NOTES ON THE ERASMUS-AUTOGRAPH
ms. GL. KGL. SAML. 95, 2*  
with a survey of the letters

by Erik Petersen

The aim of the fragmentologist is normally to reconstruct as much as possible of a given codex on the basis of the evidence that can be established from the fragments and other sources. The reconstruction may be physical, as when several fragments can be proven to have belonged to one and the same original codex; or it may be intellectual, and the aim of the fragmentologist will be, then, to extract as much evidence as possible from a single or a few fragments about, say, the liturgical practice in a given location. In some cases fragments form an important addition to knowledge gathered from more complete sources, in other cases fragments are all we have as our basis for information.

Fragments may be defined as parts or pieces of a previous unity, codicologically speaking the codex. The work of the fragmentologist is, in a way, dialectical, in the sense that a conception of the unity is necessary for the interpretation of the fragment; on the other hand, the fragment forms the basis for the reconstruction of the unity. The fundamental question is how we define 'unity'.

A codicological unity is not always an unambiguous phenomenon. A fragment of, say, an antiphonary gives no trouble in this respect, since our conceptions of an antiphonary are fairly well defined. But there are more complicated cases. In the following I shall deal with a manuscript which may in some ways be considered as a collection of fragments or of writings in a more or less fragmentary condition, in others as a unity.

The Royal Library is in the possession of three invaluable volumes of Erasmus-autographs: Gl. kgl. Saml. 95, 2*, Gl. kgl. Saml. 96, 2*, and
Thott 73, 2°. There are certain similarities between the volumes: their content is miscellaneous, their internal arrangement is disordered, they have come into Danish possession in a way that is not traceable in all respects, they have received their present binding after Erasmus' death, and they have attracted relatively little attention until fairly recently.

P.S. Allen, the famous editor of Opus Epistolarum Des. Erasmi Roterodami, was the first to announce the existence of Gl. kgl. Saml. 95, 2° to the scholarly world; he was allowed to borrow the manuscript, so that he could study it at the Bodleian Library in Oxford. The manuscript contains a large section of drafts for 52 letters. Strangely enough Allen seems to have had no knowledge about the two other Copenhagen manuscripts, and nobody seems to have told him about them, although they also contain epistolary material relevant to his edition¹. In 1964, Margaret Mann Phillips made use of the manuscript in her book 'The 'Adages' of Erasmus. A Study with Translations'. To her, the primary interest of the manuscript was, of course, its content of adages - the manuscript contains about half of the new adages which were to be published in the edition of 1533. She noticed that the manuscript does not represent the final text. Her observations seem to confirm the general impression that Allen also got from his study of the manuscript: that the texts contained in it are late, and that they were further elaborated before they left Erasmus' hands. Margaret Mann Phillips overlooked (as likewise Allen and later scholars seem to have done) one tiny piece of relevance to her study: an addition to an adagium located in the present volume on f. 198a, between two letters. - Only in the 1960es, during the preparation of the new edition of Erasmus' Opera Omnia, was it noticed by scholars outside Denmark that three manuscripts existed. C. Reedijk made a first presentation of them in his contribution to the Festschrift Herman de la Fontaine Verwey, in his article 'Three Erasmus Autographs in the Royal Library at Copenhagen'², and the manuscripts have been taken into consideration in the relevant volumes so far published of the Opera Omnia – until now first of all Thott 73, 2°. Reedijk adds little to the information on Gl. kgl. Saml. 95, 2° given by Allen; he himself refers to his treatment of this manuscript as a summary of Allen's analysis, and concentrates on the
description of the two other Erasmus autographs. So far the only work of Erasmus contained in Gl. kgl. Saml. 95, 2° that has been edited in the Opera Omnia is the De praeparatione ad mortem. The editor, A. van Heck, makes some remarks on the value of the manuscript that may perhaps be considered symptomatic; in his introduction he writes: "malheureusement il ne s’agit dans ce manuscrit que d’une simple ébauche, par complète, écrite d’une main pressée et négligente, de sorte que sa valeur pour la constitution du texte n’est pas grande." One understands the frustration of the editor in search for good sources for the constitution of the text, although the observation, via negativa points out the central quality of the manuscript: that it shows the work in progress, Erasmus in his studio, calamo currente, so to speak.

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There are many unsolved problems surrounding the three manuscripts. In the following I shall not try to solve them, but only add a few observations on one of them, Gl. kgl. Saml. 95, 2°, and present a survey of the letters contained in that volume, hopefully adding to a firmer basis for future conclusions.

In Appendix XIII of Opus Epistolarum, P.S. Allen has described the content of Gl. kgl. Saml 95, 2° in a fairly detailed way. The major elements of the manuscript are the following:

1° A list of writings by Athanasius
2° Ecclesiastes, Book I
3° De praeparatione ad mortem
4° Adagia
5° Indices to the Adagia [in a secretary’s hand]
6° Notes on Seneca
7° Notes on St. Augustine
8° Drafts of 52 letters
9° Testamentum Des. Erasmi Roterodami

A listing of the content in the manner just used gives a false impression of the volume in which various parts of various writings and items are so intermingled that it is hard to find any order. Parts
of Ecclesiastes occur together with parts of the De praeparatione ad mortem. In other words, it is possible to find a coherent sequence of folia only in bits and pieces. As we shall see, the same is true for the section of letters; we might have expected to find them organized either chronologically, or by receiver, or by subject, but as we have them in the volume, no such structure occurs.

P.S. Allen speaks very appropriately of the 'orderly and yet disordered' arrangement of the volume; this is true even of the section of letters. As an orderly arrangement must be considered the fact that all letters have been placed together at the end of the volume; on the other hand, one finds great disorder as to the relative location of the letters within the section. As in the rest of the volume, there are only minor sequences of folia which might in some way or another be seen as following some kind of logical structure.

The earliest letter in the volume dates to 1517; the latest are from 1536, the year of Erasmus' death. These are the earliest and latest datable documents of the entire volume. Considering how much Erasmus travelled around in Europe, and how often he changed his address during this long period, one may, as a matter of fact, see it as no small wonder that so much material is still preserved. All the writings contained in the volume, and several of the letters, had been printed during Erasmus' lifetime, but still he kept the original drafts till the end of his life.

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P.S. Allen's main interest in the volume was, as one would expect, the sequence of letters. Oddly enough, and in spite of his very accurate description of the volume and of his intelligent analysis of its content, he did not communicate a list of contents of the letter section; in his Appendix XIII he merely presents a chronological scheme of the spread of the letters according to the years in which they were conceived, without indicating which letters he was actually dealing with. In the following I shall present a list of the letters as they occur in Gl. kgl. Saml. 95, 2°, indicating the folia, the date, the recipient, and a reference to the no., vol. and pages in Allen's edition.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>fol.</th>
<th>date</th>
<th>recipient</th>
<th>Allen:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>no.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>160-161v</td>
<td>20.2.1536</td>
<td>&quot;amicis lectoribus&quot;^9</td>
<td>3100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>162-164v</td>
<td>(fin. 1532)</td>
<td>Joannes Faber</td>
<td>2750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>164v-167</td>
<td>1.11.1533</td>
<td>Justus Decius</td>
<td>2874</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>167v-169v</td>
<td>19.11.1533</td>
<td>Joannes Vergara</td>
<td>2979</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>170-176v</td>
<td>2.3.1532</td>
<td>Martinus Bucer</td>
<td>2615</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>177</td>
<td>blank</td>
<td></td>
<td>Vol.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>177v</td>
<td>blank</td>
<td>(inscribed Bucero)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>178</td>
<td>16.3.1536</td>
<td>&lt;John Longlond&gt;</td>
<td>3108</td>
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<tr>
<td>178</td>
<td>16.3.1536</td>
<td>&lt;Leonard of Gruyeres ?&gt;</td>
<td>3109</td>
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<tr>
<td>178a</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>178av</td>
<td>blank</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>179</td>
<td>27.1.1536</td>
<td>Ferdinandus</td>
<td>3087</td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>179av</td>
<td>blank</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>180-180v</td>
<td>3.5.1528</td>
<td>Clemens VII</td>
<td>1987</td>
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<td>181-181v</td>
<td>30.11.1531</td>
<td>&lt;John Morin&gt;</td>
<td>2577</td>
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<td>182-183</td>
<td>11.5.1533</td>
<td>&lt;Stephen Loret ?&gt;</td>
<td>2807</td>
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<tr>
<td>183v</td>
<td>blank</td>
<td>(inscribed bonus dies..)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>184-187v</td>
<td>12.12.1524</td>
<td>Georgius dux Saxoniae</td>
<td>1526</td>
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<td>188-189</td>
<td>1.2.1533</td>
<td>Theobaldus Fettichius</td>
<td>2760</td>
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<tr>
<td>189v</td>
<td>blank</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>190-191</td>
<td>(Jan.) 1533</td>
<td>&quot;Pio lectori&quot;^10</td>
<td>2758</td>
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<tr>
<td>191v</td>
<td>blank</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>192-193</td>
<td>8.9.1529</td>
<td>Gwilhelmus Montiolus</td>
<td>2215</td>
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<tr>
<td>193</td>
<td>blank</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>194-195v</td>
<td>10.9.1519</td>
<td>Jacobus Tutor</td>
<td>1013</td>
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<td>196</td>
<td>^16.7.1528</td>
<td>Joannes cardinalis Lotharingiae</td>
<td>2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>196v</td>
<td>blank</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>197-197v</td>
<td>24.3.1528</td>
<td>Georgius dux Saxoniae</td>
<td>1983</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
198-198v 16.7.1528 Ursinus Velius 2008 VII 415-416
198a Piece of Adag., Chil. IV, Cent. II, prov. XXIII/11
198av blank
199-200v 5.8.1531 Joannes Botzemus 2516 IX 309-312
201-206 7.3.1531 Jacobus Sadoletus 2443 IX 157-168
206v blank (a few letters inscribed)
207-208v 30.3.1530 Christophorus Mesia 2299 VIII 400-405
209 31.3.1530 Alfonsus Manricus 2301 VIII 410-411
209v blank
210-211 (ca.24.6.)1530 Andreas Alciatus 2329 VIII 451-455
211v blank
212 24.6.1530 Antonius Fugger 2330 VIII 455-456
212 24.6.1530 Joannes Cholerus 2331 VIII 456
212v-213 24.6.1530 Christophorus a Stadio 2332 VIII 456-458
213v blank
214-214v 11.8.1530 Conradus Herbipolensis ecclesiae episcopus 2361 IX 7-9
215-215v 30.6.1530 Georgius Saxoniae dux 2328 VIII 466-468
216-216v 14.3.1531 Julius Pflug 2451 IX 186-188
217-217v 15.3.1531 Georgius Saxoniae dux 2452 IX 188-189
218-218v 13.3.1531 Lazarus Bayfus 2447 IX 178-179
219-220 13.3.1531 Baptista Egnatius 2448 IX 179-182
220v blank
221-222v 12.3.1531 Eobanus Hessus 2446 IX 173-177
223-224 13.3.1531 Jacobus Tussanus 2449 IX 182-185
224v blank
225-227v 31.3.1531 Andreas Alciatus 2468 IX 231-236
228+231 30.3.1530 Petrus Mesia 2300 VIII 405-410
229-229v 5.9.1529 Thomas Morus 2211 VIII 271-273
230 blank
230v blank
231-231v belonging to same letter as f. 228
232-232v 12.4.1531 Augustinus Trivultius 2482 IX 255-256
233 blank
233v blank
234-234v 28.3.1530 Argentoratensis senatus 2293 VIII 393-394
6.6.(1530) Bernardus episc. et card. Tridentinus 2326 VII 446-447
236-237v 28.8.1527 Alfonsum Manricus 1864 VII 146-151
238-238v (ca. 16.11.1517) Petrus Aegidius 715 III 145-147
239-239v 23.8.1524 Argentinae civitatis moderatores 1477 V 511-513
240 (March 1532) <Bernard of Cles> 2623 IX 463-464
241-242v 22.3.1525 Joannes cardinalis Lotharingiae 1559 VI 52-55
243-244 20.11.1524 Ferdinandus 1515 V 579-580
244v blank
245 (Sept. 1530 ?) Unknown 2381 IX 42-45
245v blank
246 (ca. 31.7.1520)
Conradus praesul Wertzenburgensis 1124 IV 306-307
246v blank
247 16.10.1535 <Francesco Maria Sforza> 3064 XI 238-239
247v blank
248-248v 31.12.(1530) "Lectore"13 2416 IX 98-99
249-252 30.3.1527 Thomas Morus 1808 VII 5-14
252v blank

P.S. Allen's description of the manuscript has been authoritative for later treatments of the volume. It might therefore be useful to question a few of his observations. The Copenhagen volume has, as Allen states, "considerable value in the light it throws on Erasmus' practice in the writing and preservation of his correspondence"14. It shows that in Erasmus' later years his practice was to make
rough drafts of letters which were then reshaped in fair copies made
by secretaries for dispatch. As noted by Allen himself, this is in
contrast to Erasmus' earlier practice as witnessed by the famous
Deventer Letter-Book\textsuperscript{15} covering the period 1516-1518; in this
period Erasmus normally wrote the letters for dispatch himself and
had secretaries copying them in the letter-book - the occurrence of a
letter from 1517 in Gl. kgl. Saml. 95, 2\* may perhaps indicate that
Erasmus' practice was not different in different periods, but
different rather for different purposes or situations.

As mentioned, Allen also notices that in spite of the
disorderly arrangement of the manuscript, there is, in fact, a certain
degree of arrangement about the papers: "... the displacement which
occurs is not of single sheets but ... of groups"\textsuperscript{16}. Yet displacement of
single sheets certainly occurs, as a quick glance at the scheme
printed above soon will reveal. The most notable example of
displacement is, perhaps, the folio containing a bit of Adag. IV.II. XXIII
which has been so displaced that it has remained unnoticed by both
Allen and later scholars\textsuperscript{17}.

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The conclusion drawn by Allen on the content and arrangement of Gl.
kgl. S 95, 2\* - and he is followed by later Erasmus-scholars - is "that
the collection was not made by any one interested in the papers for
their historical value; for in that case we might fairly expect to find
them carefully sorted out and the letters especially placed in
chronological order. It seems more as though it were a congeries
brought together almost haphazard by some one desirous of gathering
and yet hardly heeding what he gathered..."\textsuperscript{18}. Reedijk speaks about
Gl. kgl. Saml. 95, 2\* and the two other Copenhagen-autographs as
"souvenir-volumes"\textsuperscript{19}. To me the opposite conclusion seems equally
likely: that the papers were collected by some one very well aware of
the historical significance of the papers. The collector has found
the papers in Erasmus' house in exactly the sequence in which they
are now bound, and he wanted to keep them in this shape, because this
was the shape in which he found them left by the great Erasmus. Most
of the content of the volume had been printed already in Erasmus' lifet ime, and could be studied and consulted in the printed editions -
whereas the papers were found to be of value because they gave an
impression of Erasmus himself and of his house. The disorderly arrangement is Erasmus' own and its preservation even after being bound in the present volume is not due to the lack of intellectual interest but is due to personal piety. The disordered arrangement was part of the historical value of the papers, and was, in itself, easily explicable when understood as personal papers by Erasmus that had been following him during his journeys and vicissitudes for a long period of his life.

Apart from the various internal arguments in favour of this thesis, there is at least one physical feature of the manuscript, hitherto unnoticed, that seems to support it: the presence of quire-signatures all through the manuscript. The quires have been alphabetically marked, beginning with the second quire on f. 4 which is marked with a $Q$ and ending with the last quire, marked with $mm$.

It is, of course, difficult (if not impossible) to give a precise date for these markings, but it seems evident that their shape is late medieval or early modern, more or less contemporary, that is, with Erasmus' death. This proves, I believe, that the present disposition and arrangement of the manuscript is original (and not caused e.g. by inaccurate binding or rebinding during the later history of the manuscript); and it proves that the arrangement was intended: if the papers were in no order, and no order mattered to the collector or owner of the manuscript, why, then, should they be structured as they were, probably when bound, by the alphabetical marking of the quires?

Gl. kgl. Saml. 95, 2° may very well be considered as a collection of fragments - entire books, passages and bits and pieces of his writings and letters, located in great disorder in the volume when compared to the printed editions. But the present state of the papers is not a witness to the bad scholarly qualities of the collector as a fragmentologist - he had no intentions of reconstructing the original 'volumes' of writings and letters; his frame and context was the late Erasmus, and his aim and motive was piety towards the great humanist and scholar 20.
NOTES

1 Allen wrote to the Royal Library in April 1907. His letter begins: "Audivi nuper, vir clarissime, extare in bibliotheca Regia Hafniensi aliquot epistolas vel ad ERASMUM ROTERODAMUM vel ab ipso scriptas..."; a little later he continues: "Manet hoc unum quaerendum, licet prae pudore vix petere ausim: an si forte fortunae epistolas quotquot sunt unum aut alterum volumen complectatur, velis haec Oxonium mittere ad bibliothecam Bodleianam pro unius mensis spatio" [letter in the archive of the Royal Library, A 10. Brøvsager, vol. IV]. - It would have been interesting to know who informed Allen about the Erasmus-letters in Copenhagen.

The head of the Royal Library at the time, the learned H.O. Lange, answered immediately: "... The Royal Library possesses a volume containing various autographa of Erasmus, among those rough drafts of 48 letters, which are, I think, of some interest for you. This volume (Gl. kgl. Saml. 95 Fol) can be sent to the Bodleian for your use, if I get an official request from the Librarian..." [letter in Allen's papers in the Bodleian Library].

It is hard to understand how the scholar and librarian H.O. Lange could possibly forget to tell the Erasmus-scholar and -editor P.S. Allen of the two other Erasmus-volumes in Copenhagen - not least because Allen himself mentions in his letter that the letters may be contained in more than one volume. Since Gl. kgl. Saml. 96, 2° contains only a single letter and the letters of Thott 73, 2° are all prefatory letters to works intended for publication (a category that is included by Allen in his Opus Epistolarum), the most likely explanation for Lange's silence is that he was not aware that the two volumes did contain epistolary material - the letters were probably not registered in the library's files of letters; as were the 48 drafts of letters in Gl. kgl. Saml. 95, 2°. - Nevertheless, it remains a puzzle that he did not tell Allen about it, for the mere sake of making the volumes known to the scholarly world outside - and for that matter inside - Denmark.

2 Studia in honorem Herman de la Fontaine Verwey. Amstelodami 1966, p. 327-349.


7  The earliest letter is on 238-238v; the four letters from 1536 are on f. 160-160v, f. 178 (two letters) and on f. 179.

8  I follow Allen in his dating of the letters; I have, however, maintained the Latin versions of the names of the recipients, following the manuscript. Names in brackets indicate that the recipient is not mentioned in the manuscript or in a printed version of the letter; in such cases I follow Allen.

9  Address to the reader, appended to Aliquot Epistolae added to the De puritate tabernaculi, 1536.


11  LB II (1703), p. 996 A.

12  Allen, slightly inaccurately, indicates the location of the letter as f. 228; in fact an entire letter splits up the letter to Petrus Mels into two halves.

13  Preface to Paraphrasis... in elegantias Laev. Vallae, Freiburg 1531.

14 (68)  Appendix XIII, p. 632.

15  Ms. 91 of the Athenaeum Library at Deventer; see Allen's Appendix VIII of Opus Epistolae (vol. I, 1906, p. 603-609).

16  Appendix XIII, p. 632.

17  F. 198 (a) is only a scrap of paper, measuring 21.3 x 9.5 cm. The entire text in the ms. reads:

allusit ad hoc proverbium aliquot locis M. Tullius ut in Ep. ad Att. lib. 4: ne βαθμία mea, quae in agendo apparuit, in scribendo sit occultor [Ad Att. IV.v1.3]. Rursus ...: Admirabere meam βαθμίαν, cum salui redierimus; tanta mihi μεγίστη nullus virtutis datur [AdAtt. V.x.3]. Rursus lib. 6. ep. 1: nami nulla re sum delectatus
maugis quam mean Βασίλειος. In Apoll tibi, liberalitatem in Bruto prohibi uiehementer gaudeo [Ad Att. VI.1.1-2]. - The inaccuracy of the last quotation has survived in the printed editions.

Appendix XIII, p. 631f.

Op. cit., p. 349. - Reedijk describes the existence of three volumes of Erasmus-autographs in Copenhagen as a "perplexing situation" to which he might be "reconciled ... if several more of these souvenir-volumes should be discovered in other libraries in the world. The existence of Erasmian mementoes of this kind in larger numbers would automatically reduce the odds against three of them emerging in the Royal Library in the way described. Thus the improbability with which we are now confronted would be homoeopathically remedied by fresh surprises". In general one might perhaps say that there are odds against the emerging of many manuscripts in the libraries in which they are now located; and I admit that I find Reedijk's sympathetic and pious hope improbable. As to his description of the manuscripts as "souvenir-volumes", I would rather speak of "source-volumes" - the three volumes were each kept together in the way they are not only to remind posterity about Erasmus, but also, and first of all, to give a first-hand impression of how he worked, and how he kept his papers - which is still the primary value of the volumes.

I am preparing a study of various codicological elements (including the bindings) of Gl. kgl. Saml. 95, 2°, Gl. kgl. Saml. 96, 2° and Thott 73, 2° in order to analyze, i.a., the possible inter-relationship of the three Erasmus-autographs in the Royal Library.

I wish to thank my father-in-law Eric Jacobsen for discussing various points of this paper with me, and for checking my English.