

Ex sagaci coniectura

Editorial contributions to the commentary on Habakkuk
in the *Opera omnia* of Jerome edited by Erasmus of Rotterdam

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ABSTRACT • Thanks to the extensive examinations of the manuscript tradition, in the new edition of Jerome's commentary on Habakkuk edited by Sincero Mantelli (CC SL 76-76A), several discrepancies from the text of the printed editions, starting with that of Erasmus of Rotterdam in 1516, are noted. First of all, there is a gloss (*quia scarabaeus uel cantharus uermis est stercoris*) which cannot be found in the manuscripts. The codices show different readings that in most cases quote a corrupt text. Considering that the above-mentioned note does not appear in the pre-Erasman editions we can draw the conclusion that Erasmus himself corrected the text, adding the meaningful note. As a confirmation to what has been said, other emendations can be added, perhaps less significant ones which nevertheless can be equally attributed to the hand of the Rotterdam humanist. These improvements in Erasmus' edition were reproduced virtually unchanged in later editions, starting with that of Mariano Vittori, who also intended to act as a 'counter-editor' to Erasmus.

KEYWORDS • Jerome, Habakkuk, Erasmus of Rotterdam, Amerbach, gloss

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG • Dank umfangreicher Untersuchungen der handschriftlichen Überlieferung werden in der vom Sincero Mantelli herausgegebenen Neuausgabe des Habakuk-Kommentars des Hieronymus (CC SL 76-76A) mehrere Abweichungen vom Text der gedruckten Ausgaben festgestellt, beginnend mit der des Erasmus von Rotterdam von 1516. Zunächst einmal gibt es eine Glosse (*quia scarabaeus uel cantharus uermis est stercoris*), die in den Handschriften nicht zu finden ist. Die Codices weisen unterschiedliche Lesarten auf, die in den meisten Fällen einen korrupten Text zitieren. In Anbetracht der Tatsache, dass die oben erwähnte Notiz in den vor-erasmischen Ausgaben nicht auftaucht, können wir den Schluss ziehen, dass Erasmus selbst den Text korrigiert und die sinnvolle Notiz hinzugefügt hat. Zur Bestätigung des Gesagten lassen sich noch weitere, vielleicht weniger bedeutsame Korrekturen anführen, die jedoch ebenfalls der Hand des Rotterdamer Humanisten zugeschrieben werden können. Diese Verbesserungen in der Ausgabe von Erasmus wurden in späteren Ausgaben praktisch unverändert übernommen, angefangen bei der Ausgabe von Mariano Vittori, der ebenfalls als „Gegen-Herausgeber“ zu Erasmus fungieren wollte.

SCHLAGWORTE • Hieronymus, Habakuk, Erasmus von Rotterdam, Amerbach, Glosse

In the *candido lectori* preface to the 6th volume of *Opera omnia* by Jerome of 1516 Bruno Amerbach insists that the text was ‘restored’ first and foremost by resorting to very ancient manuscript witnesses (“Nam sine ueterum auxilio codicum, in restituendis auctoribus nihil agitur”) – he even mentions their origins – and to the enlightened opinion of learned scholars (the well-known Joannes Reuchlinus, Conon Norimbergensis, Gregorius Reischius, Conradus Pellicanus).¹ But above all, he recognises that the text has been emended thanks to the codices but also thanks to *diuinatio* (“partim ex vetustis exemplaribus, partim ex sagaci coniectura”).² Although most scholars believe that the *Opera Omnia* printed under Erasmus’ supervision were prepared on the basis of partial printed editions,³ it is certain that the text was emended⁴ by restoring Greek and, above all, Hebrew lexemes, which the manuscript tradition had often rendered unclear or even unattainable – and here we see the scholars mentioned in the preface and the three Amerbach⁵ brothers at work –, but it is true that some corrections, even rather conspicuous, are the work of the one

¹ “Ai quattro volumi delle *Epistulae* seguivano i commentari biblici a cura dei dotti figli di Johann Amerbach, Bruno, Basilio e Bonifacio, esperti delle tre lingue sacre. Completavano l’équipe di Basilea due ebraisti, Johannes Reuchlin e Conradus Pellicanus, e i grecisti Johannes Cono e Beatus Rhenanus”. Twenty years before the 1516 edition, Johann Amerbach had conceived a plan to publish all the works of the four Latin fathers. When Johann Froben, as a partner, took over the printing house upon Amerbach’s death (1513), his three sons remained to edit Jerome, assisted by the distinguished scholars mentioned above: Erasmus took over (1515) the supervision of the entire publishing project, but spent most of his time on the edition of the letters. Sola, *Filologia come ideologia. Un quindicennio di studi su Erasmo editore di Gerolamo*, Adamantius 23 (2017), 500 n. 1.

² This is the preface to the first edition, to be followed by several editions, for the types of J. Froben: Hieronymus, *Sextus tomus operum diui Hieronymi commentarios in duodecim prophetas, quos minores vocant, iuxta utramque translationem continet*, ed. B. Amerbach, Basel 1516 [henceforth: Erasmus]. A useful bibliographical review of the most recent publications about the Erasmian edition of Jerome can be found in F. Sola, *Filologia come ideologia*, 500-517, in which she reviews recent studies on the Erasmian edition: B. Clausi, *Ridar voce all’antico Padre. L’edizione erasmiana delle Lettere di Gerolamo*, Soveria Mannelli 2000; H. M. Pabel, *Herculean Labours: Erasmus and the Editing of St. Jerome’s Letters in the Renaissance*, Leiden 2008; the doctoral thesis of U. Dill, *Prolegomena zu einer Edition von Erasmus von Rotterdam Scholia in Epistolas Hieronymi*, Basel 2004 and N. Naquin, *On the Shoulders of Hercules. Erasmus, the Froben Press and the 1516 Jerome edition in context*, Princeton 2013 and the long article by J.-C. Margolin, *Érasme, éditeur de Saint Jérôme*, in *Gli antichi e i moderni, Studi in onore di Roberto Cardini*, ed. by L. Bertolini – D. Coppini, vol. II, Firenze, 2009, p. 776. A few years later, the same scholar discussed her doctoral thesis about Mariano Vittori’s edition, in which she accurately reconstructs the genesis of this work conceived as a ‘counterpoint’ to that of Erasmus: F. Sola, *Un’edizione per la Controriforma. L’opus Hieronymianum di Mariano Vittori (1565-1572)*, doctoral thesis, Macerata 2020 [<https://u-pad.unimc.it/> consulted on July 9th, 2023].

³ “Tuttavia, è ormai assodato che, per tale *ope codicum*, Erasmo si dovette basare, piuttosto che sulla collazione di manoscritti medievali, sulle prime accessibili opere a stampa e, nello specifico, sull’edizione, del 1508, di Saccon, da cui gli derivò la tassonomia di origine Ielliana”. About the Jeronymian epistolary Sola, *Un’edizione per la Controriforma*, 189.

⁴ “Dal 1513 le lettere dell’Olandese testimonieranno un’operazione di risanamento del testo, in cui l’attenzione all’*emendatio* sembrerà superare l’impegno profuso nell’*enarratio*. Due anni dopo, la lettera 335 a Leone X dimostra che nel frattempo ‘la prospettiva è sostanzialmente mutata’. L’obiettivo è ora un ‘rilancio degli studi teologici che passi attraverso un recupero della cultura patristica’; lo strumento è la filologia, con cui ricostruire l’antica sapienza dei Padri, resa non fruibile dalle corrottele derivate da secoli di trasmissione manoscritta, e non più dal profondo divario culturale che la separa dai moderni”. Sola, *Filologia come ideologia*, 505.

⁵ Cf. *supra* note 1. Erasmus himself admits in his letters that he benefited from their help: “De Hebraicis literis nihil arrego mihi”. *Epist.* 324, P. S. Allen, Oxonii 1906-1947, vol. II, 50-51. Cf. Sola, *Un’edizione per la Controriforma*, 187-188.

who had learnt to write like Jerome.⁶ In fact, the state of the Jeronian text had appeared so deplorable to Erasmus that, after an initial project aimed only at commenting on the Stridonian's work, he decided to edit a complete and 'emended' edition of his writings, although his work was in continuity with that of the editors who had preceded him.⁷

As to the commentary on the prophet Habakkuk,⁸ found in volume six of the 1516 Erasmian edition along with the other minor prophets, in 2018 we prepared a new critical edition for the *Corpus christianorum*.⁹ Comparison with the manuscript tradition immediately revealed several textual variants found only in the printed editions, which we would like to highlight, starting with the most conspicuous.

In the commentary we first find an aside, as it sounds in the editions,¹⁰ reading: *quia scarabaeus uel cantharus uermis est stercoris*.¹¹ The expression, although it has the appearance of a gloss, fits naturally (we noted above Erasmus' stylistic *mimesis* of Jerome) into the period dealing with bad teachers, who undertake preaching solely for venal purposes:

⁶ Erasmus saw in Jerome a model of reform in the theological field, but also the most sublime example of style to be imitated, so much so that he had learnt to write like him. F. Sola, *Filologia come ideologia*, 502-504. Cf. Clausi, *Ridar voce all'antico Padre*, 26; J.-C. Margolin, *Érasme, éditeur de Saint Jérôme*, 28 n. 21.

⁷ Cf. Sola, *Filologia come ideologia*, 504-505 about the reconstruction of the genesis of the Jeronymian *Opera omnia* by Clausi, *Ridar voce all'antico Padre*.

⁸ As announced in Amerbach's preface, the *In Habacuc Prophetam Commentarii, siue quaestiones*, a kind of *excerptum* from the Jeronymian commentary, "quam Hieronymi titulo scriptam reperimus, quanquam stilo reclamante" (*Prefazione*, Erasmus), were added to the f. 91v-92r of the Erasmian edition.

⁹ Hieronymus, *Commentarius in Abacuc*, ed. S. Mantelli (*Corpus Christianorum Series Latina* 76-76A bis), Turnhout 2018 [henceforth: Mantelli]. On pages LXXXV-XCII we analysed earlier editions including in particular the Erasmian one, taking up an earlier essay of ours (S. Mantelli, *Quia scarabaeus uel cantharus uermis est stercoris. Una glossa erasmiana nel commentario ad Abacuc di Gerolamo*, *Augustinianum* 50 [2010], 443-451), to which I refer in the considerations that follow.

¹⁰ The main editors of Jerome's works, whom we enumerate, made reference to Erasmus of Rotterdam's edition (*Sextus tomus operum diui Hieronymi commentarios in duodecim prophetas quos minores uocant iuxta utranque translationem continet*, Basileae, 1516): Mariano Vittori (*Tomus quintus operum Diui Hieronymi a Mariano Victorio Reatino, canonico, et sacrae theologiae professore, ad fidem antiquissimorum exemplarium, trecentis et amplius sublatis erroribus, emendatus, continens Ecclesiasten, et duodecim Prophetas Minores*, Romae, 1571, henceforth: Victorius), Jean Martianay (*Sancti Eusebii Hieronymi Stridonensis presbyteri operum tomus tertius complectens commentarios in sexdecim prophetas maiores atque minores restitutos ad fidem manusciporum codicum uetustissimorum, studio ac labore domni Johannis Martianay presbyteri congregationis S. Mauri, Sancti Hieronymi operum tomus tertius*, Parisiis, 1704) and eventually Domenico Vallarsi, whose work will be received in the Migne (*Sancti Eusebii Hieronymi Stridonensis presbyteri operum tomus sextus... studio et labore Dominici Vallarsi, Veronae, 1736, PL*, 25, col. 1273-1388). Not even the most recent edition of the commentary on the prophet Habakkuk (S. Hieronymi presbyteri opera, *Commentarii in prophetas minores, post Dominicum Vallarsi textum edendum curauit M. Adriaen*, CC SL, 76 A, Turnhout 1969, henceforth: Adriaen), conducted on the basis of the collation of a single new manuscript (Paris, *Bibliothèque Nationale de France*, lat. 1836), with the inclusion in the apparatus of several variant lessons taken from Vallarsi and his predecessors, represents a significant advance in the constitution of the text.

¹¹ Erasmio, f. 85rB; Adriaen I, ii, 9/11, l. 411.

*Deus enim eorum uenter est: et omnia ciborum causa faciunt qui rediguntur in stercus: quia scarabaeus uel cantharus uermis est stercoris: et ad hoc tantum assumunt crucem: ut auaritiam et superbiam magistri sui diaboli doceant ore uipereo*¹².

“For their god is the belly, and they do all things by reason of food, which turns into dung – for the beetle or *cantharus* is the dung worm –, and for this alone they burden themselves with the cross to teach the greed and pride of their master, the devil, with a viper’s mouth”.

The collation we carried out in view of a new critical edition of the Jeronymian text,¹³ however, surprisingly reveals the total absence of this gloss. The numerous manuscripts questioned about this noticeable omission respond in four ways¹⁴. The first group omits the aside but presents a

¹² Erasmo, f. 85rB; Adriaen I, ii, 9/11, l. 409-413.

¹³ To this purpose we made use of the survey by B. LAMBERT, *Bibliotheca hieronymiana manuscripta: la tradition manuscrite des œuvres de saint Jérôme*, Steenbrugis 1972, volume II, 153-189, volume IV A, 192-194, supplementing it with the specifications by Y.-M. DUVAL, *Introduction*, in SAINT JÉRÔME, *Commentaire sur Jonas*, Paris 1985 (SCh 323), 126-138, who had dealt with the manuscript tradition of *In Ionam*, sometimes overlapping with that of our text. The information in the Lambert was not always accurate, for instance the ROMA, Biblioteca Nazionale Vittorio Emanuele II, Sessor. 90 is a liturgical codex or the SCHAFFHAUSEN, Stadtbibliothek (Ministerialbibliothek), 11 and the SAINT-OMER, Bibliothèque Municipale, 45 do not hand down the commentary on Habakkuk. Seven codices, some of them very old, bear the text in epitome form: LYON, Bibliothèque de la Ville, 600 (517); PARIS, Bibliothèque Nationale, Lat. 10600; GENT, Universiteitsbibliotheek, 254; TROYES, Bibliothèque Municipale, 52 (Bouhier, A.50); BOULOGNE-SUR-MER, Bibliothèque Municipale, 41; SAINT-OMER, Bibliothèque Municipale, 33; PARIS, Bibliothèque Nationale, Lat. 14287.

The codices that we have collated in their entirety are the following: KÖLN, Dombibliothek, 55 (Darmst. 2050); KARLSRUHE, Badische Landesbibliothek, Aug. Perg. CCXII; LAON, Bibliothèque Municipale, 38; BERN, Bürgerbibliothek, 102; IVREA, Biblioteca Capitolare, 51 (XCVII); MONTE CASSINO, Biblioteca della Abbazia, 93 FF; ROMA, Biblioteca Vallicelliana, B.2.2; VATICANO, CITTÀ DEL, Bibliotheca Apostolica Vaticana, Palat. lat. 173; CAMBRIDGE, Trinity College, B.3.5.

¹⁴ To the first group belong the following: CESENA, Biblioteca Malatestiana, D.IV.3; FIRENZE, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Conv. Sopp. 335; FIRENZE, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Conv. Sopp. 327; FIRENZE, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, S. Croce, Plut. XV, dex. 5; FIRENZE, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Fesul. 32; FIRENZE, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Plut. XIX, Cod. 1; FIRENZE, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, S. Marco 590; VATICANO, CITTÀ DEL, Bibliotheca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. lat. 331; TODI, Biblioteca Comunale, 79.

To the second: LUCCA, Biblioteca Governativa, 1378 (L.90); ZÜRICH, Zentralbibliothek, C.41 (278); TOURS, Bibliothèque Municipale, 275; MANCHESTER, John Rylands Library, Rylands Latin MS. 93 (Crawford 103); DIJON, Bibliothèque Municipale 132 (99); WIEN, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Lat. 918 (Rec.21); PARIS, Bibliothèque Mazarine 572 (267); VALENCIENNES, Bibliothèque Municipale, 64 (57); PARIS, Bibliothèque Nationale, Lat. 17375; KARLSRUHE, Badische Landesbibliothek, Aug. Perg. CXLVIII.

To the third: FIRENZE, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, S. Marco 593; TROYES, Bibliothèque Municipale, 191; VENDÔME, Bibliothèque Municipale, 33; MÜNCHEN, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 6251; ALENÇON, Bibliothèque Municipale, 5; ANGERS, Bibliothèque Municipale, 153 (154); LISBOA, Biblioteca Nacional, Cod. Alcobaça XIV (338); PARIS, Bibliothèque Nationale, Lat. 11630; PARIS, Bibliothèque Nationale, Lat. 1836 (this is the only codex collated by Adriaen, which, however, does not report the contents of the several and extensive marginal glosses of a later reader. However, the offending sentence is not found in these notes); PARIS, Bibliothèque Nationale, Lat. 1840; PARIS, Bibliothèque de l’Arsenal, 34.

To the fourth: ORLÉANS, Bibliothèque Municipale, 59 (56); ORLÉANS, Bibliothèque Municipale, 60 (57); MÜNCHEN, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 21527; CHARLEVILLE-MÉZIÈRES, Bibliothèque Municipale, 196c; DOUAI, Bibliothèque Municipale, 239 (t. 2); LAON, Bibliothèque Municipale, 41; VALENCIENNES, Bibliothèque Municipale, 66 (59); ZWETT, Stiftsbibliothek, 67; GRENOBLE, Bibliothèque Municipale, 214; BRUSSEL, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, 21837; BRUSSEL, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, II.1105 (Phillipps 4686); PRAHA, Narodni Museum, XII.A.4; PARIS, Bibliothèque Nationale, Lat. 1831.

A particular lesson can be found in MADRID, Biblioteca Nacional, 445 (A.96) (t. 2), reading: *Deus enim eorum uenter est, et omnia ciborum causa faciunt, qui rediguntur in stercus. Stercoris quoque et ad hoc tantum assumunt crucem, ut auaritiam et superbiam magistri sui diaboli doceant ore uipereo* (f. 101v); and PARIS, Bibliothèque Mazarine 571 (266)

complete sentence, thanks to the presence of the expression *unde et stercoris quoque causa*, so we have:

Deus enim eorum uenter est, et omnia ciborum causa faciunt, qui rediguntur in stercus. Unde et stercoris quoque causa (et) ad hoc tantum assumunt crucem, ut auaritiam et superbiam magistri sui diaboli doceant ore uipereo.

“For their god is the belly and they do all things by reason of food, which turns into dung. Hence also by reason of dung, and for this alone they burden themselves with the cross, to teach the greed and pride of their master, the devil, with a viper’s mouth”.

The second group, instead, omitting the lexeme *causa*, presents a decidedly scazon clause:

Deus enim eorum uenter est, et omnia ciborum causa faciunt, qui rediguntur in stercus. Unde et stercoris quoque et ad hoc tantum assumunt crucem, ut auaritiam et superbiam magistri sui diaboli doceant ore uipereo.

A third set of witnesses shows an even more abbreviated form:

Deus enim eorum uenter est, et omnia ciborum causa faciunt, qui rediguntur in stercus. Unde et ad hoc tantum assumunt crucem, ut auaritiam et superbiam magistri sui diaboli doceant ore uipereo.

A fourth one presents the complete omission of the gloss witnessed by the editor:

Deus enim eorum uenter est, et omnia ciborum causa faciunt, qui rediguntur in stercus. Et ad hoc tantum assumunt crucem, ut auaritiam et superbiam magistri sui diaboli doceant ore uipereo.

The TROYES, Bibliothèque Municipale, 126, f. 204r, is particularly interesting as it quotes the text of the second group but the words *et stercoris quoque* have been deleted: it is the first attempt at emendation which is witnessed and which helps us to order the codex tradition, which gradually ‘ate’ this sentence, first most likely due to the accidental dropping of the word *causa*, then with the intention of eliminating what had become an erratic, uneven and troublesome mass within the textual flow.

The ORLÉANS codex, Bibliothèque Municipale, 60 (57), f. 199r, belonging to the fourth group, features an interesting marginal note, which reads: *cantarosis id est scarabeus*. An interesting addition, unfortunately not fully readable, is that of LUXEMBOURG, Bibliothèque Nationale, 81 (69), f. 26r:

Deus enim eorum uenter est, et omnia ciborum causa faciunt, qui rediguntur in stercus. Unde et stercori quoque mer<...> comparantur¹⁵ et ad hoc tantum assumunt crucem, ut auaritiam et superbiam magistri sui diaboli doceant ore uipereo.

The PARIS codex, Bibliothèque de l’Arsenal, 34 deserves special mention: this manuscript, dating from the 12th century, shows the biblical text of the prophet Habakkuk in the central band of the page, while the Jeronymian commentary, naturally not complete, is given in the form and in the writing of a gloss in the two wide side margins and in the line-spacing. The scriptural text referred to is the *iuxta Hebraeos*, but with regard to v. 11 of chapter two, the variant of the

reading in its turn: *Deus enim eorum uenter est, et omnia ciborum causa faciunt, qui rediguntur in stercus. Unde quoque et ad hoc tantum assumunt crucem, ut auaritiam et superbiam magistri sui diaboli doceant ore uipereo* (f. 132v).

¹⁵ From *unde usque comparantur* added in the margin with a cross-reference mark added in the text. The lexeme of which only three letters remain (*mer*) is mutilated due to the trimming of the parchment.

Septuagint is also given as a rubricated gloss: *LXX: ascarabeus de ligno, apertius more suo*.¹⁶ In correspondence of this passage, on f. 116, we find the following note:

Ascarabeus de ligno magistri peruersi qui/ lucris gratia crucem predicant quorum deus/ uenter est. Idem sonat: et cantarus de ligno loquitur. Sic¹⁷ enim alii: est enim/ cantarus uas stercoris. Omnia faciunt/ causa uentris et ciborum, qui in stercora uertuntur. Hereticus, quoniam dogmata stercori com-/paranda.

New to the numerous codices examined is the definition of the beetle as *uas stercoris*.

Despite this exception, however, we have no other elements in the manuscripts that help us identify the origin of the aside that appears in the printed editions since the Erasmian one. The solution to our conundrum comes from the investigation of a pre-Erasmian edition¹⁸, that shows a similar lesson to that of the second group, namely:

Deus enim eorum uenter est: et omnia ciborum causa faciunt qui rediguntur in stercus: unde et stercoris quoque et ad hoc tantum assumunt crucem.

In this incunabulum, dating from a few years before the work of the great humanist, there is no shadow of the explanatory note concerning the scarab.¹⁹

Erasmus, or whoever in his stead, probably had in his hands codices or printed editions that presented a limp text, as is also statistically evident from the collation essay quoted above: obviously, in order to produce a good edition of the text, he had no hesitation in making an elegant and appropriate emendation that not only made the sentence flow, but also made a reference that had become obscure to the contemporary reader, more evident.²⁰ Proof of what

¹⁶ The editor of this singular reworking attributed the characteristic that Jerome usually ascribes to Simmachus, namely greater perspicuity in translation, to the version of the Septuagint.

¹⁷ *Sicut*: the last two letters expunged and crossed out in red ink.

¹⁸ <Hieronymus, *Commentaria in Bibliam*, Venetiis 1498>. We viewed the specimen held by Biblioteca Casanatense in Rome (Vol. Inc. 1903). The bibliographical information on this incunabulum is taken from the catalogue of the aforementioned library and from the spine of the print in which it is said: *Sancti Hieronym(i) in librum | XII | prophetar(um) | 1498* (Henceforth: *Commentaria 1498*). The incunabula that form the basis of the Jeronymian *Opera Omnia* have been extensively studied, particularly for the epistolary those of Teodoro de' Lelli and Giovanni Andrea Bussi. Cf. F. Sola, *Filologia come ideologia*, n. 28, 506.

¹⁹ The text of our edition, restored thanks to the manuscript tradition, reads as follows: «Deus enim eorum uenter est et omnia ciborum causa faciunt, qui rediguntur in stercus, unde et stercoris quoque causa, et ad hoc tantum assumunt crucem, ut auaritiam et superbiam magistri sui diaboli doceant ore uipereo». Mantelli I, 2, 9-11, l. 888-891.

²⁰ Cf. *supra*. Erasmus himself says that Jerome's works have suffered the unfortunate fate of falling into the hands of inept men who mutilated and altered the texts, and he hopes that someone, namely himself, will be able to restore them to their original form. *Ep. 149*, in *Opus Epistolarum Des. Erasmi Roterodami...*, rec. P. S. Allen, Oxonii 1906-1947, vol. I, 353 cited in Erasmo da Rotterdam, *Vita di San Girolamo*, ed. A. Morisi Guerra, Roma 1988, 7. In Huizinga's biography, we find Erasmus' labour as he tells it: "Nel 1513 scrivo ad Ammonio: 'L'entusiasmo con cui sto ripulendo Gerolamo e provvedendolo di note è così grande che mi pare di essere ispirato da una divinità. L'ho già quasi interamente emendato, collazionando molti vecchi manoscritti. Lo faccio a mie spese e non puoi credere quanto mi costi'. Nel 1512 erano in corso delle trattative con Badio per una edizione delle lettere di San Gerolamo. Ma il socio di Froben, Giovanni Amerbach, morto prima dell'arrivo di Erasmo, aveva già in progetto da anni un'edizione di San Gerolamo. Numerosi eruditi, fra cui Reuchlin, vi avevano collaborato, finché Erasmo si offrì con tutto il suo materiale. Egli divenne il vero e proprio editore. Delle nove parti in cui uscì l'opera nel 1516 coi tipi di Froben, le prime quattro contenevano l'edizione erasmiana delle lettere di San Gerolamo, le altre erano state da lui corrette e provviste di prefazioni". J. Huizinga, *Erasmo*, Milano 1958, 112.

we have conjectured so far lies in the variant of another passage, which in the 15th-century edition cited above perfectly matches the textual tradition, as unanimously witnessed by the codices we have collated:²¹

Codd.; Commentaria 1498

luxta pedes eius stetit et commota est terra: despexit et distabunt gentes: contriti sunt montes violentia: tabuerunt colles seculi itineris sempiterni eius.

Codd.; Mantelli²²

luxta pedes eius stetit et commota est terra, respexit et distabuerunt gentes, contriti sunt montes uiolentia, tabuerunt colles saeculi itineris sempiterni eius.

Erasmus; Adriaen²³

Stetit et commota est terra; aspexit et distabuerunt gentes; contriti sunt montes uiolentia, tabuerunt colles saeculi itineris sempiterni eius.

This is a haplography with respect to the text of the Septuagint for homologation with the version from the Hebrew, quoted just before, and the use of the verb *aspicio* instead of *despicio* or *respicio*, as witnessed by the codex tradition, again for the same reason.

Even a small clarification, entirely ascribable to Jerome's style, reveals itself on closer inspection, to be by the hand of the humanist who knew the Greek language:

Codd.; Commentaria 1498; Mantelli²⁴

Pro quo LXX transtulerunt *saluatore meo*.

Erasmus; Adriaen²⁵

Pro quo LXX transtulerunt τῷ Σωτήρι μου id est *saluatore meo*.

Then there is a passage in which the two editions agree against the manuscript tradition, forcing us to assume that emendations were made by readers or editors unknown to us:

Codd.; Mantelli²⁶

Nihil igitur eis proderit sculptura et conflatio sua: sculpturam, quia refertur ad lapides, in his dogmatibus intellege, quae stultitiam prima fronte demonstrant, conflationem (ibi) ubi aliqua uidetur esse ratio sapientiae saecularis.

Commentaria 1498; Erasmus; Adriaen²⁷

Nihil igitur eis proderit sculptura et conflatio sua. Sculptura quae refertur ad lapides: in his dogmatibus intellegitur quae stultitia prima fronte demonstrant: conflatio est ibi: ubi aliqua uidetur esse ratio sapientiae secularis.

²¹ Henceforth: *Codd.*

²² Mantelli II, 3, 6, l. 326-328.

²³ Adriaen II, iii, 6, l. 344.

²⁴ Mantelli II, 3, 18-19, l. 1189.

²⁵ Adriaen II, iii, 18-19, l. 1285.

²⁶ Mantelli I, 2, 18, l. 1192-1196.

²⁷ Adriaen I, ii, 18, l. 743.

As further proof of what we are saying, we can also cite a suggestion from a long text, which constitutes a booklet in itself, from the *Adagia* of Erasmus of Rotterdam²⁸, which are usually shorter. The aphorism that our author takes the time to comment on reads as follows: *scarabeus aquilam quaerit*. At some point he pauses to describe with true zoological interest the animal's appearance and behaviour:

*Nunc ad scarabeum veniam. Est animal, ac vix etiam animal, quippe cui sensus aliquot desint, ex insectorum infima gente, quod infami sane vocabulo Graeci κάθαρρος, Latini scarabeum appellant, aspectu tetrum, odore tetrius, sonitu teterrimum, alis crustacea vagina obtectis. Quin magis totus ipse scarabeus nihil est nisi crustum. Nascitur in excrementis, hoc est animantium stercoreibus, in iisdem vivit, versatur, oblectatur, deliciatur. Praecipuum huic studium pilas quam maxime potest ingentes componere, ceu pastillos, non ex odoribus, sed stercore, potissimum caprino; nam id illi prorsus amaracinum olet. Eas miro conamine voluit auersus, pedibus posterioribus, quos habet longiore, superne iniectis, capite in terram prono. Quod si quando contingat, ut adversus collem aliquem onus protrudant, elapsis subinde pilis ac deorsum recorrentibus, putes te Sisyphum voluentem saxum videre. Nec defatigantur nec conquiescunt. Tantus operis ardor, donec in antrum suum devexerint. In his pilis, ut ipsi nati sunt, ita foetus etiam suos educant et teneros adhuc adversus hyemis rigorem nidulantem fovent. Equidem scio nulli non esse notum scarabeum, ut qui passim sit obivius, nisi sicubi nulla omnino sunt stercora. Sed non est eadem omnium species. Etenim sunt, quibus nigro quodam virore luceat crusta. Plerique tetro nigrore horrent. Sunt nonnulli grandiores, praelongis ac bisulcis armati cornibus, cacumine forcipibus dentato; ea, cum visum est, ad morsum contrahunt stringuntque. Sunt item rutili et iidem praegraves, qui terram aridam fodiant atque illic nidos ponunt. Sunt qui metuendo bombo formidabilique strepitu provolent, ut imprudentem non mediocriter territent. Sunt et alia formarum discrimina. Verum illud commune est omnibus: e stercore ortus, e stercore victus, in stercore vita delitiumque.*²⁹

Not only the reference to the Greek and Latin name of the insect or the insistence on dung as the natural habitat of this infamous creature, but the entire description, useful in its pedantry to the paradoxical presentation of the two animals used by Erasmus to once again speak out against war, lead us not to doubt that the aside in the printed editions after the Erasmian one comes from the same pen that wrote this polemical-satirical pamphlet.

The interventions made in the 1516 text were fortunate and were handed down unaltered up to our critical edition. Thus the Erasmian Jerome, despite criticism and condemnation, became a constant reference for later editors,³⁰ starting with Mariano Vittori, who prepared his text as a Catholic 'counter-edition' to the Dutchman's.³¹ If we compare the 'emended' passages in the Erasmian edition, we realise that Vittori kept them unchanged and did not remove the gloss about the scarab. Only, perhaps realising its spurious nature, he changed the punctuation and put it between brackets.³²

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²⁸ Desiderius Erasmus Roterdamus, *Opera Omnia. Recognita et adnotatione critica instructa notisque illustrata*, Amsterdam-Oxford 1981, 2601, 394-424.

²⁹ Desiderius Erasmus Roterdamus, *Opera Omnia. Recognita et adnotatione critica instructa notisque illustrata*, Amsterdam-Oxford 1981, 2601, 412-413.

³⁰ As to the editions based on the Erasmian one cf. *supra* n. 10.

³¹ F. Sola, *Filologia come ideologia. Un quindicennio di studi su Erasmo editore di Gerolamo*, *Adamantius* 23 (2017), 500.

³² Victorius, 263.