RAISING THE GHOST OF ARIUS

Erasmus,
the Johannine Comma
and Religious Difference in Early Modern Europe

PROEFSCHRIFT
TER VERKRIJGING VAN
DE GRAAD VAN DOCTOR AAN DE UNIVERSITEIT LEIDEN,
OP GEZAG VAN DE RECTOR MAGNIFICUS PROF. MR. P. F. VAN DER HEIJDEN,
VOLEGENS BESLUIT VAN HET COLLEGE VOOR PROMOTIES
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I know not a Passage in all the New Testament so contested as this.

Edward Calamy, 1719

It is rather a danger to religion, than an advantage, to make it now lean upon a bruised reed. There cannot be better service done to the truth, than to purge it of things spurious.

Isaac Newton, 1690

To use a weak argument in behalf of a good cause, can only tend to infuse a suspicion of the cause itself into the minds of all who see the weakness of the argument. Such a procedure is scarcely a remove short of pious fraud.

Richard Porson, 1790
ABBREVIATIONS


CSEL. Corpus scriptorum ecclesiasticorum latinorum. 96 vols. Vienna: Tempisky, 1866-.

CW. Collected Works of Erasmus. Toronto: Toronto UP, 1974-.


GA. Gregory-Aland manuscript numbers, given according to Aland et al., 1994.


Abbreviations for musical sources are given as in the Répertoire international des sources musicales (RISM).

The following textual sigla are also used:

C corrector (C1, C2, C3...)
L lectio varia (in margine); an L reading always substitutes for a T reading
S reading in a supplemental part of a manuscript
T text reading
* prima manus
** secunda manus
[ ] numbers given in brackets after a biblical citation refer to a Teststelle and Lesart assigned by Text und Texwert

Unless otherwise stated, biblical citations in English are quoted from the New Revised Standard Version. All other translations, except where specifically noted, are my own.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The germ of this study was planted some time ago when I read the curious work *Tractatus aliquot Christianæ religionis* (1583) by Jan Sommer, a minor Transylvanian Reformer. Only a couple of copies of this book survive, including one in the Lambeth Palace Library, given to John Whitgift, Archbishop of Canterbury, by no one less than John Dee. It was Sommer’s intention to show that several Christian doctrines had been stolen holus-bolus from Plato; amongst these was the notion of the Trinity. My curiosity about Sommer’s claims led me into the heart of the Socinian debates and the question of the Johannine comma.

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