Reformers and the second generation of codifiers, with the dividing line falling in the mid-1560s, and he notes the change in style between the initial period of the Reformation and early Orthodoxy, but he is concerned primarily with developments from the last third of the sixteenth century; *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics* (see above, n. 1), 1: 52–61. The same is true of Muller’s discussion of the phases of Orthodoxy, *After Calvin* (see above, n. 1), pp. 3–21.

⁵ Alan Perreiah, “Humanist Critiques of Scholastic Dialectic,” *Sixteenth Century Journal* 13 (1982), 3–22. Terrence Heath describes the relationship between grammar and late medieval logic in “Logical Grammar, Grammatical Logic and Humanism in Three German Universities,” *Studies in the Renaissance* 18 (1971), 9–64.

ceded far behind grammar and rhetoric in the educational reforms of the Italian humanists.

Nevertheless, logic was too important to persuasive argumentation for humanists to ignore it completely. Lorenzo Valla was the first to suggest how the principles of dialectic could be adapted to humanist use by combining them with the principles of rhetoric taken from Cicero and Quintilian. It was the Dutch humanist Rudolf Agricola, however, who provided humanists with an acceptable form of dialectic. In his *de inventione dialectica*, Agricola emphasized Latin eloquence rather than terminological precision and the organization of arguments rather than the scientific demonstration of truth. Indeed, Agricola blurred the Aristotelian distinction between logic or scientific demonstration, which was based on true propositions, and dialectic, which was based on propositions that were only probable.⁶

Drawing on the use of topics in the classical rhetorical tradition as well as on Aristotle's *Topics*, Agricola taught that arguments could best be analyzed by examining them according to standardized categories. The first part of argumentation was the finding and use of such topics, or invention; judgment or the formal principles of argumentation came only after one had "found" the content to be discussed. Agricola not only provided lists of such topics or loci but also gave examples of how topical invention could be used to generate arguments and to analyze texts.⁷

Unlike late medieval logic, Agricola's combination of rhetoric and dialectic proved to be eminently practical. Called, alternatively, "place logic," "topical dialectic," or "rhetorical dialectic," this humanist reinterpretation of dialectic was enthusiastically endorsed by Erasmus and took northern Europe by storm. The first edition of Agricola's *de inventione dialectica* was published in 1515, thirty years after its author's

⁶ The distinction is made in Aristotle's *Topics*, 1.1. Later writers followed Agricola in this, and over the course of the sixteenth century "dialectic" became the standard term for the discipline.

⁷ Peter Mack, "Humanist Rhetoric and Dialectic," in *The Cambridge Companion to Renaissance Humanism*, ed. Jill Kraye (Cambridge, Eng., 1996), pp. 82–99; Walter J. Ong, S.J., *Ramus, Method, and the Decay of Dialogue: From the Art of Discourse to the Art of Reason* (Cambridge, Mass., 1958), pp. 92–130; Wilhelm Schmidt-Biggemann, *Topica Universalis. Eine Modellgeschichte humanistischer und barocker Wissenschaft* [Paradeigmata I] (Hamburg, 1983), pp. 3–21. Richard Muller also points to the importance of the changes in the focus and practice of logic initiated by Agricola, "Reformation, Orthodoxy, 'Christian Aristotelianism,' and the Eclecticism of Early Modern Philosophy," *Dutch Review of Church History* 81 (2001), 306–25.

death, and there were almost twenty reprints before the definitive edition appeared in 1539.⁸ Within a generation, dialectic went from being dismissed by humanists as a useless waste of time to being advocated as a basic methodological tool that could be used for the analysis of texts from any discipline.⁹

It took another generation, however, for this new dialectic to obtain a firm place within the curriculum of Germany's universities. In fact, the next stage in the development of dialectic coincided with the dramatic decline and slow recovery of the German universities. Before they could concern themselves with curricular matters, the universities first had to survive the educational crisis brought on by the Reformation. University matriculations, which had already been declining in Germany during the 1510s, plummeted sharply during the 1520s.¹⁰ Only Wittenberg escaped this drastic collapse, and even it went through some difficult years before the final statutory reforms of the mid-1530s. Wittenberg itself served as a model as new schools were established and older universities reformed over the next few decades.¹¹

The small number of university students who did matriculate in the years after the Reformation encountered a curriculum in a state of flux. The 1530s and 1540s proved to be a time of experimentation, as cur-

⁸ Lisa Jardine, "Distinctive Discipline: Rudolph Agricola's Influence on Methodical Thinking in the Humanities," in *Rodolphus Agricola Phrisius (1444–1485): Proceedings of the International Conference at the University of Groningen*, eds. R. Akkerman and A. J. Vanderjagt (Leiden, 1988), pp. 38–51.

⁹ Günter Frank, "Melanchthons Dialektik und die Geschichte der Logik," in *Melanchthon und das Lehrbuch des 16. Jahrhunderts. Begleitband zur Ausstellung im Kulturhistorischen Museum Rostock 25. April bis 13. Juli 1997*, ed. Jürgen Leonhardt (Rostock, 1997), pp. 125–45; Kees Meerhoff, "The Significance of Philipp Melancthon's Rhetoric in the Renaissance," in *Renaissance Rhetoric*, ed. Peter Mack (Basingstoke, 1994), pp. 46–92.

¹⁰ According to the classic study by Franz Eulenberg, the yearly number of matriculations between 1526–30 was only one-third of what it had been fifteen years earlier; *Die Frequenz der deutschen Universitäten von ihrer Gründung bis zur Gegenwart* [Sächsisches Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philologische-Historische Klasse 54] (Leipzig, 1904), p. 52.

¹¹ Leif Grane, "Studia humanitatis und Theologie an den Universitäten Wittenberg und Kopenhagen im 16. Jahrhundert: komparative Überlegungen," in *Der Humanismus und die oberen Fakultäten*, eds. Gundolf Keil, Bernd Moeller, and Winfried Trusen (Weinheim, 1987), pp. 65–114; see also Gustav Adolf Benrath, "Die Universität der Reformationszeit," *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 57 (1966), 32–51; Notker Hammerstein, "Universitäten und Reformation," *Historische Zeitschrift* 258 (1994), 339–57; Heinz Scheible, "Die Reform von Schule und Universität in der Reformationszeit," *Luther Jahrbuch* 66 (1999), 237–62.

ricular statutes were introduced and then fine-tuned to reflect the new educational priorities of humanism and evangelical theology. Standard components of the medieval curriculum, most notably lectures on Aristotle's metaphysics, were eliminated, and universities created chairs for instruction in the Greek language and for the humanist disciplines of poetry and rhetoric.

Dialectic instruction survived, but the dialectic now being taught was the new version developed by Agricola and his disciples. Lectures in dialectic were no longer based on Aristotle's *Organon* but on one of the many introductory texts and compendia produced by humanist educators. Philipp Melanchthon published his first textbook on dialectic, *Compendiaria dialectices ratio*, in 1520, and it went through seventeen further printings in the next eight years. Although this text continued to be printed, Melanchthon produced a revised and expanded text in 1528 that proved even more popular. The third and final version of Melanchthon's dialectic text, *Erotemata Dialectices* of 1547, was the most successful of all, becoming the basis for dialectic instruction in Lutheran Germany throughout the second half of the sixteenth century. The chief rival to Melanchthon's text was Johann Caesarius' *Dialectica in decem tractatus digesta*, first published in 1520 and frequently reprinted through the rest of the century, but other humanist educators ranging from the famous (Juan Luis Vives and Johann Sturm) to the obscure produced their own texts for dialectic instruction.¹²

3. *The teaching of dialectic*

Given the institutional and curricular instability of the three decades after the Reformation, it is questionable whether many students could have gained more than a very elementary grounding in this new humanist dialectic. The case of the university of Basel illustrates the difficulties faced by students seeking a university education. Matriculations fell from a high of ninety students in 1514/15 to only ten students in 1525/26, and in 1529 the university was forced to close. It reopened in 1532, but several chairs in the arts faculty remained unfilled or passed

¹² For a survey of many of these texts, see Wilhelm Risse, *Die Logik der Neuzeit, I: 1500–1640* [Geschichte der Logik] (Stuttgart, 1964), pp. 14–78. Risse discusses Caesarius' text, 25–31, and the successive versions of Melanchthon's text, pp. 78–105. See also Ralph Keen, *A Checklist of Melanchthon Imprints through 1560* [Sixteenth Century Bibliography 27] (St. Louis, 1988), pp. 31–32, 42–46 for a list of the editions of Melanchthon's various dialectic texts.

rapidly from one occupant to another over the next decade.¹³ The arts faculty operated on an informal basis for several years, until it was finally given new statutes in 1539. The curricular statutes adopted the following year were revised in 1544 and again in 1551. In letters to his friend Konrad Hubert, the Basel pastor Johann Gut lamented the lack of discipline among the students and the negligence of the faculty, and he mocked “the crowd of little masters” (*turba magistrorum*) who were teaching at the university.¹⁴ Even the students complained about the quality of instruction: in 1544 an anonymous letter sent to the law professor Bonifacius Amerbach complained that Heinrich Pantaleon, then teaching dialectic, was as capable of lecturing “as an ass was of playing a lyre.”¹⁵

If dialectic instruction was unsatisfactory in Basel, it was even worse elsewhere. Apart from Basel, the Reformed cities of Switzerland could not offer university-level instruction in dialectic. The new academy in Zurich had professors for the biblical languages and theology, but dialectic was taught along with Latin and rhetoric by the same individual, Johann Jakob Amman. Bern also suffered from a shortage of teachers and had no separate chair for dialectic.¹⁶ As a consequence,

¹³ Rudolf Thommen, *Geschichte der Universität Basel, 1532–1632* (Basel, 1889), pp. 1–31; Theophil Burckhardt-Biedermann, “Die Erneuerung der Universität zu Basel in den Jahren 1529–1539,” *Beiträge zur vaterländischen Geschichte* 14 (1896), 401–87. Matriculation figures from Hans Georg Wackernagel, ed., *Die Matrikel der Universität Basel* (Basel, 1951–) (hereafter cited as BM) 1: 368.

¹⁴ Gast to Hubert, 16 Aug. 1540, Simmlersche Sammlung, Zürich Zentralbibliothek, MS S 48: 97, and Gast to Hubert, 8 Feb. 1542, MS S 51: 31.

¹⁵ Alfred Hartman and Beat Rudolf Jenny, eds., *Die Amerbachkorrespondenz* (Basel, 1942–), 6: 84–86, no. 2078.

¹⁶ Ulrich Im Hof, “Die Entstehung der reformierten Hohen Schule. Zürich (1528)—Bern (1528)—Lausanne (1537)—Genf (1559),” in *Beiträge zu Problemen deutscher Universitätsgründungen der frühen Neuzeit*, eds. P. Baumgart and N. Hammerstein [Wolfenbütteler Forschungen 4] (Nendeln, 1978), pp. 243–62. On Zurich, see Ulrich Ernst, *Geschichte des Zürcherischen Schulwesens bis gegen Ende des 16. Jahrhunderts* (Winterthur, 1879), pp. 89–93, 95–99, and 102–105; Hans Nabholz, “Zürichs Höhere Schulen von der Reformation bis zur Gründung der Universität, 1525–1833,” in *Die Universität Zürich 1833–1933 und ihre Vorläufer*, ed. Zürich Erziehungsrat (Zurich, 1938), pp. 1–50, esp. 8–12; cf. Jakob Bedrot's comment to Oswald Myconius about the lack of instruction in dialectic and math in Zurich, 16 Aug. 1540, cited in J. V. Pollet, O.P., *Martin Bucer. Études sur la correspondance*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1958–62), 2: 302 n. 2. In 1548, dialectic and rhetoric were taught in Bern by the professor of mathematics, Bernhard Tillmann; Adolf Fluri, “Die bernische Schulordnung von 1548,” *Mitteilungen der Gesellschaft für deutsche Erziehungs- und Schulgeschichte* 11 (1901), 159–218, esp. 198–200. Irena Backus has concluded, on the basis of her exam-

if students at these schools wanted more advanced training in dialectic, they would have to go elsewhere, but their choices were limited. Although it had been reformed in the mid-1530s, Tübingen had a poor reputation with respect to both its course offerings and the discipline of its students.¹⁷ Strasbourg's academy, created in 1538, might seem a more promising place to study dialectic, for its rector, Johann Sturm, had already published his own textbooks for the discipline. By the mid-1540s, however, Sturm had turned the responsibility for dialectic lectures over to the physician Justus Velsius, and the academy did not hire a professor specifically for dialectic until 1563.¹⁸

Despite these initial difficulties, the educational situation gradually stabilized at mid-century, in Basel and elsewhere in Protestant Germany and Switzerland. The third stage in the development of humanist dialectic witnessed its triumph as it was enshrined in the curricular requirements of universities and academies and propagated especially through Melancthon's popular text. Moreover, by the 1550s new stipendiary systems were being put into place that enabled young theology students to continue their university studies for longer periods.¹⁹ A growing number of future pastors and theologians were thus not only

ination of possible texts used for dialectic instruction in Geneva immediately after the Academy's creation, that if students studied from Melancthon's text, they would have received an adequate grounding in dialectic, but the texts of Johann Sturm and Conrad Neobar were both insufficient: "L'enseignement de la logique à l'Académie de Genève entre 1559 et 1565," *Revue de théologie et de philosophie* 111 (1979), 153–63.

¹⁷ See Rudolf Gualther's letters to Heinrich Bullinger, written in March and April 1540, *Heinrich Bullinger Werke, 2. Abteilung: Briefwechsel*, eds. U. Gäbler et al. (hereafter cited as HBBW) 10, nos. 1379, 1382, and 1388. Gualther may be guilty of blackening Tübingen's reputation somewhat, since he was trying to persuade Bullinger not to send him there, but Oswald Myconius expressed much the same opinion about Tübingen, 25 March 1540, HBBW 10, no. 1377. On the reforms introduced to Tübingen, Charlotte Methuen, *Kepler's Tübingen: Stimulus to a Theological Mathematics* [St Andrews Studies in Reformation History] (Aldershot, 1998), pp. 33–37.

¹⁸ Anton Schindling, *Humanistische Hochschule und freie Reichsstadt. Gymnasien und Akademie in Straßburg 1538–1621* [Veröffentlichungen des Instituts für europäische Geschichte Mainz 77] (Wiesbaden, 1977), pp. 236–37.

¹⁹ On the stipendiary system in Württemberg, see Charlotte Methuen, "Securing the Reformation through Education: The Duke's Scholarship System of Sixteenth Century Württemberg," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 25 (1994), 841–51; for Marburg, see Walter Diehl, "Die Stipendienreform Landgraf Philipps im Jahre 1560 und das älteste Marburger Stipendiatenalbum," in *Festschrift des Historischen Vereins für das Großherzogtum Hessen: Philipp der Großmütige. Beiträge zur Geschichte seines Leb-*

introduced to dialectic, but studied it long enough to develop a competency that far surpassed that achieved by their slightly older contemporaries who had matriculated during the 1530s and 1540s. The education of future pastors at the university of Basel during the third quarter of the sixteenth century both illustrates this development and shows its impact on the evolution of exegesis and theological method.

The arts statutes adopted in 1551 determined Basel's curriculum for most of the second half of the sixteenth century.²⁰ These statutes distinguished between three levels of students: the beginners at the Pedagogium, the laureandi preparing for their bachelor's degree, and the laureati working towards their master's degree. Newly matriculated students were examined, and those deemed not ready for the baccalaureate level were placed in the Pedagogium. There they took courses in Greek and Latin grammar, Latin literature, and a simple introduction to dialectic. The text recommended for students at this level, Jodocus Willichius' *Erotematum Dialectices*, presented the basic elements of dialectic — discussing predicaments, predicables, and propositions, as well as the method of defining and dividing a concept and of refuting arguments — in question and answer form, suitable for memorization in the same way a catechism would be memorized.²¹

ens und seiner Zeit (Marburg, 1904), pp. 97–123, and Walter Heinemeyer, "Pro studiosis pauperibus." Die Anfänge des reformatorischen Stipendiatenwesens in Hessen," in *Studium und Stipendium. Untersuchungen zur Geschichte des hessischen Stipendiatenwesens*, ed. W. Heinemeyer [Veröffentlichungen der historischen Kommission für Hessen 37] (Marburg, 1977), pp. 77–100; for Heidelberg, Eike Wolgast, "Das Collegium Sapientiae in Heidelberg im 16. Jahrhundert," *Zeitschrift für die Geschichte des Oberrheins* 147 (1999), 303–18; for Basel, Eberhard Vischer, "Das Collegium Alumnorum in Basel," in *Aus fünf Jahrhunderten schweizerischer Kirchengeschichte. Zum sechzigsten Geburtstag von Paul Wernle*, ed. Theologische Fakultät der Universität Basel (Basel, 1932), pp. 95–162. Zurich was unusual in that it established a stipendiary system that sent students to foreign universities for the last phase of their education; Karin Maag, "Financing Education: The Zurich Approach, 1550–1620," in *Reformations Old and New: Essays on the Socio-Economic Impact of Religious Change c. 1470–1630*, ed. Beat Kümin [St. Andrews Studies in Reformation History] (Aldershot, 1996), pp. 203–16.

²⁰ The statutes are reprinted in Thommen, *Geschichte* (see above, n. 13), pp. 339–48.

²¹ *Iodoci Willichii Reselliani Erotematum Dialectices Libri III. Quibus accessit Davidis Chytraei de Studio Dialectices recte instituendo Libellus*. This text was first published in Strasbourg in 1544 and went through four more editions there over the next two decades; a sixth edition was published in Basel in 1568. For a characterization, see Risse, *Logik* (see above, n. 12), pp. 108–10.

The Pedagogium functioned as an equalizer, making sure that all students, no matter what their abilities at matriculation, would enter the course for the bachelor's degree with the same level of linguistic ability. Once students had attained proficiency in Latin and Greek, they moved on to the courses required for the bachelor's degree. These emphasized the study of rhetoric, which included not only the principles of rhetoric from texts such as the *Rhetorica ad herennium*, but also the analysis and imitation of classical orations. The students also continued their study of dialectic, using the more sophisticated texts of Johann Caesarius, Jodocus Perionius, or Melanchthon. All of these texts to a greater or lesser extent sought to combine Ciceronian rhetoric with Aristotelian dialectic, emphasizing correct Latin style and the practical application of dialectic to the analysis of texts, including — particularly in Melanchthon's case — the analysis of Scripture.²²

The statutes of the arts faculty expected students to spend roughly a year taking courses in the Pedagogium before attending the lectures required for the bachelor's degree. The prescribed course of study for the B.A. was to last another eighteen months. In fact, for the period between 1550–90, when the Pedagogium was transferred from the university to the city's Gymnasium, it took most of Basel's future pastors somewhat longer than three years to move from matriculation to reception of the bachelor's degree. Only after 1589, after the Pedagogium was separated from the university and incorporated into the city's gymnasium, did the length of time from matriculation to degree fall to slightly less than two years. This at least implies that most students needed to spend more than a year at the Pedagogium or first level, bringing their language skills up to par.²³ The curricular emphasis up through the awarding of the bachelor's degree was chiefly linguistic and literary. The courses required for the master's degree were much different in nature. At the advanced level of arts study, the em-

²² Perionius' text, *De dialectica libri III*, was first published in Paris in 1543. The Basel rhetoric professor Coelio Secundo Curione published both a commentary, *Caelij Secundi Curionis Commentarj*, in *Ioachimi Perionij Cormoeriaceni de Dialectica libras tres* (Basel, [1549]) and a brief summary of it, *Epitome Dialecticae Iochimi Perionij* (Basel, [s.d.]); cf. Risse, *Logik* (see above, n. 12), p. 143, n. 86.

²³ 1550–59: 3.6 years; 1560–69: 3.1 years; 1570–79: 3.3 years; 1580–89: 3.2 years; 1590–99: 1.8 years. Basel's pastors are identified in Karl Gauss, *Basilea Reformata. Die Gemeinden der Kirche Basel Stadt und Land un Ihre Pfarrer seit der Reformation bis zur Gegenwart* (Basel, 1930); the dates of matriculation and of any degrees awarded, either at Basel or at other universities, are given in BM 2.

phasis shifted from language and communication skills to more technical philosophical and scientific concerns. Rather than using a dialectic text, candidates for the master's degree attended lectures on Aristotle's logical works. They also studied Aristotle's scientific works and mathematics, particularly geometry — important because its treatment of scientific proofs aided comprehension of Aristotle's treatises on argumentation. The rigor of Basel's M.A. program is reflected in the time it took for students to complete the degree requirements. The statutes of the arts faculty estimated that students would move from B.A. to M.A. in eighteen months. In reality, most future pastors attended lectures for almost four years before passing the examinations required for the master's degree. Only during the decade of the 1580s did the length of time needed to complete an M.A. fall to below three years — still twice the originally anticipated length of time to finish the degree.²⁴

In addition to the increased curricular emphasis on Aristotle, the students' mastery of Aristotelian logic was heightened by another development, the specialization of knowledge that resulted from the appointment of professors to teach specific areas, rather than having all professors teach in all areas.²⁵ Basel's university had three chairs for the teaching of dialectic, corresponding to each of the three levels of study. Turnover among the dialectic professors at the Pedagogium and the bachelor's level was fairly high, with each professor serving on average from three to five years. The situation was quite different at the master's level, however. Johann Hospinian was appointed professor for Aristotle's *Organon* in 1546, and he held that post until his death in 1575. His textbooks reveal the development in his own understanding of Aristotelian dialectic.

Hospinian published his first dialectic text, *Quaestionum Dialecticarum Libri Sex*, in 1543, while he was teaching both Greek and rhetoric at Basel.²⁶ The work was based on the lectures he had earlier given at Tübingen using Caesarius' dialectic text. Fourteen years later, he published the second edition of his *Dialectical Questions*. In a general preface to his readers, he pointed out the many changes that had been

²⁴ 1550–59: 3.9 years; 1560–69: 3.9 years; 1570–79: 3.7 years; 1580–89: 2.8 years.

²⁵ On the general trend, see Joseph S. Freedman, "Philosophy Instruction within the Institutional Framework of Central European Schools and Universities during the Reformation Era," *History of Universities* 5 (1985), 117–66.

²⁶ *Joannis Hospiniani Stainani ... Quaestionum Dialecticarum Libri Sex, nunc primum in lucem editi* (Basel, 1543).

made to the new edition: “what was confused has been clarified, what had been missing is now filled in, and what was misleading has now been corrected.”²⁷ While some of this may have been exaggerated in order to increase the sales of the new edition, there was a fundamental truth to Hospinian’s claim that “that which was earlier a compendium of our Caesarius is now, as it were, an epitome of Aristotle.” The revised version followed the same order of the original, proceeding from terms to propositions to arguments (both syllogisms and fallacies), but it was about three times the size. This transformation, Hospinian reported, was the result of his years of teaching the *Organon*: reading Aristotle and his Greek interpreters had convinced Hospinian of his earlier errors and prompted him to rewrite, rearrange, and correct his dialectic text. Hospinian crowned his career by publishing a Greek and Latin edition of Aristotle’s *Organon* in 1573.²⁹

4. *Dialectic and theological education*

How did this curriculum shape the mindset and abilities of Basel’s future pastors? First and foremost, for those students who earned a master’s degree, there was a shift from the more linguistic and literary orientation of the bachelor’s degree to a more rigorously analytical orientation that emphasized logical argumentation and scientific demonstration. Students at the M.A. level were taught to go beyond the basic level of definition and division of terms in textual analysis to use syllogistic reasoning as well. Finally, they moved beyond the simplified and rhetoricized humanist dialectic taught at the lower levels to the study of Aristotle’s logical works, taught by a professor who had spent years teaching those works.

The increased familiarity with Aristotelian dialectic imparted at the M.A. level would have had little impact on the study of theology if Basel’s future pastors did not receive this higher degree. One of the most important developments over the second half of the sixteenth century,

²⁷ *Quaestionium Dialecticarum libri sex, post longam amplificationem et castigationem, nunc demum secundo in lucem emissi*. . . . (Basel, 1557), preface, unpaginated.

²⁸ The growing appreciation of Aristotle in Hospinian’s texts parallels that in the more influential dialectic texts of Philipp Melanchthon; Frank, “Melanchthons Dialektik” (see above, n. 9).

²⁹ He also published a book on syllogisms, *Non esse tantum trigenta sex bonos malosque categorice syllogismi modos* . . . (Basel, 1560); his *De controversiis dialecticis liber* . . . was published posthumously in 1576.

however, was the significant increase in the amount of education required of Basel’s pastoral candidates.

During the 1550s and 1560s most of Basel’s future pastors studied for only a few years before being called to a parish position. Only a quarter of the pastors entering the ministry in the 1550s had a master’s degree. Most of the remainder had matriculated at the university but did not receive any degree.³⁰ Thanks in part to the establishment of a stipendiary program to support students preparing for the pastorate, the proportion of new clergy with a master’s degree rose to somewhat below half during the 1560s and remained at that level for the next few decades. During the 1590s, however, the level of education rose dramatically: only three of the fourteen new pastors appointed during this decade did not have a master’s degree. In fact, the crucial transition came in the mid-1580s, when the church’s leaders decided that only individuals with master’s degrees would be considered for vacancies in Basel’s church.³¹

The implications of the evolving dialectic curriculum and the rising standards of pastoral education for theology instruction can be traced in the published commentaries and unpublished lectures produced by Basel’s theology professors: Martin Borrhaus, who taught Old Testament from 1544–64, Simon Sulzer, who taught New Testament from 1554 and then succeeded Borrhaus as professor of Old Testament, and Johann Jakob Grynaeus, who succeeded Sulzer as professor of Old Testament when the latter began teaching Hebrew in 1575.

³⁰ Of the 28 pastors entering the ministry 1550–59, the educational background of six is unknown, ten had matriculated but left school without a degree, five had earned a bachelor’s degree, and seven had earned their master’s degree. At least one future pastor — Johann Jakob Grynaeus (see below, n. 37) — completed the curriculum for an M.A. without officially being granted the degree, but this was not usual. In most cases, the time between awarding of the B.A. and the appointment to first pastoral post would have precluded the possibility of extended study. In Basel there was an incentive to incur the costs of formally obtaining a degree, since all students supported by civic scholarships in preparation for entering the ministry were required to obtain a degree.

³¹ In 1586, the church’s leaders examined two students seeking pastoral posts, though they had not received their M.A.s. Both were denied positions, although one was given a position in a Reformed village subject to the bishop of Basel; Basel Staatsarchiv D 1,2 (Kirchenratsprotokolle), Conventus 10 (10 June) and 11 (22 June). Ten of the twenty pastors who entered Basel’s ministry in the 1580s had a B.A. or less. Only one of these, the son of a Basel pastor, was appointed after 1585. The new policy was advocated by Johann Jakob Grynaeus, who assumed leadership of Basel’s church in 1586.

Martin Borrhaus was a typical representative of the generation of scholars whose education was influenced by the first humanist reforms of the university curriculum and the outbreak of the Reformation. A student of Johann Eck at Ingolstadt in the years immediately preceding the Reformation, Borrhaus (or Cellarius, as he was then called) left for Wittenberg in 1521. His developing spiritualism led him to break with the Wittenberg Reformers, and he spent a few years traveling through Germany, Austria and Poland before returning to south Germany. After a few years in Strasbourg, he settled in Basel, and by the end of the 1530s he was teaching rhetoric at the city's university. In 1541 he published a commentary on Aristotle's logical works, which he claimed was an attempt to reform the dialectic curriculum as it had been taught in Ingolstadt. In 1544, Borrhaus was appointed professor of Old Testament. Over the next two decades he lectured on and later published commentaries on the Pentateuch, the historical books (Joshua through 2 Kings), Job, and Ecclesiastes; he also combined a commentary on Isaiah with one on the Apocalypse.³²

Despite his competence in dialectic, Borrhaus was primarily a philologist whose commentaries emphasize the linguistic analysis and explanation of the scriptural text. For the most part he did not burden his commentaries with much theological baggage. Those loci that he did discuss in his commentaries tended to concentrate on doctrines that were particularly important to him, particularly the related issues of election, predestination, and free will, and topics that reflected his own rather idiosyncratic dualistic spiritualism: the relation of old and new covenant, the contrast between the old and new man, Mosaic vs. evangelical law, the wisdom of the law vs. the wisdom of faith. His discussions of these topics take up a relatively small proportion of most of his commentaries. Most of each book is instead devoted to clarifying the meaning of difficult words, phrases, and passages.³³

³² Irena Backus, *Martin Borrhaus (Cellarius)* [Bibliotheca dissidentium, Répertoire des non-conformistes religieux des seizième siècles 2] (Baden-Baden, 1981), pp. 11–14, 49.

³³ The chief exceptions are his commentary on the first several chapters of Genesis, which is much more detailed and theologically-oriented than the rest of the Pentateuch commentary, and a large section of his revised Ecclesiastes commentary, which seems to be an independent theological treatise inserted into the midst of the commentary, *In Sancti Viri Iobi Historiam Salutari de Mysterio crucis et de lege atque evangelio doctrina refertam Martini Borrhai Commentarii. Eiusdem in Salontonis sapientis Israelitarum Regis sacram concionem quae Ecclesiastes inscribitur . . . annotationes* (Basel, 1564), pp. 174–204.

Borrhaus' successor as professor of Old Testament, Simon Sulzer, took a similar approach to the Scripture text. Sulzer was born in 1508 and reached the age of university study just at the time that schools throughout Germany and Switzerland were at their greatest disarray. Sulzer was fortunate enough to come to the attention of the Senate in his native Bern, and he was sent to Strasbourg to study at Bern's expense in 1530. Soon afterwards he moved to Basel and apparently studied dialectic under Simon Grynaeus, whose Greek/Latin edition of Aristotle's *Organon* was reprinted several times in Basel. Sulzer was the first professor of logic when Basel's university reopened in 1532. After a brief spell as a teacher in Bern, Sulzer returned to Basel in 1536 and was awarded his M.A. early the following year. He remained in the city and taught Aristotle's *Organon* until he was called back to Bern in 1538, where he became first a professor of theology, then a pastor. In 1548 he was dismissed from his post and returned to Basel, where he was quickly appointed to a pastorate. He also taught first Hebrew and then New Testament at the university, and finally succeeded Borrhaus as professor of Old Testament following the latter's death in 1564.³⁴

To judge from the manuscript notes, which are all that remain of his theology lectures, Sulzer also emphasized the philological and rhetorical explication of the biblical text. As a young theology professor in Bern, Sulzer relied heavily on the printed commentaries of the leading reformers and sought their advice in the treatment of theological commonplaces. Like the older reformers and his later colleague Borrhaus, Sulzer proceeded through the text on a phrase-by-phrase basis, occasionally discussing Greek words and their proper translation into Latin and/or German. He also kept his theological digressions to a minimum, at most giving brief lists of propositions summarizing the general principles that might be derived from a passage.³⁵ Sulzer re-

³⁴ Sulzer's academic career briefly summarized in BM 2: 1. Student notes of his lectures on Aristotle's Topics and Prior Analytics, dated 1538, preserved in Basel Universitätsbibliothek (hereafter cited as BUB) MS F VI 27, and his propositions based on Melancthon's *Loci Communes* in MS A VII 54. The biography of Gottlieb Linder is outdated, *Simon Sulzer und sein Antheil an der Reformation im Land Baden, sowie an den Unions-bestrebungen* (Heidelberg, 1890).

³⁵ See his letter to Heinrich Bullinger, 11 June 1534, in which he asked for the Zurich reformer's help for his lectures on the Gospel of Mark. HBBW 4: 208–10, no. 393. Manuscript lectures on Ephesians and Philippians given in Bern between 1541–43 are preserved in the Bern Burgerbibliothek, MS 536. Both sets of lectures contain frequent references to the commentaries of Bullinger and Martin Bucer, as well

tained this style of lecturing throughout his life. His lectures on Acts and on Hosea from the 1570s follow the same phrase-by-phrase discussion of the text, explaining context and drawing doctrinal and practical applications.³⁶

By the 1570s, however, Sulzer's more literary and rhetorical approach to the scriptural text was beginning to seem outmoded. A new era began in Basel with the appointment of Johann Jakob Grynaeus to the university's theology faculty in 1575. Grynaeus had matriculated in Basel in 1551, the same year that the university's curriculum went through its final revision. He spent the next eight years there completing the coursework for an M.A., although he did not formally seek the degree. After serving as a pastor in the neighboring Margraviate of Baden for four years, he received a stipend from the Markgraf for further study in Tübingen. There he not only studied theology but also attended the philosophy lectures of Jacob Schegk, one of the foremost defenders of Aristotle of his generation. In 1564 Grynaeus was awarded his doctorate in theology. He returned to Baden and served as superintendent of the church in the district of Roeteln until called to the chair of Old Testament in Basel in 1575. Eleven years later, he became the head of Basel's church and was at the same time promoted to the chair of New Testament, a position he held until his death in 1617.³⁷

Grynaeus brought a decisive change to the study of theology and the Scripture text in Basel. Both Borrhaus and Sulzer had been well trained in Aristotelian dialectic, but they did not apply the methods of dialectic to their exegesis of Scripture. Grynaeus, however, saw dialectic as the key to understanding the scriptural text, and his theology lectures were structured as models of applied dialectical argumentation. The lectures he gave on the book of Romans over the course of 1577–

as Erasmus' *Annotationes*, and have occasional appeals to Jerome, Ambrose, Augustine, and Chrysostom. Sulzer also refers to Luther's translation of certain terms; as for instance Luther's treatment of Phil. 2,6 (Christ in the form of God), fol. 132r; lists of propositions following discussion of Phil. 4,9, fol. 165r, and Phil. 4,14, fol. 167v.

³⁶ Sulzer's lectures on Isaiah from 1564–65, and on Acts and Hosea from 1574 are preserved in BUD, MS A III 43.

³⁷ See Grynaeus' account of his education in the "Exhomologesis" printed in Grynaeus' edition of *Iohanni Oecolampadii Dialogus, quo Patrum sententiam de Coena Domini bona fide explanat* (Basel, 1590), pp. 270–88.

78 are a case in point.³⁸ Grynaeus showed virtually no concern for linguistic analysis of the text. Indeed, his frequent use of Greek words at key points in his analysis of the text, without any Latin translation or explanation, implies that he expected his listeners to have mastered that language, rendering such philological analysis unnecessary.

Grynaeus' demands on his students went beyond linguistic competence, however, for his lectures were aimed at students who were well grounded in the fine points of Aristotelian dialectic. The book of Romans is presented as an argument that makes use of syllogisms and refutes logical errors, from which propositions can be drawn that are then defended using the tools of logical analysis. The lecture material itself is presented in the form of theses and axiomata, syllogisms and demonstrations. Literary concerns have disappeared, and in fact are made virtually impossible by Grynaeus' habit of devoting the entire lecture to just one verse.

One wonders if Grynaeus' lectures would even have been comprehensible to the cohort of future pastors studying in Basel twenty years earlier — and they may not have made much sense to those newly matriculated students who were required to attend the theology lectures. To the advanced students who had studied dialectic for several years, however, Grynaeus' lectures were practical demonstrations of how to apply their knowledge of dialectic to the task of exegesis. The decision that only candidates with master's degrees would be considered for pastoral posts guaranteed that from the mid-1580s all of Basel's new pastors had this kind of advanced training in dialectic which in turn shaped their exegesis of Scripture.

5. *The 'dialectical turn' in theology*

To draw all of these developments together, through the third quarter of the sixteenth century, pastoral education in Basel focused on language acquisition and the skills of communication and textual analysis based on a combination of rhetoric and humanist topical dialectic. Even as late as the early 1580s only about half of Basel's future clergy prolonged their studies to receive advanced training in dialectic, in-

³⁸ *Chronologia brevis Evangelicae Historiae: Logicique artificii in Epistola Apostoli Pauli ad Romanos, declaratio . . .* (Basel, 1580). The observations based on Grynaeus' commentary on Romans can be applied to any of the many other commentaries he published on both the Old and New Testaments.

cluding direct study of Aristotle and of the mathematical and scientific works that were the subject of the curriculum for the master's degree. For most of this period, the linguistic and literary education imparted in the arts faculty was accompanied by lectures on the Bible that also reflected linguistic and literary concerns.

The 'dialectical turn' came in the mid-1570s with the appointment of Grynaeus, who had himself finished the requirements for a master's degree in Basel during the 1550s and had continued his study of Aristotle while obtaining his degree in theology at Tübingen. Grynaeus' manner of lecturing on the biblical text reflected not only his own competence in dialectic, but also his confidence that his students could understand and imitate his example as they studied Scripture for themselves.

Grynaeus was not the only Reformed theologian to apply advanced dialectic to theology. At the same time that Grynaeus was introducing his students to an exegesis based on Aristotelian dialectic, Lambert Daneau was doing the same thing with his students in Geneva. And in 1580 another Genevan theologian, Antoine de la Roche Chandieu, published a work calling for the use of "scholastic and analytic" method in theology.³⁹ From 1584–86 Grynaeus taught at the university of Heidelberg, where he followed the same method of lecturing on the Scripture text.⁴⁰ The decade between 1575–85 thus witnessed an important step for the development of Reformed scholasticism. A new generation of theologians, raised with the humanist conviction that dialectic was a practical discipline that should be a tool of textual analysis and trained in the use of Aristotelian dialectic, now brought that training to bear on their study of the text of Scripture.

³⁹ On Daneau's use of dialectic in theology, Olivier Fatio, *Méthod et Théologie: Lambert Daneau et les débuts de la scholastique réformée* [Travaux d'Humanisme et Renaissance 147] (Geneva, 1976), pp. 63–98; Donald Sinnema, "Antoine de Chandieu's Call for a Scholastic Reformed Theology (1580)," in *Later Calvinism: International Perspectives*, ed. W. Fred Graham (Kirksville, 1994), pp. 159–90. Significantly, Chandieu criticized the use of "topical reasoning," or argument from probable, rather than true, propositions.

⁴⁰ In Heidelberg, Grynaeus lectured on Hebr. 1–9 from Sept. 1585–March 1586, and then began his first lecture in Basel in April 1586 with Hebr. 10. There is no change in style or manner of lecturing between the two locations; *Explanatio Epistolae S. Apostoli Pauli ad hebraeos . . .* (Basel, 1587).

The significance of this development cannot be over-emphasized. At the beginning of the sixteenth century, Erasmus had inspired an entire generation of biblical humanists to abandon the application of dialectic to the study of theology. The biblical humanists caused a revolution in theological method by rejecting speculative theology and by identifying scriptural exegesis as the proper form of theological method. The evolution of dialectic into a tool of textual analysis, rather than simply a method of argumentation, made possible its reappearance in theology — not now in competition with, but rather as a tool for scriptural exegesis.

The emergence of Reformed scholasticism in the later sixteenth century has been attributed to both the polemical concerns of Protestant theologians and to the desire to systematize Protestant doctrine. The developments described in this essay point to another more basic factor: the evolution of dialectic itself, coupled with the increasing proficiency of a large proportion of future pastors in the principles of advanced dialectic. This proficiency was encouraged by institutional factors, such as the university's curricular requirements and the possibility of longer university stays for future pastors who were supported by civic and university scholarships. Other contributing factors were the availability of suitable texts for elementary and intermediate dialectics instruction from the 1530s, and the increasing professionalization of the arts faculty, which enabled deeper familiarity with Aristotle's *Organon*. All of these factors combined to promote the application of dialectic to the task of exegesis and the teaching of theology, and thus they formed the educational roots from which Reformed scholasticism grew.