

early modern history. For one, the author details highlights in the life of Christoph Kress, placing them within the larger context of reform activities in German-speaking territories. For another, Zophy does not limit his attention to political or religious activities in isolation, but treats the work of Kress as one contribution to the emergence of evangelical politics in Nuremberg. Third, and somewhat incidentally, the reader is afforded a glimpse of how one of the prominent cities in the Holy Roman Empire faced the religious and political changes that were sweeping Europe at the time.

The study is further enhanced by ten illustrations scattered throughout the volume and by two appendices, one of which offers a chronological table, while the other is a copy of Christoph Kress's last will and testament. Unfortunately, somewhat indifferent editing has allowed a number of typographical errors, especially of foreign terms, to creep into the critical apparatus.

By the standards of the day, the career of Kress as tradesman, city father and representative of the city of Nuremberg in foreign lands was as predictable as it was successful. In early manhood he was apprenticed to an Italian businessman and spent some time in London. By the time he entered matrimony, he was ready to serve his city as one of its leading councillors—a position he maintained for some twenty-two years until his relatively premature death in 1535.

During his political career, Kress made a name for himself in successfully fighting baron-knights of the largely impoverished lesser nobility who made a living from robbing merchant caravans. Even though Kress seems to have identified with the Lutheran cause, as early as 1521, Zophy portrays him as a conservative man. Nonetheless, he was to play a leading role in defence of the Lutheran Confession at the 1530 Diet of Augsburg, which earned him recognition among the evangelicals and respect among his Catholic opponents for his statesmanlike sense of fairness and impeccable conduct.

At his death, the Nuremberg poet Hans Sachs eulogized Kress in a poem, and prominent dignitaries like Landgrave Philip of Hesse and King Ferdinand sent their tributes. The active yet relatively tranquil life of Christoph Kress provides a miniature mirror of the affluent dignity with which cities like Nuremberg weathered the storms of the far-reaching changes in the early modern era.

E. J. Furcha

McGill University

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*Collected Works of Erasmus. Volume 50: Paraphrase on the Acts of the Apostles.*  
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Anyone who has ever doubted Erasmus's serious intentions as a reforming scholar should take a careful second look at the *Annotations and Paraphrases of Scripture* he produced. The latter, especially, were intended to get his readers involved in the drama of salvation history. In the process of his reading of Acts Erasmus probed the motives of some key players in that story and explored the

locale of the action. He succeeded admirably, although not without negative reaction from some of his contemporaries, to create a unique blend of apostolic teaching with an emphasis on living by the rule of Christ—a blend he was sure would be found in Scripture. He was also sure, so it would seem, that the needed inner transformation of readers of these works would take place when through their reading of and reflection on Scripture they would become infused with the spirit of Christ.

Unlike his contemporaries, Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin (at a later date), Erasmus was convinced that the chief shepherd on earth should and could be instrumental in reforming a sadly misguided church. Partly for this reason Erasmus dedicated his *Paraphrases on Acts* to the recently elevated Pope Clement VII who succeeded the short-lived Dutch Pope Adrian VI. He undoubtedly hoped that the pontiff and his prelates would model their ministry on that of Peter and Paul, eliminating in the process outdated practices, yet being patient with those who were still caught up in their superstitions.

With characteristic hyperbole Erasmus flatters the Pope by congratulating him that his family name of Medici is a good omen, since the world of his day was in desperate need of a "predestined master of the medical arts." What more appropriate gesture then but to dedicate "Luke the physician, the medico,...to a Medici." Little did Erasmus know in 1524 that Clement would not live up to the high hopes he had placed in this friend of humanist learning.

In keeping with the fine scholarship that has been a hallmark of *Collected Works of Erasmus*, the editor, John Bateman, and the translator, Robert Sider, have carefully perused the most significant of the numerous sixteenth-century editions of this tome, thus ensuring the most comprehensive access to the mind of Erasmus on this particular subject. While the translator has come to the conclusion that Erasmus made relatively few significant changes in the several editions between 1524, when *Paraphrases on Acts* was first published, and the folio edition of 1535 on which this translation is based, he indicates all but the most insignificant modifications in the critical apparatus. Since all these are relegated to the rather elaborate endnotes, they in no way detract from the smooth and elegant prose of the body of the text.

Discerning readers are forewarned that Erasmus's brief account of the journeys of Peter and Paul which prefaced the editions of 1524, but not the 1534 and 1535 editions, have not been included in this volume but will appear in CWE 41.

The editor and translator of this volume ought to be congratulated for their painstaking efforts to compare and contrast Erasmus's skill as translator and biblical hermeneut with twentieth-century scholarship on the subject. Their labors give the *Paraphrase on Acts* not only antiquarian significance but place it once again in the context of scholarly debate on a significant book of the Christian Scriptures.