

Opera omnia Desiderii Erasmi Roterodami, Ordinis noni tomus sextus: Polemics with Alberto Pio of Carpi. Desiderius Erasmus.

Ed. C. L. Heesakkers. *Erasmi Opera Omnia IX-6*. Leiden: Brill, 2015. xiv + 760 pp. \$235.

Erasmus's controversy with Alberto Pio, prince of Carpi, which lasted for six years, was notable for its sustained virulence. Unlike previous opponents, Pio, a diplomat of international renown and a member of the papal court, was a particularly dangerous foe. Word had reached Erasmus that he was being accused in high circles in Rome of being the source of Luther's views. Erasmus wrote at first a very polite, deferential letter to Pio, dated 10 October 1525, urging him to desist from attacking him. Pio's *Responsio Paraenetica* (Exhortatory response), which did not arrive until almost a year later, was a very lengthy refutation (ninety-nine folios in its first printing) of statements made by Erasmus in his letter, and an exhortation to condemn Luther. In his *Responsio* Erasmus mocks Pio's faulty arguments, gullibility, and inanity, and categorically denies having any sympathies with Luther's doctrines. The next round was a huge work of Pio's in twenty-three books, enlarging on his previous response, which he continued to work on until his death in January of 1531. Despite his reluctance to "wrestle with ghosts," quoting from his own *Adages*, Erasmus felt he had no alternative but to answer the multiple charges made against him. It is a merciless counterblast, to which he gave the scornful title, translated into English in volume 84 of *The Collected Works of Erasmus* as "The Apology of Desiderius Erasmus of Rotterdam Against the Patchworks of Calumnious Complaints by Alberto Pio, Former Prince of Carpi, Whom, Although Elderly and Terminally Ill and Better Suited for Any Other Undertaking, Certain Ill-Starred Men Have Clandestinely Incited to Enact This Farce." It must be remembered that Erasmus was one who would never remain silent when accused of impiety, either by the living or the dead. A year later he made reply to the index of the book, which he had not seen previously, refuting a total of 122 items out of the 500 that were listed.

All four works by Erasmus — the initial monitory letter, the *Responsio*, the *Apologia*, and the *Brevissima Scholia* — are edited in this forty-fifth volume of the *Opera Omnia* of Erasmus by Chris Heesakkers with the extraordinary accuracy and thoroughness that characterize this most worthy scholarly enterprise. The critical text is preceded by an informative introduction, describing the events and additional personalities involved in the dispute — in particular, Agostino Steuco, Girolamo Aleandro, and Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda — and summing up the content of both Pio's and Erasmus's contributions to the debate. The text of Erasmus's initial letter is identical with that published in Allen's edition of Erasmus's correspondence, with further variants. The text of the *Responsio* is based on the Froben editio princeps (Basel, 1529), and the base text for the *Apologia* is the Froben editio princeps (Basel, 1531). The *Scholia* were first published by Erasmus with three other short works in 1532 and are here reprinted for the first time since then, although they appeared in English translation in volume 84 of the Toronto Erasmus in 2005.

The exhaustive commentary to these four works is at least four or five times longer than the text, for the reason that it is the general practice of ASD, as the edition is called, not simply to cite sources by chapter and verse, as it were, but to print the entire citation, which is often quite lengthy, in Latin or Greek or occasionally in the Hebrew of the Masoretic text of the Old Testament. Heesakkers also regularly cites excerpts from Pio's treatises at some length in order to provide a better understanding of Erasmus's responses. There is no lack of citations from those works of Erasmus that elucidate the argument, especially in the apologies against Zúñiga, Noël Béda, Edward Lee, the Spanish monks assembled at Valladolid in 1527 who charged him with heresy, and the Paris faculty of theology. Then there are the usual innumerable citations from the fathers of the church, both Greek and Latin, from classical and later authors, and from modern sources of all sorts. In addition, there are numerous historical, biographical, linguistic, and rhetorical notes that aid in the comprehension of the complicated issues of the debate. Thanks to the two prestigious projects of ASD and the Toronto Complete Works of Erasmus, this great figure of the Northern Renaissance is becoming more and more comprehended by the modern world.

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