

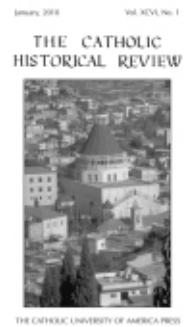


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Biblical Humanism and Scholasticism in the Age of Erasmus
(review)

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The Catholic Historical Review, Volume 96, Number 1, January 2010,
pp. 124-125 (Review)



Published by The Catholic University of America Press
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1353/cat.0.0614>

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Biblical Humanism and Scholasticism in the Age of Erasmus. Edited by Erika Rummel. [Brill's Companions to the Christian Tradition, Vol. 9.] (Boston: Brill. 2008. Pp. viii, 334. \$195.00. ISBN 978-9-004-41573-3.)

The question of how to study the Bible permeates the Christian tradition throughout its history. In the western Middle Ages the text of the Bible was approached by using the dialectical disputation developed after the eleventh century in the increasingly complicated Scholastic method. At the very end of the fourteenth century new historical and philological methods began to be favored. This in turn led to an awareness of the original languages of Scripture to which are attached the names of scholars such as Giannozzo Manetti, Johannes Reuchlin, Desiderius Erasmus, Juan Luis Vives, Martin Luther, and Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples. Together with a high regard for the Hebrew and the Greek texts, a beginning was made in the methodology of source criticism, a study of Patristic and Jewish (philological) commentary, and a confrontation of the Latin translations with the originals. All of this gave rise to a confrontation between members of the faculties of arts and those of theology at universities such as the new foundation at Louvain and the University of Tübingen.

The present volume presents aspects of this debate in a set of articles under four headings: (1) The reaction against biblical humanism in Spain (Carlos del Valle Rodríguez, Alejandro Coroleu, and Charles Fantazzi), (2) The Faculty of Theology at Paris and the "Theologizing Humanist" (Guy Bedouelle and James K. Farge), (3) The campaign against biblical humanism at the University of Leuven (Cecilia Asso, Marcel Gielis, and Paolo Sartori), and (4) Critics of biblical humanism in sixteenth-century Italy (Paul F. Grendler, Nelson H. Minnich, and Ronald K. Delph). These four sections are preceded by Erika Rummel's introduction and by two essays: John Monfasani, "Criticism of Biblical Humanism in Quattrocento Italy," and Daniel Ménanger, "Erasmus, the Intellectuals, and the Reuchlin Affair." A general bibliography and a useful index complement the volume.

The volume as a whole seeks to focus on the controversy between humanists (concentrating on Reuchlin, Erasmus, and Lefèvre d'Étaples) on the one hand and Scholastics (such as Martin Dorp, Jacob van Hoogstraaten, and Luis de Carvajal) on the other. The essays give fascinating close readings of these controversies. Moreover, there are often interesting asides with regard to the fortunes of the debate in connection with political change. A case in point is the falling away of the patronage of the French court for the humanist approach when King Francis I was captured by Emperor Charles V at the Battle of Pavia (1525). In another telling case, Paul Grendler shows how important the stimulus of the papacy was for the endeavors of the highly important philological approach of Sante Pagnini. All in all, Erika Rummel is right in pointing out that the humanist and Scholastic parties learned much from each other and that their views were far from being mutually exclusive: "They clashed only when the parties insisted on the exclusive merit of their

approach or expertise" (p. 13). As an historian of the pedagogical tradition, she wisely sums up: "With the assimilation of humanism into the theological curriculum, the debate between scholastics and biblical humanists lost much of its urgency and gradually abated" (p. 13). This remark indeed raises the question whether a second volume might not be useful in which an analysis would be given of the variety of Catholic and Protestant approaches to the philological exegesis of the Bible in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

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Radikalität der Reformation. Aufsätze und Abhandlungen. By Hans Jürgen Goertz. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht. 2007. 378 pp. €61,60. ISBN 978-3-525-55200-1.)

Hans-Jürgen Goertz, longtime holder of the chair in social history at the University of Hamburg, began his scholarly career some forty years ago with a study of the theology of Thomas Müntzer, the charismatic figure in the early German Reformation (much beloved by Marxist historians because of his involvement in the German peasants' war) who challenged Martin Luther's new theology with the insistence on the primacy of suffering, spiritual and physical, in the life of the Christian. Since then, Goertz has been an active and trail-blazing participant in the scholarly conversation about the fringe groups of the Reformation, variously labeled "Left Wing" or "Radical Reformation." The present volume brings together over a dozen essays on that phenomenon. Since most of these essays were previously published, the expert will find little that is new here, as is the case with all such collected essays that are publications of mature and seasoned scholars. By the same token, however, by putting the results of some twenty years of scholarship into a single volume (the essays were published between 1986 and 2006), we are afforded a splendid coherent summary of Goertz's understanding of the dissidents or radicals of the Reformation. Since some of the essays were originally published in the *Mennonite Quarterly Review* and other English-language publications, the volume will prove to be more useful for German-reading scholars.

The distinctiveness of Goertz's understanding of the "radicals" has been its revisionist character. When he appeared on the scholarly scene, the orthodox view was that the emergence of the Anabaptist movement in the Reformation occurred in Zurich was characterized by a single-minded commitment on part of the earliest Anabaptists to bring Luther's and Ulrich Zwingli's biblical insights to their proper conclusion, and that all subsequent Anabaptist groupings can be traced back to Zurich. Goertz pointed out that Anabaptist conventicles emerged in other places as well, that one can speak of a homogeneous Anabaptist movement only with great difficulty, and that there are identifiable connections between Anabaptists and social unrest in Switzerland and Germany in 1524–25.