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Exemplar Paterfamilias: Moses' Divine *Vocatio* and His Resistance in Sixteenth-Century Lutheran Exegesis

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How did Lutheran theologians after Luther receive the Reformation exegesis of the prophetic office? This study will seek to offer a partial answer to that question in the assessment of three of Luther's heirs: Johannes Brenz (1499–1570), Peder Palladius (1503–1560), and David Chytraeus (1530–1600). These three theologians were significant for the propagation of the Reformation in their respective regions, and all wrote exegetical commentaries on the book of Exodus and Moses' call. These commentaries are relevant as they reflect first-generation reactions to Luther's teaching and writing from his own students, and they offer us primary text to assess the question of prophecy. This study of the exegetical commentaries of these three students of the Reformer will also corroborate and engage with G. Suijan Pak's assessment of Reformation interpretation of prophecy.[1] In accord with Pak's assessment of the reception of Luther's interpretation, I will show that these three commentators exemplify the new interpretive paradigm of prophets—in this case, Moses—put forward by Luther.[2] Namely, Luther's heirs viewed "prophecy" not as ecstasy and the revelation of new doctrines but as deep insight into Scripture's meaning. While Luther emphasized the application of the prophets' histories to the pastoral office, some of his heirs applied them also to civil magistrates. We will see how the Reformer's shift from a medieval, unduly positive view of Moses did not mean that Moses must be viewed in a thoroughly negative light, but in fact that his students found both positive and negative examples to derive from Moses. To show such adherence and development, we will note how the students of the Reformer analyze *what* doctrines may be given witness in the call of Moses, *how* Moses is understood to receive the divine call, and what other scriptural texts three Reformation-era commentators highlighted in their assessment of the Mosaic call. I will survey the comments of these four exegetes on the following passages from Exodus:

[1] G. Suijan Pak, *The Reformation of Prophecy: Early Modern Interpretations of the Prophet and Old Testament Prophecy*, Oxford Studies in Historical Theology (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2018).

[2] By the phrase "interpretive paradigm" I have in mind several conceptual items: the basic description or summary of a given passage, the referent of a given passage (Christ and/or the historical person Moses), and the exposition given to a passage. Thus, when Peder Palladius summarizes Exod 3 as Moses' "call" instead of his "sending" he gives evidence of a new pattern for describing biblical texts and prophecy.

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the first excuse (Exod 3:11), the last excuse (Exod 4:10–17), and Moses' doubt after Pharoah punishes the Israelites (Exod 5:23).

State of the Question

In the mid-twentieth century, Emil Kraeling described Luther's Old Testament exegesis as focusing on the literal sense and turning away from christological allegory.[3] He also thought that Luther viewed some parts of the prophetic writings as irrelevant for Christians.[4] For him, the post-Reformation theologians were fundamentally different from Luther. While Luther supposedly criticized the Bible at times, the post-Reformation theologians treated the Bible as perfect and fell into legalistic "biblicism."[5] Thankfully, such characterizations have been challenged. Robert Kolb, while not denying some differences between the exegesis of Luther and the post-Reformation theologians, notes that the latter strove to follow Luther's biblical exposition.[6] G. Suijan Pak notes that Luther saw a "twofold history" in the Old Testament prophetic texts: the first dealing with Christ, and the second dealing with the historical circumstances of the prophets' times.[7] Lutheran Orthodox exegesis has also been appreciated as "dogmatic." The old Lutheran exegetes strove to identify the doctrines that were contained in the biblical texts and to make contemporary application to their hearers.[8]

Scholars have noted development in how Christians understood "prophecy." According to Brian Fitzgerald, the Middle Ages saw disagreement on whether "prophecy" involved ecstatic revelation, on one hand, or deep understanding of biblical revelation, on the other.[9] Luther tended toward the latter view. Faced with

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[3] Emil G. Kraeling, *The Old Testament Since the Reformation* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1955), 13–15.

[4] Kraeling, *Old Testament Since the Reformation,* 17. Kraeling asserts later, "There was no attempt [on the part of Luther's students] to develop further the liberal insights of Luther or the thoughts of Carlstadt" (33).

[5] Kraeling, *Old Testament Since the Reformation,* 40, 42.

[6] Robert Kolb, *Martin Luther as Prophet, Teacher, and Hero: Images of the Reformer, 1520–1620* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999), 12.

[7] Pak, *Reformation of Prophecy*, 218–223.

[8] A sympathetic overview may be found in Brevard Childs, *Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments: Theological Reflection on the Christian Bible* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992), 10–14; the disciplined practice of later Lutheran exegesis is exemplified by Benjamin T. G. Mayes, "Friedrich Balduin's Use of Exegesis for Doctrine," *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 79, no. 1–2 (January/April 2015): 103–120; see also Robert Preus, *The Inspiration of Scripture: A Study of the Theology of the 17th-Century Lutheran Dogmaticians* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1957), 193–194.

[9] Brian Fitzgerald, *Inspiration and Authority in the Middle Ages: Prophets and Their Critics from Scholasticism to Humanism*, Oxford Historical Monographs (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2017), 1, 103, 231. Especially significant among reactions against predictive prophecy was that of Aquinas, for which see chapter 4 of this work. See also Paul M. Rogers, *Aquinas on Prophecy:*

Anabaptists and enthusiasts, whose view of "prophecy" undermined the authority of the pastoral office, Luther by the mid-1520s claimed that the biblical examples of prophets and prophecy apply to the pastoral office, not to the laity.[10] This view continued with Luther's heirs. When they regarded Luther as a "prophet," this did not mean a revealer of new doctrines but a proclaimer of the saving doctrine revealed in the Scriptures.[11]

Moysi Vocatio: A Sketch of Moses' Call to Serve YHWH and His Resistance

After Moses flees from Egypt (Exod 2), he becomes a shepherd of the flocks of his father-in-law Jethro. While tending the flock near Mount Horeb, Moses is called by the Lord God, perceived in the burning bush (Exod 3:2–5). Straightaway, the Lord declares his purpose in revealing himself to Moses: "Then the LORD said, 'I have surely seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters. I know their sufferings. . . . Come, I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring my people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt'" (Exod 3:7, 10).[12] Moses, for his part, is extremely reticent to accept such a commission and challenges the fittingness of his selection on several scores. First, Moses wonders why he is called: "who am I?" (Exod 3:11). The second objection concerns knowledge of the name of God: "If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' what shall I say to them?" (Exod 3:13). Then Moses doubts whether the Israelites will believe him (Exod 4:1-9). Finally, Moses objects that he is not eloquent (Exod 4:10-17); the last objection is climatic and demonstrates a test of God's patience. Moses will later falter once more, wondering whether God will actually come through on his promise and saying, "[Y]ou have not delivered your people at all" (Exod 5:23). Beginning with the initial encounter between Moses and the God of his fathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and continuing through the first rebuke Pharoah provides the Israelites, Moses questions God's command and purpose. The textual duration in which Moses resists God's call (the dispute about the nature and purpose of the mission extends from 3:2 through 5:22) to go to Egypt and lead the sons of Israel out of Egypt delimits the scope of this study.

Wisdom and Charism in the "Summa Theologiae" (Washington, DC: Catholic Univ. of America Press, 2023), 121–162.

[10] Pak, *Reformation of Prophecy*, 105–106.

[11] Kolb, *Luther as Prophet*, 27, 31–32.

[12] Unless otherwise noted, all Bible quotations are from the ESV.

Luther's Sermons on Exodus: Contemporary Conflict

As Erik Hermann has pointed out, understanding Luther's distinctive exegesis begins with recognizing Luther's sources of exegesis.[13] Luther largely used what had become common, the *Glossa Ordinaria*, and, plausibly, a Bible edition that included the notes of Nicholas of Lyra's *Postilla*.[14] Luther treated the contents of the first half of Exodus not in the lecture hall but in the pulpit, by preaching upon it and making reference to its central figures during the years of his conflict with Erasmus of Rotterdam, in 1524–1525. Both in the text of *The Bondage of the Will* (*De Servio Arbitrio*) and in the recently translated *Sermons on Exodus: Chapters 1–20*, Luther dealt with the details of the text of Exodus.[15] In none of these texts does Luther list what doctrines can be identified from a given passage of Scripture.[16] Nevertheless, doctrine was certainly Luther's concern as he preached and wrote on these texts. Aside from Erasmus, there was also the increasing dilemma presented by former allies who had labeled themselves "prophets" and claimed to possess revelations of their own that offered significantly different doctrinal perspectives from Luther's.[17] Luther had been preaching against Andreas Karlstadt and Thomas Muntzer already and had called them false prophets.[18] The *Sermons on Exodus* should therefore be read with such figures as Karlstadt and Muntzer in the background, and Luther's concern for understanding the nature of a prophet and of a call stems at least in part from these conflicts.

According to Luther, the gospel of Christ was a central feature of the prophetic message.[19] Luther described God's summons to Moses in Exodus 3 as a call to make the true God known, rather than, for instance, the description offered by Nicholas of Lyra, who explained the literal sense as Moses being sent for the liberation of the

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[13] Erik Hermann, "Luther's Absorption of Medieval Biblical Interpretation and His Use of the Church Fathers," in *The Oxford Handbook of Martin Luther's Theology*, ed. Robert Kolb, Irene Dingel, and L'ubomír Batka (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2014), 71–90. See especially 73–76.

[14] Hermann, "Luther's Absorption," 74.

[15] Martin Luther, *Sermons on Exodus: Chapters 1–20* (1524–1525), in *Luther*'s *Works, American Edition*, vols. 1–30, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1955–1976), vols. 31–55, ed. Helmut Lehmann (Philadelphia/Minneapolis: Muhlenberg/Fortress, 1957–1986), vols. 56–82, ed. Christopher Boyd Brown and Benjamin T. G. Mayes (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2009–), 62:19–418 (hereafter cited as AE) (= *D. Martin Luthers Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe* [*Schriften*], 73 vols. [Weimar: Böhlau, 1883–2009], 16:1–528 [hereafter cited as WA]).

[16] Nevertheless, many of the doctrinal emphases that are expounded upon at length, such as the immortality of the faithful, the divine essence, the divine name, and so on, can be found in Luther's preaching.

[17] Pak, *Reformation of Prophecy*, 70–71; Martin Brecht, *Martin Luther: Shaping and Defining the Reformation, 1521–1532*, trans. James L. Schaaf (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990), 137.

[18] Brecht, *Martin Luther*, 156.

[19] Pak, *Reformation of Prophecy*, 107.

people of Israel.[20] For Luther, Moses was a prophet not because he received new teachings or ecstatic visions but because he was the one who taught true Christian doctrine, proclaiming what God has revealed. These emphases appear in the sermons, yet Moses is primarily interpreted as a prophet *with a true call* from God, acting on what has been *revealed* by God and therefore not on his own authority but with a divine imperative and content of salvific importance.

Luther on Moses' Call and Resistance: Continuity and Contrast with the Medieval Exegetical Tradition

Luther recognizes that there is a lesson to be learned concerning the Office of the Ministry in the call of Moses—namely, that no one ought to assert authority where it is not clear that God has given it. It is possible, Luther observes, for anyone to claim that they possess the Spirit of God or that they have been given divine revelation—yet unless there is some way for the church to be confident of this, it is equally possible that it will be led into confusion and false teaching by anyone who wants to teach and direct it. "For it is certain that the Spirit will not move or kindle anyone's heart unless He first confirms it with signs. He has to bring outward proof. That is the inner calling."[21] Such proof has, according to Scripture, two expressions, one where God directly calls men to be prophets and apostles through theophanic revelation, through visions, and the like. The confirmation of this immediate call consists of the miraculous works that God accomplishes through the man; thus, Moses' staff transforms into a snake and, later, a great serpent.

Although Moses' call certainly fits into this category, Luther takes occasion to discuss the other expression, the mediate call, "which is effected by people, is first confirmed by God's commandment on Mount Sinai: 'Love God, and your neighbor as yourself'. . . . Thus I preach without performing any signs at all, and yet the calling is God's because it proceeds from the commandment of love and is caused by God."[22] By implication, the one who discerns within himself a call to serve in the Ministry of the church ought to ask whether such a heartfelt movement is borne by the desire to serve the neighbor and proclaim the holy gospel. Even if so, this impulse alone is not enough. The desire to preach must also be confirmed by external means.

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[20] Nicholas of Lyra et al., *Bibliorum Sacrorum Glossa Ordinaria A Strabo Fulgensi Collecta: Nunc Autem Novis, Cum Graecorum, Tum Latinorum Patrum Expositionibus Locupletata*: *annotationis etiam iis quae confuse antea citabantur, locis: et postilla Nicolai Lyrani: additionibus Pauli Burgensis ad ipsum Lyranum: ac ad easdem Matthiae Toringi Replicis*, 6 vols. (Venice: Juntas, 1603), 1:495.

[21] Luther, *Sermons on Exodus*, AE 62:60 (= WA 16:32–33).

[22] Luther, *Sermons on Exodus*, AE 62:62 (= WA 16:35–36).

Later Lutheran theologians would term this expression the mediate call.[23] Luther concludes with a sharp warning: "All this is written to instruct us . . . because no one ought to undertake a matter that concerns God unless he has been called to do so."[24] No one makes himself a prophet, even if he adequately understands the word of God, but only the one who God makes to be his mouth.[25] Precisely as man, Moses is not different from other men who are equally sinful, doubtful, and hesitant—the difference lies in the fact that God has called him and gives confirmation of this call with miraculous signs and promises. Luther extends this difference to ground the prophetic office in the preaching of the gospel of Christ and true doctrine.[26]

As many commentators before,[27] Luther is alert to the tension between Moses' exalted depiction given later in the New Testament and his apparent reluctance to obey God, which borders on unbelief: "He is an excellent man, and yet he resists and refuses to carry out the public office, not wanting to undertake it until he hears God's disfavor, even though he had the momentous, magnificent promise that God would be with him."[28] Luther's new emphasis on the call and its content, however, make him approach this tension in a much different way. Luther does not shy away from perceiving the prophet in a negative light. Luther notes that although Moses' reluctance can be viewed as a sort of confession of his weakness, nevertheless, it must also be said that Moses resists God—that is, that he is unwilling and therefore in some sense culpable for God's anger against him later. Although Luther describes Moses as an "excellent man" at the outset, he qualifies this description in a summary at the conclusion of the passage: "[God] wanted to reveal His greatest wisdom, that this stutterer, Moses, *will be* such an excellent man, who persuades all kings."[29] Thus, it

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[23] Martin Chemnitz, *Loci Theologici*, 3 vols., in *Loci Theologici*, *De Coena Domini*, *De Duabus Naturis in Christo*, *Theologiae Jesuitarum* (Chelsea, MI: Lutheran Heritage Foundation, 2000), 3:121; Balthazar Mentzer, *Exegesis Augustanae Confessionis cuius Articulu XXI Breviter & succincte explicantur, & subjecta ἀντιθέσει τῶν ἑτεροδόξων, Papistarum, Calvinistarum, & Photinianorum illustrantur* (Frankfurt am Main: Georgii Erhardi Martii, 1585), 180; Johann Benedikt Carpzov, *Isagoge In Libros Ecclesiarum Lutheranarum Symbolicos* (Dresden: Johann Christoph Zimmermanni & Johann Nicholii Gerlachii, 1725), 428, 872–873. When he explains how God uses miracles to glorify his name and confirm divine truth, Carpzov is careful to make a distinction between the *organi separati*, an instrument (of a miracle) on its own, such as Moses' staff, and an *organi coniunctissimi activi et efficacissimi*, Jesus' own human nature, which is able to heal those afflicted by the devil, because he is God and man and his very flesh brings life (p. 1529).

[24] Luther, *Sermons on Exodus*, AE 62:62 (= WA 16:48–9). Pak, *Reformation of Prophecy*, 70. Fitzgerald, *Inspiration and Authority*, 113–114, 142–143, notes a like concern for the Dominicans, who dealt with ecstatic and apocalyptic prophets.

[25] Luther, *Sermons on Exodus*, AE 62:110 (= WA 16:110–111).

[26] Luther, *Sermons on Exodus*, AE 62:101 (= WA 16:100–101); Martin Luther, *Lectures on Deuteronomy* (1525), in AE 9:51, 131, 168 (= WA 14:585–586, 648, 670–671).

[27] Hugh of Saint-Cher, *Opera* 1:77.

[28] Luther, *Sermons on Exodus*, AE 62:62 (= WA 16:36).

[29] Luther, *Sermons on Exodus*, AE 62:83 (= WA 16:58); emphasis mine.

seems that Luther's initial description of Moses has to be qualified in his final assessment of Exodus 3–4, for although Moses *will* be a great example of obedience to God's word and call, nevertheless in the moment, precisely on account of his cowardly resistance, he is opposed to God. Moses, Luther could say, does not have a good conscience or confidence in God. In this way, Luther picks up an important narrative focus on the larger text of Exodus, which is the initial unbelief in God's declaration that results in God demonstrating his power and authority so that those he addresses are compelled to recognize his word and works.[30]

After Moses has offered all the possible excuses and says, "Send someone else, whomever You want," Luther states plainly, "Since Moses wants to throw away this calling based on his own will and desire, the Lord becomes very angry at Moses. . . . Now Moses has to acquiesce. Earlier God dealt with him in a friendly manner, but here He is angry. And if God wants to be angry, then you have to stop."[31] Luther interweaves Moses' own experience with that of Christians. If Moses' resistance to God's many persuasive words was shameful and disgraceful, surely that would be the case, too, for Christians to resist and oppose him in the callings that they have been given. For when God sets a person in an office, he then makes him "god" to whomever he chooses; thus, Moses is "god" to Aaron and Pharoah. If anyone despises those whom God sends, then they despise God himself. This of course applies to Moses himself, who despises the divine office given to him by God and thus behaves in a shameful way.[32]

In this regard, Luther distinguishes himself somewhat from the medieval tradition, which tended to find ways to excuse Moses' reluctance to enact God's liberation of Egypt.[33] Denys the Carthusian, for instance, explained Moses' hesitancy by his recognition of the burden of the task: "Moses, wisely considering the magnitude of the undertaking that God laid before him and urged upon him, at length recused himself."[34] Denys explains this disposition by comparing him to other virtuous men, such as Paul, who says that he is not worthy to be called "Apostle" and yet calls himself "Apostle"; or David, who, though recognizing that he has been anointed and

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[30] Cf. Patrick, *The Rhetoric of Revelation*, 34. On the fickleness of the people, see Exod 4:9–31, 5:21, 6:9; on the Lord's demonstration of his power, see Exod 6:7, 7:5, 7:17, 10:2, 14:4, 14:18, 14:31b.

[31] Luther, *Sermons on Exodus*, AE 62:84 (= WA 16:58–60).

[32] Luther, *Sermons on Exodus*, AE 62:85 (= WA 16:60–61).

[33] *Biblia: mit Glossa ordinaria, Postilla litteralis von Nicolaus de Lyra und Expositiones prologorum von Guilelmus Brito* (Venice: Paganinus de Paganinis, 1495), 158.

[34] "Moyses prudenter considerans magnitudinem legationis, quam sibi proponuit et injunxit Dominus, diu se excusavit. . . ." Denys the Carthusian, "Commentaria in Genesim et Exodum (i–xix)," in *Doctoris ecstatici D. Dionysii Cartusiani Opera omnia, in unum corpus digesta ad fidem editionum Coloniensium cura et labore monachorum sacri Ordinis Cartusiensis*, 42 vols. in 44 (Monstrolii: Typis Cartusiæ S. M. de Pratis, 1896–1935), 1:504. Unless otherwise noted, all translations are my own.

chosen to be king over Israel, nevertheless thought that he would be killed by the hand of Saul before he took power. Such noble men consider themselves unworthy, but then in view of divine revelation take up the task. The inward process of deliberation is marked by personal humility coupled with divine fortitude: "So it is that whenever virtuous men continue in actions and thoughts of a humble sort, they then regard themselves as inept and unworthy for lofty matters; but sometimes they continue in thoughts and actions of a bold sort, and then from confidence in divine aid they carry themselves as men prepared for great things."[35] In this frame of reference, Moses is judicious for his insistence that he is insufficient, for he demonstrates an appropriate humility of soul. Though Denys likewise follows this positive exposition throughout, as does Nicholas of Lyra and the *Glossa*, when the text clearly explains that God is wrathful with Moses (4:15), he then expresses some doubt about Moses' conduct; perhaps it could be that Moses committed a venial sin.[36] Hugh of Saint-Cher similarly describes Moses' request for God to pick someone else as a result of his wisdom and awareness that, with his weak tongue, he would be physically unimpressive before Pharoah, and therefore was wisely advising God that he was not the ideal candidate to enact God's plan.[37] For Luther, however, the fact that God calls a weak, doubtful, ineloquent, sinful man to such a great and divine office is no remarkable thing; indeed, it is exactly what he continues to do.[38]

Luther surely goes beyond Hugh of Saint-Cher, Nicholas, and Denys in his estimation that initially Moses acts in a shameful way. Luther thus also sets a pattern for the exposition of this text among the sons of the Lutheran Reformation. The early chapters of Exodus teach about offices to which God calls men, typically identified by Luther as the pastoral, parental, and governmental (LC I 158). Luther, however, does not specify to which of these Moses refers, preferring instead to speak only about his own preaching office. When, in Exodus 5:23, Moses again demonstrates his weakness and fear even after so much encouragement from God, saying, "You have not delivered Your people," Luther comments on Moses' return to God with a degree of exasperation. "My goodness, how could God deceive anyone?" Yet, he says, this is written for our instruction, not Moses', "as consolation so that we learn to hold fast to God's Word in our callings and offices and to forsake ourselves,

[35] "Sic viri virtuosi quandoque insistent actibus et considerationibus humilitatis, sicque reputant se ineptos et indignos ad ardua; quandoque vero insistent considerationibus et actibus magnanimitatis, et ita ex confidentia divini subsidii offerunt se paratos ad magna." Denys, "Commentaria," 505.

[36] Denys, "Commentaria," 509.

[37] Hugh of Saint-Cher, *Hugonis Cardinalis Opera Omnia In Universum Vetus, & Novum Testamentum*, 8 vols. (Venice: Pezzana, 1703), 1:78.

[38] Luther, *Sermons on Exodus*, AE 62:83 (= WA 16:57–58).

but to place our trust and hope in God."[39] That is, Luther's exasperation is directed toward his hearers' unbelief, of which Moses is an example here. God does not lie, and he will bring about what he has promised, "even though it did not look like it would happen and even though it seemed difficult and impossible."[40] The pastoral office is not inhabited by men who are exempt from temptation and despair but by those who, like the very clergy that Luther taught, wrestled with unbelief.

In summary, when Luther approaches Moses' call, the primary matter at hand is the nature of a divine call, which especially in regard to the church and the Office of the Ministry cannot be merely an internal call. Moreover, Moses may indeed be the instrument through which God will work great things, causing Moses to be regarded as a great man; but this does not mean that he is unlike ordinary, sinful men. In fact, his wavering demonstrates that God can be angry even with great men and call them to quit their sinful—or, in this case, pusillanimous—disposition. Whether men wish to or not is beside the point. Luther's emphasis on the call subsequently became a standard feature of Reformation commentary on this book to a much greater degree than it previously had, as the following will demonstrate.

Luther's Hermeneutical Offspring: Fellows and Students

Since we have surveyed Luther's discussion of Moses' call, we turn now to other Reformation commentators. We will proceed chronologically, beginning with one of Luther's fellow Reformers, Johannes Brenz, followed by Peder Palladius from the middle period, and concluding with David Chytraeus in the late period of Luther's life and teaching.

[39] Luther, *Sermons on Exodus*, AE 62:95 (= WA 16:94–96).
[40] Luther, *Sermons on Exodus*, AE 62:95 (= WA 16:94–96).

Johannes Brenz on Moses' Call and Resistance

Author and Text

Johannes Brenz (1499–1570)[41] was Luther's younger contemporary and, though less is known of his time as a student,[42] quickly became a supporter of Reformation theology.[43] In spite of the general lack of detail surrounding his early life, it is known that he was present at the Heidelberg Disputation (1518), where he was persuaded by Luther's rejection of Aristotle.[44] This event triggered a great admiration for Luther and devotion to his theology, which Brenz attempted to pursue all his life.[45]

After his time as a student, Brenz devoted a significant portion of his life to implementing Reformation theology in Schwäbisch Hall, serving as pastor of St. Michael's Church in Hall from 1522 to 1548.[46] It was as a theologian of the Lord's Supper that Brenz's theological convictions were solidified and given expression. When the conflict over the nature of the Eucharist broke out, Brenz sided with Luther against his old teacher Oecolampadius and was the primary author of the *Syngramma Suevicum* (Book of the Swabians), defending Luther's position of the

[41] Recent biographies and treatments of Brenz include Ernst Volk, *Johannes Brenz: Zeuge biblisch-evangelischer Wahrheit und Reformator im südlichen Deutschland* (Nurnberg: VTR, 2010); Matthias Deutschle, *Brenz als Kontroverstheologe: Die Apologie der Confessio Virtembergica und die Auseinandersetzung zwischen Johannes Brenz und Pedro de Soto*, Beiträge zur Historischen Theologie 138 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006); older studies include Julius Hartmann, *Johannes Brenz*: *Leben und Ausgewählte Schriften* (Elberfield: R. L. Friderichs, 1862); L. W. Gräpp, *Magister Johannes Brenz, der Reformator Schwabens: Ein Lebensbild aus der Reformationszeit nach Quellen zusammengestellt und erzählt* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1894); Georg Bayer, *Johannes Brenz der Reformator Württembergs*: *Sein Leben und Wirken dem evangelischen Volk erzählt* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1899).

[42] James Martin Estes, "Johannes Brenz and the German Reformation," *Lutheran Quarterly* 16, no. 4 (Winter 2002): 373–414. See 374 on Brenz's early life and education.

[43] Martin Brecht, *Die frühe Theologie des Johannes Brenz*, Beiträge zur Historischen Theologie 36, ed. Gerhard Ebeling (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1966), 7; David C. Steinmetz, *Reformers in the Wings* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1971), 109.

[44] Hermann Ehmer, "Luther und Brenz," in *Luthers Wirkung: Festschrift für Martin Brecht zum 60. Geburtstag*, ed. Wolf-Dieter Hauschild, Wilhelm H. Neuser, and Christian Peters (Stuttgart: Calwer, 1992), 97; Gräpp, *Magister Johannes Brenz*, 12.

[45] Robert Kolb has recently noted that Brenz does, on the subject of predestination, deviate somewhat from Luther's stance: "The Swabian reformer followed the Wittenberger in connecting the believer's knowledge and use of God's election of his children to the Word and to faith. Indeed, Brenz did move beyond Luther's more ambiguous statements regarding the damned to teach a predestination to damnation, although he clearly rejected any thought that God might be the cause of evil." Robert Kolb, *Bound Choice, Election, and Wittenberg Theological Method*: *From Martin Luther to the Formula of Concord*, Lutheran Quarterly Books, ed. Paul Rorem (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2017), 70.

[46] Estes, "Brenz and the German Reformation," 375–376.

Sacrament of the Altar.[47] However, his lasting influence at Hall was due not only to his decided preference to remain at his post rather than to depart for more prestigious stations but also to his productivity. Brenz was a remarkably fruitful author. The Swabian reformer produced some five hundred printed writings in his life. He authored church orders and a large catechism that preceded Luther's own and other full-scale Bible commentaries.[48] In all, Brenz published over forty Bible commentaries, and these were influential for generations of pastors to come.[49] As Estes noted, such commentaries were the fruits of his weekly preaching on Sundays and weekdays.[50] Brenz constantly was writing in order to serve the church.

Brenz's commentary on Exodus seems first to have been published in 1539. However, Brenz had already taken occasion during weekday services to preach on the first five books of Moses (and others) in 1536 and would again later in 1557.[51] Brenz's commentary on Exodus was published and republished several times and is included in the posthumously published *Operum* of all his scriptural commentaries. Unless otherwise indicated, I will cite from the *Operum*.[52]

Brenz on Doctrines Derived from Exodus 3–5

Brenz's exegesis of Exodus is more detailed than that in Luther's sermons on this book. Brenz was capable of both general summaries and exhaustive exposition of the text and referred to the Hebrew text to explicate it. In a booklet that was intended to provide a summary of the themes of each book of the Scriptures, Brenz described Exodus in the following way:

> In some other parts, in which the liberation of Israel from Egypt is written of . . . it seems that in this book something else is put forth at length rather than that Christ is described. But if you weigh the matter carefully, all Exodus has this especially in view: that it might commend Christ to the churches of God.

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[47] Steinmetz, *Reformers in the Wings*, 110; Estes, "Brenz and the German Reformation," 378; Robert Kolb, *Luther's Wittenberg World: The Reformer's Family, Friends, Followers, and Foes* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2018), 154.

[48] Martin Brecht reports that Luther highly esteemed Brenz's John commentary: "Luther said of him that none of the Reformers would achieve what Brenz had in his John commentary." Brecht, *Die frühe Theologie des Johannes Brenz*, 180.

[49] Steinmetz, *Reformers in the Wings*, 111–112; Kolb, *Luther's Wittenberg World*, 155.

[50] Estes, "Brenz and the German Reformation," 405.

[51] Gräpp, *Magister Johannes Brenz*, 73, 114.

[52] Johannes Brenz, *In Exodum, secundum librum Mosis, Ducis et Liberatoris Israelitarum ex AEgypto, Commentarius prior, praelectus in Schola Tubingensi. Anno 1538*, in *Opervm Reverendi Et Clarissimi Theologi D. Ioannis Brentii . . . Tomus Primus* (Tübingen: Georgius Gruppenbachius, 1576), 349–594 (hereafter cited as *In Exodum Commentarius).* The text of the commentary on Exodus is substantially the same as the earlier publication, *In Exodum Mosi Commentarii* (Francoforti: Officina Petri Brubachii, 1550). For the 1538 printing, see Johannes Brenz, *In Exodum Commentarius* (Halle: Petri Brubachij, 1538).

> For the Israelites were emancipated unto liberty and were brought together by means of the laws into one body, a republic (as it is described in Exodus), so that they would be a people among whom [*in quo*] the promises concerning Christ might be preserved by holy and public sermons, and so that the family out of which the Christ was to come might surely endure.[53]

This summary exposition of the book follows upon a question whether such arcane history can have much meaning for the life of the church. Brenz is alert to the collective or political development that takes place within Exodus, but this does not mean he wished to see this "republic" as paradigmatic for the laws of nations.[54] Rather, its primary history is the history that pertains to the gospel of Christ and the preservation of God's promises. Precisely because its central content and concern is the preservation of God's people and the fulfillment of God's promise to send an Offspring who would deliver (Gen 3:15), it is a book that concerns Christ and his gospel.[55] This central, underlying concern makes its appearance in the way that Brenz reads Exodus—namely, through God's call to weak men like Moses. For Brenz, as we shall see, Moses is a significant example to learn from, both from his disobedience that arises from unbelief and from his obedience, which is the result of trust in God's promises. And yet, Moses is the minor character in God's activity to create faith among men. All the doctrines that can be discerned in a scriptural text such as Exodus hold together in that we recognize, in the text's particular details, Christ and his redemptive, transformative work to shape our hopes and lives.[56]

Brenz, like Luther, does not make summary lists of doctrines that can be derived from a given chapter or text. However, his commentaries include useful summary headings through which one can glimpse the topic or focus of a given section.

At the end of chapter 2, Brenz highlights that a purpose of the afflictions that God sends to his faithful, such as Moses, is to demonstrate his power: "It is well-established that whoever abandons impiety and will run after the call of God is

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[53] Johannes Brenz, *Argvmenta et Sacrae Scriptvrae summa, librorum Veteris uidelicet et Noui Testamenti* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Braubach, 1546), A3r–A3v. This emphasis accords well with Pak's assertion that Luther and his followers saw a twofold "history" in the Old Testament and prioritized the revealed gospel in their assessment of the basic data of that twofold history. Pak, *Reformation of Prophecy*, 218–223.

[54] Brecht, *Die frühe Theologie des Johannes Brenz*, 311, notes that Moses, for Brenz, was the magistrate of the Jews, and his ordinances for the Jewish people were not binding for the German people. On the manifold understanding of the term *res publica* in the Lutheran Reformation, see Robert von Friedeburg, "Church and State in Lutheran Lands 1550–1675," in *Lutheran Ecclesiastical Culture, 1550–1675*, Brill's Companions to the Christian Tradition 11, ed. Robert Kolb (Boston: Brill, 2008), 361–410.

[55] Brenz, *In Exodum Commentarius* (1576), AA2r [2]. Cf. Pak, *Reformation of Prophecy*, 180–181.

[56] Brenz, *Argvmenta*, A2r; Brenz, *In Exodum Commentarius*, 352–353, 403.

exposed at once to the greatest dangers and disasters."[57] The call of God is a high office but not one that appears great and awesome in the sight of the world. More broadly, Brenz consistently highlights the reality that Christians must suffer. The purpose of this affliction, however, is not to drive us away from God. Indeed, in afflictions and trials we are to bring precisely these things before God: "Now since God has regard for afflictions and the truth of his promises, nothing is more effective for us than that we pour ourselves out to God in prayer—not, I say, our righteousness, which is filthy, but our affliction and our contrite and humbled heart."[58] Moses is the answer to the afflicted groans and prayers of the enslaved Israelites.[59] Brenz thus distinguished himself as one of the great Reformation theologians who emphasized the reality of suffering in Christian life and vocation.

Brenz concludes his exposition of God's response to Moses' second objection, that his word would be insufficient (Exod 4:10), with his word: "'I will be with you,' [so to say] I have revealed my will to you by a promise, which is 'I will be with you'; furthermore, I will not be present in another way than through this mode of revealing—that which is through my word."[60] Brenz thus echoes Melanchthon in the Apology of the Augsburg Confession: "God cannot be treated with, God cannot be apprehended, except through the Word" (Ap IV 67).[61] Brenz expresses the same thing with potent language: "God does not want to be known apart from his revealed word. For the word of God is the face of God. The word of God is the revealed will of God. The Word of God is the only Son of God, made man in these last times."[62] Thus, according to Brenz a prophet does not generate a fundamentally new message but is rather called to interpret and proclaim the same one that God has always intended and revealed. In this regard, Brenz conforms to the paradigm established by Luther that the word of the prophets from Scripture is God's word and not a human word.[63] Brenz makes an advance upon Luther in his exegesis of this point in the text. Whereas Luther had stressed God's immutability to affirm his promise, Brenz—though he does not deny this reality and discusses it earlier in the commentary—adds that God has given no other way to know him surely than through this word that reveals the only-begotten Son. So then, Brenz was concerned to identify the

[57] Brenz, *In Exodum Commentarius*, 368.

[58] Brenz, *In Exodum Commentarius*, 371.

[59] Brenz, *In Exodum Commentarius*, 376; Walther Zimmerli, *Old Testament Theology in Outline* (Edingburgh: T&T Clark, 1978), 82.

[60] Brenz, *In Exodum Commentarius*, 380.

[61] In *Triglot Concordia*: *The Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, ed. W. H. T. Dau and F. Bente (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1921), 189.

[62] Brenz, *In Exodum Commentarius*, 380.

[63] Pak, *Reformation of Prophecy*, 183.

revelation of the gospel even in the tangles of Moses' own faulty concern for his security.

Brenz on Moses' Call

With Brenz we see how influential Luther's exegesis of this text was in the earlier period of its reception. "You have, then, the call of Moses here to the guidance of the Israelites and the promises that are added to the call. From this we are warned, so that no one might usurp public duties from his own presumptuousness but should wait for the call from God and in the meanwhile diligently serve in the present vocation."[64] Brenz, too, then, interprets the call of Moses primarily in relation to the Office of the Ministry as does Luther. However, in line with his generally pessimistic view of human nature,[65] Brenz is much more willing, as we shall see, to take Moses to task for his reluctance to follow the divine call. Nevertheless, his thematic emphasis follows Luther by focusing in the early chapters of Exodus on the confirmation of the divine call. Like Luther, Brenz regards the miraculous burning of the bush as a confirmation, for Moses' benefit, that God's summons from the bush is not a mirage but is a true and divine call.[66]

> When the Lord wanted to free Israel from Egypt, he calls and establishes Moses as the leader of the Israelites. Moreover, since it was to deliver an especially vast, miserable, defenseless, and oppressed people from so grave and strenuous tyranny, and it was not fitting for him to usurp public duties without a most certain call from God, for this reason when the Lord God was about to call Moses, in the first place he revealed his presence by means of a great and awesome miracle, so that Moses might make sure that this call was the call of God.[67]

In this case, Brenz emphasizes that Moses' own conscience needed certainty about the divine call. By the same token, if Moses did not have a call from God to lead the Israelites, then it would be utterly improper for him to usurp a public office of this sort.

Brenz closely analyzes the first excuse that Moses raises to God (Exod 4:1). "In order that we might gain understanding of what Moses desires for himself with this question, it must be observed that, at this point, names are put forth for things, so that through names the things themselves may be signified, made clear, and known."[68] Moses is not, then, asking for something more than God's oral command

[64] Brenz, *In Exodum Commentarius*, 377.
[65] Kolb, *Bound Choice*, 70.
[66] Brenz, *In Exodum Commentarius*, 373.
[67] Brenz, *In Exodum Commentarius*, 373.
[68] Brenz, *In Exodum Commentarius*, 380.

to go to the Israelites but instead wants a clear manifestation of God. Brenz's point is that Moses wishes to have some clear and obvious sign of certainty that will compel the Israelites to follow him and establish him as their divinely called leader. From this we can understand that Moses is not content with the word of God.

At the climax of Moses' objections to God's call—"'I implore,' [Moses] said, 'O Lord, send whomever you would send'" (Exod 4:13)—Brenz offers this disapproving assessment: "Once more, it seems to me that here in Moses [is] the incapacity of men for believing the word of God and for following the call of God."[69] Brenz likewise here and later describes Moses' disposition and action as "disobedience" (*inobedientia*). Moses, Brenz thinks, trades the mountain for the molehill. "O what mixed up terror! Moses fears such great dangers if he obeys God, yet fears nothing if he does not obey God."[70] The problem of the prophet is unbelief, which results in nearsightedness. Moses thinks only of what he can perceive, even though God has already miraculously shown that what Moses perceives is not all that should be taken into account. What such fear reveals is not only a disordered fear but also that behind it stands the service of Satan, who does not wish to see the kingdom of God come.[71]

Brenz takes this nearsighted fear to be a peculiar vice of those called to the prophetic office, citing Jonah as another example. Shockingly, Brenz thinks, God does not destroy Moses. God is angry, it is true, but wishes to show his clemency.[72] "Here, then, we see such great clemency of God, such great diligence. For his clemency is that he does not at once reject Moses on account of disobedience; and his diligence is that he turns Moses' disobedience into something good."[73] Whereas Luther stated that Moses' resistance was written for our instruction to rely on God's promises, Brenz proceeds by explaining this as a negative example. We should not take Moses' bad behavior and reluctance as an example for our own presumption that God will not reject us if we take occasion to sin, for that would be to tempt God and blaspheme his grace. These examples are set forth for us so that our faith might be confirmed and strengthened when, like Moses, we are called to ventures of which we cannot see the end.[74]

Though here it is most appropriate to take Moses as an example of what not to do, in many other places, Brenz is quick to point out that Moses also offers examples of what Christians should do. When Moses returns, he does not instantly pack his bags and announce that he is leaving but greets Jethro, his father-in-law (Exod 4:18).

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[69] Brenz, *In Exodum Commentarius*, 389.
[70] Brenz, *In Exodum Commentarius*, 389.
[71] Brenz, *In Exodum Commentarius*, 389.
[72] Brenz, *In Exodum Commentarius*, 389.
[73] Brenz, *In Exodum Commentarius*, 390.
[74] Brenz, *In Exodum Commentarius*, 389.

In this regard, Moses is an example of modesty. Further, when Moses sets forth from Midian, he acts as the model head of his household (*paterfamilias*), since in taking up that high office of the divine call, he does not abandon the vocation he already has in the care of a wife and children. It was therefore permissible for pastors to take wives, as Moses, Peter, and other apostles had.[75] Moses' example, however, implies more than possibility: it also implies that the divine call does not mean the abandonment or neglect of family for the sake of the other duty.[76] It would be easy, Brenz points out, to presume that the wife and children would be an impediment to the call, but Moses follows the path later clarified in the Lord's words, "What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate" (Matt 19:6; Mark 10:9). Moses' example applies for married men and especially those in the Holy Ministry. It is written for "married men,"[77] so that they will know how they ought to undertake the duty and office of husband—namely, by providing and caring for their wives and children whatever the circumstance. This observation certainly had ramifications for the defense of those called into the Office of the Holy Ministry who chose to take wives and have children, a practice Brenz defended in the Württemberg Confession of 1551.[78] For they, too, have the divine call to serve in the ministration of the church; yet it is not wrongful for those who serve in such an office to take wives and children. Moreover, it is incumbent upon them especially to serve and care for their wives and children as examples for those they serve.

When he analyzes how Moses reacts to Pharoah's punishment of the people (Exod 5:22–23), Brenz asks, "What else does it signify than his own most iniquitous opinion that God cares nothing for his people?"[79] Moses thus becomes the paradigm of the sons of Israel, embodying an initial, if doubtful, willingness to follow God's call, yet wavering back and forth. Brenz leaves aside any extensive comment on this until his notes on Exodus 7, when he again refers to God's clemency in dealing with

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[75] Brenz, *In Exodum Commentarius*, 390–391.

[76] Contrary to the presumption of medieval tradition, which exalted men that abandoned family for the sake of private devotion. See Peter Lombard, *The Sentences—Book 4*: *On the Doctrine of Signs*, trans. Giulio Silano, Mediaeval Sources in Translation 48 (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2010), 163–164.

[77] It is clear that men are implied for Brenz, not merely "married folk." See Brenz, *In Exodum Commentarius*, 394, where he juxtaposes wives (*uxores*) and husbands (*mariti)*: "For the Lord ordained that the man should rule over his wife, not the wife over the man, Gen. 3. And to this order he promised his blessing. Therefore, where the wife seizes governorship in marriage, that is sedition, contrary to the order of God."

[78] Johannes Brenz et. al., *Confessio illustrissimi Principis et Domini, D. Christophori Ducis Wirtenbergensis & Theccensis, Comitis Montbeligardi &c. una cum Apologeticis Scriptis*, 2 vols. (Frankfurt: Brubachius, 1561), 1:23; for Brenz's defense, see 1:666–697, especially 676. Cf. Johannes Brenz, W*ürttemburgisches Glaubensbekenntnis* (Stuttgart: Evangelische Gesellschaft, 1848), 36.

[79] Brenz, *In Exodum Commentarius*, [399].

Moses' fickleness and disobedience.[80] Just as Pharaoh was to be the vehicle through which God demonstrated his power and stern chastisement, so Moses is the instrument through which he shows his mercy: "through which God would bring to light publicly his rich glory and clemency."[81] How does God bring Moses back from timidity to be an obedient servant? "He repeats, reinforces, and makes clear previous promises, prophecies, and miracles."[82] That is to say, God does not deviate from what he has done before, or alter his plans, but reaffirms them and strengthens them, so as to redirect Moses to the accomplishment of his task by belief in God's word. "God preaches nothing novel to Moses in this place but only the same old things."[83] The demarcation between Pharoah and Moses is in order to demonstrate difference with regard to faith. At every stage of the narrative, the question at issue is faith or disbelief in the promises of God. For even if we should fall into sin and deserve damnation, and our actions bring God's wrath, as long as the word of God is preached in such a way that it calls disobedient men to repentance, the door to repentance and salvation remains open.[84] To put it briefly, Moses' external disobedience is a result of his internal unbelief. God strikes at this unbelief as he always does, through his word—yet this works both internal belief and external obedience on Moses' part.

Brenz, then, takes Luther's basic insight concerning Moses' reticence to take up the divine call. In this respect, his exegetical procedure follows Luther. Brenz is more willing, however, to probe the details of the text to demonstrate the peculiar weaknesses of Moses' character than Luther had been in his sermons. At the same time, Moses' call exhibits God's patience in dealing with weak-hearted men. Brenz regards it as an encouragement to weak-hearted men not to fear the offices to which God calls them but to boldly take up their work and do it with diligence on account of the confidence they have from God himself. Thus, the shift from the medieval exegesis, which placed confidence in Moses' character, to the Reformation emphasis on God's revealed word, is exemplified in Brenz's interpretation of Moses' divine call.

Peder Palladius on Moses' Call and Resistance

Peder Palladius (1503–1560) is a remarkable instance of the spread of the Reformation at its earliest developments. Born to a pious lay father in Denmark, Palladius was a schoolteacher until he was sent to study at Wittenberg with Luther and

[80] Brenz, *In Exodum Commentarius*, 405.
[81] Brenz, *In Exodum Commentarius*, 406.
[82] Brenz, *In Exodum Commentarius*, 406.
[83] Brenz, *In Exodum Commentarius*, 406.
[84] Brenz, *In Exodum Commentarius*, 406.

Melanchthon in autumn of 1531.[85] Although he may have had some awareness of Reformation teaching, it was not until he matriculated as a student that he embraced it. After he sat at Luther's and Melanchthon's feet as a student, Palladius returned to his native Denmark as a new doctor of theology when Bugenhagen traveled there in 1537 at King Christian III's behest.[86] He was therefore close to the seat of power and would give advice to Christian as well as, significantly for his commentary, to his son Frederick.

Palladius was made bishop of the Roskilde residing in Copenhagen[87] as well as professor of theology at the University of Copenhagen. In the years that followed, he offered translations of Luther's catechism and selections of Melancthon's *Loci*.[88] However, after these initial forays, Palladius produced extensive literature of his own and published a great deal of literature with brief expositions of biblical texts, designed for pious souls. Palladius wrote two overviews, which we will refer to in the following, that are instances of these brief expositions. In the first, the *Overview of the Books of Moses*, Palladius provides a basic outline of every chapter of the first five books of Moses. The intended audience of this volume is particular. Following the death of King Christian III, his son Frederick II ascended the throne of Denmark in 1559. Palladius writes in the dedicatory epistle that the purpose of this work is that the new king might have in hand a book of the Law to know and profit from the examples of kings and princes. The work's purpose was also that the evangelical doctrine that the kings of old—especially Frederick's own father—wished to promote might be put forward for the benefit of the churches.[89] Palladius' outline of each chapter of Exodus in this work is broad and does not include a *loci* classification as Chytraeus (see below), though he does provide brief descriptions of each chapter division.

Palladius' other work involving the text of Exodus is the *Introduction to the Prophetic and Apostolic Books*.[90] This work was popular and was reprinted several times

[85] Ole Peter Grell, "From Popular Evangelical Movement to Lutheran Reformation in Denmark. A Case of Two Reformations," *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 101, no. 1 (2011): 33–58; Martin Schwarz Lausten, "Palladius, Peder," in *Religion Past and Present*: *Encyclopedia of Religion and Theology*, ed. Hans Dieter Betz et. al., vol. 9 (Boston: Brill, 2011), 473; Mikkel Lund, "Denne Klare og Lyse Dag: Luthersk subjektivitat I Peder Palladius' visitatsbog" (master's thesis, University of Copenhagen, 2020), 3.

[86] Grell, "From Popular Evangelical Movement," 37.

[87] Kolb, *Luther's Wittenberg World*, 201.

[88] Anna Vind, "Luther in Danish," *Lutheran Quarterly* 35, no. 2 (2021): 155–170. Palladius also, it seems, brought sections of Luther's *Antinomian Theses* without citation into his work against heresies. See Jeffrey G. Silcock and Christopher B. Brown, "Introduction," in AE 73:42.

[89] Peder Palladius, *Librorum Moisi, Qui Sunt Fons Doctrinae Ecclesiae, explicatio brevis & ad usum piorum accommodata* (Wittenberg: Johannes Crato, 1559), A6r.

[90] Peder Palladius, *Isagoge Ad Libros Propheticos Et Apostolicos* (Wittenberg: Johann Krafft d. Ä., 1557).

during his life as well as posthumously by several publishing houses. Though its introduction gives some very helpful delineations of a correct understanding of Holy Scripture, including its sufficiency, clarity, truthfulness, and the like, the overview of individual books must be described as extremely brief. Often a single word designates the meaning of an entire chapter; and the summary descriptions of lengthy books of Scripture take up hardly more than a page.

Palladius on Doctrines Derived from Exodus 3–5

Palladius follows Luther's emphasis on vocation in his own commentary on Exodus. In *The Overview of the Books of Moses, w*hen Palladius divides Exodus into six distinct parts, the first division—chapters 1 through 7—are brought under the rubric of "The Call of Moses."[91] Palladius follows the divisions of Sacred Scripture as Lyra divides them and places the five books of Moses in the category of legal texts, distinct from "historical" texts, because they will describe the public teaching of the Law through Moses, whereas the historical accounts are classified thus because they contain to a much greater degree events that have taken place.[92] Exodus 3 covers the following topics: (1) the care and attention of God regarding his people, (2) the call, (3) the flight from the call, (4) miracles, and (5) dangers and trials in a call.[93] Exodus 4 covers the following topics: (1) signs and miracles, (2) the rejection of the call, (3) the gift of eloquence, (4) the gentleness and diligence of God among those called, (5) moderation, (6) the delay of the wife, (7) the commendation of the verbal call, and (8) that the gospel is received indeed with a gracious spirit but is immediately held in disdain and loathed.[94] Chapter 5 covers the following topics: (1) the works of the call, (2) tyranny and oppression, (3) divine aid and deferment, and (4) ingratitude.[95] These labels, however, do not receive extensive comment from Palladius, and he does not expound on them in any great detail.

Although Palladius does not offer expansive commentary to his readership, it is significant that he clearly presents the paradigm shift brought about by Luther's teaching in the basic description of biblical texts. When we consider his brief works in light of their purpose, especially the *Overview* designed for the edification of a newly crowned king, then the brevity and simplicity with which Palladius writes makes sense. What are the primary words the monarch would see as he glimpsed through this handbook to governance? He would see repeated emphasis on the call

[91] Palladius, *Librorum Moisi*, 162.

[92] Palladius, *Librorum Moisi*, 3. The Law, Palladius succinctly explains, "teaches what must be done and what must be avoided, along with all examples of obedience and transgression of the Law" (4).

[93] Palladius, *Librorum Moisi*, 171.

[94] Palladius, *Librorum Moisi*, 174.

[95] Palladius, *Librorum Moisi*, 177.

of God to governance, diligence, the commendation of the call, and similar things. The concern about tyranny, coupled with the emphasis on vocation (the call) also fits well. Palladius is not thinking here principally of the pastoral office but of kingship, which, for Palladius, is a form of governance given by God for the benefit of the people.

David Chytraeus on Moses' Call and Resistance

Author and Text

David Chytraeus (Kochhafe) (1530–1600) was the son of one of the first Reformation pastors, Matthew Kochhafe, pastor for the village of Ingelfingen, Württemberg.[96] He was born in the Ingelfingen parsonage on February 26, 1530.[97] Chytraeus went to Tübingen to learn the arts, then to study with the reformers at Wittenberg in 1544, where he lived with Melanchthon. Chytraeus fits into the picture of Luther's students as the dusk settled over Luther's career, and though he heard Luther lecture on Genesis, Melancthon was the predominant influence, who secured for Chytraeus a position at Rostock as a lecturer on Christian doctrine and astronomy.[98] Although he could never part himself from the disposition of his teacher, his confessional sentiment lay with that of Luther.[99] As a result, he is most famous among confessional Lutherans as one of the Formulators of the Book of Concord.

The text of his commentary on Exodus appeared first in the year of his arrival at the University of Rostock in 1561 and was followed shortly after by another printing in 1563.[100] In this essay, I will principally refer to the 1563 edition to cite Chytraeus' comments and arrangement. I will also refer to some of Chytraeus' other writings that have some bearing upon the interpretation of Moses' person and work.[101] Chytraeus' commentary is marked by a number of particular features. Like

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[96] John Warwick Montgomery, *Chytraeus on Sacrifice* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1962), 10.

[97] Detloff Klatt, *David Chytraeus als Geschichtslehrer und Geschichtsschreiber* (Rostock: Ratsund Universitätsbuchdruckerei, 1908), 4–5.

[98] Kolb, *Luther's Wittenberg World*, 189–190.

[99] Theodore E. Schmauk and C. Theodore Benze, *The Confessional Principle of the Lutheran Church as Embodying the Evangelical Confession of the Christian Church* (Philadelphia: General Council Publication Board, 1891), 597; Kolb, *Bound Choice*, 190.

[100] David Chytraeus, *In Exodum Enarratio* (Wittenberg: Johannes Crato, 1561; 2nd ed., 1563). Unless otherwise noted, all subsequent citations of this work are from the 1563 edition.

[101] David Chytraeus, *Onomasticon Theologicum, Recens Recognitum, In Quo, Praeter Nomina Propria Fere omnia, quae in Bibliis extant, Plerorumque etiam Sanctorum, qui Calendario usitate inscribi solent, Item Doctorum Ecclesiae, Martyrorum, Haereticorum, & Synodorum, nomina & historiae breviter indicantur* (Wittenberg: ex officina Ioannis Cratonis, 1560).

many others in the Lutheran Orthodox tradition,[102] Chytraeus was interested in interpretating Scripture for the benefits that God provided through it: "Particularly by way of the reading and exposition of those books that God has commended to the church, these works especially ought to be given attention, so that we might gather up the testimonies concerning God and concerning each and every article of Christian doctrine necessary to know for the salvation of souls, with which we might further confirm our faith."[103] Chytraeus here carries forward explicit themes emphasized by Luther and other Lutheran forebears, particular the importance of the prophet's role to preserve Christian doctrine.[104]

Chytraeus on Doctrines Derived from Exodus 3–5

Chytraeus' commentary outlines the doctrinal topics of each chapter of a given text. It seems likely that in the outline of his commentary writing, he followed his teacher Philipp Melanchthon, as did many others.[105] In the introduction to the text, he lays out the major doctrines that ought to be considered from the whole text of Exodus: (1) God; (2) the Son of God; (3) the person, office, and benefits of Christ; (4) the law of God; (5) the gospel; (6) justification; (7) good works; (8) the sacraments; (9) repentance; (10) the church; (11) the resurrection; and (12) political overseers (*magistratibus, Iudiciis, legibus politiciis*).[106] This outline manifestly follows the Augsburg Confession, departing only by placing the sacraments before the definition of the church. These by no means are to be understood as independent units, however. "[E]very part of Christian doctrine," Chytraeus explains, "can be referred back to two particular parts, namely, law—that is, the Decalogue—and the gospel, or the promise concerning Christ, the Son of God, and mediator."[107] Like Brenz, Chytraeus does not find that the law or the gospel—the specific promise of salvation through God's Christ—is absent in the texts of Moses or in the saints to which they bear witness. Chytraeus' commentary thus fits into the broad pattern that Pak has identified and that we have seen with Brenz and Palladius. However, his historical sensibility expands, as we will see below, what sort of calls can be discussed from the text of Exodus.

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[102] Benjamin T. G. Mayes, "The Useful Applications of Scripture in Lutheran Orthodoxy: An Aid to Contemporary Preaching and Exegesis," *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 83, no. 1–2 (January/April 2019): 111–135.

[103] Chytraeus, *In Exodum Enarratio* (1561), 2–3.

[104] Pak, *Reformation of Prophecy*, 180.

[105] Robert Kolb, "Philipp's Foes, but Followers Nonetheless," in *The Harvest of Humanism in Central Europe*: *Essays in Honor of Lewis W. Spitz*, ed. Manfred P. Fleischer (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1992), 159–177; see 162.

[106] Chytraeus, *In Exodum Enarratio*, 4–5.

[107] Chytraeus, *In Exodum Enarratio,* 5. Cf. Pak, *Reformation of Prophecy*, 232.

Chytraeus further mentions in the introduction of the commentary, for Exodus 3, the doctrine of the Trinity, the Son of God, repentance, the call to the Ministry (under the heading of the church), and the resurrection. This list is, however, modified when Chytraeus sets to work on the chapters themselves. According to the section where Chytraeus treats the contents of Exodus 3, this chapter includes the following subjects: (1) the call of Moses, (2) a description of the true God, (3) proof of the resurrection of the dead, (4) the plundering of the Egyptians, and (5) an allegorical interpretation of the burning bush. Exodus 4 covers the following subjects: (1) chief topics (*loci praecipui*) and (2) divergence and variety of divine gifts. Exodus 5 covers the following subjects: (1) an example of the manner in which God delivers the church and all pious men from anguish and (2) the causes that bring about the change of governments.

Along with the reformers surveyed above, Chytraeus follows the paradigm set by Luther in describing Moses' summons by God as a call. Though comparable to Brenz and Palladius on certain points—Brenz highlights the resurrection from the dead, and Palladius notes the divine gifts and duties in offices—Chytraeus advances beyond his contemporaries, if not in detail, then certainly in categorization. It is noticeable, however, that Chytraeus chooses Exodus 4, rather than 3, as the occasion to discuss this call. In Exodus 3 he concentrates his attention on the fact that this text teaches Christians about the true God, especially with his discussion of God's name and the revelation of the divine essence at Exodus 3:14.

Chytraeus on Textual Links

Chytraeus assumes a number of important textual links that form the basis of his interpretation, both about Moses and about the revelation that he received and believed. Chytraeus takes it for granted that what the New Testament says about Moses' life is an accurate portrayal of his historical reality. Thus, in describing Moses in summary, he writes, "[Moses] taught not only the doctrine of the law but also that of the gospel concerning Christ, as in John 5 Christ said, 'If you had believed Moses, you would also believe me, for he wrote of me.'"[108] Unlike Luther, Chytraeus explicitly links Moses' call to other, New Testament, texts. He differs slightly also in the description, since for Luther the "call" is the matter at hand, whereas for Chytraeus the issue is "governance." Whereas Luther seems to have the preaching office chiefly in mind, with scant reference to other offices such as magistrate or parent, Chytraeus highlights that Moses is both prophet and the governor or judge of the new political body of Israel.[109] Whether it is the Office of the Ministry or a governmental post, it

[108] Chytraeus, *Onomasticon Theologicum*, 419.
[109] Chytraeus, *In Exodum Enarratio*, 96.

is inadvisable to take up such an office without a call, "since a governance is not a happy one unless God gives his aid."[110] This conclusion is based not on the text of Exodus itself but rather on three other passages cited by Chytraeus, Hebrew 5, 1 Peter 4, and 1 Corinthians 7.

Chytraeus on Moses' Call

Chytraeus classifies the call of Moses as a historical account.[111] When Chytraeus writes Moses' history, however, he takes for granted that the scriptural witness that comes later in New Testament texts provides accurate historical details of the account, even though they may not have been explicitly provided by the account itself.[112] Moses' life and his internal experience are to be known and explained first from the text itself but, second, with reference to what the rest of Scripture says of that life. Chytraeus exposits Moses' life in Pharoah's court as filled out by Acts 7, and understands that such education, comparable to the liberal arts, is a means by which Moses is educated "in the discipline and knowledge of the Lord."[113] There was, of course, the issue of what sort of education Moses might have received in this pagan god-king's court. Chytraeus fuses a series of texts that explain Moses' own conscience's conviction as well as a judgment of Scripture to resolve the issue:

> The example of the teaching of Psalm 83 [84:10–11], "I prefer to be an outcast in the house of my God, than to reside in the palaces of the wicked, for the Lord God is a sun and shield; the Lord shall give grace and glory."[114] The epistle to the Hebrews, chapter 11, applies the present history of Moses to this teaching: by faith Moses refused to be called a son of Pharoah's daughter, preferring at once to be associated with the people of God rather than with the wicked, rather than enjoy the temporary advantages of sin, because he judged that the ignominy of Christ was a better wealth than the treasures of the Egyptians.[115]

Thus Chytraeus' view of Moses' narrative history includes Moses' conscience's judgment as well as a pious estimation of his character rooted upon scriptural grounds. By making such intertextual connections more firmly, Chytraeus modestly augments the depiction of Moses from the outset, so that though later issues may be described as sins of disobedience, Moses is nevertheless, viewed from the whole lens

[110] Chytraeus, *In Exodum Enarratio*, 97/G12r. Later Chytraeus links the "call" specifically with the Office of the Ministry. Chytraeus, *In Exodum Enarratio,* 278.

[111] Chytraeus, *In Exodum Enarratio*, 96.

[112] Klatt, *Chytraeus als Geschichtslehrer*, 36.

[113] Chytraeus, *In Exodum Enarratio*, 90.

[114] The text paraphrased is not precisely the same as that of the Vulgate Psalter. For the Vulgate see *Biblia Sacra iuxta Vulgata Versionem,* ed. Ryan Gryson et al., (n.p.: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1969).

[115] Chytraeus, *In Exodum Enarratio* (1561), 91.

of Scripture, to be understood to act in a way that is devoted to God and loyal to his own people.[116]

As mentioned above, the reformers and the dogmaticians that followed them attempted to articulate what made prophets and those in pastoral office alike in their duty while distinct in the manner of their calling. Chytraeus defines a "prophetic call" as the type that is effected by God immediately, with particular commands and in a particular manner. What makes this kind of call unique is not only that it is immediate but also that it is occasional.[117] The other type, the "common call," is effected in a mediate way, but Chytraeus understands it to be part of the regular life of the church, not the exception to the norm. Chytraeus describes the "common call" as the "one that happens through the church."[118] Chytraeus seems to be emphasizing that part of the distinction between the prophets of the Old Testament and the men called to serve as ministers in the New is not only the manner of their call but also their time in history. The Old Testament prophets were unique because they were called by God to address certain, singular issues, whereas those called into the Office of the Ministry in the New Testament have a regular call. Chytraeus therefore modifies slightly the understanding of a "prophet" as one who not only affirms heavenly doctrine but also as one who was called in a unique way for unique circumstances.[119] The distinction between the immediate and mediate call is reaffirmed later, but Chytraeus notes that the immediate call can also be confirmed in a mediate way, by the testimonies of men. So, although they are historically distinct, Chytraeus still affirms their close relation and shared duty and content.[120]

When he comes to Exodus 4, Chytraeus, intriguingly, sums up the initial excuses of Moses much like Denys the Carthusian had done before him. As Denys had done, Chytraeus compares Moses to other men with high office and attributes his initial hesitancy to a prudent assessment of the duties of the office to which God calls him, while also recognizing his own weakness and flaws. In this respect, Chytraeus' exegesis moves away from the interpretation offered by Luther and Brenz. Nevertheless, Chytraeus' focus upon the nature of the call aligns with Luther and Brenz in its emphasis upon the external, revealed means by which such a call is given and upon the confidence with which it can be undertaken. "As Moses,

[116] In his commentary on Deuteronomy, Chytraeus highlights Moses' unique standing as the primary prophet, not as in the Hebrew texts with the appellation "servant of God" but for his unique office in giving the Law. "Moses was called an ocean of theology by the ancients." David Chytraeus, *Deuteronomium Moysis Ennaratio* (Wittenberg: Schleich & Schöne, 1575), A1r. He is also therefore the source and fountain of Christian doctrine that the apostles drew from, as for instance Peter on the day of Pentecost deriving his doctrine from Deuteronomy (B3r).

[117] Chytraeus, *In Exodum Enarratio*, 97.

[118] Chytraeus, *In Exodum Enarratio*, 96.

[119] Chytraeus, *In Exodum Enarratio*, 97.

[120] Chytraeus, *In Exodum Enarratio*, 278.

considering his own great incapacity and inability to speak refused to undertake a most difficult and dangerous call in leading the people of Israel from Egypt, so all modest and prudent men . . . understand the multitude of dangers and impediments to governance."[121] From this we in the church know that the divine call must be obeyed, he explains. Even if we should regard ourselves as insufficient, God himself will supply the need of those who call upon him. The tasks, though difficult, will not be in vain with God's help. "Therefore," Chytraeus concludes, "the divine call is not to be resisted on the pretense of our incapacity but obeyed with reverence."[122] Chytraeus concludes his reflection with the observation that this matter is not one of choice but of doctrine, and for this reason Moses is given as an example, that we might put the doctrine into practice in a God-pleasing and faithful way. Taken on the whole, Moses sets aside his own reserves and puts his confidence in God, his help, and his promises.[123]

Chytraeus therefore shows an approach to Moses, as well as to the prophetic call, that is removed from the turmoil and conflict of the early period of the Reformation. The concern for Protestant visionary prophets has moved to the background, while historical and systematic interests move to the foreground. While he affirms the distinction between the mediate and immediate call, Chytraeus' definition of the prophetic office is more precise than those of his predecessors, adding historical circumstance to the formal processes by which prophets, on the one hand, and ministers, on the other, are called. At the same time, Luther's doctrinal concern for the nature of the call remains evident and significant for Chytraeus, as do other major points of doctrine. Though Chytraeus interprets Moses in a somewhat more positive fashion, this is not due, it seems, to a reluctance on his part to identify sinfulness in prophets. It is rather due to his careful weighing of later texts of the New Testament that treat Moses' intentions positively and in a pious way. Chytraeus seems compelled to harmonize his overall presentation of Moses with Acts 7 and Hebrews 5, taking Moses' character as a whole, rather than, as with Luther, making careful differentiations between Moses' initial reaction and his later one.

Conclusion: Reformation Exegesis at a Midpoint

Brenz, Palladius, and Chytraeus stand in line with Luther as faithful students and fellow reformers, rather than, as Kraeling painted the Reformer's students, as rigid hardliners who missed Luther's spirit and failed his exegetical legacy. As Pak has shown, the traditional exegetical lines that were established with Luther

[121] Chytraeus, *In Exodum Enarratio*, 105.
[122] Chytraeus, *In Exodum Enarratio*, 107.
[123] Chytraeus, *In Exodum Enarratio*, 97.

remained in place for generations.[124] Yet the line of traditional interpretation was not simply a recasting of the text. The heirs of the Reformation were not parrots but took the insights of the theological exegesis they learned and applied them to the particular issues they faced. That is to say, even as Luther functioned "prophetically" in his office as a pastor and teacher of the church, and therefore was an example of how to conduct the ministration of the gospel, they too sought to provide examples through their reading of Scripture to the Christians who read them. As the understanding of "prophet" was transformed and set in relation to the pastoral office, it also clearly had applications for other offices that God ordains, such as governance and family. The duties are distinct, but the source of the offices is not. Just as pastors are called to serve God's church by the preaching of the word and are answerable to God for their fidelity to that word, so also magistrates and governors are under God's authority and answerable to him for their governance. Likewise, the estate of marriage is established by God and given its order and form by God himself. These all possess duties given by God, without being identical to one another. This is clearly the intent of Palladius' commentary, designed as it was to magnify good governance under the word of God. It is also true of the commentary of Brenz, who wrote in the face of criticism of Reformation doctrine concerning the pastoral office, priesthood, and marriage.

This initial demonstration shows that the paradigm shift of Reformation exegesis blossomed in its own way for new, practical insights while remaining faithful to the doctrinal assertions of Luther and the confessors at Augsburg. Close attention to the details of Scripture permitted these students of Luther to apply the word of God to the particulars of the life and experience of their audience. This sampling, through the example of Moses, shows how much the Reformers recognized what Scripture had to offer. To conform the life of their listeners and readers to the word of God, they carefully inspected the details of every word so that nothing of this sacred treasure might be lost, nor any portion of life left untouched. Such exegesis may rightly be considered exemplary. In this kind of exegesis, we are conformed to the word of God, not the other way round. The significance for Luther and his students of demarcating the divine call to the pastoral office from other duties given by God ought to be illustrative for our own vocabulary today, for instance. The example of the Reformer and his exegetical heirs also may be of service to those of us who stand in such offices, both as encouragement and exhortation. It is an encouragement insofar as they highlight how many and how great are the trials those whom God calls must endure. It is also an exhortation that we, like them, turn our eyes

[124] Pak, *Reformation of Prophecy*, 272.

keenly towards the Scriptures, to set our lives and service in the Holy Ministry under the eternal gospel of the Son of God, the light and glory of the church in every age.