

## 'Erasmianism' in the Early Reformation in the Netherlands

Has there ever been an age of Erasmus? Perhaps not an age, but the years around 1516 might in a way be characterized as Erasmian. One testimony may be sufficient: "For who is there in whose heart Erasmus does not occupy a central place, to whom Erasmus is not the teacher who holds him in thrall? I speak of those who love learning as it should be loved." These words were written in March 1519, and if anyone were to be asked in a multiple choice test by whom, nobody would consider Luther to be the most plausible answer. And yet it was Luther.<sup>1</sup> Admittedly, he addressed these words to Erasmus in order to win his sympathy and support, although he realized as early as 1516 that Erasmus did not share his deepest convictions. But still, the compliment that Luther paid was the expression of a sentiment shared by many contemporaries. They were, to quote the title of that excellent three volume biographical dictionary we all know and we all use, *Contemporaries of Erasmus*, a title which suggests, and not without reason, that Erasmus was a standard.

For a great number of people Erasmus was first and foremost the champion of Christian liberty. This usually implied a widespread aversion to the laws of the Church, in particular to regulations regarding holy days and fasting. When reading what Silvana Seidel Menchi has written on Erasmus's influence in Italy one is struck by the fact that for many Italians Erasmus was not precisely the moderate latitudinarian, but rather a revolutionary, inspiring them to reject important elements of the Catholic tradition.<sup>2</sup>

With respect to the Netherlands there is no evidence to support such a far-reaching conclusion.<sup>3</sup> However, it cannot be denied that reading Erasmus must have given rise to beliefs which the authorities regarded as dangerous or heretical. Let us take an example: anticlericalism, and especially anti-monasticism. This was not a new phenomenon, but it was no doubt greatly enhanced in the 1520s by the appearance of Luther and his followers. But some writings of Erasmus, too, could induce readers to criticise or even reject altogether parts of the medieval tradition. As is well-known, Erasmus assures us time and again that he himself is not aiming at radical changes, and we should take him seriously in this respect. Nevertheless, it is not difficult to

<sup>1</sup> Allen Ep. 933, 4-6; transl. CWE 6, 281, 4-7.

<sup>2</sup> Silvana Seidel Menchi, *Erasmus in Italia 1520-1580* (Turin 1987); German transl.: *Erasmus als Ketzer: Reformation und Inquisition im Italien des 16. Jahrhunderts* (Leiden 1993).

<sup>3</sup> For a short introduction to the early (i.e. pre-Calvinistic) Dutch Reformation see A. Duke, 'The Netherlands', *The early Reformation in Europe*. Ed. A. Pettegree (Cambridge 1992) 142-165.

imagine that the average reader of the *Enchiridion*, in particular of the 1518 edition to which the letter to Volz was appended, might have come to conclusions which Erasmus himself would not have endorsed.

In the letter to Volz (a Benedictine abbot who sided with the Reformers in the 1520s) we find a detailed comparison between the life of monks and the life of ordinary citizens. Although Erasmus's remarks are carefully worded, their implication is unmistakably that a layman can be as good a Christian as a monk, perhaps even a better Christian. The one great vow taken in baptism is a vow to Christ, not to man. The monastic vows are regarded as no more than merely human inventions, in contrast with the traditional view that chastity, poverty and obedience were 'counsels of perfection' by which one could come closer to Christ. But Erasmus seems to suggest the opposite. Immediately after having argued that "... they who live a religious life under less compulsion seem more truly religious" (that is: the laymen) Erasmus admittedly draws his own very careful, moderate and well-balanced conclusion. I quote: "The result is therefore that no one should be foolishly self-satisfied because his way of life is not that of other people, nor should he despise or condemn the way of life of others".<sup>4</sup> But who would remember that? From an orthodox point of view, the damage had already been done and it would not be correct to maintain that conservative Louvain theologians such as Eustachius of Zichem had entirely misunderstood the *Enchiridion*. His observation that Erasmus, otherwise so censorious, does not attack monks and nuns leaving their monasteries, is to the point. Zichem's suggestion that Erasmus's "monachus non est pietas" amounts to the same thing as "monachus est impietas"<sup>5</sup> is biased, but many readers may have understood it in the latter sense.

The combination of a theory which is open to a radical interpretation and a dislike of radical changes — a combination which may be called typically Erasmian — is also to be found in the first Dutch forbidden book, the *Summa der godliker scrifturen* (1523).<sup>6</sup> Like Erasmus, it repeatedly stresses that the monastic vows add nothing at all to the general vow taken by all Christians in baptism. But as to the practical consequences, the author of the *Summa* states explicitly that he does not aim at "reforming" the estates spiritual or temporal; he rather wants to show the meaning of evangelical life.<sup>7</sup> Nor does he encourage, so he says, monks and nuns to abandon

<sup>4</sup> *Enchiridion*, Holborn, 19, 5-20, 3; transl. CWE 66, 22-23.

<sup>5</sup> Eustachius de Zichinis, *Erasmii Roterodami canonis quinti interpretatio. Le dernier écrit louvaniste anti-érasmien*. Ed. Joseph Coppens. Verhandelingen van de Koninklijke Academie voor Wetenschappen, Letteren en Schone Kunsten van België. Klasse der Letteren 37 (Brussels 1975) Nr. 75, 60-91, esp. 77 and 85. Cf. Erika Rummel, *Erasmus and his Catholic Critics 2* (Nieuwkoop 1989) 24-25 and eadem, 'Monachus non est pietas. Interpretations and Misinterpretations of a Dictum', *Erasmus' Vision of the Church*. Ed. Hilmar Pabel (Kirksville 1995) 41-55, esp. 54-55.

<sup>6</sup> *Het oudste Nederlandsche verboden Boek. 1523. Oeconomica christiana. Summa der godliker scrifturen*. Ed. J.J. van Toorenenbergen (Leiden 1882). Cf. J. Trapman, *De Summa der godliker scrifturen (1523)* (Leiden 1978) and id., 'Introduzione' and 'Nota bibliografica', *Il Sommario della Santa Scrittura e l'ordinario dei cristiani*. Ed. Cesare Bianco (Turin 1988) 7-23, 47-51.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. the wording in the contemporary English translation: "Myne intent is not to reforme all estates as well espirituell as seculer. For of that I will not presume. But I shewe alonely by the scriptures howe we shulde lyve if we wolde lyve according to the gospell ...", *The Summe of the holye scripture* ([Antwerp] 1529; only copy known at Cambridge UL) A4v-5r. *The Summe* was printed by Johannes Grapheus, see P. Valkema Blouw, 'Early Protestant Publications in Antwerp, 1526-30. The Pseudonyms Adam Anonymus in Basel and Hans Luft in Marlborow', *Quaerendo* 26 (1996) 107.

their monasteries, for “... if a monk or a nun live in the right way, that life is not bad”.<sup>8</sup> Though both the *Enchiridion* and the *Summa der godliker scripture* were conservative in not inciting monks and nuns to abandon their monasteries, yet what they taught would never encourage young men or women to take vows — on the contrary.

Let us now turn to one of the most outstanding supporters of Erasmus in the Northern Netherlands: Gerard Listrius.<sup>9</sup> Rector of the School of Zwolle as from 1516, he was well versed in Hebrew, Greek and Latin and thus a rare specimen of the humanist ‘homo trilinguis’. He introduced Greek in Zwolle; two years earlier when he worked as a corrector at Froben’s press, he had shown his talents in this field by contributing some Greek poems to a collection of translations from Plutarch made by Erasmus (Basel, Froben 1514). Until his marriage in 1519 he lived in the house of the rector of the Brethren of the Common Life. In the first letter of Listrius to Erasmus we know of, written about November 1516, he tells his correspondent that all the learned and pious men (“docti atque religiosi”) love Erasmus and are reading and re-reading his New Testament in Greek. Although Listrius does not say so, we may infer that these “docti atque religiosi” owe their knowledge of Greek to Listrius himself. But the barbarians are there too — among the theologians as Erasmus will know.<sup>10</sup> Listrius was challenged above all by the Zwolle Dominicans. We learn from another letter by Listrius that Erasmus’s supporters included “patres nostri”.<sup>11</sup> This must refer to the Brethren of the Common Life. This might seem strange, since Erasmus himself was highly critical of them because of their presumed anti-intellectualism. He especially used to blame them for recruiting by way of their hostels young boys for the monasteries of various religious orders.<sup>12</sup> But here we have “devoti” who were open to Christian humanism. So Gerard of Kloster, the prior of the monastery of Mount St. Agnes near Zwolle, an important foundation of the Devotio Moderna, was an admirer of Erasmus.<sup>13</sup>

In about 1519, in collaboration with the printer Simon Corver, Listrius started to publish school books, for instance, a little book *De figuris et tropis* on figures of speech etc. (1519).<sup>14</sup> In it Listrius praises in passing Erasmus’s *Paraphrases* on the Epistles of Paul because of their ‘elegance’.<sup>15</sup> This book was dedicated to Gerard of

<sup>8</sup> *Het oudste Nederlandsche verboden Boek*, 117. In the above-mentioned Cambridge copy these remarks on monks and nuns have been crossed out by an angry (16th-century?) reader.

<sup>9</sup> On Listrius see C.G. van Leijenhorst in *Contemporaries of Erasmus* 2, 335-336 and in particular B.J. Spruyt, ‘Listrius lutherizans: his *Epistola theologica aduersus Dominicanos Suollenses*’, *Sixteenth Century Journal* 22 (1991) 727-751 and ‘Gerardus Listrius’ *Epistola theologica aduersus Dominicanos Svollenses*’. Ed. B.J. Spruyt, *Nederlands Archief voor Kerkgeschiedenis/Dutch Review of Church History* 71 (1991) 224-244.

<sup>10</sup> Allen Ep. 495.

<sup>11</sup> Allen Ep. 500, 5 (c. December 1516).

<sup>12</sup> Cf. in particular Allen Ep. 447, 97-118 to Grunnius (August 1516). On Erasmus and the Modern Devotion see C. Augustijn, ‘Erasmus und die Devotio moderna’, *Erasmus. Der Humanist als Theologe und Kirchenreformer* (Leiden etc. 1996) 26-37. Augustijn emphasizes the differences and concludes that the Modern Devotion has had no positive influence upon Erasmus.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. *Contemporaries of Erasmus* 2, 87-88 (C.G. van Leijenhorst).

<sup>14</sup> See W. Nijhoff - M.E. Kronenberg, *Nederlandsche Bibliographie van 1500 tot 1540* 2 (The Hague 1940) Nr. 3408.

<sup>15</sup> (On paraphrasing) “Id quod Erasmus fecit in aliquot epistolas Pauli, elegantissime.” I used the Zwolle 1520 edition (Nijhoff-Kronenberg, *Nederlandsche Bibliographie* 1 (The Hague 1923) Nr. 1376) F3v.

Kloster, the above-mentioned prior, a man who according to Listrius was a patron of learning and an enemy of sophistry. A better compliment could hardly be imagined. Another book which could be instructive was Erasmus's *De Copia*, first published in 1512. Listrius saw to it that Corver printed a new edition in 1520.<sup>16</sup> In accordance with the Strasbourg reprint of 1514 this edition was preceded by a long letter, in which Erasmus enthusiastically expressed his thanks for the way the Strasbourg humanists had welcomed him (=Ep. 305). Leaving aside the contents of this letter, we should look at the title page. There we find that the letter is recommended as a "very Erasmian letter, that is a letter which is elegant, learned, and uncommonly perspicuous" ("epistola plane Erasmica, hoc est elegans, docta et mire candida").<sup>17</sup>

This use of the term 'Erasmian' is not exceptional in the first half of the sixteenth century. It reminds us of a remark made by Johannes Kessler, the reformer of Sankt Gallen. In his interesting memoirs, the *Sabbata*, written in German in the 1520s, Kessler praised Erasmus's Latinity and scholarship. The name of Erasmus, Kessler observed, had even become proverbial, for it was said that everything written in a skilful, intelligent, learned and wise way, might be called 'Erasmian', that is flawless and perfect ("... was kunstreich, fürsichtig, gelert und wis geschriben ist, spricht man, das ist Erasmissch, das ist onfelbar und vollkommen").<sup>18</sup> And when in 1514 the Louvain theologian Martinus Dorpius addressed Erasmus in a letter as "mi Erasme", he continued: "... to the bare name I need add nothing, for it has now become synonymous with scholarship and high standards ..."<sup>19</sup>

With respect to terminology, we may infer that in the original meaning of 'Erasmian' the literary and scholarly aspects were predominant.<sup>20</sup> But this use of the term, however interesting in itself, does not rule out that for many people, including scholars, Erasmus was above all an inspiring religious teacher. I do not see any incongruity in calling those people 'Erasmians'. This does not mean, however, that they could not change.

Listrius himself is a case in point. The printer Simon Corver did not confine himself to printing books on grammar and style; in 1519 he published an edition of Erasmus's *Enchiridion*.<sup>21</sup> He must have done so on the advice of Listrius, who made use of this book in his teaching. Thus his pupils and perhaps a larger audience as well were introduced to Erasmus's spiritual piety. As an inevitable result the existing hostility of the Dominicans increased. Just like Erasmus, Listrius frequently denounced them as tyrants and hypocrites, hostile to the humanities. On their side, the Dominicans

<sup>16</sup> Nijhoff-Kronenberg, *Nederlandsche Bibliographie* 2, Nr. 2914.

<sup>17</sup> See the description of the title page in Nijhoff - Kronenberg, *Nederlandsche Bibliographie* 2, Nr. 2914.

<sup>18</sup> *Johannes Kesslers Sabbata*. Ed. Emil Egli - Rudolph Schoch (St. Gallen 1902) 87.

<sup>19</sup> Allen Ep. 304, 1-2: "... mi Erasme (nam hoc solum nomen ita nunc est doctrinae excellentiaeque nomen, ut nihil sit adiiciendum)"; transl. CWE 3, 18, 3-5.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. also the preface to the Paris 1535 edition of Erasmus's translation of Lucian's *Toxaris*: "Quantum et hic, ut in caeteris, candide lector, se vere Erasmum, *hoc est facilem florulentumque* [my italics], praestitit Erasmus, quasdam tamen nonnumquam inseruit voculas aptas quidem illas elegantesque, sed quae iuventuti non admodum multae lectionis negotium facessant", quoted by C. Robinson in his introduction to *Luciani Dialogi*, ASD 1-1, 369.

<sup>21</sup> Nijhoff - Kronenberg, *Nederlandsche Bibliographie* 2, Nr. 2927. With dedicatory letter to the reader in Greek by Listrius.

accused Listrius of 'Lutheranism'. As is well-known, this was just a convenient way of calling someone a heretic, regardless of whether he had read Luther or not. In this case, however, the Dominicans turned out to be right. As early as 1520 Listrius began to move in Luther's direction.<sup>22</sup> At the same time Corver printed three (Latin) writings by Luther.<sup>23</sup>

In the 1520s, there was a general feeling that Erasmus and Luther were fighting the same battle. This feeling was shared by friend and foe alike. To put it in positive terms: both Erasmus and Luther advocated Christian freedom. But precisely because of that, conservative theologians considered this freedom as dangerous to the established Church and its authority.

Luther was also widely read in the Netherlands; a considerable number of his works had been translated into Dutch.<sup>24</sup> More specifically, one chapter of the *Summa der godliker scripturen* is actually a shortened version of Luther's tract *Von weltlicher Obrigkeit*. Moreover, the relationship between faith and works is compared with the good tree bringing forth good fruits, as Luther did in *Von der Freiheit*. And what is most important: in the *Summa* so much attention is paid to God's mercy, justification by faith alone etc. that in this respect the book goes far beyond Erasmus, which made Karl Benrath characterize it in 1880 as "ein Zeugniß aus dem Zeitalter der Reformation für die Rechtfertigung aus dem Glauben".<sup>25</sup>

It is clear that Erasmian and Lutheran elements have not always been combined in the same way. In some cases the Lutheran element would seem to be part of an Erasmian whole — or vice versa; both elements may also balance each other. It would not be satisfying, however, to leave it at that. As historians, we would like to know how, in every individual case, Erasmian and Lutheran (to confine ourselves to this reformer) elements were interrelated, combined or blended. And we must, of course, take into consideration that people change over the years. Where 'Erasmianism' is concerned, it shows a general tendency to become less visible, depending on the extent of confessionalism the individual concerned adhered to, be it Protestant or Catholic. But we are not going to consider the attitudes of individuals, fascinating as it might be to follow a man like Listrius. However, we remain in his orbit. I propose to take a look at a small Latin book which was most likely published in Zwolle in 1521, the *Lamentationes Petri*.<sup>26</sup> It is a satire, written by an anonymous author hiding

<sup>22</sup> Spruyt, 'Listrius lutherizans'; id., 'Gerardus Listrius' *Epistola*.

<sup>23</sup> *Tessaradecas consolatoria* (1520), *De libertate christiana* (Febr. 1521) and *De bonis operibus* (c. 1521) = Nijhoff - Kronenberg, *Nederlandsche Bibliographie* 1, nos. 1418, 1415 and 1417 (with corrections in 3, 2e stuk, p. xxii and 3, 3e stuk, p. 291) respectively. Cf. C.Ch.G. Visser, *Luther's geschriften in de Nederlanden tot 1546* (Assen 1969) nos. 11, 22 and 33 respectively.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. Visser, *Luther's geschriften*, 187-193 ('Zusammenfassung').

<sup>25</sup> Trapman, *De Summa*, 2-3, 65, 71.

<sup>26</sup> *Lamentationes Petri, autore Esdra Scriba olim, modo publico sanctorum Protonotario, cum annotationibus seu additionibus Iohannis Andreae*, s.l., s.a. [= Zwolle, Simon Corver, 1521?], see Nijhoff-Kronenberg, *Nederlandsche Bibliographie* 2, Nr. 2985. Cf. also additions in 3, 2e stuk, p. xxvi; 3, 3e stuk, p. 118; 3, 5e stuk, p. xiv (copies mentioned: Paris BN, Hamburg, Wolfenbüttel, Zwickau, Cambridge Trinity College). The book contains: dedicatory letter by Esdras to William Frederiks (A2r-A4v); 'prologus' by Esdras, addressed to William Frederiks (B1r-B4r); quotation from Luther's *Assertio articulorum per bullam Leonis Decimi damnatorum* (a statement against the Mendicant Orders) (B4v); the *Lamentationes* proper (C1r-H6r); a number of 50 'Triades' [attributed to Ulrich von Hutten]

behind the name of Esdras.<sup>27</sup> According to Jerome Aleander, Erasmus's friend in Venice, and later to become his enemy, the booklet must have been written by Erasmus. But Aleander is quite alone in this opinion.<sup>28</sup>

The *Lamentationes* is staged in heaven, and the characters are St. Peter, St. Paul, the evangelists and the Church Fathers, in particular St. Jerome and St. Augustine. The dramatis personae have every reason to complain, since the Church is in a deplorable state. Peter and Paul lament the neglect of their writings: the New Testament Epistles are not being read any longer; nor are the Gospels and the works of the Church Fathers. How did it come to that? The culprit is Aristotle (see e.g. C2v; C4r-v). The decadence of theology is due to him as well as to Thomas Aquinas, who is in favour with his fellow Dominicans (apparently Esdras' special enemies). The great obstacles to a renewal of the Church are the four Mendicant orders: Dominicans, Franciscans, Carmelites and Hermits of St. Augustine (E1r-3r). There is much debate in heaven as to how to break the power of the Mendicants. Several solutions are being proposed; Peter would like to intervene militarily. But he is calmed down by Paul. Then the Apostle proposes a stratagem: let us fight the Mendicants with their own weapons. To that effect we need assistance from an insider. Augustine puts forward the name of Luther, since he is a member of an order ('secta') claiming wrongfully "that I am its founder" (F3v).

It is interesting to see why exactly Luther is considered such a good choice. He is a man of irreproachable conduct, and he is the most erudite of the Mendicants. Subsequently Jerome and Augustine go down to Wittenberg (F4r). What they would like Luther to do above all is to preach freedom to Christians who are regrettably bound by human precepts and scholastic doctrines (G1r). The great majority of works by medieval theologians should be abolished: thus Nicholas of Lyra may be read with discretion, but all of Scotus should be burnt (G4r). From the scholastics we should turn to the Church Fathers; they will teach us what the 'monachi' have taken away: simplicity, purity and Christian freedom (H1r). The Mendicants should follow the example of the Brethren of the Common Life, whose life is evangelical and apostolic since for their part they follow Jerome in reading, studying and meditating on the Bible (H2r). Luther, however, wonders why he has been chosen. Are there not any greater scholars? Jerome replies that indeed the greatest scholar in Germany is Erasmus. He would have done a good, or even a better, job. But Luther is, as it were, more employable. Being a monk himself, he knows their tricks (H4r).

(H6r-v). For the *Lamentationes* see O. Clemen, 'Die Lamentationes Petri', *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 19 (1899) 431-448 (with extracts); M.E. Kronenberg, *Verboden boeken en opstandige drukkers in de Hervormingstijd* (Amsterdam 1948) 61-62, 69-70, 119 (Miss Kronenberg argues p. 62 in favour of a new edition of the satire); Roland H. Bainton, *Erasmus of Christendom* (New York 1969) 168.

<sup>27</sup> The name Esdras seems appropriate for an author wishing both to keep his identity a secret and to reveal what is going on in heaven. He begins as follows: "Ego Esdras olim scriba, modo publicus sanctorum Pronotarius, superne dudum oraculo admonitus, adhibui mihi Saream, Dabriam, Selemiam, Echanum, et Asiel, viros quinque, deditque deus intellectum viris istis, et scripserunt quae dicebantur excessiones noctis quas non sciebant. Scripti sunt autem per dies quadraginta libri ducenti quatuor" (C1r). This is patterned after iv Esdras 14 (the seventh vision of the Ezra-Apocalypse), verses 24, 42 and 44. There are, however, no further links between the *Lamentationes* and iv Ezra and the apocalyptic mood of the latter is absent from our satire.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. Clemen, 'Die Lamentationes', 431-433.

Unlike Erasmus, Luther is one of the main characters of the *Lamentationes*. But then we should immediately add that the reform program proposed is rather Erasmian. For it contains the return to the sources — the Gospel and the Church Fathers — combined with a dislike of the Mendicants and scholasticism. The reforms aimed at are not radical: ‘seditio’ should be avoided.<sup>29</sup> This implies an Erasmian attitude with respect to the sacraments. So confession is a human institution, it is true, but if rightly used it is good and holy (H1r). And the mass and other rites of the Church — so Jerome tells Luther (who does not object!) — should be celebrated in the traditional way.<sup>30</sup> Jerome asks Luther to teach people not to attach too much importance to ceremonies.<sup>31</sup> Significantly enough, what is stressed in Luther is his exemplary Christian life and his erudition. Next, Jerome is given a prominent place which would not have commended the *Lamentationes* to Luther. Augustine does make his appearance indeed, but he is not represented as the Church Father teaching the right doctrine concerning grace and justification, which would have been more to Luther’s liking. If the author of the *Lamentationes* champions an Erasmian reform program, the man to carry it into effect, however, should be Luther. He is the most effective weapon in the fight against the Friars and their theology.

The *Lamentationes* is dedicated to the learned priest Willem Frederiks of Groningen. The dedicatory letter sounds the praises of both Willem Frederiks<sup>32</sup> and the rector of the House of the Brethren of the Common Life at Groningen (= Gozewijn van Halen<sup>33</sup>). They had both had dealings with Erasmus. The letter is full of Erasmian traits. The writer welcomes the new editions of the Church Fathers: Jerome appeared some time ago (sc. 1516), and “now St. Cyprian is reborn to the world” — Cyprian appeared February 1520 at Basle. Aristotle is rejected here, too; scholastic debates about matter, movement, ‘quidditates’, ‘formalitates’ etc. are meaningless; The living Christ is to be found in the Gospels; the Gospel does not teach the obligation of clerical celibacy; nor does it contain binding regulations for fasting, and so on (A2r-A4v). However, Erasmus himself would surely not have paid such compliments to the Brethren of the Common Life. But just as in the case of Listrius’ friends these Brethren are different from those Erasmus was wont to criticize.

When dealing with writings in which Erasmian and Lutheran (or other Protestant) components are apparently combined we should, of course, begin by tracing the sources. This will enable us to ascertain where and to what extent the author has

<sup>29</sup> “Martinus [=Luther]: Num omnem ecclesiae faciem factam velis alienam? Hieronymus: Non velim, neque enim id pararet pacem, sed seditionem”, H1r.

<sup>30</sup> “De eucharistiae communione, atque septem aliis ecclesiasticis ritibus, patriis observationibus observandum est”, H1v.

<sup>31</sup> Esdras has Jerome complain: “Ceremoniis plus iudaicis mundus praemittit”, G1r; cf. G3r and G3v [Jerome again]: “Tantus apud Christianam plebem est ciborum delectus, tot canones penitentiales, in eum qui vel modicum deliquit, tot dierum atque festorum celebritates, ut nemo nesciat, nemo addubitet nos omni ceremoniarum ritu iudeis aut esse pares, aut certe nonnunquam prestare”. Cf. Erasmus to Albert of Brandenburg, 19.10.1519, Allen Ep. 1033, 134-135: “Ad ceremonias plusquam iudaicas summa religionis vergebat”.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. *Contemporaries of Erasmus* 2, 56 (C.G. van Leijenhorst).

<sup>33</sup> Cf. *Contemporaries of Erasmus* 2, 121-122 (C.G. van Leijenhorst).

incorporated them into his text. Then we must try to find out how the quotations from — or the allusions to — different sources function within the whole<sup>34</sup>. In some cases we may come to the conclusion that what we see is mainly Erasmian in character, while Lutheran tendencies play a minor part. The *Lamentationes Petri* might serve as an illustration. In other cases we come across the opposite situation, or we find a combination that is like an ellipse with its two foci, such as the *Summa der godliker scrifturen*. As for the *Summa*'s Erasmian component it should be noticed that the book moved in a world alien to humanism in the Italian sense. Admittedly, the intended readers were not intellectuals who used to communicate in Latin. But if we turn to the Latin source of the *Summa*, the *Oeconomica christiana*, we find sporadic 'humanist' expressions such as 'litterae optimae' and 'honestiores litterae' indeed, yet in the context of this edifying booklet they denote only instruction in Latin that will enable children to read and understand the Bible.<sup>35</sup> In the *Oeconomica*, moreover, the term 'evangelica philosophia' lacks any humanist overtones — which are anyhow not always audible in Erasmus himself. What remains is so diluted that we can fully understand that the Dutch translator simply rendered it by 'kerstendom' (Christianity), for this was exactly what was meant.<sup>36</sup>

This spiritual climate reminds us of the Dutch translation of the *Enchiridion* which appeared in Amsterdam in 1523, the same year that the *Summa* was published in Leiden. The translator considered most of the classical citations and references as superfluous for the reading public he had in mind. To him, the *Enchiridion* was a religious book whose fundamental message was not in need of being supported by Greek and Roman pagan culture. In 1523, too, another Dutch translation appeared in Antwerp, which was more faithful to the original. The latter was reprinted once, while — significantly? — the simplified version in the period 1540-1616 was reprinted fourteen times.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>34</sup> Carlos Gilly has done exemplary research with respect to the *Diálogo de doctrina cristiana* by Juan de Valdés. This book, printed in Alcalá in 1529, represented, in the opinion of Marcel Bataillon, one of the major testimonies of Spanish Erasmianism. Gilly showed, however, that Valdés had borrowed substantial parts of the *Diálogo* from Luther, see his 'Juan de Valdés: Uebersetzer und Bearbeiter von Luthers Schriften in seinem *Diálogo de Doctrina*', *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 74 (1983) 257-305.

<sup>35</sup> *Het oudste Nederlandsche verboden Boek*, 10-11.

<sup>36</sup> *Het oudste Nederlandsche verboden Boek*, 3 and 25 (*Oeconomica*) = 118 and 138 (*Summa*).

<sup>37</sup> Cf. S.W. Bijl, *Erasmus in het Nederlands tot 1617* (Nieuwkoop 1978) 60-79.