

Desiderius Erasmus: a spoiler of the Roman Catholic tradition?

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Abbreviations

Allen	P.S. Allen, ed <i>Opus epistolarum Des. Erasmi Roterodami</i> (Oxford 1906-58)
ASD	<i>Opera omnia Des. Erasmi Roterodami</i> (Amsterdam 1969-)
CWE	<i>The Collected Works of Erasmus</i> (Toronto 1974-)
Ep	Epistle
Holborn	<i>Desiderius Erasmus Roterodamus. Aüsgewahlte Werke</i> , ed. H. and A. Holborn (Munich, 1933)
LB	<i>Opera omnia Des. Erasmi Roterodami</i> , ed. J. LeClerc, 10 vols. (Lugdunum Batavorum, 1703-1706)
Opera	<i>Omnium operum divi Eusebii Hieronymi Stridonensis tomus primus [-nonus]</i> (Basel: 1516)

Introduction

Desiderius Erasmus (Rotterdam, 1469 – Basel, 12 July 1536) is known for his famous and influential works. In the 16th century he became one of the greatest humanists in Northern Europe. His publication of the revised version of the New Testament in Greek in 1516 meant a revolutionary breakthrough in the field of theology. Although some of his views were radical for the age – he pleaded for religious tolerance in an intolerant era –, others were more moderate which can be seen in his notion of free will. This notion on tolerance should be seen as a major source for the more advanced thoughts on tolerance in later periods. The young Erasmus started his career in the Low Countries, but later spent his life also in France, England, Germany and Italy. During the age of Renaissance humanist intellectuals shared thoughts and influenced each other in many ways. Erasmus was no exception as is evident in his relations with his English friends John Colet and Thomas More. The first chapter will serve as an introduction to developments in Erasmus' thoughts. We will discover his views on classical culture and Christianity, especially his relation to the *bonae litterae* (classical literature) and *sacrae litterae* (biblical literature). For this enterprise we will treat a number of passages from his works which will elucidate the distinct perspective Erasmus has taken towards these writings.

By virtue of his great character Erasmus was able to make friends on several occasions. However, he also made some enemies with his sometimes revolutionary thoughts. The aim of this thesis is to demonstrate some of the most distinguished charges against Erasmus. Four important figures will form the points of discussion: Alberto Pio III, Diego López de Zúñiga, Noël Beda and Julius Caesar Scaliger. The reason for choosing these four scholars is because of the particularity of their objections towards Erasmus. Their main charge against Erasmus is that he tends to depict traditional theology as outdated in some respects. Alberto Pio III is from Italy, Diego López de Zúñiga is a Spaniard, Noël Beda is a Frenchman and Julius Caesar Scaliger is also from France with Italian descent. It is known that they enjoyed important positions in their own academic milieus. By looking at these reactions and relating them to each other, one gets a clear picture of the various accents within the controversies. All four responses towards Erasmus are from a similar time span which makes them fruitful to compare Erasmus' humanism¹ with the humanism of his contemporaries. This thesis is meant to present the gradations within humanism and to relate them to each other in the end.

The second chapter will begin with the discussion of the Spanish humanist Diego López de Zúñiga (died 1531 in Naples). The controversy between Erasmus and López de Zúñiga was one of the longest. In his *Annotationes* against Erasmus from 1520 López de Zúñiga attacked Erasmus on several points concerning the translation of the Greek New Testament. Erasmus was certainly not alone in establishing a new revised version of the New Testament in Greek. López de Zúñiga served as an editor of the Complutensian Polyglot Bible project, which was meant to establish a revised trilingual version of the whole Bible. Due to disagreements between the Spanish editor and the Dutchman, a controversy on philological matters began. It expanded into a debate on theological and ethical grounds. Erasmus' views on philology were obviously different than Zúñiga's. The former tried to revive the tradition on which the study of the Bible was based, whereas the latter preferred the long

¹ See page 5-7 for an explanation of the term 'humanism.'

established tradition. Since Christianity was constantly evolving, traditions of biblical studies had also to be revised. Therefore Erasmus' goal was to prepare the way for a kind of pious Christianity which was more in harmony with contemporary conditions of life. He tried to give Christians access to Scripture without being extravagantly concerned with current doctrinal vexations. Nevertheless, the construction of the Complutensian Bible was more profound than Erasmus' Greek New Testament. Erasmus even made use of it to improve his own version.

The third chapter is devoted to Noël Beda's dispute with Erasmus. Beda was a French theologian (1470 – January 8, 1537). He is best known for his defences against what he deemed revolutionary humanistic trends, which were in opposition to the orthodox teachings. His *Annotationes* from 1526, directed against Erasmus, treats several cases by which he refutes Erasmus' opinions. Though Beda and Erasmus were rivals, they shared some things in common. Like Erasmus, who was attacked by Catholics and Protestants, Beda had to live out his last years in exile from the Faculty of Theology of Paris. Both wanted to reform Christian society in a certain manner. Where Beda's ideal of reform went back to traditions which had developed in the Middle Ages, Erasmus concentrated his endeavours on the needs of present circumstances. Beda perceived Erasmus to be a rhetorician, considering him a person not worthy being a legitimate discussion partner. In Beda's eyes, people like Erasmus undermined the sense of Christian development. Beda was not against developments as long as they complemented and elucidated the Catholic tradition. So called improvements could lead to heretic-like inventions which in turn would result in unnecessary difficulties. Beda's views strongly resembled the ideals of the Counter-Reformation. With his linguistic approach, Erasmus lay out the potential for individuals to be critical and independent in their understanding of Christianity, whereas Beda pleaded for the preservation of the *status quo* and loyalty to the tradition.

The fourth chapter will shed light on the disputation between Erasmus and Alberto Pio III, Prince of Carpi (23 July 1475 – 1531). Pio was an Italian prince, known as a favourer of art, literature and education. He was not a professional humanist, but a learned Italian layman who made critical remarks on Erasmus' *Novum Instrumentum*, and in particular the *Paraphrases*, *Enchiridion* and *Moriae encomium*. In 1531 Pio published his folio volume work (*Libri XXIII*), which was printed posthumously. In this work Pio attempted to combine his early arguments with more recent rationales in order to refute Erasmus' thoughts permanently. He had claimed that Erasmus' theological and ethical beliefs approached those of Luther. Erasmus' main response was that Pio was not careful in his critiques. In the past Erasmus had already replied to similar charges, for instance to Beda, Zúñiga and other Spanish monks. Like Zúñiga, Pio attempted to publish his own revised version of the New Testament. Various circumstances prevented him from achieving his goals. It is known that he had a good control of ancient languages like Erasmus did, sometimes even more profound than his fellow Dutchman. Like Beda he was forced to maintain the *status quo*, since he had strong ties with the papal quarter and other aristocrats. Pio's loyalty to Rome is evident in his writings since he tries to refute every antipapal allegation made by Erasmus. Just like Beda, Pio can be regarded as a forerunner of the Counter-reformation.

The fifth chapter will be a discussion of the last figure: Julius Caesar Scaliger (April 23, 1484 – October 21, 1558). He initially served as a soldier, and respectively became a medical expert, physician and philosopher later on. In the year 1528 Scaliger became a French citizen, while residing in the town Agen. In 1531, he published his *Oratio pro M. Tullio Cicerone contra Des. Erasmusum* which was meant as an attack on Erasmus' *Ciceronianus*. With his *Ciceronianus* Erasmus had attacked Cicero's standard for rhetorical style, which was being used in a corrupted way. Erasmus' criticism of

Aristotle, whom he depicted as a philosopher used by humanist contemporaries with much adulation, led to another dispute. According to Scaliger, Erasmus insulted, alongside Italian culture, the Christian piety (albeit in an indirect way) by attacking Cicero and other Italian pagan heroes. In 1537 Scaliger's second *Oratio*, titled *Adversus Des. Erasmi Roterod. Dialogum Ciceronianum oratio secunda* was published which was meant as an affirmation of his views in his previous oration. Both orations contain both stylistic and religious elements, in which Scaliger displayed his unpleasant and ineffectual character. He praised Aristotle for his contribution to Christianity, and placed Plato on a lower level. He blamed the Church Fathers since they had placed Cicero into the background while ignoring his importance. Scaliger was a traditionalist and, at the same time, a modernist in orientation, a position which places him in an interesting spotlight. He contributed much to contemporary progressive thoughts while defending the tradition to which he belonged.

The thesis will end with a conclusion in which the various charges against Erasmus will be related to each other. It will be made evident that Erasmus' way of thinking led to the charge of being a heretic, not only in Italy but also for instance in France and Spain. Sometimes he was depicted as a companion of Luther, and not without reason: Erasmus tried to make "purified" Scripture available to theologians, anticipating and influencing Luther's demand for a socially broader return to Scripture. However, Erasmus' thinking differed from that of Luther. There was much ignorance of Erasmus' genuine views towards humanism among humanistic scholars since so many reactions unfolded against this Dutch scholar. After all, every humanist worked and taught in a specific context which would not remain without compromises: the Renaissance, the rebirth of classical art and literature, had to take place in respect to the (religious) tradition in which the scholar was acting.

Humanism and scholasticism in the Renaissance period should not be seen as separate categories since "the sixteenth century did not necessarily see the two as incompatible."² Nevertheless, the divergence between Erasmus and many of his contemporaries is well present. The scholastic theologians were clearly defending the linear historical view of both Bible and Church tradition, whereas Erasmus held a classical cyclical view of history. The Dutchman's intention was not to ignore the established scholastic tradition, but to be observant as regards the old Christian and pre-Christian writings. This attitude was so revolutionary that it drew the attention of other humanists in Europe, which led to various counterattacks. The writings of the Dutchman undermined the notion of a linear development in time, the development of the centuries-old orthodox tradition. Erasmus perceived history to be a sacred history, just like Scripture was perceived as sacred literature. Therefore he pleaded for a rewritten representation of this sacred history, which was more important than the sole classical pagan history.³ The scholastic theologians, who were loyal to the traditional scholasticism – the theology and philosophy of medieval universities – , felt that they were attacked by him since in their eyes he regarded their perspective on history as often inaccurate and outdated. In general terms, humanists invented historiography and new methods by which history could be approached with more objectivity.⁴ To a certain extent, Erasmus was different from these humanists since he "personified the mixture of medieval and modern ways of thinking and living."⁵ His humanism represents a "transition from "sacred" to "learned" as the grounds for personal

2 Jensen, K. (1990). *Rhetorical Philosophy and Philosophical Grammar: Julius Caesar Scaliger's Theory of Language*. Munich: Fink, p.186.

3 Pabel, H.M. (2000). "Retelling the History of the Early Church: Erasmus's "Paraphrase on Acts"," *Church History* 69, No. 1 (Mar., 2000), p.64.

salvation.”⁶ The humanists who still largely stood in the tradition of scholasticism, felt that they had to adopt some of the new humanists’ methods in order to counterattack their opponents. Scholastic theologians felt that they could sometimes use the same principal authorities and philological flattery and cite Christian writers in a modest way.

As I said earlier, scholasticism and humanism should not be seen as each other’s enemies. Humanist scholars were not always radical reformers, and scholastic theologians were not always opposed to new developments. Neither of them declared that their own enterprises could account for “the totality of human knowledge.”⁷ They did not try to demolish each other. There were similarities as well as dissimilarities. The newly arisen humanistic enterprises challenged religious and secular institutions, which were forced to respond to these new trends. Traditional theologians perceived the Christian past as holy and attempted to act in line with it. They felt that humanist scholars had no right to claim that their newly acquired methods and knowledge were superior to the scholastic *modus operandi*. Since humanist scholars developed reliable methods based on philological techniques, the present scholastic theologians rightly noticed that this meant an attack on the commentaries and methods advanced by scholastic professors.⁸ However, it was not the primary task of humanist scholars to debunk the medieval methods of reasoning and analyzing. The centuries-old scholasticism had a long tradition for approaching religious and philosophical matters. Still, in the eyes of humanist scholars scholastics held an enslaved attitude in discussing religious matters, since they acknowledged the supreme role of the Roman Catholic Church. In the long run humanist scholars developed modern philology which led to a dispute between them and the scholastics, which was provoked “by pointing to vulnerable spots in the medieval intellectual tradition.”⁹

4 Mack, C.R. (2005). *Looking at the Renaissance: Essays toward a Contextual Appreciation*. University of Michigan Press, p.105.

5 Ibid, p.117. This means that Erasmus was an important intermediary for the transition of the medieval ways of thought to more modern forms of notions. Erasmus strove for a synthesis between Renaissance and Christianity; he wanted a Renaissance of Christianity. See the first chapter for a thorough analysis of Erasmus’ thoughts.

6 Brashler, J. (2009). “From Erasmus to Calvin: Exploring the Roots of Reformed Hermeneutics,” *Interpretation* 63, No. 2 (Apr., 2009), p.161. Such an attitude was meant to broaden an individual’s knowledge of the essence of Christianity. According to Erasmus, a genuine Christian was someone who was well-educated in practical religious matters. This view would mean that privileged men, thanks to the class in which they were born, no longer were the only ones who could examine Christianity in order to benefit from it. By reading the Christian sources, each Christian could acquire his own privileged position in this world.

7 Nauret, C. G. (1998). “Humanism as Method: Roots of Conflict with the Scholastics” *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 29, No. 2 (Summer, 1998), p.428.

8 Ibid, p.437.

9 Ibid, p.438.

Within scholasticism and humanism there were also varieties. In reality, several traditions of scholasticism existed. Such divergences were due to the assigned role of the printing press, the level of education and the degree of supervision by religious authorities in the region concerned. Scholastic theologians were similar mainly in their predilection for Aristotle, as his intellectual dialectical method was attractive.¹⁰ Likewise, humanist scholars shared their main passion in pursuing the studies of the *bonae litterae*. As we will come to see, each humanist followed this trend to a different degree. One could speak of "adaptation" instead of "mere imitation", which explains the different forms of humanism in each country.¹¹ The lack of Scriptural manuscripts in several areas of Europe may have contributed to disputes among present scholars.¹² Once scholars were lagging behind in development due to lack of materials, they had no other choice except to attack more modern-thinking rivals in order to defend their own prominent role in the milieu in which they were active. Scholastic theologians particularly accepted interpretations of Scripture which were "filtered through the *Glossa ordinaria*, the comments of earlier authorities."¹³ Humanist scholars broadened the amount of authorities when it came to religious or philosophical matters. They inquired "the historical context, the rhetorical patterns and style, and the practical implications for society as well as the individual reader of the ancient authors."¹⁴ Renaissance humanism was concerned with the *studia humanitatis* and was thus distinguishable "from technical philosophy as cultivated by the Aristotelians, the Platonists and the philosophers of nature, and from the university disciplines of mathematics, medicine, law, and theology."¹⁵ Humanism was an enterprise separate from both traditional theology and the established sciences.

The purpose of this thesis is to contribute to the general understanding of scholasticism and humanism as its successor. The treated reactions should serve as a clarification of why modern humanist enterprises were perceived as competing, radical and sometimes incorrect. The scholars, presented in this thesis, have successfully left us with their writings which enables later generations to analyze them. The material used in this thesis consists mainly of secondary sources in English, while at the same time references (in Latin) are made to the original works of present and past scholars. The scope of the thesis is consciously defined, as regards time and space. The best attempts are done to present a significant part of scholarly material within a confined entirety. The main contribution of this essay is to show succinctly the various nuances within scholasticism and humanism, in view of how (Christian) history was presented by each scholar. Much research has

10 Ibid, p.430.

11 Kristeller, P.O. (1962). "The European Diffusion of Italian Humanism." *Italica* 39, No. 1 (Mar., 1962), p.14.

12 Fryde, E.B. (1983). *Humanism and Renaissance Historiography* (Hambledon Press History Series). Bloomsbury Academic. London, p.83.

13 Brashler, J. (2009). "From Erasmus to Calvin", p.162.

14 Ibid.

15 Kristeller, P.O. (1962). "The European Diffusion of Italian Humanism", p.2.

already been done concerning the relation between scholasticism and humanism. However, till now no studies have been conducted in which the various different paradigms regarding Erasmus's view and those of his opponents are discussed. In this study I will look at Erasmus and his four rivals through the lens of the linear or cyclical conception of history.¹⁶ Erasmus favoured a cyclical paradigm of history, as opposed to the linear historical view of both Bible and Church tradition, which was preferred by his four opponents discussed here. In the time of Erasmus the Renaissance period reached its culmination, which had consequences for the medieval ways of thinking. Humanists developed new methods of historiography which enabled scholars to perceive the past, present and future with different eyes. Hopefully this essay will broaden the interest in humanist and scholastic thoughts and encourage others to expand on the divergent paradigms of historiography. Though these paradigms might date from the sixteenth century, they still allow us to ponder on our present ways of looking to time periods.

16 In this respect I have considerably been influenced by two studies: Burke, P. (1969). *The Renaissance Sense of the Past*. London: Edward Arnold and O'Malley, J.W. (1968). *Giles of Viterbo on Church and Reform: A Study in Renaissance Thought*. Leiden: Brill. The concise but rich material presented in these works enables the reader to ponder on the kind of historiography that is being represented by every single scholar from the Renaissance period. It is important to be aware of a scholar's ideal of representation as regards religion, literature and history. The more scholars' thoughts are put into a specific context, the better the dissonances and harmonies between them become evident. The inquiry of the historical paradigms is headed under "philosophy of History." For an extensive study on this topic see Stanford, M. (1998). *An Introduction to the Philosophy of History*. Wiley-Blackwell, Oxford.

1. Erasmus and his relation to the *bonae litterae* and *sacrae litterae*

1.1 The initial phase

Desiderius Erasmus Roterodamus (Rotterdam, 1469 – Basel, 12 July 1536), was born as a son of a priest.¹⁷ Since his early youth he received education in a milieu which was old-fashioned, though the influence of the *Devotio Moderna* was present in reasonable degree in the Low Countries. Erasmus doesn't document about this new movement in his works, which implies that it was overall not so attractive in the theological atmosphere of the Low Countries.¹⁸ His love and talent for Latin literature and culture were already evident in his fourteenth year as he composed a poem and wrote letters in Latin.¹⁹ His bucolic poem reveals the influence of two Neo-Latin Italian contemporaries: Angelo Poliziano and Antonio Geraldini. In 1487 he was placed in the monastery Steyn near Gouda. In 1493 he departed from this monastery and found a job as a bishop's secretary. He would never again return to monastic life.

Erasmus' enthusiasm for the *bonae litterae* was high since he had a broad knowledge of classical Latin writers and Christian fathers. At this time, the printing press was not fully developed. Erasmus acquired his knowledge from several teachers. On one occasion he discovered good-quality literature which was brought to the Low Countries by Rodolphus Agricola.²⁰ Erasmus corresponded with old and new acquaintances. One of them was Cornelius Aurelius from Leiden to whom he announced his heroes from the past: Virgil, Horace, Ovid, Juvenal, Statius, Martial, Claudian, Persius, Lucian, Tibullus, Propertius, Cicero, Quintilian, Sallust and Terence.²¹ In Erasmus' perspective everyone was free to choose his own heroes, as long as it did not lead to barbarous thoughts. In earlier stages of his study Erasmus had already encountered persons whom he later called barbarians. These figures were the despisers of the *bonae litterae*. Willingly or unwillingly these men used the *bonae litterae* for wrong purposes which eventually would degenerate Christian values. Since the early Middle Ages many Christians disliked pagan writers and their works, others simply neglected these works because of laziness. These men strove for *simplicitas*, simplicity.²² "Unlettered religion

17 Augustijn, C. (1967). *Erasmus. Vernieuwer van kerk en theologie*. Het Wereldvenster, Baarn, p.24.

18 Augustijn, C. (1995). *Erasmus: His Life, Works, and Influence*. Erasmus Studies (Book 10). University of Toronto Press, p.27.

19 Heesakkers, C.L. (2002). *Erasmus tegenover het Italiaanse humanisme*. 23ste Erasmus Birthday Lecture honouring J. Kelly Sowards onder auspiciën van de Erasmus of Rotterdam Society en het Sir Thomas Browne Institute, gehouden te Leiden op 24 oktober 2002. Florivallis, p.6.

20 Ibid, p.7.

21 Ibid, p.8.

22 Augustijn, C. (1995). *Erasmus: His Life, Works, and Influence*, p.25.

has something of flabby stupidity, which is violently distasteful to those who know letters," says Erasmus.²³ According to Erasmus solecisms leads to barbarism and dubious word meanings which eventually provide us with incomprehensible Latin.²⁴

In 1520 Erasmus' work *Antibarbari* was printed. This work was meant as an attack against those who opposed the new possibilities of modern culture and embraced antiquated traditions. Here he announced his central question: "how can one, with a good conscience, be both a man of culture and a Christian?"²⁵ Erasmus had planned a journey to Italy for three times. This would probably have taken place between his seventeenth and twenty-eighth year, between 1486 and 1497.²⁶ His plan was to obtain a doctor's degree and afterwards he would spend his time on humanistic purposes. In a letter to one of his friends he explained his two aspirations: 1. to fabricate reliable text versions of Jerome, which he admired the most among the old Church Fathers; 2. to restore the tradition of biblical theology.²⁷ While he was on his way to Italy, he encountered one of Lorenzo Valla's important works in an old library: the annotations on the Vulgate of the New Testament. This discovery confirmed Erasmus' endeavour to revise the Vulgate version of the New Testament on philological grounds. This operation eventually led to the publication of the original Greek version of the New Testament in 1516. In Erasmus' view a theologian needs to be a philologist in some sense. Even when one considers grammar as belonging to the profane domain, it can still be serviceable for theology.

But I do not really believe that Theology herself, the queen of all the sciences, will be offended if some share is claimed in her and due deference shown to her by her humble attendant Grammar; for though Grammar is of less consequence in some men's eyes, no help is more indispensable than hers.²⁸

1.2 The Bible and its study

Biblical scholarship should be seen as linguistic scholarship.²⁹ With the publication of the New Testament in Greek, Erasmus tried to pave the way for publishing the Bible in the vernacular. With this the Greek language was made accessible to Latinists and the distribution of Greek literature in

23 *Antibarbari*, ASD 1-1 46:7-47:7, cited in *ibid*, p.25.

24 Erasmi, Roterodami D. (1983). *Apologia respondens ad ea quae Iacobus Lopus Stunica taxaverat in prima duntaxat Novi Testamenti aeditione*: Opera Omnia, IX-2. H.J. de Jonge (ed.). Amsterdam-Oxford, North-Holland Publishing Company, p.29.

25 Augustijn, C. (1995). *Erasmus: His Life, Works, and Influence*, p.26.

26 Heesakkers, C.L. (2002). *Erasmus tegenover het Italiaanse humanisme*, pp.11-12.

27 *Ibid*, p.15.

28 CWE Ep 182: 147-152, cited in Rummel, E. (1985). *Erasmus as a Translator of the Classics*. University of Toronto Press, p.18.

29 Augustijn, C. (1995). *Erasmus: His Life, Works, and Influence*, p.105.

Europe was being stimulated.³⁰ However, it was not Erasmus' intention to debase the word of God for the sake of abridging or paraphrasing the text.³¹ With the translation of the New Testament in Greek he made an appeal to incorporate the original sources. He maintained in his textual approach the principle of *difficilior lectio potior* (the more difficult reading is the better).³² His translation could be regarded as superior to the Vulgate: "Consider: have I not expressed the meaning more faithfully, clearly, and effectively than the old translator?"³³ Though Erasmus followed Valla by asserting that the Vulgate never could be written by Jerome since his style was different than in which the Vulgate was fixed.³⁴ Erasmus' main point was that Scripture should be clear and available to as large an audience as possible.

I absolutely disagree with those who do not want divine scriptures to be written in the vernacular by simple souls; as if Christ has taught so complicated things, that they can barely be understood by some theologians or the Christian religion must be protected by ignorance [...] I wish that all females read the Gospel, read the letters of Paul. I wish these writings were transmitted in all languages of all people, so that not only Scots or Irish, but also the Turks and Saracens could read and learn them.³⁵

In 1511 Erasmus had published his well-known *Praise of Folly*, a satire directed to daily foolishness. Between 1517 and 1524 he published his *Paraphrases*, a work which was meant to renew theology through new methods of textual criticism. In England it was even instructed that each English church should have a copy of this work. The *Paraphrases* had their effects on the practical side of Christianity. Theology would no longer be theoretical philosophy only, but also practical.³⁶ About the Greek language he even made the following remark: "For whereas we Latins have but a few small streams, a few muddy pools, the Greeks possess crystal-clear springs and rivers that run with gold."³⁷ A right knowledge of Latin and Greek could reveal to the individual a world of a specific lifestyle and world paradigm. This would only be possible if the knowledge of classical writings could be combined

30 Rummel, E. (1985). *Erasmus as a Translator of the Classics*, p.4.

31 Ibid, p.98.

32 Bentley, J.H. (1983). *Humanists and Holy Writ*, p.153.

33 *Apologia*, Holborn 170:18-19, cited in Rummel, E. (1985). *Erasmus as a Translator of the Classics*, p.98.

34 Bentley, J.H. (1983). *Humanists and Holy Writ*, p.162.

35 LB. V 140BC, cited in Augustijn, C. (1967). *Erasmus. Vernieuwer van kerk en theologie*, p.74.

36 Augustijn, C. (1995). *Erasmus: His Life, Works, and Influence*, p.194.

37 CWE Ep 149:22-24, cited in Rummel, E. (1985). *Erasmus as a Translator of the Classics*, p.3.

with the holy Christian writings. The result of this synthesis would be the betterment of the individual's morality, according to Erasmus.

From 1524 Erasmus constantly expressed his objections to Italian humanism, in which he saw a growing paganism.³⁸ Around these times he wrote his *Ciceronianus* which was meant as an attack on the Ciceronians. These Ciceronians were Latinists who wrote and thought in Cicero's tradition in a corrupted way. Heavily relying on such pagan writers would result in idolatry. The right way to use such authors lay in temperance and erudition. He even claimed once: "I do not fully share the freedom in translating authors that Cicero both allows others and (I should almost say excessively) practises himself."³⁹ By studying classical literature Erasmus tried to apply worthwhile classical elements to the Bible. Whereas scholastic theologians used the Bible to obtain certain results, Erasmus tried to provide a system for authentic existential belief where the Bible remained an essential element.⁴⁰ The old scholastics "had fallen asleep, stuck to the old ways, and went about the modern world like men in a daze."⁴¹ The tradition of the scholastic theologians had darkened Christianity and Erasmus tried to approach the Christian belief by focusing on the Bible. The tradition of the scholastic had produced stark contrasts between the past and present.⁴² Therefore a connection between the *bonae litterae* and *sacrae litterae* was needed. A synthesis between Renaissance humanism and theology is Erasmus' endeavour to eventually achieve clerical and social unity.⁴³ Since Scripture can purely be understood through language alone, a good knowledge of the ancient classical languages is needed. Erasmus once declared: "I see that it is a pinnacle of madness but to point to that part of theology which deals in particular about the sacred mysteries, unless one has also mastered the Greek."⁴⁴ In Erasmus' opinion the people of the present needed to have the Bible in the vernacular alongside a fine Latin version for academics.⁴⁵

38 Heesakkers, C.L. (2002). *Erasmus tegenover het Italiaanse humanisme*, p.27.

39 CWE Ep 188:64-66, cited in Rummel, E. (1985). *Erasmus as a Translator of the Classics*, p.32.

40 Lindeboom, J. (1982). *Het Bijbels humanisme in Nederland. Erasmus en de vroege reformatie*. Leeuwarden: Gerben Dykstra, herdruk uitgave Leiden 1913, pp.114-115.

41 Augustijn, C. (1995). *Erasmus: His Life, Works, and Influence*, p.28.

42 Eire, C.M.N. (1989). *War against the Idols: The Reformation of Worship from Erasmus to Calvin*. Cambridge University Press, p.30.

43 Augustijn, C. (1995). *Erasmus: His Life, Works, and Influence*, p.104.

44 Augustijn, C. (1967). *Erasmus. Vernieuwer van kerk en theologie*, p.71.

45 LB, IX, 783D, cited in Rummel, E. (1987). "God and Solecism: Erasmus as a Literary Critic of the Bible", *Erasmus of Rotterdam Society Yearbook 7* (1987), p.68.

Especially after 1500 Erasmus places the stress on combining the *bonae litterae* with *sacrae litterae*. The *bonae litterae* must be made subservient to Christ, Erasmus explains.⁴⁶ However, there is no difference between classical and Christian virtues; there are only different kind of virtues. Erasmus admired antiquity since in this golden period the pursuit of moderate virtues stood central. These virtues were largely neglected in the current time. Just as he tried to reconcile classical with Christian literature, he tried to create unity within society by accommodating the demands of the Church with those of laity. His work *Enchiridion Militis Christiani*, written in 1503, should be seen as a manifesto for an inclination towards the spiritual aspect of Christianity. In this work Erasmus exhorts his audience to pursue the spiritual and to renounce worldly matters.⁴⁷ This distinction between the material and spiritual betrays Platonic and Neo-Platonic influences.⁴⁸

"Theology remains the queen, the classics are in its service."⁴⁹ According to Erasmus solidarity was the cure for all kinds of miseries, starting from bagatelles to major disputes. However, with his exhortations to education in classical culture and literature, he also pleaded for individualism.⁵⁰ Considering his works in general, one discerns the type of individuality: it is individuality within community. In any case, education in classical and Christian literature and culture would help people to see new possibilities in daily life. Being a Christian should not be a matter of the degree of sacredness, but of the level of erudition.

Furthermore, Erasmus wonders how it is that men like the Stoics, Socrates, Aristotle, Epicurus, Diogenes and Epictetus lived largely after Christian values. The answer is that behind all valuable guidelines Christ's spirit was already present from early times, which refers to the logos-theology. This theology was in its older form present since the early days of Christian apologists and Fathers, and was even present among some modern Italian humanists. Its core is the notion of the presence of God's spirit since the earliest times. The most brilliant philosophers gained their insight through this spirit. However it was only with the coming of Christ that men could participate in an uncompromised harmony which was made possible by God. Christ meant the culmination of all wisdom.⁵¹

Perhaps you will find in the writings of Plato or Seneca things that do not deviate sharply from the commandments of Christ. You will find in Socrates' life things that somewhat correspond to the living Christ. But this closed circle and unconditional harmony in every regard you will find only in Christ.⁵²

46 Augustijn, C. (1967). *Erasmus. Vernieuwer van kerk en theologie*, p.85.

47 Eire, C.M.N. (1989). *War against the Idols*, p.31.

48 Idem.

49 LB. II 1053EF, cited Augustijn, C. (1967). *Erasmus. Vernieuwer van kerk en theologie*, p.88.

50 Augustijn, C. (1995). *Erasmus: His Life, Works, and Influence*, p.55.

51 Augustijn, C. (1967). *Erasmus. Vernieuwer van kerk en theologie*, p.91.

52 LB. V 91F-92B, cited in *ibid*, p.93.

With these words Erasmus makes clear that he attaches much value to the *bonae* and *sacrae litterae* at the same time. Erasmus' thoughts fit into a cyclical paradigm of history, as opposed to the linear historical view of both Bible and Church tradition. For his enterprise Erasmus goes back to the ancient sources in order to apply useful features to the later Christian writings. This method is meant as amendment of present possible degenerations within Christianity, not to refute the current methods of reasoning completely. The cyclical view holds that the whole course of life is comparable to a circle, in a way that the past may provide solutions or exhortations for present circumstances. Since the early Middle Ages till the Renaissance, theologians lay more emphasis on the linear biblical paradigm of history.⁵³ The linear paradigm puts the emphasis on a one-dimensional human history which heads to a point of perfection, where it should come to an end.⁵⁴ Erasmus' distinct paradigm would inevitably clash with the present standards, as we will see in the further chapters.

2.3 The use of humanism for society

Jerome and Origen were especially important for Erasmus, since both wanted, like him, to combine Christianity with ancient civilization.⁵⁵ Therefore Erasmus saw himself not as an original but a traditional scholar. It is even believed that Erasmus was a more critical scholar in textual and philological scholarship than for instance Jerome and Origen.⁵⁶ The proponents of scholasticism regarded Erasmus' self-proclaimed approach as misplaced modernism. Erasmus, however, like other members of biblical humanism, underscored Christ's position in Christianity. He did not reject the methods of scholasticism completely, he only could object to its superiority since a complete rejection would cause too much insurgence. He alleged about the present young theologians: "if they have given a proof of their capacity in this nonsense, they become *baccalaurei*, without ever having read the Gospels or the Epistles of Paul."⁵⁷ Opponents of the *vera theologia* would still try everything to pursue their own profits at the expense of Christianity. They regarded Erasmus' undertakings as desecration of the Bible and Church dogmas. Men like Erasmus were regarded as heretics, since there was "no difference between knowing Latin and Greek and being a heretic."⁵⁸ In Erasmus' opinion the Church was more in decay than developing positively. The focus on the sacramental, liturgical and supernatural during the Christian Middle Ages had led to the forgetting of the true human and divine

53 Burke, P. (1969). *The Renaissance Sense of the Past*. London: Edward Arnold, p.87.

54 O'Malley, J.W. (1968). *Giles of Viterbo on Church and Reform: A Study in Renaissance Thought*. Leiden: Brill, p.101.

55 Augustijn, C. (1995). *Erasmus: His Life, Works, and Influence*, p.100.

56 Bentley, J.H. (1983). *Humanists and Holy Writ*, p.143.

57 *Ratio LB. V 134F/Holborn 299:4-5*, cited in Augustijn, C. (1995). *Erasmus: His Life, Works, and Influence*, p.103.

58 Allen Epp 948:92-93, 2468:77-79, cited in Rummel, E. (1985). *Erasmus as a Translator of the Classics*, p.19.

nature in mankind.⁵⁹ Regarding Erasmus' adoption of a cyclical paradigm, the Church would become weaker and weaker as it developed in time and renounced its early sources.⁶⁰

One may suggest that Erasmus had somehow Romantic yearnings for the early times of Christianity. This Romantic desire should be seen in context: He worried about the present abuses within the Church: so called holy mortals were considered as Gods; dogmatic faith led to schisms which were regarded as heretical; writers insisted on explaining all kinds of mysteries within Christianity, whereas Christ's disciples were themselves reserved about this.⁶¹ Erasmus used "the past as a practical measure against the present."⁶² Erasmus condemned the following: the pope's power; distribution of indulgences; traditional veneration of saints; music during church services; confession practices.⁶³ These condemnations show that Erasmus' methods not only covered the theoretical field, but also practical issues. The notion of free will is a perfect example which is the result of this procedure: by applying exegetical methods to Bible passages one could support or refute such a notion.⁶⁴

Erasmus encouraged his contemporary theologians to learn Greek and Hebrew, alongside Latin. It is known that in Erasmus' time there were fewer teachers of these two languages than there were of the Latin language. Therefore "if by chance no teacher is available, the next best thing is to read authors."⁶⁵ Learning Greek was not only necessary for a thorough knowledge but it was infeasible "even to put a finger on that part of theology which is especially concerned with the mysteries of the faith unless one is furnished with the equipment of Greek."⁶⁶ Erasmus once asserted that if even evangelists made mistakes in constructing Jesus' narratives, copyists would increasingly make mistakes in their transcriptions.⁶⁷ Scripture "was full of poetical figures and parables whose translation required both a skilled philologist and a well-read interpreter."⁶⁸ For Erasmus, pagan philosophy was useful because of its used method and content. Erasmus' ideal form of explanation lies in the use of allegory: Christian sources should be read in this way since the earliest pagan

59 Lindeboom, J. (1982). *Het Bijbels humanisme in Nederland*, p.115.

60 O'Malley, J.W. (1968). *Giles of Viterbo on Church and Reform*, p.105.

61 Augustijn, C. (1967). *Erasmus. Vernieuwer van kerk en theologie*, p.67.

62 Eire, C.M.N. (1989). *War against the Idols*, p.30.

63 Allen VIII 2205. 71-123, cited in Augustijn, C. (1995). *Erasmus: His Life, Works, and Influence*, pp.159-160.

64 Augustijn, C. (1995). *Erasmus: His Life, Works, and Influence*, p.192.

65 CWE 24, 667:11-13, cited in Rummel, E. (1985). *Erasmus as a Translator of the Classics*, p.10.

66 CWE Ep 149:25-27, cited in *ibid*, p.12.

67 Bentley, J.H. (1983). *Humanists and Holy Writ*, p.142.

writings adopted this method and are up to the present day successful in conveying their true message.⁶⁹ Erasmus asserted that a thorough study of the ancient classical writers and the Bible would eventually turn his opponents into proponents.⁷⁰ Development of the spirit in classical sense meant for Erasmus: pure thinking, philosophical development (in moderate Ciceronian style) and the adoption of these in harmonious life. No further contradictions should exist between the Renaissance and Christianity. Erasmus pleaded for a Renaissance of Christianity and corrected their contents.⁷¹

68 Rummel, E. (1985). *Erasmus as a Translator of the Classics*, p.101.

69 Eire, C.M.N. (1989). *War against the Idols*, p.35.

70 Augustijn, C. (1967). *Erasmus. Vernieuwer van kerk en theologie*, pp.73-74.

71 Lindeboom, J. (1982). *Het Bijbels humanisme in Nederland*, p.116.

2. Diego López de Zúñiga and the Complutensian Polyglot Bible

2.1 The Complutensian Polyglot Bible

Diego López de Zúñiga (Jacobus Lopis Stunica in Latin) was a Spanish theologian who is known for his attacks on Erasmus and Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples (1455-1536). As a trilingual humanist he was familiar with the difficulties within the Bible. Although he had proper knowledge of the Greek, he often attempted to defend the Vulgate edition of the Bible, even in cases where it was untenable.⁷² His controversy with Erasmus began in 1519 and lasted till 1531.⁷³ Erasmus composed five apologetic writings against him.⁷⁴ Zúñiga is sometimes perceived as an unimportant critic of Erasmus. Nevertheless he is also known as 'Erasmus' most formidable critic.'⁷⁵ He was a qualified scholar in Latin, Greek, Hebrew, and even had some knowledge of Aramaic and Arabic.⁷⁶ He criticized Erasmus for his lack of knowledge of the Semitic languages Hebrew and Aramaic. Concerning Mark 5:41 he had noticed Erasmus' wrong representation of the proper name ταβιθα, which actually should be the Greek ταλιθα, the equivalent for 'little girl' in Aramaic. Erasmus had corrected this in the third edition of his New Testament.⁷⁷

Zúñiga's aim was not so to help Erasmus but to preserve the true meaning of the text of the New Testament, and if possible to demand eminence in the field of New Testament scholarship.⁷⁸ In his view Erasmus should neither doubt the centuries old Vulgate nor to publish a revised version of it in Greek.⁷⁹ In 1516 Erasmus' *Novum Instrumentum (Novum Testamentum)* reached Alcalá, the place where Zúñiga and his colleagues were working on the Polyglot Bible.⁸⁰ By 1520 Zúñiga had prepared his annotations against Erasmus and went toward Rome, where he would live out his final days.⁸¹ He discerned the indefensible character of the leaders of the Catholic Church and therefore moved to 72 Hall, B. (1998). *Humanists and Protestants, 1500-1900*. T. & T. Clark Publishers: Edinburgh, p.20. A professor named Sáenz-Badillos cites Zúñiga as 'excesivamente conservador' (overly conservative).

73 Bentley, J.H. (1983). *Humanists and Holy Writ*, p.198.

74 Erasmi, Roterodami D. (1983). *Apologia respondens*, p.13.

75 Graham, R.H. (1990). "Erasmus and Stunica: A Chapter in the History of New Testament Scholarship," *Erasmus of Rotterdam Society Yearbook* 10 (1990), p.10.

76 Idem.

77 Ibid, p.50.

78 Ibid, p.56.

79 Patrick P. & Jenkins, A.K. (2007). *Biblical Scholarship and the Church: A Sixteenth-Century Crisis of Authority*. Aldershot-Burlington, VT: Ashgate, p.60.

Rome in order to expose them the dangers which Erasmus' works would cause.⁸² Zúñiga's vexation toward Erasmus has a long development since he felt already insulted by Erasmus' *Praise of Folly* in 1511. In the initial phases of his criticisms he concentrated on philological matters, but later his accusations were of doctrinal nature. In this way he eventually attacked more of Erasmus' works: among them were *Moriae encomium*, *Ratio verae theologiae* and *Enchiridion*.⁸³ It is known that Erasmus criticized Zúñiga for his possible Jewish ancestry in order to denigrate his opponent's apologetic defence of the Catholic tradition. Thus Erasmus did not perceive Zúñiga as a true follower of Catholicism, as can be seen at some occasions.⁸⁴

Zúñiga has been considered as one of the editors of the Greek New Testament for the Complutensian⁸⁵ Polyglot Bible project.⁸⁶ The leader of the Polyglot Bible project was the Spaniard Cardinal Francisco Ximenez de Cisneros (1436–1517) who established a trilingual university in 1502. He gathered many experts from different corners of Europe in order to produce a critical edition of the New Testament. This university was meant for ecclesiastical education and its teachers and students were not uninterested in Erasmus' scholarly findings.⁸⁷ However, the Complutensian editors were different from both Erasmus and Valla in their approach towards philological questions: they noted down annotations of verb tenses, moods and references to other parts of the Bible, without detailed discussions of text versions and possible stages of textual development (matters which Erasmus and Valla did).⁸⁸ These editors choose St. Thomas Aquinas, whose annotations on the Greek

80 Coroleu, A. (2008). "Anti-Erasmianism in Spain" in *Biblical Humanism and Scholasticism in the Age of Erasmus*. Edited by Erika Rummel. [Brill's Companions to the Christian Tradition, Vol. 9.] Boston: Brill, p.75.

81 Ibid, pp.75-76; Zúñiga's annotations reached Erasmus around February 1534, as is showed in a letter to one of his friends.

82 Erasmi, Roterodami D. (1983). *Apologia respondens*, p.34.

83 Rummel, E. (1986). *Erasmus' Annotations on the New Testament: From Philologist to Theologian*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, p.125.

84 ASD 94:704-706, cited in Rummel, E. (1989), *Erasmus and His Catholic Critics*, vol I. 1515-1522. Nieuwkoop: De Graaf Publishers, p.152.

85 The adjective Complutensian is derived from the Latin Complutum (in Spanish 'Alcalá de Henares'), a city close to Madrid. See further Bentley, J.H. (1983). *Humanists and Holy Writ*, p.71.

86 See for further information *ibid*, pp.70-71; 91-93.

87 Coroleu, A. (2008). "Anti-Erasmianism in Spain", p.74. Though this interest in Erasmus was to a limited extent, since the differences in humanistic traditions didn't permit scholars to collaborate in a committed manner.

and Latin New Testament were unreliable, above Jerome as textual authority.⁸⁹ Sometimes the Latin text represented the Greek original far better than the more recent Greek versions they proposed.⁹⁰ This choice makes it evident that these men had chosen for defending the established Scholastic tradition, thus not always loyal to philological but mere theological matters. This might be one of the reasons why there was no collaboration between them and Erasmus in the end.

Zúñiga assembled and compared different Greek and Latin manuscripts for the Complutensian project and participated in establishing an interlinear Latin version of the Septuagint. The Polyglot Bible consists of three languages: Latin, Greek and Hebrew. The Latin text is in the center with the Greek and the Hebrew surrounding it. Here the Latin represented the right traditional Christianity, whereas the Greek and Hebrew stood for respectively the strayed Eastern tradition and the obsolete Judaism. There is no precise evidence which indicates Zúñiga's actual role during the whole Complutensian project.⁹¹ However we know from one of his letters that he was already active in this enterprise since 1502.⁹² The New Testament edition with the Greek and the Vulgate in parallel was already printed in 1514, only published later in 1522. The Greek New Testament compiled by Zúñiga and his colleagues was already printed in six volumes between 1514 and 1517.⁹³ During this period Erasmus' version of the Greek New Testament received its license by the pope Leo X which again led to Zúñiga's vexation. This kind of vexation should be seen as pure jealousy since there was competition among humanists too. At one point Zúñiga found Erasmus' *Novum Instrumentum* among Cardinal Ximenez' books. He explained the cardinal that this work was actually erroneous in many respects. The cardinal's reply was: "Would that all prophesied this way. If you can, produce something better, stop condemning the labours of others."⁹⁴

2.2 Some major accusations against Erasmus

Zúñiga's charges against Erasmus were directed against the consequences which Erasmus' works would cause. According to Rummel, he blamed Erasmus for the fact that he

had no respect for authority. He attacked all men indiscriminately, reviling the translator of the Vulgate, the scholastic exegetes, even the Church Fathers, describing them variously as inept, careless or manipulative.⁹⁵

88 Bentley, J.H. (1983). *Humanists and Holy Writ*, p.94.

89 Ibid, p.95.

90 Ibid, p.97.

91 Erasmi, Roterodami D. (1983). *Apologia respondens*, p.17.

92 Patrick P. & Jenkins, A.K. (2007). *Biblical Scholarship and the Church*, p.60.

93 Coroleu, A. (2008). "Anti-Erasmianism in Spain", p.74.

94 Erasmi, Roterodami D. (1983). *Apologia respondens*, p.18.

For Zúñiga a true Christian should acknowledge the authority of the Vulgate, no matter which errors it contained. These errors should never lead to the step of inventing a new translation of the New Testament. In fact, Jerome should be regarded as the highest authority when it comes to Scripture, thus Zúñiga. Jerome was commanded to produce the Vulgate on the command of a pope, who found himself in an apostolic tradition.⁹⁶ Zúñiga defended the Latin of the Vulgate for its literal representation of the Greek and the Semitisms in it. Thus he authorized the solecisms within the Vulgate.⁹⁷ Erasmus often claimed that the errors in the Vulgate were unacceptable and should be corrected, but for Zúñiga these were not errors at all, only acceptable forms within the Latin language.⁹⁸

Zúñiga perceived his version as elaborate and expansive, whereas in Erasmus' operation he only could see hastiness and inaccuracy which fitted to a typical Dutchman. In Erasmus he perceived a lack of appreciation towards Spain. For instance, Erasmus had made a comment at Romans 15:24 in his *Novum Instrumentum omne* (1516).⁹⁹ He proposed Σπανια for the right representation of the country Spain. So the Latin form "Hispania" in the Vulgate was originated from an inadequate reading of the Greek original in his view. Zúñiga asserted that variations between refined Latin and Greek were possible. He named the long chain of Spanish tradition, Spanish intellectuals such as o.a. Antonio de Lebrija and Arias Barbosa (one of his teachers). Zúñiga was able to find the alternative reading Ἰσπανία in the Complutensian version of the New Testament. Replies from Erasmus followed in which he attempted to display his innocence since he respected Spain in many respects. Now many Greek versions contain the reading Σπανια, which justifies Erasmus' proposal. Anyway, in the third edition of his *Novum Instrumentum* (1522)¹⁰⁰ Erasmus left out this remark about Spain.¹⁰¹

In general the kind of accusations within the world of upcoming humanism were connected to personal and professional prejudices among Erasmus' contemporaries.¹⁰² Erasmus' critics often used the Vulgate and the tradition of the Church Fathers to weaken his argumentations in the places where they could do so. In other situations they made ambitious use of philology in order to come up with a better explanation than Erasmus had. Zúñiga sometimes used Valla in support of his own

95 Rummel, E. (1989), *Erasmus and His Catholic Critics*, Vol I, p.165.

96 Erasmi, Roterodami D. (1983). *Apologia respondens*, p.19.

97 Ibid, p.29.

98 Graham, R.H. (1990). "Erasmus and Stunica", p.53.

99 Ibid, p.57.

100 Bentley, J.H. (1983). *Humanists and Holy Writ*, p.204.

101 Graham, R.H. (1990). "Erasmus and Stunica", p.57.

102 Bentley, J.H. (1983). *Humanists and Holy Writ*, p.199.

thoughts and on other occasions he criticized him when he could not find useful arguments in his writings which could support his own opinions.¹⁰³

There are many cases known by which Zúñiga proposed alternative readings of words or passages on the basis of Latin, Greek and Semitic languages. In his *Annotationes contra Erasmus Roterodamum in defensionem translationis Noui Testamenti* (1520) he treats 212 elaborate points concerning the New Testament.¹⁰⁴ Erasmus' response came in the next year in which he refuted all of Zúñiga's charges against him.¹⁰⁵ Zúñiga argued that the publication of *Novum Testamentum* made Erasmus guilty of inessential philological arguments and above all, it undermined Christian orthodox belief.¹⁰⁶ The following examples demonstrate well the nature of the discussions between Erasmus and Zúñiga.

One of the most renowned debates concerning the New Testament is the debate about John 1:1. Erasmus translated this opening phrase from "In principio erat verbum" to "In principio erat sermo."¹⁰⁷ He substituted "verbum" by "sermo." Zúñiga did not react extensively on this point. He only wanted to know whether the name of God was clearly attributed to Christ in the whole New Testament or not. Erasmus asserted in his *Novum Instrumentum* (Basel, 1516):

I doubt whether the name of God is anywhere clearly attributed to Christ in the writings of the Apostles or Evangelists, except in two or three places.¹⁰⁸

Zúñiga asserted in his *Annotationes* from 1520:

The name of God is clearly attributed to Christ in the writings of the Apostles and Evangelists, not in two or three places, as Erasmus wrote out of his ignorance of the holy scriptures, but in many places.¹⁰⁹

Zúñiga addressed the following ten passages where Jesus was represented as God: Matthew 1:23, John 1:1, John 20:28, Acts 20:28, Romans 9:5, Philippians 2:6, Colossians 2:9, Titus 2:13, Hebrews 1:8, 1 John 5:20.¹¹⁰ He tried to defend the tradition of the Church by citing Theophilus, Bede, Ambrose,

103 Graham, R.H. (1990). "Erasmus and Stunica", p.16.

104 Erasmi, Roterodami D. (1983). *Apologia respondens*, p.20.

105 Patrick P. & Jenkins, A.K. (2007). *Biblical Scholarship and the Church*, p.60.

106 Idem.

107 Graham, R.H. (1990). "Erasmus and Stunica", pp.17-18.

108 *Novum Instrumentum* (Basel, 1516), ggiii, verso, cited in *ibid*, p.18.

109 *Libellus trium*, Aiii, recto, cited in *ibid*, p.19.

110 Idem.

Origen, Hilary, Jerome, Athanasius.¹¹¹ Erasmus was being accused of Arianism and heresy. Zúñiga tried to place Erasmus against the long chain of authoritative Church Fathers. Erasmus answered him that his discussion was concentrated on the linguistic aspects of the translation, rather than on the traditional understanding of the terms.

Another point concerns Luke 7:22: Erasmus had made the following annotation to Luke 7:22 while remarking on *Pauperes evangelizantur* (Matt. 11):

porro pauperes vocat mites, sive mansuetos Hebraeorum more, quibus,
ab עני Hieronymo vertitur pauper, a Septuaginta mansuetus...¹¹²

Zúñiga pointed out that עני had not the same meaning as *mansuetus* (this should be ענו). The deviation was caused by a difference in the last letter of the word. Confusion between a *yod* and a *waw* are common in the Septuagint. In Erasmus' view the word עני could mean two different things in Latin: *pauper* or *mansuetus*. Zúñiga rightly accused Erasmus for this incorrectness by showing that עני was never translated as *mansuetus* in the Septuagint. The form עני is indeed headed under the phenomenon called 'Hebraism'.¹¹³ Thanks to such corrections Erasmus could alter similar Bible passages in his own version of the Greek New Testament.¹¹⁴

Yet another point of collision concentrated on Matthew 21:37, which deals with the owner of a vineyard who sends his son to speak with evil tenants who had previously killed his servants. The quarrel was about the word "perhaps" (*forte*) in the passage "Perhaps they will respect my son." Erasmus maintained that this word was not authentic. It should be an addition, made by a redactor, in the later Greek and Latin manuscripts since it could not be retrieved in the older later Greek and Latin manuscripts. Zúñiga's explanation was completely different: the word *forte* was authentic, but it was only deleted in almost all Greek and Latin manuscripts since the word made the passage unseemly doubtful.¹¹⁵ Since no Greek version comprises the word *forte* in Matt. 21:37, we should assert that Erasmus' explanation is more probable than Zúñiga's. However Zúñiga's approach should be seen as an attempt to explain divergent readings in other ways, thus not per se incorrect but rather competing.¹¹⁶ As regards the whole gospel of Matthew Zúñiga asserted, against Erasmus, that it was originally written in Hebrew on the basis of the following authoritative writers: Origen, Chrysostom, Jerome and Augustine.¹¹⁷

111 Idem.

112 Hall, B. (1998). *Humanists and Protestants*, p.76.

113 Ibid, pp.76-77.

114 Ibid,p.77.

115 Bentley, J.H. (1983). *Humanists and Holy Writ*, pp.200-201.

116 Ibid, p.201.

2.3 Erasmus as a peer of Apollinaris and Luther

Curiously enough Zúñiga also charged Erasmus of Apollinarianism. Apollinaris was a bishop from Laodicea in Syria who strove to protect Christ's divinity when Arianism was still on the rise and threatening this divinity. Zúñiga pointed out that Erasmus was neglecting Christ's human nature in Acts 4:27. The questions concentrated on the phrase "sanctum puerum tuum lesum." Erasmus chose for "puerum" (son), whereas Zúñiga translated the Greek παιδα as "servus."¹¹⁸ Erasmus gave the following explanation:

But Christ when he brought salvation was not a boy and the name of servant does not fit here, for even if he obeyed and was submissive to the Father according to his assumed humanity, nonetheless he obeyed as a son and not as a servant.¹¹⁹

For this Zúñiga argued that

Since indeed the Son is equal to the Father, and obedience and submission signify a lower status, it is clear that Christ was obedient and submissive to the Father not as Son but as servant, that is, according to his assumed humanity.¹²⁰

Zúñiga proposed six citations from Jerome and one from Ambrose to strengthen his opinion.¹²¹ Erasmus referred to Valla's explanation concerning this question. The dispute would last for some time since several publications would involve this subject in the general debate between the two. On one occasion it became so violently that the arguments were not about theology but rather personal. Zúñiga called Erasmus "a Batavian...ignorant, dense, a drunkard, stupid, a post, a dullard, a wood block."¹²² Near the end of the dispute Erasmus admitted that the translation "servant" would be suitable as long as it was perceived in the right way. For Zúñiga this meant his victory over Erasmus. Zúñiga may be successful in depicting Erasmus as opposing the orthodox tradition, but it certainly does not mean that the argumentations were handled in an academic and just way. Eventually Zúñiga ceased his attacks on Erasmus on this subject. The reason for this could be Luther's role in this time. In his *Deutsche Bibel* Luther also translated παιδα as "Kind" (lit. "child"), a translation closer to "son" than to "servant."¹²³ This probably supported Erasmus' claim.

117 Ibid, p.202.

118 Graham, R.H. (1990). "Erasmus and Stunica", p.33.

119 LB, 6, 452D-E, cited in *ibid*.

120 *Annotationes, Dvi, verso*, cited in *ibid*, p.34.

121 *Idem*.

122 Erasmi, Roterodami D. (1983). *Apologia respondens*, p. 146, (11. 709-10), cited in Graham, R.H. (1990). "Erasmus and Stunica", p.40.

Zúñiga noticed Erasmus' alliance to Luther in other cases as well. Erasmus' opinion concerning the sacrament of marriage resembled much Luther's thoughts on this subject.¹²⁴ The passage that concentrated on this subject was Ephesians 5:32. This point of debate was more connected to actual circumstances. Erasmus substituted the word *sacramentum* by *mysterium* which would have consequences. Luther already repudiated in his writings that marriage should be regarded as a sacrament. For Erasmus marriage still belonged to the realm of sacraments. His point was only that its sacramental basis could not be proven on this single passage. The Greek μυστήριον was much closer to the word *mysterium* than *sacramentum*. Zúñiga's accusation against Erasmus was that since he attacked the sacrament of marriage he probably would go on with his suspicions towards other sacraments and finally the papal primacy.¹²⁵ Non-theologians included marriage in the domain of the sacraments. However, argued Zúñiga, they were introduced through divine commandments to the apostle Paul, who in Ephesians 5 refers to the unity of man and woman as belonging to the sacraments.¹²⁶

2.4 Erasmus as the final champion

As we have seen Zúñiga tried to defend his own interpretations of the New Testament in various ways. One was by referring to the "Codex Rhodiensis" in Greek which covered the apostolic epistles. With this codex Zúñiga tried to defend the Vulgate, by referring to it when discussing the various Greek New Testament manuscripts including Erasmus' texts. However, Erasmus could not regard this codex as reliable: "[It could have happened that the codex from Rhodes] had been emended in the direction of the codices of the Latins, especially since it is of Rhodes [, conquered by the Latins]."¹²⁷ The codex was in many places altered to the Vulgate in order to support the readings found in the Vulgate.¹²⁸ It seems that this codex and other codices which were used for the Complutensian Polyglot Bible are not identifiable till present day.¹²⁹ It is unknown which text versions the Complutensian editors have precisely used for establishing their version of the Greek New Testament. The codex has probably been lost. The project in which Zúñiga was active should be seen as a tradition striving for present philological as well as older traditional aspirations. "What the old translator put in good and proper Latin," argued Zúñiga, "Erasmus has dared to express in new

123 Graham, R.H. (1990). "Erasmus and Stunica", p.44.

124 Pabel, H. M. (2004). "Sixteenth century criticism of Erasmus' edition of St. Jerome". *Reformation and Renaissance Review* 6.2, p.237.

125 Ibid, p.238.

126 Ibid, p.239.

127 LB, 6, col. 756 D, cited in Graham, R.H. (1990). "Erasmus and Stunica", p.49.

128 Bentley, J.H. (1983). *Humanists and Holy Writ*, p.201.

129 Ibid, p.93.

language hitherto not heard in the Church.”¹³⁰ It is acceptable to classify Zúñiga as a scholar belonging both to the cyclical and linear standard of Christian history. He tried to defend the Vulgate to a great extent while at the same time he went back to older Hebrew and Greek sources in order to revise present findings. Yet he inclined more towards the linear view since he defied much of Erasmus’ visions. The Dutchman insulted the popes, priests, tradition sacraments and doctrines. Erasmus was depicted as “the scyla of Apollinarianism and the Charybdis of Arianism.”¹³¹ Erasmus was regarded along with the German Hebraist Johann Reuchlin as the “standard bearer and prince of the Lutherans.”¹³² Luther and Erasmus were in his opinion so affiliated that “either Erasmus lutherizes or Luther erasmuzizes.”¹³³ Erasmus was placed among heresiarchs like Valentinus, Marcion and Bardasanes and anti-Christian writers Julian the Apostate, Porphyry and Celsus.¹³⁴

After all, Erasmus is in some degree indebted to Zúñiga’s findings.¹³⁵ It has occasionally been asserted that the Complutensian Bible triumphed over Erasmus Greek New Testament by its high-quality composition. The final triumph of Erasmus’ text version over the Complutensian Bible was due to its date of publication, Erasmus’ more intelligent philological approach and his place among powerful humanists and other influential figures.¹³⁶ It is assumed that Erasmus made use of the criticisms he received since he “benefited from the controversies because they obliged [him] to enlarge the scope of his work and provide a broader commentary than he originally planned.”¹³⁷ In the end Zúñiga’s writings against Erasmus led to a decrease to his own reputation rather than the other way around. In Italy Zúñiga had several dynamic contacts. However in 1522 his books were not allowed to be sold in Rome, which was decided by the Popes Leo X, Adrian VI, and Clement.¹³⁸ The reason for this lay in Zúñiga’s harsh and swift approach towards Erasmus. Zúñiga was not able to

130 Ibid, p.207.

131 *Annotationes contra Erasmum*, fol. H vi^v- I i^r, K i^r, D vi^v-E ir, cited in *ibid*, p.209.

132 *Erasmi Roterodami blasphemiae ac impietates*, fol. A ii^v, cited in *ibid*, p.211.

133 *Libellus trium illorum voluminum praecursor*, esp. fol. G iv^v-G V^v, cited in *ibid*, p.211. The latin phrase is “idest aut Erasmus luterizat aut Luterius erasmizat.”

134 Jonge de, H.J. (1987). *Four Unpublished Letters on Erasmus from J.L. Stunica to Pope Leo X (1520)*. J.P. Massaut (ed.), *Colloque érasmien de Liège*, Paris, p.148.

135 Bentley, J.H. (1983). *Humanists and Holy Writ*, p.204.

136 Spottorno, M.V. (2002). “The textual significance of the Spanish Poliglot Bibles”. *Sefarad* 62, p.378.

137 Rummel, E. (1986). *From Philologist to Theologian*, p.170.

138 Coroleu, A. (2008). “Anti-Erasmianism in Spain”, p.77.

enlist enthusiastic supporters in his controversy against Erasmus.¹³⁹ If these men had been able to find a compromise which would enable them to work together, then the results of their enterprises might be fascinating. After all, their studies took place in a milieu where religious traditions stood central, thus their attitudes should in fact match the Christian charity.¹⁴⁰ Alas, reality was far from this charity.

139 Erasmi, Roterodami D. (1983). *Apologia respondens*, p.46.

140 Graham, R.H. (1990). "Erasmus and Stunica", p.60.

3. Noël Beda and the Faculty of Paris

3.1 Beda's allegiance to orthodoxy

It is thanks to Erasmus that Noël Beda received more attention in the debates within humanistic circles. The year 1526 serves as the starting point of what we know of Beda. In this year the fight between Erasmus and Beda had culminated in outstanding defences of distinct views.¹⁴¹ Beda was born around 1470, at Mont-Saint-Michel (Normandy). Since 1520 he was chosen as *syndic* of a conservative party in Paris, preparing its Faculty against humanistic and reformational radical influences, in order to preserve its established tradition.¹⁴² The following characterization represents Beda well: "a true maniac for persecution, capable of setting fire to all of France, to his king, and even to himself in order to safeguard orthodoxy, he spent his life in denunciation and invective."¹⁴³ Beda was condescending in his tone and Erasmus was much harsher in his replies.¹⁴⁴ In his replies on Erasmus' works he names previous figures who had reacted against Erasmus: Edward Lee, Stunica and Petrus Sutor.¹⁴⁵ Beda had a considerable important relationship with the theologian Jan Standonck (1453–1504) (Erasmus' former tutor and much in favour of the *Devotio Moderna*). Beda and Erasmus may have become acquainted with each other in the Collège de Montaigu in 1498/99.¹⁴⁶ Standonck hoped to provide students with education of high level, while being faithful to tradition and country.¹⁴⁷ Beda can be regarded as a "reforming critic" whose task was to solve the misunderstandings within the Church, though staying in line with the scholastic tradition.¹⁴⁸ For Beda

141 Vredeveld H. (1991). "Erasmus and Noël Beda At Paris in 1499" in *Nederlandsch archief voor kerk-geschiedenis*, vol. 71 (1991), Nieuwe serie, p.105.

142 Farge, J.K. (2008). "Noël Beda and the Defense of Tradition" in *Biblical Humanism and Scholasticism in the Age of Erasmus*. Edited by Erika Rummel. [Brill's Companions to the Christian Tradition, Vol. 9.] Boston: Brill, p.143.

143 Ibid, p.144.

144 Rummel, E. (2002). "Why Noël Bédà Did Not Like Erasmus' Paraphrases" in *Holy Scripture Speaks : The Production and Reception of Erasmus' Paraphrases on the New Testament*. Hilmar M. Pabel & Mary Vessey (eds.). University of Toronto Press, pp.265-266.

145 Ibid, p.266.

146 Rabbie, E. (2010). "Twenty-ninth Annual Erasmus Birthday Lecture: Long and Useless: The Polemic between Erasmus and Beda", *Erasmus Studies* 30 (2010), p.9.

147 Farge, J.K. (2008). "Noël Beda and the Defense of Tradition", p.145.

148 Ibid, p.146.

something like translating the Bible into the vernacular was wrong since this would lead to divergent opinions and eventually to schisms.¹⁴⁹ In his view humanists were not authorized to study and explain Scripture since they had not the right kind of theological education; their modern methods and explanations were not in line with the apostolic tradition.¹⁵⁰

In 1519 Beda began already to give form his opinion against Lefèvre d'Étaples and Josse Clichtove (a theologian and contemporary of Lefèvre), against whom he wrote several publications.¹⁵¹ Erasmus and Beda may get to know each other during their studies theology at Paris.¹⁵² Beda often insulted Dominicans and Augustinians, but never Franciscans since it is assumed that he himself was a Franciscan. One of Erasmus' characterizations of Beda was that the Frenchman was relying too much on "Scotist trifles."¹⁵³ The real inventors, argues Erasmus, are "the scholastics who have substituted Aristotle, Averroes, and Duns Scotus for the Bible."¹⁵⁴ In the preface of his *Annotationes*¹⁵⁵ Beda places Erasmus in a different perspective than for example Lefèvre: "Lefèvre has been the more restrained and prudent; but Erasmus piles error upon error, replying impudently at great length."¹⁵⁶ Beda's and Erasmus' lives show somehow similarities, despite the fact that they disagreed with each other on different points. For Beda the main element of being a loyal Christian theologian lay in the acceptance of the established orthodoxy. Erasmus placed the importance of education above established tradition. Both felt uncomfortable and unappreciated near the end of their lives. Erasmus was offended by both Catholics and Protestants and withdrew from the fierce debates. Beda had to live his final days in exile away from the University of Paris as we will see later on. Another resemblance was their endeavour to reform Christianity in a devout and social way.¹⁵⁷ Beda strove for a reform which was in line with the former religious tradition. He was criticized by Erasmus for his aim

149 Ibid, p.148.

150 Ibid, p.152.

151 Crane, M. (2005). "Competing Visions of Christian Reform: Noël Bédà and Erasmus," *Erasmus of Rotterdam Society Yearbook 25* (2005), p.43.

152 Vredeveld H. (1991). "Erasmus and Noël Beda At Paris in 1499", p.107.

153 Idem.

154 Ep. 1679, cited in Farge, J.K. (2008). "Noël Beda and the Defense of Tradition", p.157.

155 The full title is *Annotationum Natalis Bedae doctoris theologi Parisiensis in Iacobum Fabrum Stapulensem libri duo; et in Desiderium Erasmus Roterodamum liber unus, qui ordine tertius est* (Paris: Josse Bade, 27 May 1526; repr. Cologne: Petrus Quentell, 1526).

156 Ibid, *prologus*, cited in Farge, J.K. (2008). "Noël Beda and the Defense of Tradition", p.158.

157 Crane, M. (2005). "Competing Visions of Christian Reform", p.39.

of pursuing outdated forms of Christian practice, for instance.¹⁵⁸ Both had their particular opinions concerning the practice of Catholic theology and the use of Scripture for social use.¹⁵⁹

3.2 The Scholastic tradition in context

Just as it is the case with every other intellectual, Beda's life and thoughts should be placed into a context for a thorough understanding of the man. Beda's education took place at the Faculty of Theology in Paris. He was born in the second half of the fifteenth century, a time in which the Hundred Years' War (1337-1453) was just ended. Restoration of the entire Kingdom of France and its study centres were needed. Just after the war period voices of liberal-kind men were directed to the inflexible University of Paris and its theological department.¹⁶⁰ In 1517 there were already men who strove for a trilingual theological education, a dream which was achieved by 1530. In this same year Beda argued that the new students were trying to involve practical matters during their disputes which were improper for the image of the theological faculty.¹⁶¹ The consequence was that some learned men from the new generations began to display some insulting behaviour towards the leading Vulgate text which offended the older schoolmasters.¹⁶² On linguistic grounds some questioned certain passages or words of the Vulgate which would have consequences for the long-established tradition of the Faculty. The conservatives clearly feared such reforms by arguing that these kind of innovations would infringe "the apostolic statutes" and that discerning them from heretics would be almost impossible since now "heretics and foes of the Faculty are lifting up their horns."¹⁶³

Reforms were led by prominent figures, such as Jean Raulin (1443-1514) and Jan Standonck, to establish discipline among people and attract newcomers for the academic centres. These men tried to aspire to social religious ideals. In 1488 for instance the Paris schoolmasters demonstrated that they were against the pope's condemnation of Pico della Mirandola's views, since they didn't believe he should be considered a heretic.¹⁶⁴ In 1505 they again distanced themselves from Rome by rejecting the pope's right to decide whether a priest should keep his vow of celibacy or not.¹⁶⁵ So

158 Ibid, p.40.

159 Idem.

160 Farge, J.K. (1985). *Orthodoxy and Reform in Early Reformation France: The Faculty of Theology of Paris. 1500-1543*. Leiden: Brill, p.49.

161 Ibid, p.28.

162 Ibid, p.49.

163 Ibid, p.53.

164 Ibid, p.221.

165 Idem.

when Erasmus' ideas reached Paris, they were appreciated by some and possibly absorbed into local and nationwide aspirations.¹⁶⁶ However, the years 1525 to 1528 proved to be one of the harshest periods of the clash between the Erasmus and the Paris theologians.¹⁶⁷ In 1526 Erasmus' *Colloquies* were condemned and in 1531 several arguments from the *Paraphrases* of the New Testament and refutations against Beda were denounced.¹⁶⁸ Erasmus' *Colloquies* were feared since they were supposed to contain blasphemies and satirical commentaries against abstinence, the tradition of veneration, virginity, and the Christian sacred life.¹⁶⁹ In 1543 the Faculty of Theology expressed her approval of papal intervention in the document 'Articles of Faith': "By divine right there is a pope who is the sovereign head of the Church militant of Jesus Christ whom all Christians must obey."¹⁷⁰ This development betrays the loyalty of the Faculty to the traditional Christian hegemony, i.e. the pope.

In 1533 Beda was exiled for being dangerous for the Parisian atmosphere in that time, since he led a group of prominent doctors who could easily influence the Faculty.¹⁷¹ In 1534 he was sent to prison by command of the king, Francis I of France, since he had told the pope that the French king was not acting according to Christian principles.¹⁷² In 1535 he was publicly humiliated after which he was exiled. He was compelled to appear in public while his works were burned, repenting his sins against faith and the king. In this year Francis I refused the papal ambassador's request for Beda's release since there were "hundred reasons" why one should behead this sickening theologian.¹⁷³ Beda's exile, by royal order, was due to a charge from the side of reliable believers who accused him of "plots and monopolies" which would lead to disunity in the Paris Faculty.¹⁷⁴ With him several other clergymen were exiled, an event which upset the Faculty. The king's motive for sending Beda into exile was that he was communicating to and discussing too much with the pope, not taking into account the royal's desires. Here it becomes evident that in some cases political motives had much more weight than theological arguments. In general the Faculty of Theology was transgressing the rules and laws of the kingdom of France, according to the king.¹⁷⁵

166 Crane, M. (2005). "Competing Visions of Christian Reform", p.41.

167 Farge, J.K. (1985). *Orthodoxy and Reform*, p.176.

168 Ibid, p.195.

169 Farge, J.K. (2008). "Noël Beda and the Defense of Tradition", p.159.

170 Farge, J.K. (1985). *Orthodoxy and Reform*, p.233.

171 Farge, J.K. (2008). "Noël Beda and the Defense of Tradition", p.162.

172 Ibid, p.163.

173 Farge, J.K. (1985). *Orthodoxy and Reform*, p.206.

174 Ibid, p.267.

In Beda's view theologians who had a degree in sacred theology had the rights and duties to act as a judge, a status which is connected to the Apostolic See. Dismissing learned men from their duty was only justified when one was perceived as enough suspicious.¹⁷⁶ However, it was not only expertise who gave someone privileges but also someone's social status. Beda could not recognize Erasmus' degree in theology, not only on the basis of rational but also customary arguments. Sixteenth-century France displayed features which were related to hereditary status and the location at which education was taken.¹⁷⁷ This kind of society was based on the Church-State model of France in which traditions played a major role. It seems that the highest degree of authority had the final say. This is evident since in 1534 the king released Beda from his exile in order to use him in a campaign against reformers, which temporarily made him an ally of the king.¹⁷⁸

Beda is known for his fights against the influence of modern humanist contemporaries. There was competition among humanists who represented somewhat different religious traditions in different areas of Europe. Accusing each other of heresy was not a strange phenomenon, especially not for Beda since he supported cooperating theologians to attack other divergent theologians. Clichtove, who first stood on Lefèvre's side, belonged in 1523 to an orthodox camp and launched a series of offensives against Luther and Erasmus.¹⁷⁹ In that same year the Faculty of Paris criticized Erasmus for his modern translations of biblical texts. However only Beda was privately reviewing these texts in the initial phase. The Faculty had members who would like to see Erasmus' works censured, but they were powerless since king Francis I forbade such censure.¹⁸⁰ Instead, at Erasmus' insistence, the king forbade the printing of Beda's *Annotationes* since this would harm the image of theology and overall intellectual progress in France. A year later Beda and some of his colleagues had traced several issues in Erasmus' works which should deserve a thorough examination. However this plan was set aside since the Faculty was waiting for an appropriate moment to execute this task since it first needed to gather its skilled men. Finally, in 1528 the University of Paris forbade Erasmus' *Colloquies* to be published.¹⁸¹ In 1549, when both Beda and Erasmus were no longer alive, the *Colloquies* were censured again and six other works by Erasmus were examined.

175 Ibid, p.140.

176 Ibid, p.162.

177 Farge, J.K. (1996). "Texts and Context of a Mentalité: The Parisian University Milieu in the Age of Erasmus," in E. Rummel (ed.), *Editing Texts From the Age of Erasmus : Papers Given at the Thirtieth Annual Conference on Editorial Problems, University of Toronto, 4-5 November 1994*. University of Toronto Press, p.12.

178 Farge, J.K. (1985). *Orthodoxy and Reform*, p.205.

179 Crane, M. (2005). "Competing Visions of Christian Reform", p.43.

180 Farge, J.K. (1996). "Texts and Context of a Mentalité", p.8.

181 Ibid, p.11.

3.3 Beda on Erasmus' Paraphrases

Since 1523 Beda was, together with Pierre Cousturier (1475-1537), reviewing Erasmus' *Paraphrases* on the Gospels. Cousturier classified Erasmus under the group of "mere rhetoricians" since the Dutchman in his eyes did not possess the knowledge to lecture men on theology.¹⁸² Erasmus was labelled as a "mere rhetorician" which would have consequences for the nature of the dispute between the Dutchman and other theologians. We will see that Beda took over this portrayal and used it in his own accusations against Erasmus. Beda didn't perceive Erasmus to be a legitimate conversation partner in their discussions, something which would have consequences for the kind of arguments, tone, level of seriousness and amount of biases. For Erasmus a skilled theologian meant a man who would cling to Erasmus' opinions, a loathsome matter, Beda once said.¹⁸³ However, Erasmus' *Paraphrases* had already received attention in various French regions.¹⁸⁴

Beda worked on his *Annotationes*, being approved by a number of doctors of the Faculty of Paris, which would be published later on.¹⁸⁵ Beda's *Annotationes* consists of 562 propositions derived from a critical analysis of Lefèvre's *Commentaries* and Erasmus' *Paraphrases*.¹⁸⁶ In this he depicted Erasmus as someone belonging to the Arians¹⁸⁷; the Dutchman questioned the Catholic view on the sacraments, several traditional customs and rejected the suppression of heresy by coercion. Erasmus' *Paraphrases* were at odds with the Christian religion; they damaged Christian piety and disturbed the Christian principles which were holy for devoted Christians.¹⁸⁸ Beda pointed out to the dangers of translating the Scripture into the vernacular, referring to Germany as an example where piety was under threat. Erasmus was seen as heretical in his works. In this same year the Faculty condemned Lefèvre's *Commentarii initiatorii in quattuor evangelia* (Commentaries on the Four Gospels).¹⁸⁹ However, in November of 1523 Francis I was planning to invite Erasmus to France.¹⁹⁰ Erasmus did not

182 Farge, J.K. (1985). *Orthodoxy and Reform*, p.187.

183 Rabbie, E. (2010). "The Polemic between Erasmus and Beda", p.18.

184 Rabbie, E. (2010). "The Polemic between Erasmus and Beda", p.11.

185 Ibid, p.191.

186 Farge, J.K. (2008). "Noël Beda and the Defense of Tradition", p.157.

187 This accusation probably had to do with the Comma Johanneum. Arianism was considered to be a form of heterodoxy. Arians held a differing view as regards the representation of the Trinity, i.e. they refused to adhere to the traditional orthodox belief in the godlike nature of Christ.

188 Bense, W.F. (1977). "Noël Beda's View of the Reformation," in *Occasional Papers of the American Society for Reformation Research* 1 (December, 1977), p.97.

189 Farge, J.K. (2008). "Noël Beda and the Defense of Tradition", p.153.

190 Ibid, p.155.

accept this invitation since the troublesome relationship between France and the Hapsburg Empire could harm his career as this could result in deviated salaries.¹⁹¹

At the start of 1524 Beda received the task to evaluate Erasmus' *Paraphrase on Luke* for fallacies. Alongside him three other theologians were doing the same. In total there were eight meetings by which the *Paraphrases* were discussed.¹⁹² In March the Faculty pronounced that the aforementioned work formed a threat to the tradition of the Church. The result was the prohibition of its printing in Paris.¹⁹³ At the point Erasmus received Beda's annotations, he clarified:

Far from being offended by the trouble you took, I would like you to do the same for the rest of the *Paraphrases* and more particularly for my annotations. For nothing would please me more than to have my books purged of error and anything which might cause offence.¹⁹⁴

With these words Erasmus apologized for the possible offensive element his works might possess. Such an allegation naturally invites the opponent to answer back in full extent. This might precisely be Erasmus' intention, one may guess. Such a strategy could reveal the opponent's arguments in full extent. Once they were revealed, true educated men could decide with whom they agreed. And so it went. Beda succeeded in pointing out to the errors in the *Paraphrases* in a certain extent. Erasmus often maintained to elucidate what the evangelist was saying, but instead he gave his own judgement, according to Beda. In Luke 2 for instance Erasmus had rephrased the sentence "Symeon senex puero Iesu bene precatus est" (Simon, an old man, wished the servant of the Lord Jesus well). Beda explained that this kind of translations were erroneous since they obscured the evangelist's message. A commentary on Scripture would distort the meaning of a text much less than a paraphrase, since the former's methods were in line with orthodoxy.¹⁹⁵ The blessing in this passage was directed to Joseph and Mary, not Jesus.¹⁹⁶ For Beda it was evident that humanists like Erasmus still had to learn a lot from their fellow scholastic theologians. Again, Erasmus was an outstanding rhetorician for Beda, but he lacked true knowledge. Such a prejudice might influence the direction and the nature of the disputes going on.

Beda knew well that Erasmus was a great proponent of the Church Father Origen. But he found Origen's theology suspicious which conferred to Erasmus' repudiation of "the sound teaching

191 Rummel, E. (1989), *Erasmus and His Catholic Critics*, Vol. II: 1523-1536. Nieuwkoop: De Graaf Publishers, p.29.

192 Idem.

193 Idem.

194 Allen Ep 1571, 3-6, cited in Crane, M. (2005). "Competing Visions of Christian Reform", pp.44-45.

195 Rabbie, E. (2010) "The Polemic between Erasmus and Beda", p.11.

196 *Annotationum libri duo*, 249r, cited in Rummel (2002). "Why Noël Bédà Did Not Like Erasmus' *Paraphrases*", p.269.

of the accepted Doctors of the Catholic Church.”¹⁹⁷ Beda was in favor of the scholastics and it was evident for him that Erasmus didn’t care for the present circumstances within the religious world. Beda complained that humanists concentrated more on language than on the content. Lefèvre and Erasmus enthusiastically used their new acquired humanistic methods in order to explain and advocate the right kind of religion. However they forgot that their new methods extravagantly focused on pagan literature, and that this could never lead to salvation according to orthodox circles.¹⁹⁸ Beda saw that the newly arisen humanists could not be defeated only by arguments based on the scholastic tradition.¹⁹⁹ He emphasized that he did not hate the humanist themselves, but only their false teachings and arrogance.²⁰⁰ He admitted that he was occasionally quoting the Church Fathers, more than the average scholastic theologian from his time.²⁰¹ By this he attempted to show Erasmus and his allies his awareness of present humanistic trends.

Beda now and then insisted that Erasmus should stop writing insulting works in order to be able to prepare for the judgment of God, which could happen soon. Erasmus’ task should be to produce works which were in harmony with the traditional principles of Christianity. When he would still contribute to translations of the Bible into vulgar tongues, this would unnecessary cause agitation among unlearned men. He requested Erasmus to respect

those of our school whom we call the “scholastics,” men who were truly needed by the Church at a period when it was in decline. No one should believe that chance led these men to use a new and simpler style; on the contrary it was the Spirit of God who wished it so and made this special concession to our times, for He guides the Church along different paths according to the needs of each particular age.²⁰²

Beda’s criticism is pointed towards Erasmus’ doctrinal errors and wrong use of Christian doctors, not so the humanistic endeavours such as the advocacy of philology and study of classical culture and Scripture. In fact, Beda pointed out, scholastic theologians were not against humanistic studies:

For no one is so weak in his head and so lacking in intelligence [...] that he does not recognize and praise humane studies and language skills as a gift of God. There is no reason why anyone should disapprove of them. Conversely, no one can approve of [...] ungrateful men who abuse God’s gifts to the ruination of many people. Let them desist therefore, let them desist from falsely claiming

197 Allen Ep 1579, 13-15, cited in Crane, M. (2005). “Competing Visions of Christian Reform”, p.45.

198 Rummel (2002). “Why Noël Béda Did Not Like Erasmus’ Paraphrases”, p.269.

199 Bense, W.F. (1977). “Noël Beda’s View of the Reformation,” p.98.

200 Ibid, p.97.

201 Rummel (2002). “Why Noël Béda Did Not Like Erasmus’ Paraphrases”, p.272.

202 CWE 11, Ep. 1579, pp.118–19, cited in Farge, J.K. (2008). “Noël Beda and the Defense of Tradition”, p.155.

that professional theologians act out of hatred for *bonae litterae*, as they call them, when they object to the humanists' false teaching.²⁰³

In the last sentence Beda speaks about the objection towards "the humanists' false teaching." Theologians like Beda understood the necessity of developments which were needed in all branches of life. The sensitivity for Beda lies in the character of the development. In other words: developments are welcomed as long as they suited with and build on the Catholic tradition. It is not surprising then that men like Erasmus were classified as adherents of Luther, since they threatened the long chain of Catholic tradition.

3.4 Erasmus' alliance with Luther

Beda makes evident that the scholastics' charge against humanists is because of disrespectful men who exploit divine gifts. Neither scholastic theologians nor humanists lacked linguistic or intellectual qualities per se, according to Beda. It was not a question of whether a theologian should admit his deficiencies or not. He accused Erasmus of being unobservant in his utterances concerning Christian doctrines such as salvation and redemption. Beda's argued that such "concession which is allowing countless people to do enormous damage to the Church, and that rascal Luther hides behind the same doctrine."²⁰⁴ Beda perceives his debate with Erasmus as no longer relevant for the theological atmosphere in France. It was not the first time that the faithful theologians of the Church had to deal with such figure as Erasmus. In the past the Church had already succeeded in smashing the voices of heretic-like persons, argued Beda. Defenders of the true Christian faith "devote themselves to the examination of new doctrines and, by censoring various articles, warn the faithful of their real import."²⁰⁵ The scholastic tradition was equally useful as other recent traditions such as humanism, he argued: "In these dreadful times, when Christendom is enveloped in dark mists of error, surely everyone must see the absolute necessity for this kind of theology."²⁰⁶ It was the humanists who supported the Lutherans with their works. Men like Lefèvre and Erasmus

although they do not sink down openly to the level of the heresies of Mani, Arius, Sabellius, and Donatus, they are certainly not far from thinking and acting wickedly like Waldo, Wycliffe, Marsilius, and others of the second order of heretics on faith and merits, free will, Church councils, penitence, and not a few other things.²⁰⁷

In 1526 the doctors of the Faculty of Paris alleged that Erasmus leads "all who read him under guise of eloquence into perverse doctrine like that of Luther."²⁰⁸ Beda could discern Lutheran influences in

203 Rummel (2002). "Why Noël Béda Did Not Like Erasmus' Paraphrases", p.267.

204 Allen Ep 1642, 19-24, cited in Crane, M. (2005). "Competing Visions of Christian Reform", p.49.

205 Allen Ep 1642, 38-40, cited in *ibid*, p.49.

206 Allen Ep 1685, 96-100, cited in *ibid*, p.50.

207 *Annotationum libri duo*, [2v], cited in *ibid*, p.52.

Erasmus' *Paraphrases*, since the name "Luther" frequently appeared in these works.²⁰⁹ Humanists "appear to have taught Luther [...] rather than having learned from him; indeed they anticipated much of what Luther himself wrote later on."²¹⁰ Beda discovered Erasmus' resemblance with Luther in the discussion of for instance Matthew 13. Erasmus pronounced somewhere that there was a very small number of men in reality who "can abstain" from sexual relationships. Beda noticed the error made here: Men have the power to "want to abstain" from such relations since one can find many exemplary cases in practice which confirm the human will to abstain.²¹¹ The humanists' focus on linguistic skills has driven them into iniquity and doubt, matters which Beda abhors:

Moreover, where our more important doctors differs, especially with respect to the action or state of men, I do not at all condemn those who have adopted an alternate position, except when they have defined a doubtful matter as certain while lacking a sure reason or authority. I take the same thing to apply to the various readings of the Holy Scripture.²¹²

It is obvious that Beda disliked people with growing doubts as regards Christian principles. In his eyes Erasmus clearly belonged to a group of humanists who had abandoned the Christian authority; these men recognized no authority except their own in interpreting the Bible and Church tradition. This was unacceptable for Beda.

3.5 An affirmation of traditional belief

In Beda's opinion humanists often pointed out to problems which were not of primary importance and sometimes superfluous. Humanism could be a useful enterprise as long as its members were acting in line with the past sacred tradition. Beda accused Erasmus of going onto divergent paths and *vice versa*. Beda might be classified as the *minus habentes* since he demonstrates to misrepresent Erasmus' argumentation.²¹³ Both belonged to the same Christian belief, though they held different positions as regards the study of Christianity and the place of the authoritative Christian writers. The first point of difference is that Erasmus encourages discussions in his own works, leaving the final judgement to the reader or the Church, whereas Beda holds a more firm stance in his views.²¹⁴ In his

208 Farge, J.K. (1985). *Orthodoxy and Reform*, p.191.

209 Rummel (2002). "Why Noël Béda Did Not Like Erasmus' Paraphrases", p.270.

210 *Annotationum libri duo*, aa 1v, cited in *ibid*, p.270.

211 *Annotationum libri duo*, 244v, cf 254r, cited in *ibid*, pp.270-271.

212 *Annotationum libri duo*, Aa iii r^o, cited in Bense, W.F. (1977). "Noël Beda's View of the Reformation," p.99.

213 Rabbie, E. (2010) "The Polemic between Erasmus and Beda", p.20.

214 Rummel (2002). "Why Noël Béda Did Not Like Erasmus' Paraphrases", p.273.

polemics against enemies Beda very easily names people “Lutheran”, “heretical” or “impious” without expounding consistently on which grounds he came to this conclusion.²¹⁵ Such an attitude would be unacceptable for men like Erasmus, who always pleaded for accurate explanations when making any assertions. Beda, as a reaction to the Reformation, strived for discipline in the way of a Catholic Reform, whereas Erasmus only wanted to go back to the sources and constitute an open-minded Church.²¹⁶ Beda could never approve of a mere objective historical approach towards the Holy Scripture to prove a certain point since theological matters had an exceptional high value: Christian life should take place according to the established tradition, with Christ in the centre and the focus on the resurrection.²¹⁷ With this it can be asserted that Beda holds a linear view of Christian history: scholars should not neglect the established scholastic tradition, no matter how authentic a discovery was. There was no need for inventions or corrections within Christian faith, which were on themselves unnecessary and led to unnecessary complications. Beda might be seen as one of the initiators what later would be known as the Counter-Reformation.²¹⁸ Whereas Beda strove for discipline and orthodoxy, Erasmus pleaded for linguistic education and in-depth understanding of Scripture.

4. Alberto Pio III and the Roman Catholic Tradition

4.1 The man and his position in Italy

Alberto Pio III Prince of Carpi (23 July 1475 – 1531) was a learned Italian layman who criticized Erasmus on certain matters. Pio’s charge is similar to other charges which Erasmus had encountered in the past, such as those from Zúñiga and Beda. Though Pio was not a professional humanist in the sense of knowledge and insight, his accusations against Erasmus are obvious and fit to a well-trained and experienced scholar. Pio was born in Carpi, in Italy. He received assistance as regards education and financial matters from his family relatives. His uncles Marco and Giovanni Pico della Mirandola were the main persons who contributed to his education in classical languages and literature.²¹⁹ Among other of his teachers were Aldo Manuzio²²⁰ (1449–1515), Triphon Bisanti (d. 1540), and Marcus Musurus (1470–1517).²²¹ The friendship between Pio and Manuzio became an intimate one which enabled Pio to become acquainted with the vast amount of present concerns in Italian humanistic circles. Pio received trainings in Aristotelian philosophy, Ciceronian rhetoric and scholastic

215 Ibid.

216 Crane, M. (2005). “Competing Visions of Christian Reform”, p.56.

217 Bense, W.F. (1977). “Noël Beda’s View of the Reformation,” p.102.

218 Farge, J.K. (2008). “Noël Beda and the Defense of Tradition”, p.164.

219 Gilmore, M.P. (1997). “Italian Reactions to Erasmian Humanism” in *Itinerarium Italicum The Profile of the Italian Renaissance in the Mirror of Its European Transformations*. P.O. Kristeller, T.A. Brady & H.A. Oberman (eds.). Leiden: Brill, p.70.

teachings of Thomas Aquinas and John Duns.²²² Erasmus regarded him as one of the prominent Ciceronian stylists of Italy.²²³ At one point Pio was welcomed at the Aldine “New Academy” which was only accessible for men who spoke old Greek fluently.²²⁴ He became acquainted with different powerful figures in Italy, among others the popes Julius II, Leo X, and Clement VII. Pio gradually attempted to insist on primacy over Carpi and the legitimacy for his principality, while dealing with competing family members and more remote political forces in order to grasp the power.²²⁵ However, in making decisions he put his trust in the papal authority for being insured of sufficient stability. Through marriage he was allied with aristocratic families: through his mother to the Gonzaga of Mantua; through his wife to the Orsini of Rome and to the Medici of Florence.²²⁶

In 1512 he was offered the position of diplomatic agent at the papal court, at the request of the Emperor.²²⁷ It is known that the Italian prince was a highly respected man since during theological disputes in Rome to which he was invited his manner of argumentation was admired.²²⁸ Among his contacts he was known as a promoter of art, architecture and literature, a position which he gradually lost later on. Besides his education in the scholastic tradition in earlier stages he became more and more acquainted with the Church Fathers, in particular St. Augustine and St. Jerome. He studied both *sacrae* and *bonae litterae* during his lifetime.²²⁹ He was even so interested in different Bible manuscripts that he gathered Semitic writings (among others Syriac, Arabic and Ethiopian), and even

220 During his stay in Italy, which took place between 1486 and 1510, Erasmus visited Manuzio, who introduced him to the Italian culture. Manuzio was a humanist and printer who also published many of Erasmus' works.

221 Minnich, N.H. (2008). “Alberto Pio’s Defense of Scholastic Theology” in *Biblical Humanism and Scholasticism in the Age of Erasmus*. Edited by Erika Rummel. [Brill’s Companions to the Christian Tradition, Vol. 9.] Boston: Brill, p.278.

222 Ibid.

223 Minnich, N.H. (1988). “The Debate between Desiderius Erasmus of Rotterdam and Alberto Pio Of Carpi on the Use of Sacred Images” in *Annuario Historiae Conciliorum* 20 (1988), pp.380-381.

224 Ibid, p.381.

225 Gilmore, M.P. (1969). “Erasmus and Alberto Pio, Prince of Carpi”, p.299.

226 Minnich, N.H. (1993). “Some Underlying Factors in the Erasmus-Pio Debate” in *Erasmus of Rotterdam Society Yearbook*, Leiden 13 (1993), p.1.

227 Gilmore, M.P. (1969). “Erasmus and Alberto Pio, Prince of Carpi”, p.300.

228 Erasmi, Roterodami D. (2005). *Controversies with Alberto Pio* (Collected Works of Erasmus, Book 84). Nelson H. Minnich & Daniel Sheerin (eds.). Toronto: University of Toronto Press. First Edition, p.xxiv.

tried to master these languages to some degree. There is this speculation that Pio was planning on printing his own version of a polyglot New Testament.²³⁰ At one point he left Italy due to the Sack of Rome in 1527 during which Lutheran infantrymen plundered the papal quarters.²³¹ For political reasons he had to escape to France where he was welcomed by Francis I. Before he went to France he stayed in the same castle (Castle of Sant' Angelo) where the pope was spending his imprisonment.²³² Once he had settled himself in Paris, he spent his last years commenting on Erasmus' works.

Erasmus had received Pio's writings in early 1524, in which he was depicted as a person unworthy of the name theologian and strayed in his tenets. The actual dispute began in 1525, when Erasmus requested Pio to cease with denigrating his name.²³³ In 1526 Erasmus received Pio's response,²³⁴ in which he accused Erasmus of being a supporter of Luther's position; he condemned the *Praise of Folly* and the *Paraphrases*.²³⁵ Pio took great care to prevent that his *Responsio accurata et paraenetica* would be published since he wanted to preserve a good relationship with Erasmus.²³⁶ In 1531 Pio's folio volume work (*Libri XXIII*) appeared, which was printed posthumously.²³⁷ Pio's folio volume work combines all controversies: Erasmus' own letter, Pio's response, Erasmus' apologia with Pio's scholia and the present 23 books (hence the name *Libri XXIII*).²³⁸ Pio probably received support

229 Minnich, N.H. (2008). "Alberto Pio's Defense of Scholastic Theology", p.279.

230 Gilmore, M.P. (1997). "Italian Reactions to Erasmian Humanism", p.71.

231 Minnich, N.H. (1993). "Some Underlying Factors in the Erasmus-Pio Debate", p.5.

232 Gilmore, M.P. (1969). "Erasmus and Alberto Pio, Prince of Carpi", p.300.

233 Pabel, H. M. (2004). "Sixteenth century criticism of Erasmus' edition of St. Jerome", p.239.

234 The full title is *Ad Erasmi Roterodami expostulationem responsio accurata et paraenetica Martin Lutheri et asseclarum eius haeresim vesanam magnis argumentis et iustis rationibus confutans* (Paris: Joost Bade, 1529, reprinted in 15 May 1529 by Pierre Vidoue in Paris); In short: *Responsio accurata et paraenetica*.

235 Gilmore, M.P. (1997). "Italian Reactions to Erasmian Humanism", p.72.

236 Erasmus, D. (2005). *Erasmi, Roterodami D. (2005). Controversies with Alberto Pio*, p.lvi.

237 The full title of the work is: *Alberti Pii Carporum illustrissimi et viri longe doctissimi praeter prefationem et operis conclusionem tres et viginti libri in locos lucubrationum variarum D. Erasmi Roterodamiquos censet ab eo recognoscendos et retractandos* (Paris: Joost Bade, 1531); In short: *XXIII Libri in locos lucubrationum variarum D. Erasmi*.

238 Rummel, E. (1989), *Erasmus and His Catholic Critics*, Vol II: 1523-1536, p.120.

from some friends, a.o. Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda (1490–1573) and some of his pupils while he was writing against Erasmus.

Pio's abilities show some strength since he managed to convert Ambrogio Flandino, Suffragan Bishop of Mantua, from a pro-Erasmian into an anti-Erasmian person.²³⁹ The correspondence between Erasmus and Pio expanded into extensive discussions. Pio in particular attacked Erasmus' *Annotationes in Novum Instrumentum, Paraphrases, Enchiridion militis christiani, Ratio verae theologiae, Christiani matrimonii institutio, Colloquia* and *Moriae encomium*. Erasmus regarded the Italian layman as an Aristotelian, not being a valid theologian. However, Pio can be regarded as a man who openly exposed his criticisms to his opponents, 'respected for his erudition, eloquence, diplomatic skills, and influence with the pope and cardinals.'²⁴⁰ Since Pio was allied to Francis I and Clement VII, both protectors of Erasmus, Erasmus perceived it necessary to take the layman's accusations serious and felt responsible to reply on them. Pio blamed Erasmus for the fact that he was not consistent in his allegations as regards Christianity. It was strange that Erasmus put himself on the same line as the prominent Church Father St. Jerome, while condemning some of his teachings. Erasmus clearly was a sceptic according to Pio.²⁴¹ It is reasonable to assert that Pio might have read Stunica's work *Erasmi Roterodami blasphemiae et impietates* (1522) since his discussion consists of similar comments that were already known from the Spanish theologian.²⁴² Pio felt it his task to preserve the tradition which he and many other men had grown up in. In the beginning Pio was in favour of the "new learning"²⁴³ of the humanists while respecting the scholastic tradition. Later on he perceived Erasmus and his adherents as a danger since they might overturn the Christian authorities, wittingly or unwittingly. Pio's position at the papal quarter and his contacts with other aristocrats urged him to safeguard the *status quo*. Erasmus, as the unlawful son of a priest, did not have these worries which gave him the freedom to openly criticize the dishonesty and suppression within the Christian world.²⁴⁴

4.2 Pio's *Responsio*

In his folio volume work from 1531 Pio shows himself to be a skilled man with vast knowledge of Church history who carefully reads and reacts to his opponent. Pio's exhortations to Erasmus are sometimes exaggerated but sometimes to the point. The section of *Libri XXIII* is considered to include

239 Pabel, H.M. (2004). "Sixteenth century criticism of Erasmus' edition of St. Jerome", p.239.

240 Minnich, N.H. (1993). "Some Underlying Factors in the Erasmus-Pio Debate", p.14.

241 Gilmore, M.P. (1978). "Apologiae: Erasmus' Defenses of Folly" In *Essays on the Works of Erasmus*. edited by Richard L. DeMolen, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, p.119.

242 Pabel, H.M. (2004). "Sixteenth century criticism of Erasmus' edition of St. Jerome", p.241.

243 Pio, *Responsio accurata et paraenetica* 3r, cited in Minnich, N.H. (1993). "Some Underlying Factors in the Erasmus-Pio Debate", p.5.

244 Ibid, p.43.

the most extensive attack on Erasmus, which can be seen in the Dutchman's reaction.²⁴⁵ Erasmus and Pio extensively disputed about the following matters: monasticism, ceremonies, the cult of saints, the power of priests and bishops, the veneration of relics, scholastic theology, the authority of Scriptural books, the primacy of Peter, vows, celibacy, matrimony, confession, faith and works, the right of war, oaths, the Trinity and mendacity.²⁴⁶ Both men gave much attention to each other's writings since their reputations were at stake and because their works could influence Catholic Christianity to a certain extent. Pio was sensitive for the community around him as well as for the person he was. His writings show that he was devoted to the Christian saints, Church Fathers, religious art and architecture, and against disunity and blasphemy.²⁴⁷ Pio referred in his replies to Erasmus more to the Church Fathers than to the scholastic doctors. He relied on Jerome in order to uphold the Catholic doctrines, Christian fasting and the veneration of relics.²⁴⁸ In this way he demonstrated that he was not restrained in using some of the same sources which were normative for Erasmus.

Pio criticized Erasmus for the fact that he was dangerous for the Church and the catholic faith; the Dutchman was offensive in his replies and insulted the tradition of the sacraments, penance and matrimony by asserting that the spirit had more weight than the letter²⁴⁹; his perspectives were incorrect since humanity was evolving itself to higher levels; he offended the tradition of priests, theologians and ceremonies.²⁵⁰ Pio admits that he had a good impression of Erasmus in the earlier years. But he soon noticed Erasmus' attempt to depict him along with similar-minded men as erroneous and blasphemous. In his replies Pio occasionally made clear that Erasmus' readings were not all worth reading. Erasmus' accusations against grammarians were unfair since in the past those men had accompanied him during the inquiries he had in Italy, asserts Pio.²⁵¹ As regards the scholastic theologians, Erasmus unjustly ignored Aquinas, Bonaventura, and Albertus Magnus. Pio often replied to Erasmus in a style which resembled the scholastic methods. He cited Jerome, Hilary, and several other Church Fathers to counter-attack or admonish Erasmus' positions and affirmed that the whole scholastic method was of divine origin. Pio found that rational reasoning in the scholastic method was essential for tackling heretics and preserving the Christian veracity.²⁵² In the early times the Church

245 Gilmore, M.P. (1997). "Italian Reactions to Erasmian Humanism", p.81.

246 Ibid, p.82.

247 Minnich, N.H. (1993). "Some Underlying Factors in the Erasmus-Pio Debate", p.5.

248 Pabel, H.M. (2004). "Sixteenth century criticism of Erasmus' edition of St. Jerome", pp.240-241.

249 Gilmore, M.P. (1997). "Italian Reactions to Erasmian Humanism", p.73.

250 Idem.

251 Ibid, p.76.

252 Pio, *XXIII libri*, fols. 174v-75vP, see Minnich, N.H. (2008). "Alberto Pio's Defense of Scholastic Theology", p.288.

Fathers used Plato's philosophy to pinpoint Christian doctrines, but in the Middle Ages scholastic theologians chose to use Aristotelian dialectics.²⁵³ This newly acquired method was essential for elucidating the unclear matters in Scripture. If this method was unsuccessful, a fact that Pio acknowledged, it was due to humans and not the *modus operandi* itself.²⁵⁴

Pio asserted that a synthesis between theology and philosophy was necessary, as was explained by the Church Fathers Augustine, Ambrose, Jerome, Hilary, Origen, Gregory Nazianzen, and Chrysostom.²⁵⁵ St. Augustine for instance was able to speculate about the Trinity thanks to his acquaintance with philosophy. It was not for Erasmus to decide which philosophers were allowed to be used in Christian tradition. The long chain of tradition was sufficient to indicate to present theologians which philosophers should be used. In this way Erasmus' overall arguments were not based on a valid source. According to Pio Erasmus was not able to make clear distinctions between divine matters and human decrees.²⁵⁶ Philology, a profession which Erasmus highly praised, could never result to "precise theology but the simpler one which does not comprehend the mysteries and does not solve questions."²⁵⁷ Pio underscored that he was not a despiser of the *bonae litterae*.²⁵⁸ For Pio, Erasmus' whole argumentation was selective by nature and therefore he refuted such assertions. In his eyes, Erasmus used tricks and sophistries to make his point and to weaken his opponent's arguments. Pio noticed that Erasmus concentrated more on eloquence rather than dialectics. With his eloquence Erasmus attempted to offend the Church and its clergy. He forgot to mention the laity who concentrated excessively on entertainment, clothes and personal welfare. With such a position Erasmus makes no valid distinction between the clergy and laity.

What theologian could Erasmus be if he was criticizing philosophers while he was ignorant about their true philosophies? In Pio's eyes, Erasmus was neither a philosopher nor a theologian.²⁵⁹ Erasmus for instance claimed to understand Aristotle while in fact he did not. For Pio, Aristotelian philosophy along with other philosophies and even mathematics were requisite for a full-scale discussion of theological matters.²⁶⁰ Once someone wants to find a truth in a matter then he must call upon an authority and participate in intelligible logic. For Pio, Aristotle is "the greatest of all

253 Idem.

254 Pio, *XXIII libri*, fols. 78r-79rK-N, 173vM, 176rS, see *ibid*, p.289.

255 Pio, *XXIII libri*, fol. 174rM-N, see *ibid*, p.287.

256 Gilmore, M.P. (1997). "Italian Reactions to Erasmian Humanism", p.79.

257 Pio, *responsio* 35^f, cited in Rummel, E. (1989), *Erasmus and His Catholic Critics*, Vol II: 1523-1536, p.118.

258 *Ibid*, p.118.

259 Heesakkers, C.L. (1988). "Argumentatio a persona in Erasmus' Second Apology against Alberto Pio" in *Erasmus of Rotterdam: The Man and the Scholar*. Jan Sperna Weiland & Willem Th.M. Frijhoff (eds.). Leiden: Brill, p.80.

philosophers and nearly divine [...] a miracle of nature.”²⁶¹ Erasmus asserted unjustly that the Greek philosopher was blasphemous. Pio refuted this claim by asserting that this philosopher was in line with the Christian tradition since his ideas resembled some of the Christian principles (e.g. Aristotle believed in a creator, according to Pio).²⁶² In contrast to Aristotle, Plato is unsuited to clarifying Christianity with his “metaphors and allegories.”²⁶³ Aristotle’s style was far more profound than Erasmus’ “stories, narratives, witty remarks, proverbs, or grammatical discussions.”²⁶⁴ Pio noticed that Erasmus concentrated more on eloquence rather than on dialectics. Pio did his best to refute Erasmus’ arguments and defend the Christian orthodox teachings by making use of common sense, natural reasoning, Scripture, the Church Fathers, and ecclesiastical authorities, and the *sensus fidelium*.²⁶⁵

If Erasmus’ main concern was focused on linguistic aspects then this was unimportant for the whole Christian matter. The way language was used in a given text, was connected to a given reality. “Great wines are still great whether served in earthenware cups or crystal goblets. One should drink wisdom from whatever vessel contains it,” according to Pio.²⁶⁶ One could not criticize the method while the linguistic quality was somehow deficient, according to Pio. Many philosophers, including Cicero, had invented their own words in Latin. Scholastic theologians continued their works in the traditions that were already established before them. The objective of theology and other sciences was exploring wisdom and not eloquence. Pio felt it surprising when Erasmus maintained being an admirer of the *bonae litterae* while in fact he attempted to ignore them on several occasions, when it was for his own advantage. Therefore Pio does not hesitate to counter-attack Erasmus on several matters.

Concerning Christian fasting, Pio asserted on the basis of Scripture and the Church Fathers that Erasmus’ charges against traditional fasting were invalid. The same goes for Erasmus’ condemnation of monasticism: for Pio monasticism was an old tradition which existed apart from Christianity and should be respected.²⁶⁷ Erasmus had put heathenism and Christianity on one line which was unacceptable. Erasmus was charged with conforming to Plato in the premise that rulers

260 Gilmore, M.P. (1969). “Erasmus and Alberto Pio, Prince of Carpi”, p.313.

261 Minnich, N.H. (2008). “Alberto Pio’s Defense of Scholastic Theology”, p.286; see Pio, *XXIII libri*, fols. 79rN, 174vO: “At maximus ac prope divinus Aristoteles [...] Fuit quippe Aristoteles omnium iudicio quoddam singulare naturae miraculum.”

262 Minnich, N.H. (2008). “Alberto Pio’s Defense of Scholastic Theology”, p.286.

263 Ibid.

264 Pabel, H.M. (2004). “Sixteenth century criticism of Erasmus’ edition of St. Jerome”, p.243.

265 Minnich, N.H. (1993). “Some Underlying Factors in the Erasmus-Pio Debate”, pp.24-25.

266 Pio, *XXIII libri*, fols. 76v–77vI, cited in Minnich, N.H. (2008). “Alberto Pio’s Defense of Scholastic Theology”, p.291.

are allowed to lie to some extent for the people's own good. Erasmus sometimes referred to Abraham and Ruth from the Bible to justify such a stance. To Erasmus' claim that some books of the Bible were less authoritative than others, Pio replied that all books within the Bible were of equal authority. The Church had since early Christianity the right to collate the books of the Bible since its authority was based on the apostles and the early Church Fathers.²⁶⁸ Erasmus often made the uncomplicated only complex and vice versa, thus Pio. In the discussion of Cor 7:8 for instance, Erasmus obfuscated the true meaning of the text. In this particular passage St. Paul gave to Christian widows and virgins the advice not to marry. Erasmus asserted that Paul's words were meant as a counsel, thus marriage was in fact allowed for such women. For Pio this passage was yet uncomplicated. It was predictable how much harm Erasmus could do with his exegesis on other passages which were more doubtful in their interpretation.²⁶⁹

In his *Responsio* (1529) Pio gives the impression of writing a disquisition which is meant as a refutation against Luther, and later on edited and directed to Erasmus.²⁷⁰ Pio so abundantly focused on refuting Lutheran ideas that one could involve many pro-Lutheran figures in the discussion. Pio's work was addressed to educated Catholics instead of Erasmus since he thought that he could not persuade the Dutchman.²⁷¹ From time to time Pio's exhortations were addressed to "Martin" rather than to "Erasmus."²⁷² Erasmus was supposed to rely excessively on the Lutheran notion of *sola fide* which harmed the significance of the good works.²⁷³ Pio rebutted Erasmus' point by saying that there were several occasions in the past by which unbelievers were invited to receive this grace, for instance the persecutor Saul.²⁷⁴ In Pio's opinion Erasmus was distorting Christian values, like Luther did. Prejudices against established principles such as humility and perseverance would threaten the Christian life. Pio discerned Erasmus' loyalty to Luther on many points. Erasmus appeared to defend the notion that the priesthood became unnecessary if an individual were able to consecrate the Eucharist privately.²⁷⁵ It is evident that Erasmus was in defence of Luther since he never attacked him or kept silence. Even when Erasmus published his *Diatribes on Free Will* against the German heretic,

²⁶⁷ Gilmore, M.P. (1997). "Italian Reactions to Erasmian Humanism", p.76.

²⁶⁸ Pabel, H.M. (2004). "Sixteenth century criticism of Erasmus' edition of St. Jerome", p.243.

²⁶⁹ Minnich, N.H. (1993). "Some Underlying Factors in the Erasmus-Pio Debate", p.7.

²⁷⁰ Ibid, p.22.

²⁷¹ Erasmus, D. (2005). *Controversies with Alberto Pio*, p.lxxix

²⁷² Rummel, E. (1989), *Erasmus and His Catholic Critics, Vol II: 1523-1536*, p.119.

²⁷³ Minnich, N.H. (1993). "Some Underlying Factors in the Erasmus-Pio Debate", p.12.

²⁷⁴ Gilmore, M.P. (1997). "Italian Reactions to Erasmian Humanism", p.80.

²⁷⁵ Minnich, N.H. (1993). "Some Underlying Factors in the Erasmus-Pio Debate", p.12.

the character of the charge was tempered since the Dutchman's position was still unclear. Erasmus was "discussing the question [of free will] without making a firm pronouncement."²⁷⁶ For Pio these learned men commanded a high degree of eloquence: "where Luther asserted, Erasmus questioned; where the German was openly arrogant, the Dutchman spoke with greater modesty."²⁷⁷ Alongside Pio, many of Erasmus' contemporaries related Erasmus to Luther which was due to the indistinctness of the positions which were taken in that time and competition among opinions.

At the same time Pio accused Erasmus of being a heretic and ally of Arius. Whether Erasmus did it consciously or not, he remained ignorant and proud. At one point Erasmus had argued that "the error of the Arians was more truly a faction or schism than a heresy, since our adversaries were almost [our] equal in number, [but] superior in eloquence and teaching."²⁷⁸ Erasmus contradicted himself on several occasions since he regarded practically all of the orthodox doctors as persuasive in contrast to heretics who were uncivilized and unrefined. Pio pointed out to Erasmus' erroneous assertion of Arian impiety being "a faction rather than a heresy."²⁷⁹ With this assumption Erasmus prevented Arians, Lutherans and alike being labelled as "heretic." It was unclear for Pio where the line should be drawn then. In this way the Church could be vulnerable on every front.

4.3 The debate on Sacred Images

The debate on sacred images between Erasmus and Pio is a captivating one. The question whether images in the Church are allowed or not goes back to the initial phases of Christianity. In their discussions Pio and Erasmus both agreed that images had the potential to lead people into the right pious direction, as long as religious art was not unrestrained.²⁸⁰ Nevertheless they had distinct ideas at some points.

Erasmus conceded that images in their portrayal could match writings in their quality of a given representation, and could even transcend verbal and scriptural explanations. Art offers mankind a special ability to perceive things more directly and become emotionally more attracted to a given representation. An attitude of love and sincerity is needed when dealing with images in order to prevent fallacies. Each individual has the right to act in a way what appears to be genuine in his eyes

276 Pio, *Responsio*, 6^v, cited in Rummel, E. (1989), *Erasmus and His Catholic Critics*, Vol II: 1523-1536, p.117.

277 Minnich, N.H. (1993). "Some Underlying Factors in the Erasmus-Pio Debate", p.13.

278 Pabel, H.M. (2004). "Sixteenth century criticism of Erasmus' edition of St. Jerome", p.244; Pio misrepresented Erasmus' views on Arianism to some extent. In this phrase Erasmus asserts only that Arianism was more a faction than a heresy. In fact Erasmus recognized Arianism to be heretical: "No heresy perturbed the churches of the entire world more severely than that of the Arians." *Opera* (1516), III, 61r).

279 Idem.

280 Minnich, N.H. (1988). "The Debate between Desiderius Erasmus of Rotterdam and Alberto Pio Of Carpi on the Use of Sacred Images" in *Annuario Historiae Conciliorum* 20 (1988), p.412.

(Rom 14:5).²⁸¹ During veneration of sacred images the primacy should be on the spiritual rendition, and not the material object itself. Erasmus proclaims that in ancient times the Jews were forbidden to venerate images. Christianity should continue in this tradition. Instead some of the Church Fathers allowed such veneration since in this way they could win over heathens to their religion. Images were only useful when they demonstrated "edifying topics."²⁸² Prior to his acquaintance with Pio, Erasmus had already organized his ideas and merged them into one stronghold. At some points when he had encountered Pio's views on this question, he borrowed some of them in order to make his own position more moderate with regard to present circumstances in the Church. Later on he abandoned his previous presumptions so that he became an advocate of an abolition of the use of images.²⁸³ Erasmus feared art since it could be misinterpreted and result in profanity. In his opinion idolatry formed no threat for Christianity since images were customary in ancient Judaism and early Christianity.²⁸⁴ With his moderate views on the veneration of images, Erasmus called up for a new Christian "interpretation of the relationship between the spiritual and the material."²⁸⁵

Pio expressed his thoughts on sacred images in Book VIII of his *XXIII Libri* (1531). He asserted that Scripture contained significance for the readers, but it was not the sole source which a Christian could make use of for a thorough understanding of his religion.²⁸⁶ Men became theologians not only by studying the narratives about Jesus, moreover they had to participate in the quintessential matters within Christianity. Alongside religion many disciplines exist which can be made subservient to religion in order to disclose more of its content. Pio named especially philosophy and arts which could enrich the image of religion. He accused Erasmus of depicting the veneration of images as something superstitious and impious. He felt it his task to investigate the concepts of idolatry and representation generated by the images.²⁸⁷ He appealed to Rom 1:18-25 where Paul explained that pagans chose to reject the one Creator since they attempted to represent their own gods by means of *numina*. Erasmus unrightfully asserted in his *Enchiridion* that many Christians who venerated images nowadays, resembled common pagan practices. The Dutchman argued that "today it has been discovered that a wooden statue may be adored by the same adoration as is given to the Holy Trinity."²⁸⁸ Images undermined the notion of piety since they displaced the internal to the external

281 Ibid, p.395.

282 Ibid, p.398.

283 Minnich, N.H. (1988). "Erasmus and Alberto on the Use of Sacred Images", p.394.

284 Giese, R. (1935). "Erasmus and the Fine Arts" in *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 7, No. 3 (Sep. 1935), p.277.

285 Eire, C.M.N. (1989). *War against the Idols*, p.28.

286 Minnich, N.H. (2008). "Alberto Pio's Defense of Scholastic Theology", p.291.

287 Minnich, N.H. (1988). "Erasmus and Alberto on the Use of Sacred Images", p.402.

instead of the opposite. Erasmus' attempted to shift the emphasis from the sensual to the intellectual.²⁸⁹

According to Pio idolatry meant the very act of offering to God and mundane creatures in unseparated fashion.²⁹⁰ Pio proved by natural reason that Christians were not to be seen as idolaters. The Christian tradition of veneration of images contributed to the development of individuals and should be seen as a symbolic act. It was devout since it offered the incapacitated the chance to learn and understand the teachings of Jesus.²⁹¹ Pio cited several biblical passages to strengthen his argumentation. He found passages that demonstrated the Creator's own role in the application of images during adorations. Among them he discusses Gen 1:26-27 where the Creator had created man in his own image, thus He was conceivable in human form; Ex 25:18 where the Creator commanded Moses to decorate the Ark with seraphim; and Joh 21:25 where is said that not all of Christ's teachings are exhibited in Scripture.²⁹² St. Basil the Great, Augustine, Jerome and John of Damascus believed that the image was equal to the actual person during adoration (this reveals a Neoplatonic influence!). Jerome supported the devotion to saints through veneration of relics (which Alberto expanded to the veneration of images).²⁹³ History proved that images had the power to provide miracles and therefore they were included in the tradition till present days. The abolition of images would harm the popularity of the Christian religion since this would support Erasmus' elitism (abolition would mean that only learned men would be able to read Scripture and understand Christianity).²⁹⁴ So Pio clearly demonstrated on the basis of the Church Fathers and Scripture that he was well informed with the various positions which were taken by Christians as regards the veneration of images.

4.4 A fervent defender of Catholicism

According to Pio, the Holy Spirit has been all the time present among mankind (Matt. 28:20: "I am with you always until the end of time"). In Pio's eyes, Erasmus distorted the element of development within Christianity. Since the earliest times, the divine truth had gradually been discovered and explained, first by Christ then by the apostles and the Church Fathers under the power of the Holy Spirit. The scholastic was "divinely invented" since it originated from the earliest teachings of learned

288 LB, VI, col. 1015D-E., cited in Gilmore, M.P. (1997). "Italian Reactions to Erasmian Humanism", p.77.

289 Eire, C.M.N. (1989). *War against the Idols*, pp.40-41.

290 Minnich, N.H. (1988). "Erasmus and Alberto on the Use of Sacred Images", p.402.

291 Ibid, p.403.

292 Ibid, p.405.

293 Pabel, H. M. (2004). "Sixteenth century criticism of Erasmus' edition of St. Jerome", pp.240-241; Gilmore, M.P. (1997). "Italian Reactions to Erasmian Humanism", p.77.

294 Minnich, N.H. (1988). "Erasmus and Alberto on the Use of Sacred Images", p.412.

Christians.²⁹⁵ It is then plausible to assert that, for Pio, Erasmus was acting in a stubborn way since he freely commented on the scholastic tradition and ignored the element of growth in Christianity. Erasmus was wrong in explaining present beliefs and practices on the basis of early principles found in Scripture. Pio was against the pure notion of *sola fide* and *sola Scriptura*. Instead he pleaded for a Christianity that was open to growth, guided by the Holy Spirit, to the extent that any change should be in line with the authority of the Roman Church. Prescriptions in the Bible are not permanently valid, proclaims Pio. In Exod. 20:8-10 men should commemorate the holy day, the Sabbath, but with Christ's coming Sunday became the day of commemorating Christ's resurrection.²⁹⁶ Pio explained that the Church could be compared to a child: it developed from childhood and adolescence into adulthood.²⁹⁷

For Erasmus, past change meant more a degeneration of the purity of the primitive Church. And therefore he relied on what Scripture and the earliest Christian Fathers had to say. Pio was in favour of the linear biblical view of history and consequently in favour of the Church's tradition, whereas Erasmus pleaded for the classical cyclical view of history.²⁹⁸ Pio accepted the notion that men needed a material expression of religion while preserving the doctrine of the Incarnation. Erasmus embraced a Platonist perspective: the materialistic factors should be minimized since spirituality formed the essence of Christianity.²⁹⁹ Pio remained consistent in his views as regards the development of the Church, whereas Erasmus showed some doubts in some cases.³⁰⁰ Pio remained loyal to Rome in every sense whereas Erasmus questioned some of the traditional doctrines of the Catholic Church.³⁰¹

Pio gives the impression of being a severe critic of Erasmus' thoughts. Nevertheless, he admits that errors are allowed to be made since these are human. He preaches modesty, humility,

295 Minnich, N.H. (1993). "Some Underlying Factors in the Erasmus-Pio Debate", p.32.

296 Ibid, p.34.

297 Ibid, p.40.

298 Ibid, p.42.

299 Minnich, N.H. (1993). "Some Underlying Factors in the Erasmus-Pio Debate", p.43.

300 Erasmus, D. (2005). *Controversies with Alberto Pio*, p.lxxix; Erasmus took over Pio's views about the linear view of Christianity, which is evident in two of his letters from 1527 and 1529. Eventually he gave up this statement. He maintained that human nature was so sinful that it was definitely better for men to accept the Christian principles explained in Scripture, instead of appealing to human reasoning.

301 Gilmore, M.P. (1971). "De modis disputandi: The Apologetic Works of Erasmus" in *Florilegium historiale: Essays Presented to Wallace K. Ferguson*. J. G. Rowe & W.H. Stockdale (eds.). Toronto-Buffalo: University of Toronto, p.81.

piety and luck to Erasmus with reference to the Church and the prominent master of theology.³⁰² Pio can be considered a precursor of the Counter-reformation since he distanced himself from the Erasmian emphasis on the Spirit.³⁰³ Not without reason: Erasmus' humanism resembled the idea of Reformation. This humanism was not in favour of the scholastic philosophy and theology. In general Erasmus was regarded as a heretic and the source of Luther in sixteenth-century Italy; his works were placed on the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum*. However, some of Erasmus' thoughts were in harmony with the ideals of the Counter-reformation which delivered him a more positive title.³⁰⁴ Pio died in January 1531, while his last work against Erasmus was not yet finished. One of his friends took the task to compile the manuscripts and publish them as one bundle two months later.

302 Gilmore, M.P. (1997). "Italian Reactions to Erasmian Humanism", p.80.

303 Ibid, p.83.

304 Ibid, p.84.

5. Julius Caesar Scaliger and his plea for pagan heroes

5.1 The Ciceronian

Julius Caesar Scaliger (Italian: Giulio Cesare della Scala) (April 23, 1484 – October 21, 1558) was an Italian scholar, who defended Aristotelian philosophy and poetry and promoted the new methods of learning of humanism in his own way.³⁰⁵ In 1528 he became a citizen of France where he could find a network of contacts.³⁰⁶ Initially he served as a soldier, then as a medical expert, physician and philosopher. He became acquainted with Erasmus' thoughts over the years. In 1531 his work *Oratio pro M. Tullio Cicerone contra Des. Erasmum* was published, which was set up to refute Erasmus' *Ciceronianus*³⁰⁷ and his venomous character.³⁰⁸ The publication of *Ciceronianus* led to several reactions in whole Europe, especially in Italy.³⁰⁹ It was not surprising then that Scaliger, being an Italian, attempted to fortify Cicero's style of reasoning and to defend the associated other Ciceronians which had built their methods on this Italian hero. This work should be perceived as containing both stylistic and religious elements, which makes it an interesting subject to investigate.³¹⁰ In 1536, after Erasmus' death, Scaliger published his second oration against the Dutchman, titled *Adversus Des. Erasmi Roterod. Dialogum Ciceronianum oratio secunda* (1537). This publication was due to Erasmus' supposed lack of recognition of Scaliger being the author of the first oration. In his second oration Scaliger openly proclaimed that he was a learned man who didn't participate in official humanist circles, though being a highly-skilled man and prepared to refute his enemies.

Scaliger felt that he had missed his chance to establish an authority within the humanistic world.³¹¹ In Italy he had studied with prominent men, while in France he was hardly known. Attacking Erasmus' *Ciceronianus* would give him the opportunity to become known in humanistic circles.³¹² Scaliger's first attempts to publish his first oration in considerable amounts were unsuccessful since the proponents of Erasmus delayed its distribution process. Joseph Scaliger (1540-1609), Julius

305 Sakamoto, K.(2010). "Creation, the Trinity and Prisca Theologia in Julius Caesar Scaliger," in *The Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 73 (2010), p.195.

306 Rummel, E. (1989), *Erasmus and His Catholic Critics*, Vol. II, p.141.

307 The full title is: *Dialogus Ciceronianus sive de optimo dicendi genere*. It was published for the first time in 1528. Alongside Scaliger's orations there were several other polemical writings composed by some of Erasmus' opponents. See for e.g. Étienne Dolet's (1509– 1546) *Dialogus de imitatione Ciceroniana adversus Desiderium Erasmum pro Christophore Longolio* (Lugduni, Seb. Gryphius, 1535) and Giulio Camillo's (ca. 1480–1544) *Trattato dell' Imitatione* (1544).

308 Rummel, E. (1989), *Erasmus and His Catholic Critics*, Vol. II, p.141.

309 Gilmore, M.P. (1997). "Italian Reactions to Erasmian Humanism", p.109.

310 Jensen, K. (1990). *Rhetorical Philosophy and Philosophical Grammar: Julius Caesar Scaliger's Theory of Language*. Munich:Fink, p.20.

Scaliger's son, argued in his *Scaligeriana* that "Erasmus...got his friends to buy up all the [printed] copies [of Scaliger's first oration] they could meet with, in order to suppress them."³¹³ This work was lost in Paris and finally republished in 1531, with the help of Beda, as the story goes. In the introduction of his oration Scaliger promises the students of Paris to dedicate more works to them once they have accepted this particular work.³¹⁴

Scaliger's skillfulness becomes evident in both his orations since his harsh and merciless approach combined with outstanding Latin, demonstrates his knowledge as regards past learning and present developments. Taking Erasmus' *Ciceronianus* and his whole body of propositions into account, one can discern inconsistencies in Scaliger's orations since he attempts to justify the Ciceronian rhetorical style while partially ignoring his opponent's arguments. However, depending on the applied perspective one could argue the same for Erasmus' *Ciceronianus*. It is known that Scaliger's works were serviceable for academic scholars and some of their students.³¹⁵ By some Scaliger was praised for he took up the defence of Cicero against Erasmus. On the other hand, Erasmus got support from his friends in France for his treatment of what he called "the barbaric Ciceronians." Erasmus' ideal of imitating Cicero was to follow him in moral sense, not in idiosyncratic sense.³¹⁶ In short, choosing the one scholar above the other depended on personal taste and the tradition in which one acted.

Erasmus' charge against Ciceronians was that they relied abundantly on Cicero's standard for rhetorical style, which was at odds with the conventional humanistic endeavours. According to Erasmus the emphasis of all studies should be on the Christian spirit, development and moderation in all senses. Extravagance and exclusive reliance on sole Renaissance ideals would disadvantage Christianity. Imitating Cicero in his rhetorical style had led to a debasement of morals and pagan customs among men, according to Erasmus.³¹⁷ Continuing in a mere Ciceronian style would lead to a deterioration of Latin, the most important equipment for present matters in life.³¹⁸ It was feasible to use Cicero's rhetoric within Christian dimensions, he argued. In the past the place of Cicero was already discussed, e.g. in the debates between Pietro Bembo and Gianfrancesco Pico della Mirandola,

311 Carrington, L. (2002). "Impiety Compounded: Scaliger's Double-Edged Critique of Erasmus," in *Erasmus of Rotterdam Society Yearbook* 22 (2002), p.59.

312 Conley, T.M. (2008). "No Way to Pick a Fight: A Note on J. C. Scaliger's First Oratio contra Erasmum" in *Rhetorica: A Journal of the History of Rhetoric* Vol. 26, No. 3 (2008), p.258.

313 Hall, V. (1950). "Life of Julius Caesar Scaliger (1484-1558)" in *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, Vol. 40, No. 2 (1950), p.99.

314 Idem.

315 Jensen, K. (1990). *Rhetorical Philosophy and Philosophical Grammar*, p.11.

316 Ibid, p.21.

317 Hall, V. (1950). "Life of Julius Caesar Scaliger", p.96.

and Poggio Bracciolini and Lorenzo Valla, tells Erasmus.³¹⁹ In the Dutchman's view there were two perils which should be combatted, "one being Lutheranism, the other the pagan Ciceronianism of the Roman Academy."³²⁰ Erasmus complained: "What means this odious boasting about the term Ciceronian? Under this pretence they hide their paganism, which is dearer to them than the glory of Christ."³²¹ He considered Ciceronians to form a "third sect" together with the adherents of Luther and Hutten.³²² For Lutherans distorted the Christian unity with their excessive reliance on individual authority, and the Ciceronians offended the true Christian virtues by concentrating on pagan practices. For Erasmus these matters blocked the way for constructing a Christian Renaissance with the emphasis on development of the spirit in a harmonious way.

As a result of Erasmus' condemnation Scaliger noticed that Roman oratory and at the same time the Roman holy religion was under threat. Italy was the place where the Ciceronian tradition flourished. A large number of Italian humanists were Ciceronians, e.g. Lorenzo Valla and Pietro Bembo.³²³ With his attack on the Ciceronians Erasmus offended both the Italian tradition of eloquence and religion. Scaliger felt it his task to explain some matters to Erasmus, since he perceived the Dutchman to be ignorant and unschooled as regards the Italian Christian tradition.³²⁴

5.2 In defense of Cicero and Aristotle

In his first oration Scaliger demonstrates his worries as regards literary matters concerning Cicero. Scaliger's ideal lies in the proper kind of imitation, which can be reached by a proper mind and vision. He attempts to explain Erasmus' *Ciceronianus* in detail and then refute it.³²⁵ He found that Erasmus' *Ciceronianus* was a dialogue only in appearance since one party has much to say about the other, not the other way around.³²⁶ He criticizes Erasmus for the fact that he dishonours Cicero, who is "the

318 Woodward, W.H. (1904), *Desiderius Erasmus Concerning the Aim and Method of Education*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p.27.

319 Carrington, L. (2002). "Impiety Compounded", p.57.

320 Ibid, p.59.

321 Allen:7:193-194, cited in Hall, V. (1950). "Life of Julius Caesar Scaliger", p.96.

322 Carrington, L. (2002). "Impiety Compounded", p.59.

323 Hall, V. (1950). "Life of Julius Caesar Scaliger", p.95.

324 Scott, I. (1991). *Controversies Over the Imitation of Cicero in the Renaissance*. Routledge. First published in 1910, p.49.

325 Ibid, p.44.

father of the Roman nation and of the truest form of Latin speech."³²⁷ Scaliger does everything to defend Cicero's Latinity and the present Ciceronians, a matter which and persons whom Erasmus ridiculed, and to reject the kind of eclecticism Erasmus strove for. It seems that Scaliger wants to preserve the eminent status of Cicero, the Italian hero to whom he is related to as a compatriot. Therefore he is obliged to refute Erasmus' own ideal of imitating the ancient heroes in order to uphold the pure tradition of Italy. He says about Erasmus:

O you hangman, do you call yourself a son of that man whom you have put to death? O parricide, how is it that you dare to claim falsely as a begetter the very parent whom you are butchering, or to butcher that father whom you falsely claim?³²⁸

Ironically enough, Scaliger considers Erasmus a barbarian, in the same way his Dutch opponent had labelled the Ciceronians. According to him, Erasmus had no legitimate rights to pronounce judgments about Cicero. The Dutch humanist made a considerable error in his *Ciceronianus*:

You have professed Horace to be the chief of poets. Yet in the first book [of] his *Satires* he says *cum dicas esse pares res*. You are trapped. If you criticise Cicero you must criticise Horace and therefore yourself, and then Cicero is proved innocent.³²⁹

Erasmus owned his expressiveness to Cicero and like-minded men, according to Scaliger. Instead of being humble and indulgent, Erasmus was developing a withering attack against men who did not agree to his self-centred opinions.³³⁰ The Italian scholar argued that Cicero's eloquence facilitated the process of people becoming Christians. It was not problematic to possess Cicero's work only partially since men do not possess all writings about Christ either, he argued. Such reasons were not enough to relinquish worthwhile human traditions. The Dutchman had inclinations to forget the sources from which he had drawn his inspiration. Scaliger worried that Erasmus' popularizing attitude could infect younger men and transform noble erudition into folly. According to Scaliger Erasmus discussed slanders from the past which were already debunked. To Erasmus' charge that Cicero's voice was loud, Scaliger told that the man possessed a great quality for he was able to express himself in the noisy crowd.³³¹ With his rejection of Cicero's eloquence, Erasmus followed in the footsteps of the barbarians:

326 Jensen, K. (1990). *Rhetorical Philosophy and Philosophical Grammar*, p.21.

327 Carrington, L. (2002). "Impiety Compounded", p.63.

328 *Oratio Prima*, The Latin original can be found in Magnien, M. (1999). *Orationes Duae Contra Erasmum* (Travaux d'humanisme et Renaissance, No. 329). Genève Droz, pp.113-114. The English translation is derived from Carrington, L. (2002). "Impiety Compounded", p.63.

329 *Oratio Prima*, The Latin original can be found in Magnien, M. (1999). *Orationes Duae*, p.108. The English translation is derived from Scott, I. (1991). *Controversies*, p.47.

330 Carrington, L. (2002). "Impiety Compounded", p.64.

331 Hall, V. (1950). "Life of Julius Caesar Scaliger", p.101.

Although, when reading proof at house of Aldus, you did the work of only half a man, yet in drinking you were the threefold Geryon, saying that you were following the example of Plato who wrote that wine stimulates genius...You reject Ennius, you say Horace is a drunkard, you remove Cicero from the memory of men. I implore you, good Romulus, or if you prefer, Camillus [i.e. Giulio Camillo], what empire or what republic of letters are you founding, or what ruins are you restoring?³³²

Erasmus was wrong in ascribing certain solecisms to Cicero, since some of them were due to errors of editors. Instead, tells Scaliger, Erasmus should look to his own blunders in his *Praise of Folly* where he depicted the Lord as belonging to the world of folly. The fact that many men were imitating Cicero was due to a need for a prominent figure who used outstanding Latin, thus Scaliger. He pointed again to one of the discrepancies in Erasmus' thinking:

Cicero was not perfect at birth. He became what he was by dint of work and development. An infinite number of Ciceros can be born and an infinite number of geniuses like his.³³³

With these words Scaliger hoped to counter-attack his opponent's claim as regards development and hard work. After taking up the defence for the Roman oratory, Scaliger then goes on discussing the Christian religion. Erasmus was being accused of "injuring the dignity, power, authority, and majesty of the pontiff in Rome" and dishonouring the "traditional practices such as fasting, prayer and celibacy."³³⁴ Erasmus' thoughts led to religious wars and trifles since religion was at present also accessible to "butchers, shoemakers, fishermen, artisans, and silly females," thus Scaliger.³³⁵ In contrast to Erasmus, Scaliger regards himself as a scholar with much perseverance. Erasmus is dishonest, jealous, a drunkard, gobbler, plagiarist, evilly inclined, half-educated, a poisoner, anti-Pope, a New Epicurean, a promoter of the Reformation and an associate of Luther.³³⁶ Scaliger argued that the Dutchman's views as regards Christianity were not so pious:

You ask if for Jesus, we should say Optimus Maximus; for God, Jupiter; and for the Virgin Mary, Diana? What a silly question. Let us say also Lucian for Erasmus. That name would be appropriate for you; since you have imitated him in the style of his History, have followed his despicable method of criticism, and you like him have jeered at our religious orders. Shall I call you Timon? Why not? You seem to hate supremely the human race and to love yourself. Or Porphorus? You

332 *Oratio Prima*, The Latin original can be found in Magnien, M. (1999). *Orationes Duae*, p.114. The English translation is derived from Hall, V. (1950). "Life of Julius Caesar Scaliger", p.102.

333 *Oratio Prima*, The Latin original can be found in Magnien, M. (1999). *Orationes Duae*, p.142. The English translation is derived from Scott, I. (1991). *Controversies*, p.51.

334 Rummel, E. (1989), *Erasmus and His Catholic Critics*, Vol. II, p.142.

335 Carrington, L. (2002). "Impiety Compounded", p.65.

336 Conley, T.M. (2008). "No Way to Pick a Fight", pp.256-257.

know that your Commentaries are known to all our sacred colleges and are unanimously condemned for their impiety..?³³⁷

In his second oration Scaliger continues his earlier accusations against Erasmus. The Dutchman is supposedly envious towards students who master the Ciceronian style in excellent degree, while Scaliger proclaims to be generous and willing to share his knowledge with the young. Scaliger confesses himself to be rough in his approach towards Erasmus, yet he is kinder than Erasmus. He discusses his past and present career, and accuses his opponent of being the initiator of the rage that is going on between them. The following passage is noteworthy, for Scaliger displays here his loyalty to the letters:

I was learning the charm of Aristotle and was comparing him with Plato; while you were running about the provinces, I was correcting the treatises of Euclid and Ptolemy; while you were reading to your disciples the Publian Mimes, I was studying Virgil; while you were criticising Cicero whom you could not equal, I was imitating him whom I was going to defend; while you were snoring in drunken stupor, I was sweating at work; while you were drinking, I with my supper untouched before me thirsty, hungry, forgetful of self, pale, and red eyed was fed with the hope of glory of letters which was of so much importance that all else seemed sordid.³³⁸

In one of his letters Scaliger even told Erasmus that he was man with his "father being a priest and [his] mother a prostitute."³³⁹ After publishing his second oration he was planning to compose a third oration for he wanted to disprove Erasmus forever, however this plan was set aside when he heard that his opponent was no longer alive.

Alongside of being a defender of Cicero and the Christian tradition, Scaliger also favours Aristotle's philosophy. Together with the orations, Scaliger's treatise *De causis linguae latinae* (*On the Causes of the Latin Language*) (1540) contains some important views as regards the relationship between philosophy and Christianity. In the fifteenth century a debate concerning the place of Plato and Aristotle within Christianity was started. Aristotle's philosophy drew the attention of scholars since it had the potential to reconcile the incompatible views of humanism and scholasticism.³⁴⁰ Aristotle's way of reasoning was easily accessible to almost all sorts of scholars and students. Scaliger preferred Aristotle's philosophy in many ways over that of Plato. The former was competent in poetry, logic, dialectic, rhetoric and philosophy while the latter was restricted in his discussions as regards physical matters. Therefore Scaliger tried to reconcile the Greek philosophy with Christianity, with

337 *Oratio Prima*, The Latin original can be found in Magnien, M. (1999). *Orationes Duae*, p.138. The English translation is derived from Scott, I. (1991). *Controversies*, p.50.

338 *Oratio Secunda*, The Latin original can be found in Magnien, M. (1999). *Orationes Duae*, pp.327-28. The English translation is derived from Scott, I. (1991). *Controversies*, p.58.

339 *Epistolae aliquot* (1621) Letter 15, cited in Hall, V. (1950). "Life of Julius Caesar Scaliger", p.113.

340 Haugen, K. L. (2007). "Aristotle My Beloved: Poetry, Diagnosis, and the Dreams of Julius Caesar Scaliger," in *Renaissance Quarterly* 60 (2007), p.825.

discussing the doctrines of Creation and Trinity.³⁴¹ In the past the philosopher Bernardinus Donatus (1483-1543) had argued that Plato was much closer to Christianity than Aristotle. He asserted: "[Plato] teaches that the world was made, while [Aristotle] claims that it was not."³⁴² Scaliger would attempt to prove the contrary. He stressed Aristotle's role in Christian philosophy:

Erasmus tells us that Greek philosophy doesn't reflect the Christian philosophy...In fact, if the Christian philosophy is two-faced, then ancient philosophy is too. It allows knowledge, but also focuses on morals. Which of the Ten Commandments Aristotle did not embrace in his works devoted to the ethics? And which works of this philosophy [i.e. Aristotle's], which you [i.e. Erasmus] cite for me, turn to be inconsistent with the law of nature prescribed by Paul to the Romans?³⁴³

Do you [i.e. Erasmus] know any better than Duns Scotus or St. Thomas, that you could have spoken about Christ, without the aid of Greek philosophy? The whole extent of their knowledge depends on Aristotle so that they have obviously brought us the greatest help in understanding the mysteries of our religion.³⁴⁴

Scaliger attempted to fortify Aristotle's and degrade Plato's position within humanistic enterprises. Scaliger believed that Plato had produced erotic writings (a claim which Marsilio Ficino refuted by referring to Aristotle's high appraisal of Plato).³⁴⁵ Scaliger knew well that some of Aristotle's works were fragmentarily transmitted via several translation stages. Therefore he focused on older sources for what they had to say about the divergent views as regards Aristotelian thoughts. He attempted to apply Aristotle's methodology to matters which were not originally Aristotle's subjects of study. Scaliger found that Aristotle's reasoning was in line with his own way of reasoning, thus a proof that the Greek philosopher acted at the time in accordance to modern academic principles.³⁴⁶ The deficiencies present in Aristotle's own philosophy or Aristotelian advocates, Scaliger never discussed.

Instead of considering many ancient heroes, like Erasmus did while striving for eclecticism, Scaliger preferred Aristotle above all other philosophers.³⁴⁷ This decision would have influences for

341 Sakamoto, K.(2010). "Creation, the Trinity and Prisca Theologia", p.196.

342 Bernardinus Donatus, *De Platonicae atque Aristotelicae philosophiae differentia*, Paris 1541, fol 9v, cited in *ibid*, p.197.

343 *Oratio Prima*, The Latin original can be found in Magnien, M. (1999). *Orationes Duae*, p.146. The English translation is my own.

344 *Oratio Prima*, The Latin original can be found in Magnien, M. (1999). *Orationes Duae*, p.147. The English translation is my own.

345 Haugen, K. L. (2007). "Aristotle My Beloved", p.823.

346 *Ibid*, p.829.

347 Hall, V. (1950). "Life of Julius Caesar Scaliger", p.92.

the way Scaliger would deal with the *bonae litterae*.³⁴⁸ This is to say that some of the *bonae litterae* could lose their status of belonging to the noble writings, if they differed in style (both literal and substantive) to some extent. According to Aristotle, Scaliger argued, nature should be seen as “part of the divine infinite power, made and continues to maintain the present state of the created world.”³⁴⁹ Aristotle did not contradict the Creation of the world. In contrast Scaliger asserted that Plato's thoughts were irreconcilable with the Christian doctrine of Creation ex nihilo.³⁵⁰ On one occasion Scaliger admitted that Aristotle perceived the world to be eternal. For his enterprise of reconciling Aristotle with Christianity he used Averroes' explanation and one from himself (Scaliger ignored the fact that Averroes had rejected the doctrine of Creatio ex nihilo in his writings)³⁵¹. Still Scaliger was able to refer to ancient philosophers of the past who demonstrated thoughts compatible with Christianity: Zoroaster, Hermes Trismegistus and Pythagoras. Plato's *Timaeus* already demonstrated references to Christ, the Son of God. Though Plato's philosophy was not able to embrace the Christian truth completely. Even Pythagoras' philosophy was in harmony with Christianity since some of his writings referred to Christ and Moses.³⁵² Scaliger tried to reconcile Aristotle and Christianity via the *prisca theologia* (ancient theology), a project which was previously undertaken by Lefèvre d'Étaples without much success. One of his main goals was to produce an Aristotelian *scientia grammaticalis*.³⁵³ Scaliger's choice for Aristotle should be seen in the context of his profession: in his late years he was active as a physician, a career which fitted to the philosophy about physical appearances. As time progressed, Scaliger renounced his endeavours to reconcile humanist ideals with scholastic aims, though he would regard Aristotle as a guiding person who still offered useful methods for approaching present matters.³⁵⁴

5.3 Whose hero?

There is no official publication known by Erasmus directed to Scaliger's first oration. The Dutchman did not feel the need to respond since he found that Scaliger displayed much unpleasantness and an ineffectual character. Instead Erasmus wrote privately to his friends disparaging the content of the first oration.³⁵⁵ Initially he thought that the first oration was from the hands of his old opponents Girolamo Aleandro (1480-1542) and Beda.³⁵⁶ Later on he accepted Scaliger as the author, still believing he got help from others. Scaliger's offensive arguments were futile and his oration was “full

348 Haugen, K. L. (2007). “Aristotle My Beloved”, p.844.

349 Sakamoto, K.(2010). “Creation, the Trinity and Prisca Theologia”, p.199.

350 Ibid.

351 Ibid, p.203.

352 Ibid, p.204.

353 Jensen, K. (1990). *Rhetorical Philosophy and Philosophical Grammar*, p.103.

354 Haugen, K. L. (2007). “Aristotle My Beloved”, p.846.

of impudent lies and furious calumnies,” according to Erasmus.³⁵⁷ Moreover, Erasmus had to deal with other opponents by which he had no time for a quarrel with Scaliger. Erasmus insulted Christian piety, under the excuse of advocating a responsible approach to Cicero, according to Scaliger. Erasmus had stated that he did not regard Cicero as the humanist ideal; Cicero’s works had not all survived due to imprudent editing of them by others.³⁵⁸ An attempt to imitate Cicero’s style was useless since every writer had his own strengths and weaknesses; reliance on a sole and most prominent pagan orator could not match the distinctiveness of Christ, Erasmus believed.³⁵⁹ Since Scaliger was in favour of studying the *bonae litterae* in his own way, he defended alongside Cicero and Aristotle other pagan heroes such as Plato, Virgil, Homer and Hippocrates to some extent.³⁶⁰ The requisite was that they should match the writings of e.g. Aristotle and Cicero in their quality as in this way they were worthy to be read.

Both Erasmus and Scaliger attacked each other mercilessly it may seem. The use of folly and mockery of names was a strategy to demonstrate knowledge and disprove the opponents’ arguments. Erasmus made much more use of humour in his *Ciceronianus* than Scaliger did in his orations.³⁶¹ The controversies between scholars in the Renaissance period betrays the individualism by which men were able to discard outdated views and introduce new visions.³⁶² Scaliger too reveals his loyalty to the anchored tradition to some extent, though the old exemplary men may not prevent present scholars from constructing new methods for academic purposes. To some extent Scaliger wrote his orations to expand his own fame and demonstrate his tastes and aspirations.³⁶³

Like Erasmus, Scaliger went back to early sources to obtain the knowledge he was searching for. The difference between these two men may lie in their ideal of studying literary works. It can be said that Erasmus was more successful in relating the old learnings to present academic findings and social circumstances. Scaliger was more devoted to traditional pagan heroes in the sense that he (un)consciously ignored the Church Fathers. Because of the Church Fathers Cicero may have faded

355 Hall, V. (1950). “Life of Julius Caesar Scaliger”, p.112.

356 Rummel, E. (1989), *Erasmus and His Catholic Critics*, Vol. II, p.141.

357 Ep 3005, cited in Carrington, L. (2002), p.66.

358 Carrington, L. (2002). “Impiety Compounded”, p.61.

359 Ibid, p.62.

360 Hall, V. (1950). “Life of Julius Caesar Scaliger”, p.122.

361 Jensen, K. (1990). *Rhetorical Philosophy and Philosophical Grammar*, p.21.

362 Hall, V. (1950). “Life of Julius Caesar Scaliger”, p.104.

363 Jensen, K. (1990). *Rhetorical Philosophy and Philosophical Grammar*, p.24.

away from the scene, thus Scaliger.³⁶⁴ It is reasonable to classify Scaliger as a scholar holding a linear view of history. He tried to build on the centuries-old established scholastic tradition by discussing, for instance, the doctrines of the Creation and the Trinity. He respected the scholastic tradition though he made some attempts to improve its methods by concentrating on the use of language. He was both innovative and traditional at the same time since his works fulfilled a role "in the diffusion of scholastic doctrine beyond the narrow confines of universities, and show how scholastic Aristotelianism was transformed in the process."³⁶⁵ For such enterprise Scaliger went back to the early sources and applied his freshly-obtained knowledge to present discussions. In the end Scaliger could reconcile himself with Erasmus since he regarded the Dutch humanist as a civilized scholar. He admitted that his greatest mistake in life was his attack on the Dutch humanist. Scaliger's son Justus Scaliger made an attempt to buy all copies of his both father's orations and burn them. All in vain, the orations were reprinted at Toulouse in 1621.³⁶⁶

364 Hall, V. (1950). "Life of Julius Caesar Scaliger", p.95.

365 Jensen, K. (1990). *Rhetorical Philosophy and Philosophical Grammar*, p.190.

366 Hall, V. (1950). "Life of Julius Caesar Scaliger", p.112.

Closing remarks

The aim of this thesis was to analyse and discuss some major charges directed against the Dutch humanist Erasmus. In the first section it became evident which position Erasmus took as a modern Dutch humanist. His relation to the *bonae litterae* and *sacrae litterae* should be viewed as unique in a time in which many European humanists defended the traditional scholasticism. With the publication of the Greek New Testament in 1516 Erasmus established his name in the field of theology. During the Renaissance period humanist enterprises were internationally aligned. Scholars exchanged letters and visited each other in different countries, and Erasmus was no exception. This is not to say that humanists always shared the same aspirations and plans. Already in individual countries disputes were going on about intellectual matters. For instance, the place of tradition was being discussed in France, the more when Erasmus' writings reached French teachers and students. The reason why Erasmus was attacked was because of his revolutionary approach to Christianity. By studying the *bonae litterae* he hoped to understand the *sacrae litterae* better, and apply this knowledge to Christian practice. With this presumption Erasmus adopted a cyclical view of history. In this sense he went back to the early Christian and pre-Christian sources to obtain knowledge and to correct present misunderstandings or difficulties within Christianity. The consequence was, as was realized by some humanists, that Erasmus was threatening the traditional scholastic theology and introducing his own version of Christianity, independent of any present Christian authority.

As we saw, Zúñiga's aspirations were linked to the Spanish tradition. His project consisted of combining older traditions with present traditions, in an evolution which in his view had developed linearly. According to him, Erasmus used a new kind of language which had not been used in the Christian tradition before. The Dutchman offended the popes, priests, sacraments and Christian doctrines. Zúñiga tended towards the linear view of history and so he was against much of Erasmus' vision. Defending the Vulgate was more important for him than undermining it for the sake of philological enterprises and other linguistic aspirations. Erasmus belonged to the chain of heretical figures underpinning Luther's philosophy. Though the Complutensian Bible was much more advanced in its content and form, Erasmus' Greek New Testament triumphed due to Erasmus' clever philological method. Zúñiga's attack was harsh and therefore it would take not long before Erasmus' edition was prohibited by the papal authorities. Both Erasmus and Zúñiga belonged to their own tradition which made it difficult to reach an agreement as regards the position of the Bible and the Christian practice.

Beda grew up in a tradition which attached much value to scholastic theology. He clearly held a linear view of history since he remained loyal to the tradition in which he had developed himself. In his eyes, Erasmus' endeavours were unimportant since he seemed to magnify his own interests. With such an attitude Erasmus attempted to find his own version of Christianity while ignoring the essential tradition of the scholastics. Beda and Erasmus differed in their visions as regards the study of Christianity and the position of Christian writers at present. Beda was resolute in his viewpoint for he took on Erasmus, depicting him as a heretic and a Lutheran. He pleaded for a Christianity with Christ in the middle, remaining loyal to the sacred linear development of Christian thought. Discoveries, pronounced by men like Erasmus, were unnecessary and originated from profane intentions. As a man belonging to developing Counter-Reformation ideals, he strove for discipline and orthodoxy while Erasmus aspired to individual understanding of Scripture.

Pio, as an Italian layman, strove for preserving the *status quo*, remaining loyal to Rome. While not being a humanist in professional sense, he sensed the consequences which Erasmus' writings would cause. Pio too belonged to the traditional camp, holding a linear view of history. Erasmus threatened this development in time, by which he insulted the long chain of Christian interpreters. Pio rejected the notion of *sola fide* and *sola Scriptura*. In his version of Christianity, growth should take place under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. While Erasmus thought development had resulted in degeneration of the primitive Church, Pio favoured development. Erasmus defended a Platonist vision since he felt that spirituality was the basis of Christianity. Pio pointed out Erasmus' erroneous doctrines, though he requested modesty, humility, piety and wished him good luck. The Italian scholar found Erasmus' thoughts were too much like the idea of Reformation. Erasmus' version of humanism was not in accordance with the scholastic tradition. In fact, Erasmus forgot the help he received from Italian scholars while he was in Italy, says Pio. The Dutchman's thoughts on Christianity were obsolete since he unjustly preferred Plato over Aristotle. Pio did his best to counter-attack the Dutch humanist by use of Scripture, the Church Fathers, and ecclesiastical authorities.

Scaliger attacked Erasmus with his two orations. The Dutch humanist had offended, alongside the Italian literary tradition, Christian piety. Scaliger attempted to demonstrate to Erasmus his vast knowledge of the *bonae litterae*. In his orations he referred to many pagan heroes, counter-attacking Erasmus and like-minded men who claimed to encourage a Christianity meant for individual growth. In line with Erasmus, Scaliger too made use of rhetorical techniques to refute his opponent. With his orations he tried to establish an authority in the humanistic world. The Renaissance age should not only be seen as "the substitution of ancient in the place of medieval authorities...but the substitution of the free inquiring mind for all traditional authority."³⁶⁷ Erasmus chose for both. He went back to the ancient sources and aspired for freedom in thought. It seems that Scaliger made a different choice: he studied the past heroes, while ignoring some of them like the Church Fathers. He was loyal to the scholastic tradition, which was prior to the new humanistic advances. He too was in favour of freedom of thought, but in a limited way in the sense that tradition never should lose its timeless value. Personal (ambitious) motives certainly played a role in the ongoing disputes between scholars, as we came to see.

With the accusations from four different scholars against Erasmus, it became evident that each scholar acted in a unique traditional milieu and had his own intellectual background. The time in which Erasmus and his contemporaries were acting, was one of competition, ignorance, submission and jealousy. The scholars of that age possessed the skills to refute each other in different ways. They made use of rhetorical strategies and eloquence. Erasmus' endeavours could be considered rebellious, dangerous and suspicious. Since radical change in these times was viewed as decline, the latter was "a natural consequence of the desire to follow the authority of the ancients."³⁶⁸ In the age of the Renaissance the Latin language acquired a "symbolic status charged with such political and religious importance that Lorenzo Valla...could call the Latin language *sacramentum*."³⁶⁹ With this knowledge one could without much trouble understand why Erasmus was perceived as threatening

367 Hall, V. (1950). "Life of Julius Caesar Scaliger", p.150.

368 Jensen, K. (1990). *Rhetorical Philosophy and Philosophical Grammar*, p.86.

369 Ibid, p.52.

the Christian religion and its sacred language Latin. Giving Erasmus his way would mean, at least for some, the abandonment of the fifteen centuries long Christian tradition based on the writings of the early Church Fathers. Erasmus was probably not alone in his enterprise. Once like-minded men were united then they would triumph over all Europe and create a diverging version of Christianity, while attacking the Catholic tradition. Erasmus was well educated in Latin and Greek and his name established in the humanistic world, thus potentially a very dangerous figure.

One can only truly understand Erasmus' opponents once all arguments are put into context. Some of his opponents might have tried to understand Erasmus, others might not. However, Erasmus' thoughts were limited in their extent and elitist in orientation: his thoughts should be considered guidelines for individual Christians and not doctrinal rules.³⁷⁰ Still Erasmus' opponents feared that such guidelines could expand into doctrinal decrees. The Dutch humanist made considerable contributions to the Christian heritage, leaving us his writings and the counter-writings of his opponents. In the time Erasmus was producing his writings, no one could exactly know to what extent his arguments were practicable for present circumstances. It was after some time that one could look back to this particular period and compare the different perspectives with each other in regard to an ideal type of Christianity. Willingly or unwillingly, humanists had to take into account previous thoughts and methods originating from the past scholastic tradition. The authority of tradition, the available materials, personal motives and contacts with other scholars were determinative factors for the stance one was willing to take at the moment. Erasmus' opponents, discussed in this thesis, might have been less fortunate than the Dutchman since they were indeed much dependent of the orthodox milieu in which they found themselves.

370 Eire, C.M.N. (1989). *War against the Idols*, p.53.

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