of power and the centralized, territorial monarchy of Duke Cosimo I, who saw death not distance as the natural punishment for enemies of the prince.

This small book, then, is a remarkable insight into the world of Medieval and Renaissance Italy. It adopts the perspective of whose who lost in the game of politics and investigates the city-state from without. Most of the information comes from north-central Italy, but the examples are used judiciously. There are also excellent notes reflecting wide research in legal, literary as well as historical sources.

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DELNO C. WEST and SANDRA ZIMDARA-SWARTZ. *Joachim of Fiore: A study in Spiritual Perception and History*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983. Pp. 160.

Joachim of Fiore's life and reputation continue to fascinate the modern reader in much the same way as they did his contemporaries. His prophetic imagination and his spiritual audacity have struck a responsive chord through the centuries. His writings, however, are dense and difficult. They presume in the reader a familiarity with the intricacies of twelfth-century theological speculation and a willingness to learn Joachim's idiosyncratic vocabulary of interpretation. With these difficulties in mind, the authors have set out to study "spiritual perception and history" in Joachim's writings.

The strength of this book is in the three chapters which describe Joachim's "spiritual understanding" (*spiritualis intelligentia*). Chapter Two, "The Basic Patterns and Interpretations of Joachim of Fiore," provides a useful introduction to Joachim's method of Biblical interpretation and his peculiar use of the terms *status*, *tempus*, and *etas* to describe historical periods. In Chapter Four, "The Trinity and History," we are shown Joachim's spiritual understanding at work, using the actions of the Trinity in history as a means of interpreting the human past, present and future. Chapter Five, inappropriately titled "The Five Great Works of Christ" (these five works are mentioned only in the last pages of the chapter), illustrates Joachim's method of Scriptural exegesis with respect to the actions of Christ and the Holy Spirit in history. Although poorly integrated with one another, these three chapters offer a useful introduction to Joachim's writings and a sensitive appreciation of his doctrine.

The remaining chapters are less successful. They are intended to discuss Joachim's life (c. 1), his literary sources (c. 3), and his continuing influence (c. 6). None of these contributes anything new to our understanding of Joachim or the context in which he wrote. This is particularly regrettable as the authors have admonished us in the introduction that: "To appreciate fully the significance of Joachim of Fiore's contributions, the historical state of mind before and during his time must be understood." Far from undertaking this task, the authors have been content

with repeating superficial generalizations about how "medieval men" thought and acted. One looks in vain here for an accurate appreciation of the social or intellectual context in which Joachim wrote, or for an awareness of the political/religious events (heresies, crusades, reforms) that certainly influenced his understanding of history. At almost every turn in these chapters we are reminded of the "many formidable problems which have yet to be answered." Unfortunately, the authors have neither expounded these problems clearly nor contributed much to their solution.

In a technical vein, the volume is well produced. There are few misprints, although a line or two seems to have dropped out on p. 54 (where mention of the Son as a "beginning" is omitted). The five illustrations are well chosen and well integrated into the argument. Latin texts are usually paraphrased, but when translations are given these are generally accurate. One might quarrel, however, with the translation of "*vitulus*" (calf) as "ox" (p. 97) or the phrase "*multe aquile esse ceperunt*" as "many chose to be eagles" (p. 97).

This book might serve as a useful introduction to the complex writings of the Abbot of Fiore. As a contribution to Joachim scholarship, however, it is uneven and poorly developed. Although sensitive to the nuances of Joachim's thought in chapters 2, 4, and 5, the exposition of the central question concerning Joachim's perception of history is rather haphazard. Even more serious is the failure to describe accurately the historical context in which Joachim worked. His thought is studied in a vacuum, or worse, in a simplistic and undifferentiated "medieval" context. The result is a description of Joachim's perception of history that is curiously unhistorical.

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LUIGI PIRANDELLO, *Lettere da Bonn, 1889-1891*. Introduzione e note di Elio Providenti. Roma, Bulzoni, 1984, pp. 195.

Il cinquantesimo anniversario del conferimento del premio Nobel a Pirandello non poteva trovare miglior avvio e successo bibliografico che con la pubblicazione del primo volume delle *Lettere Familiari Giovanili*.

Di questo attesissimo *Epistolario* (che ritrovato verso la fine degli anni cinquanta vide ritardata per molteplici ragioni la pubblicazione) è ovvia l'importanza. Oltre che per le novità e curiosità biografiche esso potrebbe costituire una insostituibile documentazione per la verifica e puntualizzazione della poetica pirandelliana soprattutto nelle prime fasi della sua elaborazione. L'*Epistolario* viene dunque a coprire una gravissima lacuna.

Il piano dell'opera prevede una serie di tre volumi che vanno dal 1886 al 1898. Questo primo tomo raccoglie le lettere degli anni 1889-1891, del periodo cioè che Pirandello trascorse a Bonn. Elio Providenti, discendente