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**Erasmus, Desiderius and Martin Luther. The Battle Over Free Will**

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and previous editions, its variants, and finally other useful details that explain the genesis and the meaning of the text.

Eisenbichler's monograph on Virginia Martini Salvi and his edition of her poetry bring back into scholarly circulation and discussion the life and work of a very prolific and politically engaged woman writer from sixteenth-century Italy. As such, it also serves as an inspiration and model for future research on other Renaissance women poets still waiting to be rediscovered and studied.

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### **Erasmus, Desiderius and Martin Luther.**

#### ***The Battle Over Free Will.***

Ed. Clarence H. Miller, trans. Clarence H. Miller and Peter Macardle, intro. James D. Tracy. Indianapolis / Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 2012. Pp. xxviii, 355. ISBN 978-1-60384-547-2 (paperback) \$16.95.

The confrontation in print from 1524 to 1527 between Desiderius Erasmus and Martin Luther over fundamental issues of Christian theology and Church authority, centred on free will, has of course appeared in English translation from Latin before, in its entirety and in selections such as this one apparently designed for student use. Here Clarence H. Miller translates selections from the standard critical edition of Luther's *De servo arbitrio* (WA) and reprints excerpts from two volumes of *Collected Works of Erasmus* (CWE vols. 76 and 77), edited by Charles Trinkaus, to which Miller himself made substantial contributions: in CWE Peter Macardle translates Erasmus's opening challenge to Luther, *De libero arbitrio diatribe sive collatio* (*A Discussion of Free Will*) and Miller translates Erasmus's two-book reply to Luther's response, *Hyperaspistes* (*A Warrior Shielding a Discussion of Free Will Against The Enslaved Will*). The original CWE annotations are a collaboration of the translators and editor, but Miller has carefully revised them for his new readership, supplying, for instance, new page numbers cross-referencing citations by Erasmus and Luther of their opponent's arguments. The notes are not overwhelming in number but aid the neophyte on points of theology, and they delight in pointing out sarcastic glances at the opponent's publications.

For Miller's selections of the debate, distinguished Erasmian scholar James D. Tracy offers a clear and lively introduction that sets the scene with a brief overview of the intellectual formation and position of each opponent. Though both sixteenth-century theologians agree to limit their arguments to Scripture in order to establish a common ground, Tracy identifies issues of biblical exegesis, divine grace, and original sin as central to their differences of opinion on free will and necessity. Miller selects their main arguments, omitting introductions, perorations, lists of scriptures (most are mentioned explicitly in the arguments themselves), and much sheer rhetorical positioning and invective. Still, incompatible personalities and styles come through—in Luther's dogmatic assertions of God's inscrutable gift of grace in the face of his earlier, very personal despair as a sinner, and in Erasmus's skeptical comfort with probability in place of logical certainty, respect for the interpretive authority of the Church, pastoral pragmatism (why tell Christians that their good works make no difference?), and search for a middle way. While Erasmus reads Scripture in the light of reason, Christian fellowship, and Church continuity, Luther (in Miller's new translation) powerfully hammers home his points in a tightly organized argument, appealing to grammatical and logical principles as well as to Scripture.

Subtitles of their arguments, added by Miller, highlight the difference in their styles and aid the reader in tracing Erasmus's responses—in discursive, defiantly copious, and increasingly rambling prose—to Luther's carefully ordered arguments. Miller's "An Outline of All Three Works," with excerpts in boldface, helps the attentive reader see how the selected text fits into the total argument. My only quibble with this otherwise useful edition is that the lack of ellipses in the text itself, to signal many, quite long, omissions, may give inattentive readers the impression that they have mastered the entire debate.

Serious scholars of Luther and Erasmus may look in vain for some passages that differentiate the exegetical methods of these two biblical experts (Luther the greater master of Hebrew, Erasmus of Greek and the Church Fathers, according to Tracy). Missing from this selection, for instance, are Luther on "Erasmus' use of tropes in interpreting Scripture" and Erasmus (in *Hyperaspistes*) on audience, "expedience," the "value of ordinary human speech in theology," and the "use of figures of speech in Scripture." The average student will still be overwhelmed by the repetition and sheer length of the arguments

that remain, but Miller's editing is copious and apt enough to give the teacher scope for a further judicious selection.

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**Feigenbaum, Gail and Sybille Ebert-Schifferer (eds.).**

***Sacred Possessions: Collecting Italian Religious Art, 1500–1900.***

Issues and Debates. Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2011. Pp. vii, 248. ISBN 978-1-60606-042-1 (paperback) \$30.

*Sacred Possessions* is an impressive, even sprawling, anthology of essays on the collecting of Italian Renaissance religious art ca.1500–1900. The organization of the book is both thematic and roughly chronological. Fourteen chapters are organized into three parts: “Aesthetics of the Sacred,” “Instruments of Faith and Passion,” and “Aesthetic Devotion.” The collection—proceedings of a 2007 conference in Rome—is decidedly a book for specialists, but the potential audience is varied. It will be of interest to scholars whose research encompasses the collecting and afterlife of Italian religious art, to be sure, but, due to the chronological and methodological scope of the essays, it will also appeal to scholars of Renaissance and Baroque art (part 1), those interested in the history of collecting more generally, particularly in the establishment of private collections of religious art both real and imagined (part 2), and readers interested in the roots of the modern cult of art in the long nineteenth century (part 3).

The scholarship is of a uniformly high calibre, and the editors have done their job. The first chapter, Brenda Deen Schildgen's “Cardinal Paleotti and the *Discorso intorno alle imagini sacre e profane*,” roots the redirection of religious art into secular economies of exchange firmly in sixteenth-century thought. Schildgen points out that Paleotti, while claiming that truly sacred art is possessed of the potential to inspire spiritual knowledge, also allowed for differentiation in the reception of religious art. By focusing on *diletto* (enjoyment) as a virtue that appeals on three ascending levels of the sensual, rational, and spiritual, and by situating the coordinates of its perception in the merits of the viewer as well as the artwork, Paleotti accounts for a diversity of audiences and contexts for religious art, including profane ones. Early modern theory might