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052184987X - Erasmus, Contarini, and the Religious Republic of Letters

Constance M. Furey

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ERASMUS, CONTARINI, AND THE RELIGIOUS REPUBLIC OF LETTERS

Though the paradigm of modernist progression has been challenged on many fronts, Erasmus and other sixteenth-century literati are still commonly viewed as people who led the way from a religious Middle Ages to a more godless modern era. *Erasmus, Contarini, and the Religious Republic of Letters* complicates this view by analyzing a unique realm of spiritualized scholarship that cannot fit easily into any conventional intellectual chronology. By analyzing the lives, work, and correspondence of Erasmus, Thomas More, Margaret More Roper, Reginald Pole, Gasparo Contarini, and Vittoria Colonna, this book demonstrates how these Catholic men and women of letters created a distinctive kind of religious community rooted in friendship and shared intellectual and spiritual pursuits. By spanning the too-frequently-respected gap between humanist reformers in Northern and Southern Europe, this book uncovers a widespread, if previously less visible, network that exhibited concerns we still grapple with today. And, in contrast to histories that focus on politics and new economies of representation, the book demonstrates how the religious search for meaning shaped contemporary assumptions about friendship, gender, and the value of reading and writing.

Constance M. Furey is an assistant professor in the Department of Religious Studies at Indiana University. Her articles have appeared in the *Journal of Religion* and *Church History*, and during the 2005–06 school year she is a research associate in the Women's Studies in Religion Program at Harvard University.

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In memory of Jim Furey



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Note on Texts

In cases where I did my own translations from primary sources that are not readily available, I quoted the original language in the notes. I also transcribed the original Italian for Vittoria Colonna's poetry, although it is available in a modern critical edition, because of the particular difficulties involved in translating poetry. In quoting early printed material, I have modernized punctuation and capitalization.

Abbreviations

- Allen P. S. Allen. *Opus epistolarum Des. Erasmi Roterodami*. 12 vols. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1906–1958.
- ASD *Opera omnia Desiderii Roterodami recognita et adnotatione critica instructa notisque illustrata*. Amsterdam, 1969–.
- CWE *Collected Works of Erasmus*. Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1976–.
- CWTM *The Complete Works of St. Thomas More*. 15 vols. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963–1997.
- LB *Desiderii Erasmi Roterodami opera omnia*. Ed. Johannes Clericus. 10 vols. Leiden, 1703–1706.

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There is boundless sadness in the fact that I cannot show this book to the person who first taught me the joys of conversation. Although he believed in private satisfactions and would have questioned my desire to thank him publicly, I want nevertheless to record my gratitude to my father, Jim Furey, who offered me a vision of life in which questions are as exciting as answers.



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