Renaissance and Reformation
Renaissance et Réforme

Erasmus, Desiderius. The Correspondence of Erasmus: Letters 2803 to 2939. Trans. Clarence H. Miller, with Charles Fantazzi. Annot. James M. Estes

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Volume 43, numéro 3, été 2020

URI : https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1075313ar
DOI : https://doi.org/10.33137/rr.v43i3.35331

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Éditeur(s)

Iter Press

ISSN

0034-429X (imprimé)
2293-7374 (numérique)

Découvrir la revue

Citer ce compte rendu

Regier, W. (2020). Compte rendu de [Erasmus, Desiderius. The Correspondence of Erasmus: Letters 2803 to 2939. Trans. Clarence H. Miller, with Charles Fantazzi. Annot. James M. Estes]. *Renaissance and Reformation / Renaissance et Réforme*, *43*(3), 305–307. https://doi.org/10.33137/rr.v43i3.35331

Erasmus's human side pokes through in this volume, as when discussing the propriety of joking. He distinguishes between jokes that are "learned and seasoned with wit" and those that reflect "tasteless festivity" or "arouse silly laughter" (193–95).

The modern editor's textual apparatus often highlights articles and books suitable for more detailed discussion of salient topics. This tome is aimed at the specialist and is not particularly useful for pastors.

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https://doi.org/10.33137/rr.v43i3.35330

Erasmus, Desiderius.
***The Correspondence of Erasmus: Letters 2803 to 2939.* Trans. Clarence H. Miller, with Charles Fantazzi. Annot. James M. Estes.**
Collected Works of Erasmus in English 20. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2020. Pp. xxiv, 364 + 13 ill. ISBN 978-1-4875-0585-1 (hardcover) $225.

Volume 20 of the *Collected Works of Erasmus* (*CWE 20*) translates volume 10, pages 213–395, of P. S. Allen, Helen Allen, and H. W. Garrod's *Erasmi Epistolae* (Oxford 1941). *CWE 20* approaches the completion of the long, painstaking project of making that extraordinary edition available in English; one volume of letters and a cumulative index remain to be published. *CWE 20* includes 166 letters, 68 by Erasmus, some no longer than notes. The volume covers correspondence between May 1533 and May 1534, a dark year for Erasmus but a productive one.

Working from home while his world collapsed around him, Erasmus felt himself dying. He heard rumours he was dead. In June 1533, he had pain in his feet, shins, knees, and hips, and in August took a turn for the worse. By November, with his house infested by fleas, he wrote, "I am old, sickly, worn out." In February 1534, he suffered "unbearable pain" lasting for days. At times pain left him paralyzed. Despite it, he kept up with his correspondence and friendships. He entertained house guests who stayed a few days or a few months. He published the *Purgatio* (his last smack at Luther) and two capstone works: the *Liber de sarcienda ecclesiae concordia*, his appeal for concord of creeds; and

a work whose time had come, *De praeparatione ad mortem*. To these last two, he appended letters.

Erasmus was again "buried in letters," "inundated with letters": letters carrying news, bearing receipts, wheedling for favours; letters posing problems he was supposed to solve, troubles he was supposed to stop; stacks of letters awaiting reply. He did what he could, though his gouty hand was scarcely able to hold a pen. When necessary, he dictated.

Chief correspondents were his banker, Erasmus Schets, and his favoured printer, Bonifacius Amerbach. He got fan mail, piles of it; *CWE 20* has a fawning example (Ep. 2811). He received a letter from Mary of Hungary, regent of the Netherlands, inviting him to return home, and with it she offered a pension and travel expenses (Ep. 2820). He wished to accept, but his health forbade it. *CWE 20* includes Sir Thomas More's last surviving letter to Erasmus (Ep. 2831), first published with *De praeparatione ad mortem*, and Erasmus's confidential letter to James V, King of Scotland (Ep. 2886), on a matter of "overwhelming importance to the tranquillity of your kingdom." In a personal letter, a father in Cologne thanked Erasmus for reporting a prodigal son (Ep. 2894); a later letter from the oblivious son asked Erasmus for a letter of recommendation (Ep. 2910). Some letters he answered, some he ignored.

Letters in *CWE 20* complain about problems with letters. Forged letters appeared, asking for money or hospitality, or saying things Erasmus would not say. Letters arrived already opened or were intercepted by enemies. Letters were bought and sold, arrived late, or not at all. Surviving letters allude to at least 270 other letters that no longer exist. Other letters survive only because someone published them; twelve letters in *CWE 20* were first published by Erasmus himself; nineteen were first published in the Allens' edition. Trusted messengers carried letters but also carried messages for ears alone, messages too private to risk putting to paper (Ep. 2886).

The letters of *CWE 20* were translated by Clarence H. Miller, who died when nearly done. Final work was by Charles Fantazzi, and it is all good. The letters are as clear in English as they are in Latin, in places even clearer. A chronological register and twelve-page name, place, and title index are thorough and dependable.

CWE 20 offers more than a reliable translation. The Allens enhanced the twelve-volume *Erasmi Epistolae* with twenty-eight appendices, addressing questions posed by the correspondence. *CWE 20* has two appendices: the first

documents a contested trust Erasmus funded for the Collegium Trilingue in Louvain (Allens' appendix 23); the second applies current medical knowledge to identify, with caution, Erasmus's ailments by their modern names.

James M. Estes's notes are excellent, even indispensable. Without them, many letters would be nested mysteries. Estes's introduction places the letters in their stormy historical context. When the volume appeared in the Allens' *Epistolae*, Europe was at war. Appearing in the midst of an international pandemic, *CWE 20* should be received with heightened sympathy for Erasmus's failing health and for his efforts to labour through it.

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Fadda, Elisabetta.
Come in un rebus: Correggio e la Camera di San Paolo.
Biblioteca dell'Archivum Romanicum, Series 1, vol. 485. Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 2018. Pp. 104 + 56 ill. ISBN 978-88-222-6582-1 (paperback) €25.

"When faced with a sight we do not recognize, we call it an enigma. This is the case for the *Camera di San Paolo* painted in Parma by Antonio Allegri, known as Correggio," writes Elisabetta Fadda on the book flap of her 2018 study, *Come in un rebus: Correggio e la Camera di San Paolo.* Her statement alludes not only to the challenge of interpreting the meaning of the room's appearance, but also to the history of scholars who described the room as a puzzle with no solution. Indeed, Cecil Gould, Roberto Longhi, Erwin Panofsky, and E. H. Gombrich all discussed the near impossibility of deciphering its meaning. More recently, David Ekserdjian devoted a chapter to the *Camera* in his monograph on Correggio (1999), in which he relegates earlier attempts at interpreting the room to "over-ingenious sophistry" (88) and states that, "in the midst of this often confused and confusing mass of critical erudition, the charm of the frescoes gets overlooked" (88).

What makes Elisabetta Fadda's attempt at deciphering the *Camera*'s program successful is that, rather than start her analysis by framing it squarely on the frescoes, she sets out to examine what factors came together to facilitate