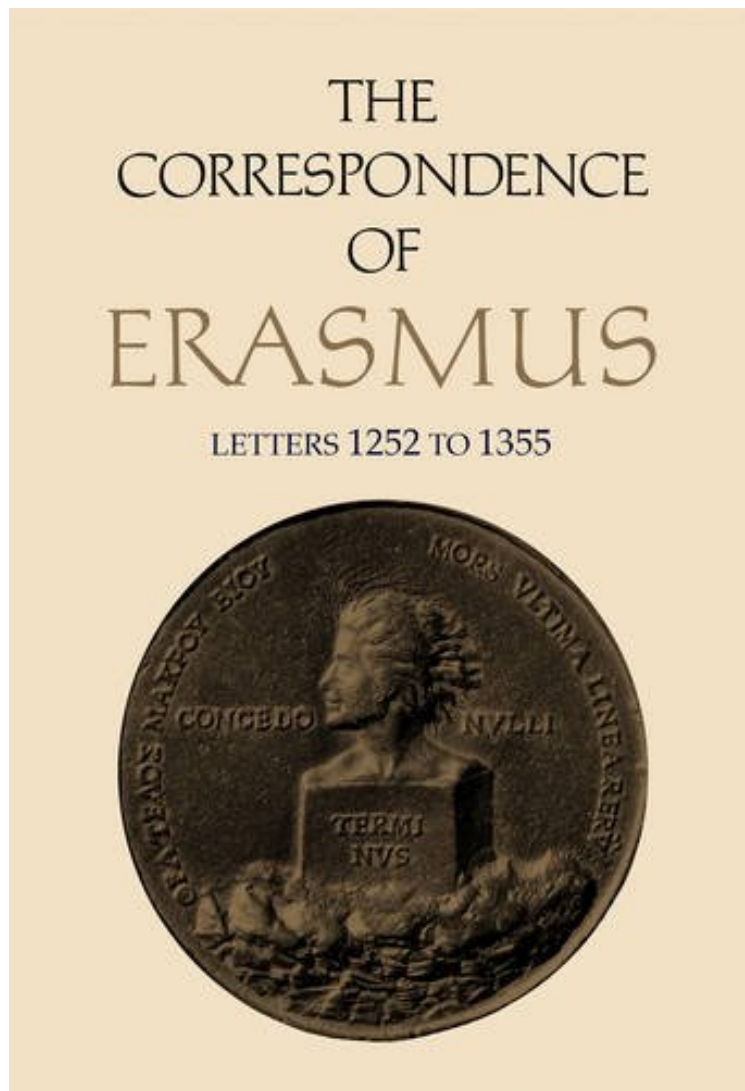


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Desiderius Erasmus

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Desiderius Erasmus : The Correspondence of Erasmus: Letters 1252-1355 (1522-1523) (Collected Works of Erasmus) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Correspondence of Erasmus: Letters 1252-1355 (1522-1523) (Collected Works of Erasmus):

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Poor Volume in a Fantastic SeriesBy Matthew"Collected Works of Erasmus: 71" - This is my fifth purchase and first disappointment in wonderful series of translations of Erasmus from

the University of Toronto. I am so grateful for the translation and many but not all of the introductory materials included in each volume. "Who?" you ask, is Desiderius Erasmus? As a lifelong Protestant, I too was unfamiliar with the genius who preceded the Protestant Reformation. Erasmus gets little attention in Protestantism despite our great debt to him. Erasmus was the rockstar of European academia in the early 1500's. Most of the intelligentsia loved him, and all knew his name. He heavily yet courteously criticized the Roman religious system, publishing his own version of the Bible in Greek and daring to correct the Latin Vulgate, all the while winning the adoration of Pope Leo X who would have felt threatened by almost anyone else who had done the same things. The Reformers including Luther loved him, at least until he finally disagreed publicly and respectfully with Luther's claim that humans have no free will. Erasmus vigilantly held his independence, resisting calls to becoming a bishop or joining a university faculty because either avenue would have limited his freedom to study, publish, and write without hindrance. His translated works are mostly full of wit and wisdom. I thoroughly enjoyed volume 3 (including his preface to the annotations of the 1st edition of the Greek New Testament), volume 10 (including his comparison of writing to childbearing), volume 76 (comprised entirely by his disagreements with Martin Luther), and volume 78 which includes his revelatory "Letter against the Pseudo-Evangelicals." While I give the very highest recommendation to volumes 3, 10, 76, 78; I found little to enjoy in volume 71. At the time of this review, there is only one other which appears to be mistakenly applied to this volume while discussing instead the "Adages" which are found in volumes 30-36. This particular volume (71) was unusually short (130 pages compared to 400+ in other volumes) while ironically feeling much longer than the others because of how tedious, less animated topics were the topics in this one. Here, Erasmus and his opponents talk at great length about whether we should learn other languages and whether or not marriage is good. Bleh. Boring. 4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Yet another great resource of ancient literature By B. Marold First, let me explain why I only gave this great classic of the Renaissance only four stars. The first, is the cost. I ordered one volume a month, until I began worrying that someone else would snatch them out from under me. My credit card is still recovering from the shock. The second is that across the six volumes, there is no index which puts things in either alphabetical or topical order (as with a Thesaurus. It would be of little value to put them all in Latin alphabetical order, as a large number of the 4150 adages are from the Greek, not Latin. Second, let me clarify what Erasmus means by "Adages". In Samuel Johnson's dictionary, an adage is "Lat.]A maxim handed down from antiquity; a proverb. This is not what Erasmus means. A proverb assumes a complete sentence. Most of Erasmus' adages are not sentences, but clauses, or even just phrases from works of literature written in classic Greek or Latin. For example, Adage 18 is a familiar expression "On the razor's edge", which forecasts the title of Somerset Maugham's novel, is first from Homer's The Iliad, meaning, as we do now, to be finely balanced between success or failure. The expression reappears in Sophocles' Antigone, in the Epigrams, and in the Dioscuri (both collections of Greek sayings.) The interesting thing is that some sources (Wikipedia) say Maugham took the expression from the Katha Upanishad "Arise, awake, and learn by approaching the exalted ones, for that path is sharp as a razor's edge, impassable, and hard to go by, say the wise." Which is a slightly different meaning. Third, I will cite the primary reason for treasuring this work. It may be the ultimate medicine for writer's block. There are 4151 different phrases, spread out over six volumes, every one has about a half page of explanation. But a large minority have essays by Erasmus which are several pages long. I can just imagine a blog writer, setting themselves the task of writing 1000 words each week, to be at a loss for something about which they can write. If I were in that position, I would take one of these volumes, open it at random and page through it until I found an adage with a page or more of commentary, and use that as the subject for my blog. Fourth, as delightful as Erasmus' comments are, their references are sometimes vague. The annotator has remedied this situation by providing footnotes, sometimes even suggesting a primary source which Erasmus does not mention, such as the expression 23 "Back to the third line". The editor attributes it to a proverb in Livy, based on a military maneuver. Everyone is familiar with the proverb "Beware of Greeks bearing gifts." It turns out this sentiment is far deeper than just the incident from Homer with the Trojan horse. Erasmus' version is 35 "Gifts of enemies are no gifts." It was an ancient Greek custom to distrust anything given to us by people with suspicious intentions. There are even events in The Iliad about bad arising out of gifts exchanged between Ajax and Hector, even before the famous incident with the horse. The books are beautifully and durably bound, and the copies I received, although plainly second hand, are in tip top shape, just a few tiny tears in the dust jacket (whether or not the volume's photograph had a dust jacket or not.

At the beginning of this volume, Erasmus leaves Louvain to live in Basel. Weary from the many controversies reflected in the letters of the previous volumes, he is also anxious to see the annotations to his third edition of the New Testament through Johann Froben's press. Above all he fears that pressure from the imperial court in the Netherlands will force him to take a public stand against Luther. Erasmus completes a large number of works in the span of this volume, including the Paraphrases on Matthew and John, two new expanded editions of the Colloquies, an edition of De conscribendis epistolis, two apologiae against his Spanish detractors, and editions of Arnobius Junior and Hilary of Poitiers. But the predominant theme of the volume remains the sorry business of Luther. The harder Erasmus persists in trying to adhere to a reasonable course between Catholic and reforming zealots, the more he finds himself a heretic

to both sides. His Catholic critics appear the more dangerous. Among them are the papal nuncio Girolamo Aleandro, who is bent on discrediting him at both the imperial and papal courts as a supporter of Luther; the Spaniard Diego Lopez Ziga, who compiles a catalogue of Blasphemies and Impieties of Erasmus of Rotterdam; and the Carmelite Nicholaas Baechem, who denounces Erasmus both in public sermons and at private drinking-parties. Erasmus' refusal to counsel severity against the Lutherans is motivated chiefly by concern for peace and the common good of Christendom, and not by any tender regard for Luther and the other reformers. Still, many of the letters in this volume testify to his growing aversion to the reformers, and we see him moving perceptibly in the direction of his eventual public breach with them. A special feature of this volume is the first fully annotated translation of Erasmus' *Catalogues Lucubrationum* (Ep 1341 A), an extremely important document for the study of Erasmus' life and works and of the controversies they aroused. Volume 9 of the *Collected Works of Erasmus* series.

Language Notes
Text: English (translation) Original Language: Latin
About the Author
Desiderius Erasmus (c. 1466-1536), a Dutch humanist, Catholic priest, and scholar, was one of the most influential Renaissance figures. A professor of divinity and Greek, Erasmus wrote, taught, and travelled, meeting with Europe's foremost scholars. A prolific author, Erasmus wrote on both ecclesiastic and general human interest subjects. James M. Estes is professor emeritus of history at Victoria College, University of Toronto. R.A.B. Mynors is Corpus Christi Professor of Latin, Oxford University.