surviving examples of the “pure” peasant scenes of daily life taper off soon after to be replaced by religious scenes of the utmost orthodoxy.

There is as well no modern comprehensive study of Aertsen’s stylistic development (see Kreidl in *Jb. d. Ksth. Slgen in Wien*, 1973 for the religious works) so that iconographically pivotal works may even be attributed to other artists. A serious monograph on Aertsen would be a formidable contribution to sixteenth-century studies.

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Robert J. Clements and Lorna Levant, eds. *Renaissance Letters: Revelations of a World Reborn*. New York: New York University Press, 1976. xxvi, 468 pp. Illustrations. \$17.50.

This large sample of 200 letters written during the Renaissance is obviously directed towards a general audience. It is arranged topically into areas comprising much of the experience of the period: Humanism, the Gentleman-Scholar, Literature, Theatre, the Fine Arts, Music, Science, Superstition, Astronomy, Astrology, Medicine, Religion, the Reformation and Counter-Reformation, the New Bible, Censorship, the Inquisition, Government and Politics, Life at Court, the Nobility, Warfare, Travel, Exploration, Colonies, Foreign Peoples and Trade, Love Sacred and Profane, Marriage and the Family, the Status of Women, Daily Life, Domestic Concerns, Town vs. Country, Pastimes and Money. Some of the letters are very famous and some have been translated for the first time. A wide survey of the continent of Europe is encompassed, with examples of letters from Russia and Hungary as well as from more familiar Renaissance centres, and a small selection from such exotic places as Morocco and the New World.

The editors have chosen to define the Renaissance as the “world reborn after 1450” (3) and hence the earliest entries are from the second half of the fifteenth century, while the latest date from the 1630’s. This decision has resulted in the omission of the first generations of Italian humanists, even though some letters of Petrarch, Salutati or Bruni would have been interesting additions to the volume.

Also, the nature of the collection has produced a wide inconsistency in the scholarly apparatus. Some letters are heavily annotated, others hardly at all; some letters have the Latin quotations translated, others do not – discrepancies, I suspect, that can be attributed to their previous editors. The introductions to the various sections are generally very superficial, even simplistic, and too often written in a chatty style that might irritate the reader (e.g. Henri IV of France is described as a “male chauvinist” on page 386, and a reference is made on page 421 to Renaissance “job opportunities”). Finally, to identify a minor error in fact, the “temple dedicated to the Prince of the Apostles” described by Valdés to Pietro Martire d’Anghiera in letter V-6 (205n.) is certainly not the mausoleum of Julius II but the new St. Peter’s.

Altogether, however, Clements and Levant have made accessible for the first time in a single volume a wide selection of letters written during the Renaissance that should prove a useful addition to the popular works available to the non-specialist reader. The breadth of the sample provides a remarkably complete in-

sight into the age and into the personalities and concerns of the literate upper classes whose lives they themselves recorded – often self-consciously – for posterity.

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Collected Works of Erasmus, Volume 5, The Correspondence of Erasmus: Letters 594 to 841 (1517 to 1518), translated by R.A.B. Mynors and D.F.S. Thompson, annotated by Peter G. Bietenholz. Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1979. Pp. xvii, 461. \$35.00.

"I have moved to Louvain, waiting to discover what will be the most suitable refuge for the old age which knocks at my door and indeed now presses close upon me" (Ep. 596). Thus at age 50 or thereabouts Erasmus announced his arrival at Louvain in early July, 1517. He sojourned there for almost ten months – until late April, 1518, when he went to Basle in order to supervise printing of the second edition of his Greek New Testament – and this volume of the *Collected Works of Erasmus* presents in splendid English translation the 247 surviving items of Erasmus' correspondence stemming from that period.

This was a time of consolidation in Erasmus' life. He had already published many of his most important works – the *Adages*, for example, the *Praise of Folly*, and the first edition of the Greek New Testament – and the controversies of the Reformation had not yet begun to disturb his scholarly and literary activity. Martin Luther's name does not even occur yet in Erasmus' correspondence, though his existence is alluded to in two letters, Ep. 711 from George Spalatin to Erasmus and Ep. 785 from Erasmus to Thomas More. In the period covered by this volume, Erasmus published new works and engaged in a certain amount of controversy; but behind these developments one sees in this volume his emergence as a sort of elder European statesman, witness the breadth and tempo of his correspondence. Letters arrived from all corners and were written for all purposes. Paschasius Berselius addressed Erasmus timorously for a simple reason: to make his name known to the great man (cf. Ep. 674). On a more exalted level, Erasmus entertained the invitations of Christendom's most eminent men during the period covered in this volume. Guillaume Budé and Francis I wanted Erasmus to settle in Paris. Cardinal Wolsey and Henry VIII offered him a position in England. Cardinal Ximénez invited him to Spain. Bishop Christoph von Utenheim tried to lure him to Basle, while Bishop Philip of Burgundy wanted to gain him for Utrecht. Other notables requested the pleasure of his company on a visit, if not on a permanent basis (cf. Ep. 809).

Meanwhile, Erasmus complained about his health. Perhaps the most frequent theme struck in his own letters is his physical fragility. He stood at death's door, or so he thought, when he entered Louvain. Later he was laid low by a rheum. All through the period covered here he informed correspondents that he had begun the last act of his comedy. For an indisposed man, however, he accomplished an impressive amount of work. His correspondence reveals his involvement in myriad activities of small, medium, and large importance. He attempted to make peace between Thomas More and Germain de Brie, lately at odds with each other