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Raising the ghost of Arius : Erasmus, the Johannine comma and religious difference in early modern Europe

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STELLINGEN

I

The phrase *tres unum sunt* (or *tria unus deus*), borrowed from the Majority reading of 1 Jn 5:8 (ὅτι τρεῖς εἰσιν οἱ μαρτυροῦντες, τὸ πνεῦμα καὶ τὸ ὕδωρ καὶ τὸ αἷμα, καὶ οἱ τρεῖς εἰς τὸ ἓν εἰσιν, “There are three that bear witness, the Spirit, the water and the blood, and these three are unto one”), was understood by several Latin Fathers until the fifth century as an oblique reference to the Trinity.

II

The Johannine comma was formed by the combination of three phrases: (1) 1 Jn 5:8 (Majority text); (2) a repetition of 1 Jn 5:8 (Majority text) with the Spirit, water and blood replaced by the persons of the Trinity, of which they were held to be types; (3) the phrase *unum sunt in Christo Iesu* (based on Gal 3:28). These phrases combined variously at the shared phrase *unum sunt*.

III

There is no convincing evidence that the biblical text familiar to Cyprian of Carthage or Augustine contained the Johannine comma.

Contra Walter Thiele, “Beobachtungen zum Comma Iohanneum (I Joh 5,7f.),” *Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche* 50 (1959): 61–73.

III

St Jerome did not write the prologue to the Catholic Epistles (incipit *Non ita ordo est ...*).

V

Since the publication of Erasmus' 1516 edition of the New Testament damaged the ability of the Complutensian edition to attract value, the attacks of Stunica on Erasmus' edition were motivated in part to damage the market value of Erasmus' edition.

VI

The seeds of the conflict over the Johannine comma were already present in the tensions and contradictions of Erasmus' presentation of it in his New Testament edition and *Annotationes*.

VII

Several persistent misconceptions about the Johannine comma originated in the account given by Richard Simon (1689).

VIII

The myth that Erasmus promised to include the Johannine comma in his New Testament if a manuscript attestation should be produced, became popular because of its potential in interdenominational polemic.

Cf. Henk Jan de Jonge, "Erasmus and the *comma Johanneum*," *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses* 56 (1980): 381-389.

IX

Religious fundamentalism presents a threat to the sciences: both to the philological sciences on which academic biblical studies are built, and to the natural sciences.

X

Codex Leicestrensis (Gregory-Aland miniscule 69) was copied in Calabria, not in England.

Contra Kirsopp Lake and Silva Lake, *Family 13 (The Ferrar Group)* (London: Christophers, 1941), 13.

XI

Frater Froyke, the first known owner of Codex Montfortianus (Gregory-Aland miniscule 61), is to be identified not as William Roye, but Francis Frowick, Minister Provincial of the Observant Franciscans in England in the second decade of the sixteenth century.

Contra James Rendel Harris, *The Origin of the Leicester Codex of the New Testament* (London: Clay, 1887), 47.

XII

Codex Montfortianus is to be identified with Erasmus' Codex Britannicus.

Contra Michael Maynard, *A History of the Debate Over 1 John 5:7-8* (Tempe, AZ: Comma Publications, 1995), 78.

XIII

The Ancient Theology (*prisca theologia*) was an important means of legitimising the study of pagan classical literature in Northern European Universities in the years between 1490 and 1518.

XIII

Laurentius Corvinus' poem *Carmen quo valedicit Prutenos* (1509) is not the first extant reference to Copernicus' heliostatic model.

Contra Leopold Prowe, *Nicolaus Copernicus* (Berlin: Weidmann, 1883) 1:343, 347, 350-351; Jerzy Dobrzycki, "Notes on Copernicus's Early Heliocentrism," *Journal for the History of Astronomy* 32 (2001): 223-225.

XV

Laurentius Corvinus' depiction of Martin Luther in the poem *Quis negat hoc ævum felix* (1524) depicts him in a positive light by drawing on Lucretius' presentation of Epicurus.

Cf. Grantley McDonald, "Laurentius Corvinus and the Epicurean Luther," *Lutheran Quarterly* 22 (2008): 161-176.

XVI

The Nuremberg merchant Hieronymus Baumgärtner (1498-1565) served as the most important link between the composer Ludwig Senfl (*ca.* 1490-1542/3) in Catholic Munich, and the Lutheran world beyond Bavaria.

XVII

The Neoplatonic elements in Philipp Melanchthon's *De anima* provided an alternative to Luther's more exclusively Christian psychology.