

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM

What does he mean to us today?

ENDERS, PETER

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DESIDERIUS ERASMUS ROTTERDAMUS

1466/69 Gouda – 1536 Basel

Portrait by HANS HOLBEIN JR.

“An idealised picture of a sensitive, highly educated scholar, and this is how ERASMUS wanted to be remembered by future generations.”

(STEPHANIE BUCK, *HANS HOLBEIN*,
Köln: Könemann 1999, p. 50)

- Web Gallery of Art: Image Info about artwork,
Общественное достояние,

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Self-work:

In what will the difference between knowledge and education take place?

In what will the difference between knowledge and faith take place?

Hypothesis: A person who believes in **nothing** – such a person is ready to commit suicide. (This is my 10th thesis in a talk on MAX PLANCK's philosophical views, 1978/79, in the basement of the *Magnus House* in Berlin*).

What do you think?

*Everyone among you who watches football or tennis often sees the 'Magnus effect'.

The Netherlands around 1500



The parents

ERASMUS's father belonged to a burgher family in the town of Gouda (at the crossroads of Rotterdam – Amsterdam and The Hague – Utrecht). He became infatuated with a girl in his youth, who reciprocated him. But his parents were against the relationship, as they had predestined their son for a spiritual career. Nevertheless, the lovers became close and had a son. He was given the name GERHARD: desirable – in Latin DESIDERIUS, DESIDAMUS.

Self-work: By what criteria have you concluded your marriage or do you want to conclude it?

Primary education

ERASMUS first attended the local primary school. Then he went to the school of the 'fraternities' in Deventer. The programme included the study of the ancient classics.

Note: WERNER HEISENBERG (1901-1976), who is called the inventor of the matrix form of quantum mechanics (1925), attended a humanities gymnasium.

Self-work: What roles do general and special education play?

Monastery 1

ERASMUS lost his parents at the age of 13. As an 'illegitimate child', he couldn't pursue a public career. So he withdrew to a monastery.

Self-work: By what criteria was your education decided?

By what criteria should education be decided in general?

Who should decide about it?

Examples: LOMONOSOV (controversial), HEGEL

Monastery 2

ERASMUS is distinguished by his outstanding knowledge, brilliant mind and elegant Latin speech, and so soon attracts the attention of influential patrons. The **Bishop** of Cambrai took him on as his secretary to conduct correspondence in Latin.

Self-work: How is it today?



Cathedral of Notre Dame de
Grasse de Cambrai (France)

Author: myself (Bernard Leprêtre) - собственная работа, CC BY-SA 3.0,
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In the main centres of humanism 1

From **Cambrai**, ERASMUS moved to **Paris**, at that time still the centre of scholastic learning.

In Paris he published his first major work, the *Adagia*, a collection of sayings and anecdotes he had extracted from the writings of various ancient writers.

This book made ERASMUS a household name in humanist circles throughout Europe.

Self-work: What do you have to do to become famous in the field of education?

Paris, 1493



In the main centres of humanism 2

After several years in France, ERASMUS travelled to **England**. Here he befriended many humanists, especially THOMAS MORE ('Utopia'), JOHN COLET, and later JOHN FISHER and PRINCE HENRY, the future KING HENRY VIII. From 1499 ERASMUS led a nomadic life, travelling to **Paris, Orleans, Leuven** and **Rotterdam**. After a new journey to **England**, in 1505-1506, he finally had the opportunity to visit **Italy**, where he had long wanted to go.

In the main centres of humanism 3

The University of **Turin** presented him with a diploma for an honorary doctorate in theology. The Pope, as a token of his special favour to ERASMUS, gave him permission to live and dress according to the customs of each country where he had to live.

Further stations: **Turin, Bologna, Florence, Venice, Padua, Rome**

Then a third time to **England**: HENRY VIII; **Oxford** and **Cambridge** Universities offered him a professorship, i.e. financial security (He was already more than 40 years old – see also Hegel's *curriculum vitae*).

Self-work: What does a stay abroad give you?

ERASMUS on scholasticism

“They are to such an extent absorbed in their pleasurable nonsense that, while they spend their days and nights at them, they no longer find a moment's time to leaf through the Gospel or the Epistles of the APOSTLE PAUL for once. But while they are engaged in their scholarly nonsense, they are quite sure that on their syllogisms the universal church rests as much as the sky rests on the shoulders of ATLAS, and that without them the church would not last a minute.”

Self-study:

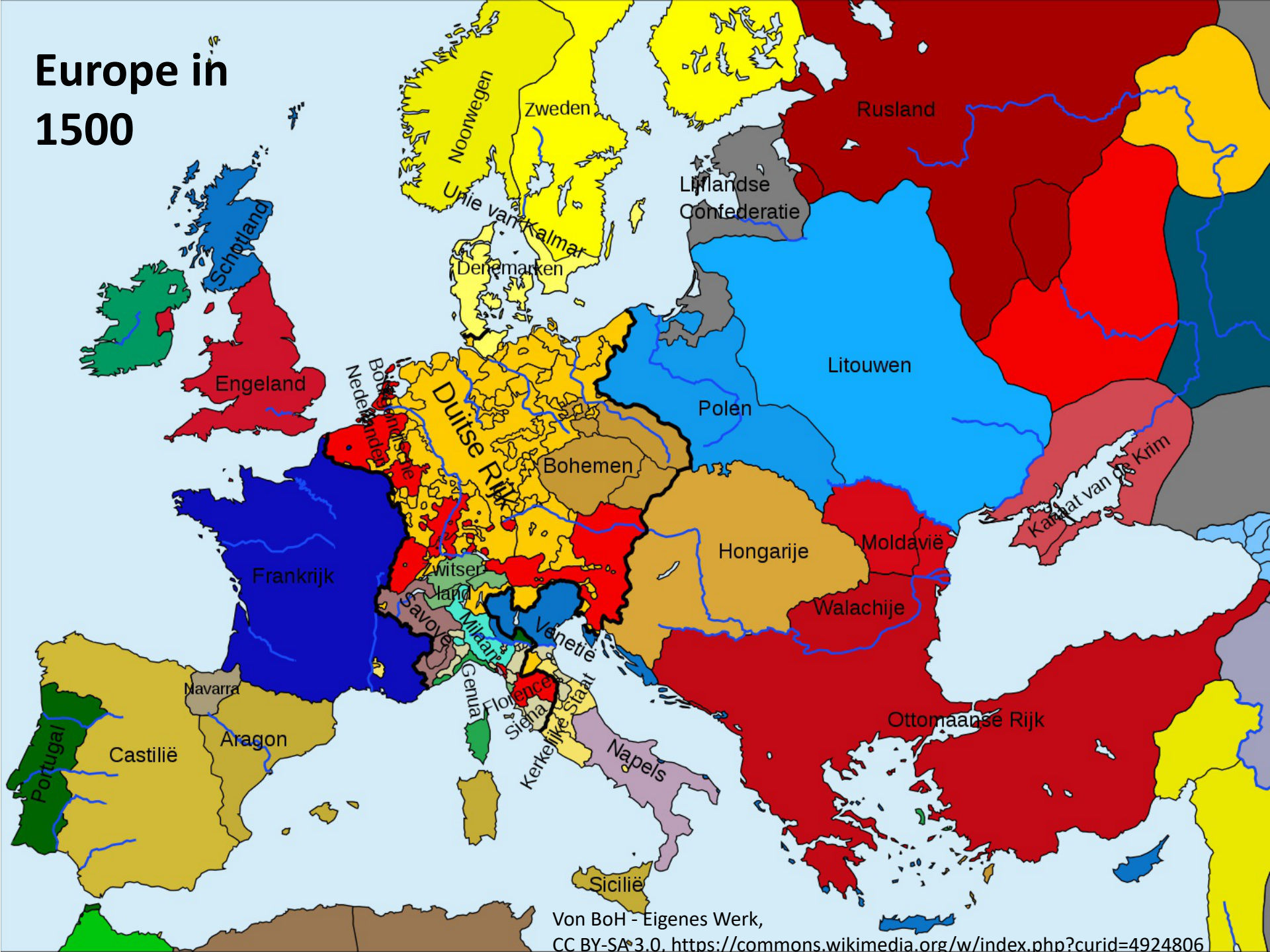
Study the syllogism by which the famous French mathematician HADAMARD has described HUYGENS' principle!

What happens, or – much more important – what will you **gain** if leaving out the minor premise?



JACQUES SALOMON
HADAMARD,
1865 — 1963

Europe in 1500



Affiliation — non-affiliation 1

In age (***1467**) and places of life, ERASMUS belongs to the older, 'REICHLIN generation' of Anglo-German humanists.

JOHANN REICHLIN,
1455–1522



Affiliation — non-affiliation 2

But by the nature of his literary activity, by its satirical tone, ERASMUS (***1467**) already adjoins to a considerable extent the humanists of the younger, ‘von Gutten generation’.

ULRICH VON GUTTEN, **1488**–1523

Artist: ERHARD SCHÖN (~1491–
1542)



Affiliation — non-affiliation 3

In fact, ERASMUS was
“a man in his own right.”
 (“Letters of Dark Men,”
1515/1517).



Affiliation — non-affiliation 4

Self-work:

- i. How to develop independent thinking?
- ii. Which artist was “an age of his own”?
- iii. Which cities have an ‘ERASMUS street’ or an ‘ERASMUS square’?



International *ERASMUS Days*

ERASMUS Days is an international six-day celebration dedicated to the *Erasmus+* programme. During these days, people all over the world are invited to come together and organise or participate in relevant activities.

For students, teachers, trainers, professionals and in general for all citizens, *ERASMUS Days* are a unique moment to promote the many benefits of the *Erasmus+* programme!

The *ERASMUS Days* take place every year in October, the month in which Erasmus was born.

#ErasmusDays, <https://www.erasmusdays.eu/>

Epilogue

GRETA RUFT: „DER KAISER IST NACKT!“

GRETA SHOUTS, “THE EMPEROR IS NAKED!”

Грета кричит: «Император голый!»

Self-work:

What would ERASMUS have said / written?

РАХМЕТ



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<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=1619684>