

*Erasmii Opera Omnia VI-10: Annotationes in Novum Testamentum (Pars Sexta).*  
Desiderius Erasmus.

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This latest and last volume of *ordo* 6 of the Amsterdam edition of Erasmus's *Opera Omnia* comprises his *Annotationes* to the pastoral letters of Paul to Timothy and Titus; the letter to the Hebrews; the letters of Peter, James, John, and Jude; and the Apocalypse. The editor, Mme. M. L. van Poll-van de Lisdonk, who edited the preceding volume as well, acknowledges her immense debt to Andrew J. Brown's superb critical edition of these texts in Erasmus's *Novum Testamentum* in this same series. In the preface to the first edition of his *Novum Testamentum*, which he had entitled *Novum Instrumentum*, he states that Erasmus had added annotations of his own in order to show the reader what changes he had made in his translation and why, and to explain anything that might be complicated, ambiguous, or obscure. Often he corrects errors in the translation of the Greek or converts the simple and sometimes incomprehensible language of the Vulgate into a more lucid and precise Latin. The annotations were for the most part grammatical comments, but these often led to theological discussions.

As is the usual practice of *ordo* 6 of the edition, the final 1535 text is printed in full while the variants of all five editions are signaled within the text by the use of the sigla A, B, C, D, and E, with the more substantial divergences printed in the apparatus criticus. The *Annotationes* were published separately from the *Novum Testamentum*, in which the Greek text that Erasmus had established and his own translation were printed in parallel columns. The individual annotations are always linked to a word or passage from the Vulgate, which Erasmus continued to regard as the official sanctioned version of the Church, but in the commentary he elucidates his own new translation. At times it may be a single word or phrase that is glossed, as in 1 Timothy 1:2. Here Timothy is called in the original Greek *gnesion teknon* (genuine, or true, son), which the Vulgate translates as *dilectus filius* (beloved son). Erasmus substitutes the adjective *germanus*, the true equivalent of the Greek. In one famous passage, the so-called *comma Johanneum* (1 John 5:7), Erasmus eliminated the Vulgate passage altogether in the first two editions since it was not present in any of the Greek manuscripts at his disposal. He later

reinserted it under pressure, but continued to express his doubts in his annotations. Van de Lisdonk provides an illuminating discussion of the question in her notes to the passage.

Erasmus fortifies his interpretations throughout with his customary arsenal of quotations from the fathers of the church and medieval and humanist commentaries. Of the Greek fathers he makes frequent reference to John Chrysostom's homilies on the epistles — availing himself of various Latin translations since the Greek edition did not appear until 1529 — and to his disciple, Theophylact. Among the Latin fathers he cites Augustine almost 100 times and Jerome more than 200 times, as the author informs us. To these he added such medieval commentators as Hugh of St. Cler and Nicolas of Lyra, whom he cites merely to ridicule. He was not kind either to Thomas Aquinas, regretting his ignorance of Greek and frequent distortion of the sense to support Church dogma. For the so-called Catholic epistles he had access to very few sources and relied heavily on the commentaries of Bede the Venerable, put at his disposal by the Franciscan friars. One of the major benefits of the edition is the location of the thousands of citations, each and every one of which van Lisdonk has traced to their sources, an immense achievement in itself. In addition, she makes reference to modern scriptural exegetical works like the Wordsworth-White edition of the Vulgate and Bruce Metzger's authoritative *Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*. Her annotations to Erasmus's *Annotations* are an invaluable aid for the comprehension of this epoch-making work. Of the ten volumes of this part of Erasmus's opus only the first volume of the *Novum Testamentum* remains to be completed. These meticulously edited works are an incomparable resource for the study both of Erasmus and of the New Testament.

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