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## Renaissance and Reformation Renaissance et Réforme



### Erasmus, Desiderius. *The Correspondence of Erasmus. Letters 1926 to 2081. 1528*, trans. Charles Fantazzi, annotated James M. Estes

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Volume 34, numéro 3, été 2011

URI : <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1106360ar>

DOI : <https://doi.org/10.33137/rr.v34i3.17033>

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Éditeur(s)

Iter Press

ISSN

0034-429X (imprimé)

2293-7374 (numérique)

[Découvrir la revue](#)

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Citer ce compte rendu

Crane, M. (2011). Compte rendu de [Erasmus, Desiderius. *The Correspondence of Erasmus. Letters 1926 to 2081. 1528*, trans. Charles Fantazzi, annotated James M. Estes]. *Renaissance and Reformation / Renaissance et Réforme*, 34(3), 220–222. <https://doi.org/10.33137/rr.v34i3.17033>

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cette actualité perpétuelle de notre auteur, notamment, pour l'époque contemporaine, la capacité de représenter et de défendre « les forces progressistes dans l'entreprise de construction du monde que nous connaissons actuellement » (p. 277). Dans cette perspective, ce sont le fond et la forme du texte qui nous paraissent modernes : cette écriture expérimentale « qui se conteste elle-même » et se génère elle-même — l'audace du discours étant bien soutenue par celle de la pensée — et qui traduit si bien cette « ère du soupçon » (p. 287) qui caractérise l'écriture postmoderne. La dernière phrase du recueil exprime élégamment une des préoccupations majeures des chercheurs littéraires de ces dernières décennies et montre pourquoi Rabelais occupe une place de choix dans leurs réflexions, qu'ils soient seiziémistes ou pas : « Voilà réaffirmée la remarquable actualité de Rabelais, dans la mesure où la destruction et l'éclatement du discours ainsi que la production d'un nouveau langage sont précisément à l'ordre du jour » (p. 292). Marcel De Grève participa de manière décisive à la mise en lumière du rôle extraordinaire que joue Rabelais dans ce processus, comme nous le rappelle ce beau recueil d'articles.

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**Erasmus, Desiderius.**

*The Correspondence of Erasmus. Letters 1926 to 2081. 1528*, trans. Charles Fantazzi, annotated James M. Estes.

Collected Works of Erasmus, 14. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011. Pp. xxiv, 503. ISBN 978-1-4426-4044-3 (hardcover) n.p.

Readers hungry for English translations of Erasmus's correspondence have recently received a rare treat from the University of Toronto Press: two volumes in as many years. Volume 13, containing letters from March to December 1527, appeared in 2010, followed in 2011 with Volume 14, which covers correspondence from the year 1528. Considering that Volume 12 appeared in 2003, these volumes give scholars interested in the Dutch humanist and his milieu a long-awaited double-helping.

The most recent volume, the one under consideration here, contains 158 letters, about two-thirds of them written by Erasmus, the other third addressed

to him. Individually the letters run the gamut from the deeply learned to the mundane. Collectively, however, they shed light on the many controversies over scholarship and religion which increasingly came to occupy the elder Erasmus's attention in what should have been his "golden years." One of his favourite metaphors of this period, referring to his literary efforts as "gladiatorial combat," make clear that the aging humanist (by this time he was over 60 years old and in poor health) was as pugnacious as ever.

On the scholarly front, Erasmus was involved in two major controversies during this period. The first involved the flare-up of an earlier controversy with the German humanist Heinrich Eppendorf, whom Erasmus believed was responsible for causing a split between himself and Ulrich von Hutten some five years earlier. Despite an out-of-court settlement of their dispute, Erasmus and Eppendorf continued to spar in a pamphlet battle that continued for another two years. Clearly this was an annoyance for Erasmus, but the stakes paled in comparison to the controversy that emerged in France over the reception of his *Ciceronian Dialogue*, which threatened his reputation and prestige there. At issue was a perceived slight of Guillaume Budé, arguably France's leading classical scholar. A number of letters to scholars both inside and outside of France show Erasmus engaging in what today we might call "damage control."

Erasmus had good reason not to alienate his supporters in France, considering that during this time the most threatening attacks on his religious views were emanating from Paris, especially its university's faculty of theology. The faculty had already condemned his *Colloquies* and *Paraphrases on the New Testament*, and since 1525 he had been engaged in a bitter controversy directly with the faculty's executive officer Noël Bédá. References to this controversy abound in these letters, which include letters he exchanged with the French nobleman Louis de Berquin, a supporter of both Erasmus and Luther who would be executed for heresy the following year. Similar controversies over religion during this period include a brush with the Spanish Inquisition which was quickly withdrawn, and with the Italian Prince Alberto Pio. All of these controversies continued, in some form, well beyond 1528.

It is surprising, engaged as he was in so many controversies, that Erasmus had any time left for scholarship. During this period he was making progress on the monumental edition of the works of Saint Augustine, though he noted more than once that "the work is killing me." Likewise, he was working on an

edition of Seneca to correct a defective edition that had been published in his name over a decade before. Both editions were in circulation the following year.

Scholars have long come to expect the highest scholarly standards of translation and annotation from the Collected Works of Erasmus series, and this volume certainly does not disappoint. Anyone who has tried to translate Erasmus's Latin will marvel at the skill and talent displayed here to render it into good, idiomatic English. Likewise, learned references on every single page reveal commitment both to scholarly rigour and to a generosity of spirit to readers who would otherwise have no way of making heads or tails of the letters. An added value to this volume is an appendix on the monetary policies of Henry VIII by John Munro—both a useful piece in its own right for understanding coinage debasement under Henry, and an aid to understanding financial transactions from England recorded in the letters.

This volume, together with Volume 13, will certainly satisfy even a Gargantuan appetite for *Erasmiana* in English. One can only hope that scholars will continue to be so well fed in the near future.

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### **Farel, Guillaume.**

***Traité messins, tome 1 : Oraison très dévotte 1542, Forme d'oraison 1545, textes établis par Reinhard Bodenmann et Françoise Briegel, annotés par Olivier Labarthe.***

Travaux d'Humanisme et Renaissance, 459. Genève: Droz, 2009. 411 p. ISBN 978-2-600-01328-4 (relié) 96 €

Guillaume Farel (1489–1565) est un acteur majeur de la réforme protestante dans les pays francophones au XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle, mais sa production imprimée a été négligée, voire oubliée au cours des siècles, effacée en quelque sorte par celle de Jean Calvin, son collègue et ami. Une entreprise d'édition critique de ses œuvres complètes commence avec le présent volume ; on s'en réjouit pour notre connaissance de l'histoire religieuse et littéraire du XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle. L'introduction générale annonce les principes de cette vaste entreprise, qui vise à satisfaire les historiens du livre, de la langue et des idées ; elle est suivie des « Règles