

MoW Register Nominations - Erasmus Collection Rotterdam

1. Title / Titre

1.0 Title / Titre

Erasmus Collection Rotterdam

2. Summary / Résumé

2.0 Summary / Résumé

The world's largest collection of early modern Erasmus documents – letters and books – functions as a fundamental source of knowledge of Desiderius Erasmus of Rotterdam (1466-1536), his influential ideas on religion, society, and education, the way they spread over the world, and the various ways in which readers used his texts and ideas.

The starting point of this Rotterdam collection dates back to 1604, and it was assembled by public as well as private means throughout the ages. Its extraordinary copiousness of different editions placed the Erasmus Collection Rotterdam, housed in Rotterdam Public Library, at the centre of scholarly interest from the 1960's onwards, because it shows how Erasmus's thoughts and texts changed throughout his lifetime. The Collection represents the various ways in which his works have been appropriated, read, and used during his life and after his death throughout Europe. The circa 3,000 books in the Erasmus Collection Rotterdam printed from the 15th until the 19th century encompass the geographical range of Erasmian printing. Moreover, the Erasmus Collection Rotterdam includes several handwritten materials by Erasmus himself. In this way, the Erasmus Collection Rotterdam stands at the basis of our current knowledge of the innovative way in which Erasmus laid foundations for our society today.

3. Nominator contact details / Coordonnées de l'auteur

3.1 Name of nominator / Nom de l'auteur de la proposition

Rotterdam Public Library

Dr. Th.C.M. Kemperman, Director

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Dr. J.P.F. Tholen, Curator of Special Collections

J.Tholen@bibliotheek.rotterdam.nl

+31 10 28 16 18 8

3.2 Relationship to the nominated material / Relation avec l'élément considéré du patrimoine documentaire

Rotterdam Public Library is the custodian of the Erasmus Collection Rotterdam.

3.3 Address / Adresse

Rotterdam Public Library

Hoogstraat 110

3011 PV Rotterdam

Netherlands

Postal address:

Post box 22140

3003 DC Rotterdam

3.4 Telephone / Téléphone

T.Kemperman@bibliotheek.rotterdam.nl

3.5 Email / Courriel

+31 10 28 16 15 5

3.6 Co-nominator(s), if any / Co-auteur(s), le cas échéant

4. Declaration of Authority / Déclaration sur l'honneur

I certify that I have the authority to nominate the item, or items, described in this document to the Memory of the World Register.
Je certifie sur l'honneur, proposer le patrimoine documentaire décrit dans ce document au Registre international de la Mémoire du monde

Declaration of authority / Déclaration sur l'honneur

Declaration of authority / Déclaration sur l'honneur

Yes

Full name / Nom et prénom

Dr. Th.C.M. Kemperman, Director of Rotterdam Public Library

Date

11/29/2021

5. Legal information / Informations juridiques

5.1 Name of owner / Nom du propriétaire

The Erasmus Collection Rotterdam is owned by the Municipality of Rotterdam.
Mr. Said Kasmi, Vice Mayor for Education, Culture and Tourism

5.2 Address / Adresse

Stadhuis Coolingsingel 40
3011 AD Rotterdam

Postal address:
Post box 70012
3000 KP Rotterdam

5.3 Telephone / Téléphone

Mr. G.N. van Bokkum
+31 6 438 36 266

5.4 Email / Adresse électronique

informatiebeheer@rotterdam.nl

5.5 Name and contact details of custodian / Nom et coordonnées du dépositaire

Rotterdam Public Library; see for contact details 3.0, 3.3, and 3.4

5.6 Legal status / Statut juridique

The Municipality of Rotterdam as the owner of the documentary heritage has a long-term agreement with the Rotterdam Public Library that secures the preservation of the Erasmus Collection in the library.^[1] Rotterdam Public Library as the custodian is responsible for proper preservation and disclosure of the collection to scholars as well as the general public.

[1] Cf. Appendix 1: Official Agreement of Preservation (Dutch)

5.7 Copyright status / Droits d'auteur

The Erasmus Collection Rotterdam is free of copyright and belongs to the public domain. Everyone is welcome to consult the collection, to take photographs, and to use its content without copyright restrictions.

5.8 Accessibility / Accessibilité

The physical objects of the Erasmus Collection Rotterdam can be consulted in the Special Collections reading room of Rotterdam Public Library, without any legal constraints. Parts of the collection have been digitised. The Erasmus Online database provides access to the digitised *opera omnia* editions of 1538-1540 and 1703-1706, and to fifteen editions of prominent works by Erasmus. In recent years, several items from the Erasmus Collection Rotterdam have been selected in cooperation with the National Library of the Netherlands (KB) to be digitized by Google Books.

In 1991, a printed catalogue was published, that includes all objects that belonged to the collection in 1990: *Catalogue of the Erasmus Collection in the City Library of Rotterdam* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1991). After this publication, many objects have been added to the Erasmus Collection Rotterdam. All current items belonging to the collection are registered in the online database of Rotterdam Public Library, in the National Catalogue, and in the Erasmus Online database. In addition, editions printed in the early modern Netherlands are included in the Short Title Catalogue Netherlands.

The Erasmus Center for Early Modern Studies, a collaboration between Rotterdam Public Library and Erasmus University Rotterdam founded in 2005, has launched the Erasmus Online database: it provides all the information gathered by former library director Egbertus van Gulik for the benefit of publishing the *Erasmii Opera Omnia*, an edition project of the Royal Dutch Academy of Arts and Sciences. In the 20th century, this database functioned as an important source for international research into Erasmus. In its digitised form, it now can be searched via the website www.erasmus.org. Erasmus Online is a useful tool not only for philologists and historians, for book historians, philosophers and theologians, but for bookellers and customers as well. It is considered a standard source of reference by

historians, philosophers and theologians, but for booksellers and auctioneers as well. It is considered a standard source of reference by the Universal Short Title Catalogue. At the moment, Rotterdam Public Library is working on a new digital environment that will provide access to the database in the near future.

6. Identity and description of the documentary heritage / Identité et description de l'élément du patrimoine documentaire

6.1 Name and identification details / Nom et identification de l'élément proposé

Title: Erasmus Collection Rotterdam

Institution: Bibliotheek Rotterdam (Rotterdam Public Library)

6.2 Type of document/ Type de document

Books / Livres, Manuscripts / Manuscrits

6.3 Catalogue or registration details / Détails du catalogue ou de l'inscription

The Erasmus Collection Rotterdam includes 3,017 documents from the 15th until the 19th century (1495-1899).[1] They are kept by Rotterdam Public Library and foremost located in shells 1 to 19, on shelves A to K.[2]

In 1495, Erasmus for the first time saw his work published in print. The Rotterdam copy 94 D 7 of this edition of Erasmus's earliest known text forms the chronological starting point of the Erasmus Collection. 30 percent of the collection consist of books printed during Erasmus's lifetime. In these editions Erasmus shows himself as a clear thinker and a workaholic, who not easily considered a text finished. Therefore, the humanist scholar and European thinker edited, augmented, and enhanced his own texts in successive editions. In the meantime, printers all over Europe started to produce pirated editions to benefit from the bestseller author. The many editions in the Erasmus Collection Rotterdam that were printed after Erasmus's death in 1536 represent the continuing popularity of his texts until 1899. The Erasmus Collection Rotterdam not only shows the range of Erasmus print culture, but through all kinds of readers' interventions and annotations in the margins of these books also provides ample proof of his actual influence through the ages.

Special attention, of course, is given to the four letters written by Erasmus himself (shelf marks 96 D 1, 2, 4 and 5) and one letter written by one of Erasmus's attendants (shelf mark 96 D 3). Together with the copy of an edition of the Roman author Aulus Gellius (shelf mark 94 D 6) that was once part of Erasmus's private library and shows his own marginal annotations and doodles, they enable the Erasmus Collection Rotterdam to present an extraordinarily complete perspective.

Not included in this Erasmus Collection is a large collection of 20th and 21st century materials also kept by Rotterdam Public Library, including text editions, books, and articles from 1900 to the present day. It is continuously supplemented with relevant new publications. These materials are less rare, and therefore excluded from the heritage collection, but they provide a highly relevant modern context to the Erasmus Collection Rotterdam.

[1] Cf. Appendix 2: Erasmus Collection Rotterdam (registration details).

[2] Therefore, the registration numbers of the objects in the Erasmus Collection Rotterdam resemble 1 A 1; the first number refers to the shell, the letter to the shelf within that shell, and the second number to the position of the book on the shelf. For example, book 11 H 12 is located in shell 11, shelf H, as the twelfth book on that shelf: it is an annotated copy of the first edition of Erasmus's world changing translation of the New Testament, titled *Novum Instrumentum* (1516). The five Erasmus letters are registered as 94 D 1-5; a copy from Erasmus's private library as 94 D 6, and a copy of Erasmus's first publication as 94 D 7.

6.4 Visual documentation (if available and appropriate) / Documentation visuelle le cas échéant (si disponible et approprié)

See:

Appendix 3: autograph letter 94 D 4

Appendix 4: shelves 10 G and H

Appendix 5: reader's annotations in copy 9 F 29

Appendix 6: copy 6 F 22 of a rare Bratislava edition

6.5 History/Provenance / Histoire/Provenance

In 1604, the Rotterdam city administration granted subsidy to purchase a public collection of books to be housed in the city's central Saint Laurence Church. This was the beginning of a collection of books that is still part of the modern Rotterdam Public Library today. It includes medieval manuscripts and incunabula, as well as contemporary printed books. Part of this early collection were also seven editions of Erasmus of Rotterdam's works, which were the first beginnings of what has now been developed into the Erasmus Collection Rotterdam.

From the late 19th century onwards, creating the Erasmus Collection was a major focus of the City Library of Rotterdam, supported by private as well as public funding, based on a strongly felt connection with the most famously influential person ever born in Rotterdam. In the early 20th century, the Erasmus Collection included already about 700 volumes. Especially in the Interbellum, the City Library, with significant financial support of Rotterdam citizens through the 'Friends of the City Library Foundation', was able to assemble the world's largest collection of Erasmiana by adding more than 1,000 Erasmus volumes. The objects that belong to this unique assembly were purchased at international auctions, in antiquarian book shops, and by private donations. In this period, also the four autograph

letters were purchased at international auctions. At this point, the Erasmus Collection Rotterdam began to fulfil its worldly role as starting point for scholarly research into Erasmus and his works.

Now, over four centuries after its genesis, the Erasmus Collection Rotterdam includes no less than 3,000 documents. It is the most famous and valued heritage collection within Rotterdam Public Library, which also houses incunabula, a collection of medieval manuscripts, and early modern Rotterdam church collections, among other documentary heritage. Although the City Library of Rotterdam started out as a department of the municipal government, nowadays it is an independent foundation, financially funded by the Municipality of Rotterdam. It functions as an institution of public debate, and offers pluralistic sources in a welcoming 'third place' to every citizen. The Erasmus Collection Rotterdam is still the treasured possession of the Municipality of Rotterdam and kept under professional conditions by Rotterdam Public Library.

6.6 Bibliography / Bibliographie

On the Erasmus Collection Rotterdam:

- James McConica (ed.), 'Erasmus in Amsterdam and Toronto', in: E. van Gulik, *Erasmus and his books* (University of Toronto Press, 2018)

'the largest assemblage of Erasmiana in the world' (p. viii)

- 'General introduction', in: *Opera omnia Desiderii Erasmi*¹ (Amsterdam: 1969)

'It goes without saying that the best possible use was made of the matchless collection of Erasmiana in the City library of Rotterdam.' (p. xvi)

- Irmgard Bezzel, *Erasmusdrucke des 16. Jahrhunderts in Bayerischen Bibliotheken* (Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 1979)

'in Rotterdam [entstand] ein neues bibliografisches Zentrum der Erasmusforschung [...]. War anfangs nur geplant, für die Mitarbeiter an der Erasmusedition in der Gemeentebibliotheek von Rotterdam eine bibliographische Dokumentationsstelle zu schaffen, so wurden [...] die ursprünglichen Ziele bald erweitert.' (p. 3)

- J.M. Meyers, *Authors edited, translated or annotated by Desiderius Erasmus: a short-title catalogue of the works in the city library of Rotterdam* (Gemeentebibliotheek Rotterdam, 1982)

'Rotterdam is already for centuries considered the native town of Desiderius Erasmus [...]. The gradual building up of a collection of Erasmiana, since the foundation of a city library in the church of Saint Laurence, also relates to this tradition.' (p. 9)

On Erasmus as a world changing influencer:

- Karl A.E. Erenkel, *The Reception of Erasmus in the Early Modern Period* (Leiden/Boston 2013).
- Michael Massing, *Fatal discord. Erasmus, Luther, and the Fight for the Western Mind* (New York 2018).
- Christine Christ-von Wedel, *Erasmus of Rotterdam. Advocate of a New Christianity* (Toronto etc. 2013).

6.7 Referees

Prof. Dr. Eric MacPhail
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Prof. Dr. Hilmar M. Pabel
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Prof. Dr. Silvana Seidel Menchi
Università di Pisa, Dipartimento di Storia
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7. Assessment against the selection criteria / Evaluation des critères de sélection

7.1 Primary criteria - significance value to the world. Comment on one or more of the following significance criteria / Critères principaux - valeur d'importance mondiale. Commentez sur un ou plusieurs des critères d'importance suivants

Not all the criteria will apply to your documentary heritage. Choose only those criteria that are relevant to your nomination.

Tous les critères ne s'appliqueront pas à votre patrimoine documentaire. Choisissez uniquement les critères pertinents pour votre candidature.

7.1.1 Historic significance / Signification historique

The Erasmus Collection Rotterdam provides the unique opportunity to tell the complete story of Desiderius Erasmus (1466-1536), his ideas, the spreading of his texts over the world, and how people throughout the ages and throughout Europe interacted with his works.

During his lifetime, Erasmus 'succeeded in gaining an immense, hitherto unrivalled fame'[1]. Popes and kings sent him letters, Martin Luther hated him, Thomas More loved him, and Habsburg emperor Charles V installed him as his official councillor. Erasmus, born in Rotterdam but a true world citizen, was already an influential thinker in his own times as a polemist who criticized rules and regulations executed by the Church and governments, in his own unique eloquent manner, based on his scholarly ideas. In this way, '[i]n his books and essays, Erasmus laid out a program to reform and revitalize European culture'[2]. He travelled across Europe and lived in Paris, Cambridge, Venice, Leuven, and Basel, amongst other cities. He published his ideas on religion, education, and society in collaboration with the leading publishing houses of his time: Aldus Manutius, Johannes Froben, and Dirk Martens. He influenced world history by criticizing hypocrisy and religious practice within the Catholic Church, acting as an 'advocate of a New Christianity'[3]. His famous *Praise of Folly* now belongs to the best known texts from world history because of its innovative literary configuration and style, through which Erasmus satirically protested against religious and societal misconduct. He unchained a revolution by publishing a new and scholarly edition and translation of the New Testament. It was used by Luther, Tyndale, and the Dutch Republic to create their vernacular editions of the Bible, that opened up reading of the most influential book in world history to large parts of the populations in the next centuries. Through his works, Erasmus was a central figure in early modern humanism, where he spread his ideas on how to create a peaceful society by modernizing education.

Nowadays, Erasmus has given his name to the European Union funded Erasmus Programme, that already enabled over three million young people to study abroad and become a world citizen. This makes the Erasmus Programme a true representative of Erasmus's ideals: be open to others throughout the world, discuss differences, and keep learning.

Erasmus's worldwide significance is indisputable. The Erasmus Collection Rotterdam offers the best opportunity to understand how this humanist thinker influenced history. For more than a hundred years, the collection forms an important basis of scholarly research into Erasmus's ideas. Without this collection, our current knowledge of Erasmian philosophy and the spreading of his ideas would not have been possible.

[1] Karl A.E. Enekel, *The Reception of Erasmus in the Early Modern Period* (Leiden/Boston 2013), p. 1.

[2] Michael Massing, *Fatal discord. Erasmus, Luther, and the Fight for the Western Mind* (New York 2018), p. xi.

[3] Christine Christ-von Wedel, *Erasmus of Rotterdam. Advocate of a New Christianity* (Toronto etc. 2013)

7.1.2 Form and style / Forme et style

Because of its wide range, the Erasmus Collection Rotterdam includes specimens of high quality and innovative printing, as well as mediocre editions by less skilled printers. The editions printed by the famous Venice printer Aldus Manutius, for example, show how his early 16th century printing house made important steps in the history of typography. The Collection also includes many editions that show the illustrations based on Hans Holbein's famous drawings to Erasmus's *Praise of Folly*. More general, the many editions together within the Erasmus Collection form a compelling case study of the transforming ways of knowledge transfer within the new age of print: 'Erasmus provides one of the most interesting cases not only for the processes of early modern image and reputation building through publishing in print, but at the same time – and certainly not to a lesser degree – for the *impossibility of controlling one's reception* before an audience that was continually growing, was increasingly emancipated, heterogeneous, and fragmented, and was, above all, constantly changing.'[1]

Other remarkable objects in the Erasmus Collection Rotterdam are the four letters written by Erasmus himself. Although the corpus of Erasmian correspondence includes 3,141 letters, autographs are rare. The four letters in the Erasmus Collection show in the one instance Erasmus's tidy handwriting, but in the other his apparent carelessness in scribbling a short note. His characteristic signature in variable manifestations concludes every letter. The letters show where Erasmus paused his writing to dip his pen in his ink pot and how he folded the letter to be sent. Therefore, these letters provide the closest form in which we nowadays can approach Erasmus himself.

[1] Karl A.E. Enekel, *The Reception of Erasmus in the Early Modern Period* (Leiden/Boston 2013), p. 1.

7.1.3 Social, community or spiritual significance / Importance sociale, spirituelle ou communautaire

7.2 Comparative criteria. Comment on one or more of the following comparative criteria / Critères comparatifs. Commentez sur un ou plusieurs des critères comparatifs suivants :

7.2.1 Comparative criteria: Rarity / Critères comparatifs: Rareté

The Erasmus Collection Rotterdam is unique for its assemblage, range, and impact. Rotterdam Public Library strives to collect a copy of

every edition of every work by Erasmus ever published. Although there are other respected collections with a considerable number of Erasmus editions and autographs – such as in Basle University Library, Royal Library of Belgium in Brussels, Leuven University Library, Bavarian libraries, and the Centre for Renaissance and Reformation Studies at Victoria University, Toronto – the Erasmus Collection Rotterdam not only represents Erasmus and his texts in their original early modern book historical context, but it also provides the extraordinary opportunity to create an overview of the Europe wide distribution and reception of his ideas. The unparalleled range of the Erasmus Collection Rotterdam, consisting of circa 3,000 early modern volumes of his works printed all over Europe, encompasses not only Erasmus's own efforts in presenting his texts to the world, but also provides a clear view on what happened to his works in the centuries after his death. The Erasmus Collection Rotterdam does not focus on a specific century or geographical region, but simply encompasses the complete early modern printing and reading history of Erasmus's works.

This exceptional wealth of documents, creating ample research opportunities, has placed the Erasmus Collection Rotterdam at the heart of the international Erasmian research tradition from the 1950's onwards. After considerable growth of the Erasmus Collection Rotterdam under the instigation of library director Prof. Dr. Willem de Vreese in the 1920's and 1930's, director Egbertus van Gulik, MA made the Erasmus Collection Rotterdam into an international research instrument by building a bibliographic database of all printed Erasmus editions. This database, together with the Erasmus Collection Rotterdam, turned out to be indispensable for the first scholarly text edition of Erasmus's complete works since 1706. This modern, standard text edition was initiated by the Rotterdam historic society 'Roterodamum' and supported by the Rotterdam City government. An international committee, the *Conseil international pour l'édition des oeuvres complètes d'Erasmus*, was set up to oversee the long-term international project that is still running at the Huygens ING Institute as part of the Royal Netherlands Academy for Arts and Sciences.[1] Over the past decades the immense task of scholarly editing all of Erasmus's texts by many international specialists has strongly profited from the extraordinary wealth of editions present in the Rotterdam collection: unlike the early modern predecessors of Erasmus's complete works, this modern edition shows how Erasmus evolved his texts throughout the years. The first part of the *Erasmi Opera Omnia* series was published in 1969; the last part is planned to appear within the current decade. Still, the Erasmus Collection Rotterdam forms an important source for the researchers who are working on the *Erasmi Opera Omnia* project.

[1] For more information on this project, see: https://en.huygens.knaw.nl/projecten/erasmi-opera-omnia/?noredirect=en_GB.

7.2.2 Integrity, completeness, condition / Intégrité, complétude, état

The Erasmus Collection Rotterdam is in a good condition. Rotterdam Public Library keeps the collection, together with other heritage collections, in climate controlled repositories. As the collection is owned by the Municipality of Rotterdam and housed in the Public Library, it is possible for everyone to consult the collection in the Special Collections Reading Room free of charge without any restrictions

The Erasmus Collection Rotterdam had, and still has, the ambition to include a copy of all Erasmus editions ever printed. It is the world's largest collection of Erasmiana, although it is not complete yet. No less than 90 percent of Erasmus's first editions are present, which means that 10 percent is not included in the collection. In these instances, of course, many later editions are. The collection even includes some editions that are unrecorded outside the Rotterdam collection and are therefore labelled as *unica*. Each year, Rotterdam Public Library still is able to add a small number of editions that are not yet included in the Erasmus Collection Rotterdam.

Recently, a conservation project has been finished in which a team of heritage professionals and book restoration specialists from inside and outside Rotterdam Public Library examined all the volumes of the Erasmus Collection Rotterdam. Special care was given to the books that needed attention. Because of this recent check-up, the physical condition of the collection is good.

The most unique objects within the collection, the four letters written by Erasmus himself, are in exceptionally good condition. Very recently, they have been examined by a paper restoration professional, who only took some minor conservation measures.

7.3 Statement of significance / Déclaration d'importance

Without the Erasmus Collection Rotterdam, our knowledge of the ideas of Erasmus of Rotterdam would not have been as complete as it is today. The collection played a major role in the initiating and accomplishment of the modern scientific editing project of Erasmus's complete works, that functions as the most important starting point for studying Erasmus worldwide.

Erasmus's ideas encompass religion, education, world peace, and living together within society. They had enormous impact in the early modern era, and are still functioning as sources of inspiration. A good example is the EU-funded Erasmus Programme for international student exchange. Erasmus's work changed world history: his new edition and Latin translation of the New Testament forms the basis for many vernacular Bible translations. His critique on Church and society played its role in religious alterations, beginning with Luther's Reformation.

The exceptional level of completeness of the Erasmus Collection Rotterdam, including Erasmus's handwritings, first editions, and centuries of reprints of his texts including many volumes that contain written annotations by readers, tells the story of Erasmus, his ideas, the way these ideas spread throughout Europe, and the ways in which readers interacted with his texts in a way that is extraordinarily complete.

Loss of the Erasmus Collection Rotterdam would impoverish the heritage of humanity because it would take away an unparalleled source that documents how our modern society has evolved from the 15th century onwards. Our modern notions of what a society is and how we as participants want to act within it are rooted in the ideas of early thinkers such as Erasmus, along with, for example, Spinoza, Voltaire, Hobbes, and Descartes. Documentary heritage that encompasses these sources functions as a safe starting point for our modern discussion on society. The Erasmus Collection Rotterdam intends to fulfil this role in the future, as it has done in the past.

8. Consultation with stakeholders / Consultation des partenaires

8.1 Details of consultation / Consultation des partenaires

- See contact for contact details 5.1-5.3

Rotterdam Public Library (custodian)

- See for contact details 4.1-4.3

Conseil International pour l'Édition des Oeuvres Complètes d'Erasmus

- Dr. M.E.H.N. (Nicolette) Mout, President

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Erasmii Opera Omnia – Huygens ING

- Jan Bloemendal, Secretary

jan.bloemendal@huygens.knaw.nl

Erasmus of Rotterdam Research Centre – Erasmus School of Philosophy, Erasmus University Rotterdam

- Dr. Han van Ruler, Founder and Board Member

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9. Risk assessment / Evaluation des risques

9.1 Nature and scope of threats / Evaluation des risques

The Erasmus Collection Rotterdam is kept by Rotterdam Public Library in climate controlled repositories. Within the library, a Special Collections curator – classicist, book historian, and specialist in early modern history Dr. John Tholen – is responsible for its storage conditions and presentation. These adequate facilities are assured in a special agreement between the library and the city administration, which guarantees that the Erasmus Collection Rotterdam will be preserved appropriately in the future. This agreement between the city administration and the public library shows the general awareness of the heritage collection's unique value and their long-term consent to provide sufficient financial funds to keep the collection at low risk.

10. Preservation and access management plan / Plan de preservation et d'accessibilité

10.1 Existing plans or proposed conservation, storage and access strategies / Plans existants ou stratégies de conservation, de stockage et d'accès proposées

In the near future (2024-2028), the building that houses Rotterdam Public Library and the Erasmus Collection Rotterdam has to be modernised thoroughly, as it dates from 1983. This means that new storage facilities for the heritage collections will be realised, matching up-to-date notions of proper depository. In the redesigned library building the Erasmus Collection Rotterdam will retake a prominent position, including an accessible permanent interactive exhibition.

11. Additional information / Informations complémentaires

11.1 Additional information / Informations complémentaires

See Appendix 8: Letter of recommendation by Vice Mayor of Rotterdam

See Appendix 9: Letter of recommendation by Prof. Dr. Eric MacPhail (Indiana University Bloomington | Editor-in-Chief of *Erasmus Studies*)

The Erasmus Collection Rotterdam provides ample research opportunities to enrich our knowledge of the foundations of our modern society. Thus far, for example the large number of handwritten marginalia from readers in the 16th and 17th centuries in the Erasmus Collection Rotterdam have not been discovered in their full potential. Although Erasmus's ideas itself are for a long time central subjects of investigation, the way in which early modern readers used these ideas as starting point for their own thinking has yet much to offer.

Very recently, the Erasmus of Rotterdam Research Centre at Erasmus School of Philosophy of Erasmus University Rotterdam introduced a new professorship of 'Erasmian Values' (see: <https://www.eur.nl/en/esphil/erasmus-rotterdam-research-centre>). The newly appointed professor supervises a PhD-research project that investigates cultural appropriation of Erasmus, based on the fertile materials in the Erasmus Collection Rotterdam. This shows that scholarly interest finds the Erasmus Collection Rotterdam relevant in the context of modern concepts as 'cultural appropriation'. Rotterdam Public Library highly values and welcomes such scholarly collaboration.

Apart from the Erasmus Collection Rotterdam, the library houses a substantial collection of 20th and 21st century books and articles

that show how Erasmus has been approached, studied, and appropriated in more recent times. The library intends to keep this modern collection up-to-date as a representative selection of modern Erasmian texts. It intends to support scholars and others interested into Erasmus and the Erasmus Collection Rotterdam.

The library itself used the Erasmus Collection Rotterdam as a starting point to develop the Erasmus Experience (<https://erasmushoudtjescherp.nl/en/>). This permanent interactive exhibition challenges visitors to discuss with each other axioms that are derived from Erasmus's ideas on society. Copies of the early modern editions that carry these ideas are present in the exhibition as witnesses to their ongoing relevance. At the end, visitors compare their own ideas to those of Erasmus to sharpen their minds. The exhibition was opened in 2016 by His Majesty King Willem-Alexander, who even referred to the visit and to the importance and relevance of Erasmus's ideas for present-day society in his Christmas speech of that year.

Based on such examples, Rotterdam Public Library, supported by the Rotterdam city government, is convinced that the Erasmus Collection Rotterdam has not only proven its scholarly value in the past, but also will have its impact on society in the future.

Submission / Soumission

Submit to UNESCO

Yes

12. Checklist / Liste de contrôle

Summary completed / Résumé terminé (section 2)

Yes

Nomination and contact details completed / Nomination et coordonnées complétées (section 3)

Yes

Declaration of Authority signed and dated / Déclaration sur l'honneur signée et datée (section 4)

Yes

If this is a joint nomination, section 4 is appropriately modified, and all Declarations of Authority obtained / S'il s'agit d'une proposition d'inscription conjointe, la section 4 est modifiée de manière appropriée et toutes les déclarations d'autorité s

No

Legal information / Informations légales (section 5)

Yes

Details of custodian if different from owner / Détails du dépositaire si différent du propriétaire (section 5)

Yes

Details of legal status completed / Détails du statut juridique complétés (section 5)

Yes

Details of accessibility completed / Détails de l'accessibilité complétés (section 5)

Yes

Copyright permission for images completed / Autorisation de copyright pour les images complétée (section 5)

No

Catalogue and registration information / Catalogue et informations d'enregistrement (section 6)

Yes

History/provenance completed / Histoire / provenance complétée (section 6)

Yes

Bibliography completed / Bibliographie terminée (section 6)

Yes

Independent referees identified / Arbitres indépendants identifiés (section 6)

..