

Matthias Dall'Asta, Heidi Hein und Christine Mundhenk (Hrsg.), Philipp Melanchthon, *Briefwechsel Band T 18: Texte 5011–5343 (Januar–Oktober 1548)*. Frommann-Holzboog, Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt 2018, 628 S. ISBN 9783772826603. € 298.

This eighteenth volume of Philipp Melanchthon's correspondence [MBW], published by the Melanchthon-Forschungsstelle in Heidelberg under its capable director Christine Mundhenk, provides a wealth of new information for 1548, a crucial year for the Reformation in Central Europe. After the 1547 defeat of the forces of the Schmalkaldic League and the imprisonment of Elector John Frederick of Saxony and Landgrave Philip of Hessen, the University of Wittenberg struggled to keep its institutions and theology afloat. Its most famous living professor, Philipp Melanchthon, worked with the new Saxon elector Moritz, first to reject the 'Augsburg Interim' (a religious settlement decreed by Emperor Charles V at the 1548 Diet of Augsburg), and then to provide modifications (later nicknamed by opponents the 'Leipzig Interim') designed to protect Evangelical [Lutheran] congregations in the Electorate of Saxony from persecution.

As with other volumes of the MBW, the apparatus provides readers with four kinds of information (variations in the autograph [E], in various handwritten copies [T] and in the printed versions [W], as well as identification of citations [Q]). In the introduction to each letter, the editors list all manuscript copies and printed versions. The letters are best read in conjunction with MBW *Regesten* [digests], which identify many of the persons and places mentioned in the letters and lay out the arguments for dating (now accessible in an online version: <https://www.haw.uni-heidelberg.de/forschung/forschungsstellen/melanchthon/mbw-online.de.html>).

MBW faces a challenge from the electronic availability of the nineteenth-century publication of Melanchthon's letters in the *Corpus Reformatorum* [CR]. Scholars may—presumably because MBW is not as widely available as it ought to be—content themselves with this earlier version, but the result could spell disaster. For one thing, MBW T18 provides a host of previously unedited letters. Of the 96 letters in MBW covering the first three months of 1548, 37 do not appear in the CR. MBW 5223a (14 July) provides the hitherto unpublished, poignant letter of consolation from Johannes Bugenhagen and Melanchthon to the city of Minden (MBW 5223a, dated 14 July), encouraging them to remain true to “pure doctrine.”

For another, the MBW uses more reliable manuscripts and printed sources. MBW 5173 makes major corrections to CR's text on nearly every line. Instead of hinting that he was considering leaving Germany for England, Melanchthon actually encouraged the English to unify teaching and practice. Re-dating

MBW 5176 [= CR 7:1011–1012] from 6 June 1549 to 1548 adds nuance to Melanchthon's arguments about justification by faith by providing his first defense for omitting the 'sola' in his criticisms of the Augsburg Interim.

The most important letters relate directly to the Augsburg Interim. On 27 February (MBW 5071, p. 104, l. 8), the word 'Interim' first appears on Melanchthon's radar. On 20 March Elector Moritz issued a hurried directive (MBW 5096) to Melanchthon and the other theologians in Wittenberg to assemble for consultations on the Interim, and on 31 March (MBW 5105) Melanchthon, having been separated from the others and taken to Altzella, wrote a highly critical response, his 'confession' (p. 145, l. 52). While allowing rulers their own opinion, Melanchthon condemned the Interim by quoting Acts 5:29, criticizing its generalities, and rejecting its teaching on the Mass. He insisted on distinguishing necessary and unnecessary matters [later called *adiaphora*], which affected later conflicts over the 'Leipzig Interim.' Upon returning to Wittenberg, on April 10/11 Melanchthon sent an additional condemnation of the document's approach to justification (MBW 5117). On 16 June Wittenberg and Leipzig's theologians drafted a final, thorough-going refutation of the Interim (MBW 5182), for which there are not only 24 extant manuscript copies but also seven contemporaneous printings—the earliest published attack on the Interim, which earned Melanchthon renewed threats of banishment from the imperial court.

This threat echoes throughout these letters, not only for Melanchthon (e.g., MBW 5257) but also for Justus Jonas (e.g., MBW 5019). In this context, Melanchthon wrote what may be the most famous letter in this volume: a defense of his behavior to the courtier Christoph von Carlowitz (MBW 5139, extant in 42 manuscript copies). Melanchthon contrasted Luther's love of fighting to his own desire for peace, while at the same time leaving the impression that he was nearing the end of his patience and would never accept the Augsburg Interim.

While these letters also reflect aspects of Melanchthon's everyday life (as dean of the arts faculty writing letters attesting to students' qualifications and degrees or chronicling Professor Caspar Cruciger's terminal illness), what looms over all the correspondence from this time is the Augsburg Interim: the threats against Melanchthon for failing to support it, the fate of pastors in south Germany driven into hiding, committing suicide, or arrested as a result of its imposition, the possibility of flight to England or Denmark, and, in the end, the negotiations on behalf of Saxony with Roman Catholic bishops (especially Julius Pflug), which detractors later called the 'Leipzig Interim' (MBW 5263, 5268 [= 5209], 5331–5335, 5322, and 5343). The final letter in this collection (MBW 5343; dated ca. 24 October) provides an example of these negotiations and, for the very first time, publishes both versions of Melanchthon's refutation

of the sacrifice of the Mass, showing how in the second version he sharpened his attack against Pflug's defense of the Augsburg Interim.

The MBW editors refrain from speculation. For example, they do not fill in the details of vague references to publications enclosed with the letters. That remains the privilege of the reviewer. In MBW 5057 and 5058 Melanchthon doubtless enclosed his 7 February oration at the granting of Master's degrees (*Oratio de studiis*)—explicitly mentioned in MBW 5063, 5068–5069, 5071, 5072 and containing an attack on the Council of Trent. In MBW 5114 Melanchthon sent a book, “printed some time ago” to Georg von Komerstadt for Elector Moritz, most likely the 1542 translation of his *Acta in Conventu Ratisbonensi* (1541), a book he expressly also sent to Duke Albrecht of Prussia (MBW 5140), recommending it as helpful in comparing the Regensburg Colloquy to the Augsburg Interim. The songs (*cantilinae*) of Georg Fabricius, mentioned in MBW 5297, could well be the additional poems for the second printing (the first in Wittenberg) of *Historia de vita et actis Martini Lutheri*. MBW 5208, a report of the Wittenberg theologians to the territorial diet assembled in Meissen (published in 1548), misses recording marginalia from the printed version that cited Canon Law exactly for references to Cyprian and Augustine (cf. MBW 18, p. 347, n. “Q” for line 969 f.). Although the Greek phrase in MBW 5217 for a “divine voice” is brief, still the overtones of Homer, *Iliad* 2.41 may have been worth noting, since Melanchthon was referring to a dream by Camerarius (similar to Zeus warning Agamemnon in a dream). These ‘omissions,’ however, simply prove both the care used in producing the MBW and the wealth of information contained in Melanchthon's correspondence.

*Timothy J. Wengert*

Lutheran Theological Seminary, Philadelphia

*tjwengert@comcast.net*