

Letter 168a: Before 22 September 1523, [Strasbourg], Capito to [Johannes Fabri]

This letter appears in Millet's list as Ep.178. It has been renumbered in view of the reference to it in Ep. 169 below, which provides a *terminus ante quem*.

The text of the letter, or pamphlet, is printed in O. Millet, "Un pamphlet prolutherien inédit de W.F. Capiton," *Revue d'histoire et philosophie religieuses* 63 (1983): 181-20. He identifies the unnamed addressee as Johannes Fabri (above Ep. 110a headnote). Throughout the letter Capito emphatically supports Luther and his teaching, calling him 'the trumpet of the gospel' and 'a true preacher' (*est evangelica tuba Lutherus... ecclesiastes est verus*, f. 264, Millet p. 190, 194). The letter is undated, but an approximate date is furnished by Johann Stumpf's letter, written 22 September 1523, in which he begs Capito not to publish what he has written. Stumpf is afraid that the pamphlet will reveal his indiscretion, i.e. that he shared with Capito a letter from Fabri to Schiesser. That letter is dated 3 June 1523. Thus, as Millet himself argues, Capito's pamphlet must have been composed after 3 June and before 22 September.

Capito's draft (Ki.Ar. 25a, # 150 in the Basel University Library) is written in a careless hand, often barely legible, with many corrections, cancellations, and interlinear or marginal additions. The transcription is problematic, and scholars owe Millet a debt of gratitude for making the text available in print. I therefore offer the following corrections with due respect. My list contains only emendations affecting the meaning. Page and line numbers refer to Millet's printed text.

- p. 185: 3 [Gr.] dielychthe >dielythe
6 participabis > participares
22 fidentiam>fidutiam.
- p. 186:6 id dicitis, fateor, quia > id vere dicitis, fateor, hereticus est, quia
15 sensus > consensus
- p.187: 21 hospes > hospes tamquam
28 id enim> ut id enim
- p. 188: 11 tacuisse foret> tacuisse vitio foret
27 consulere>consulere merito
- p. 189: 3 solidissimum>stolidissimum
27 repetita> ac repetitus
- p. 190: 17 nititur>nitatur
24 diuturnum>diutinum
- p. 191: 6 nugarunt>nugatum
- p. 192: 26 monachae>monachae nobiles
- p. 193: 4 proficis industria>profers industriam
23 verbo>verbo uno
- p. 194: 9 Ciceronem usum >Ciceronem nullo usum
32 lucem > Luther[i]
33 tam>tenebras
- p. 195: 1 praeibis>bibens
25 ne>nae
28 inferi>inferni
- p. 196: 28 nexiit>nexuit
- p. 197: 1 Fabrilia> fabrilia faber

- 10 nescivit>nesciunt
otiosis>otiosus
- p. 198: 7 duos> duos, [Gr.] hoposos autos eig' exaiphnes polemikos kai meliphoron
28 hoc est> hoc est praeterquam
- p.199: 1 perhibet>prohibet
8 emereres>coemereres
20 librarius>librariorum
20 expingendis>expungendis
- p.200: 2 minis>minus
9 humanissimus>humanissimus est
[Gr.] epistemon>ho episte
[Gr.] pamphilodoros > pamphilodoros [?] di' hon eunoustatos ...[illegible]

[*Summary*]: The manuscript consists of three sections, which Millet arranges as follows: [ff. 268r-269v] Capito presents an account of a dinner party given by Eberhard Schiesser (see below Ep. 169 note). The conversation, which focuses on the Luther affair, is dominated by a cleric affecting to be a humanist. The guests deplore what they see as Luther's heretical views, his lack of refinement, and his aggressive criticism. One of them, who does not share the general opinion, responds with a tongue-in-cheek eulogy of the changes that have taken place in the church since the time of the apostles and of the wealth and power it has now acquired. The "humanist", oblivious to the irony of the eulogist, reacts enthusiastically. He volubly describes the worldliness and venality of the papal court and his own adventures in Rome. In a second section [ff. 262r- 267v], the host raises the question why none of the learned theologians has written against Luther and rebutted his arguments if he is as ignorant as they say. The "humanist" produces and reads from two anti-Lutheran letters, one from Johann Eck to Jacob Wimpheling, the other from Fabri to the host himself. Concluding his account of the dinner, Capito then addresses Fabri directly and critically reviews the arguments presented. In the third section [ff. 270r-271v] Capito discusses the mass and the sacramental question and, more generally, the authority of biblical precepts versus human decrees and interpretations. He gleefully mentions that Fabri has been unable to find a publisher for his anti-Lutheran tract *Antilogiae* and concludes with an amusing sketch of their good-humoured host, Schiesser.