essay of the *Confessions* of St. Augustine, David Jeffrey on "Franciscan Spirituality and the Growth of Vernacular Culture" and James R. Shaw on "Albertus Magnus and the Rise of Empiricism."

Two essays deserve special notice. Robert Lopez's "Practical Transmission of Medieval Culture" first appeared in Italian in 1963. Its English translation here makes more accessible this important exploration of the various channels by which ideas and ways of life were spread in the Middle Ages. The second, John Freccero's thoughtful and perceptive "Dante's Medusa: Allegory and Autobiography," deserves more attention from specialists than it is likely to get hidden away in this volume.

The book itself is nicely produced but poorly edited. The sixteen plates are of good quality, but are not described or attributed with any consistency. In addition to the thirty-four *errata* noted on a supplemental insertion, I counted more than fifty typographical errors. Even more disturbing are the frequent errors involving the use and interpretation of Latin words and phrases that betray a striking disregard for this basic vehicle of medieval thought. Examples are: *Reductione artium* (*passim*); *pro tempus* (p.4); *sarcophagi* for *sarcophagus* (p.8, twice); the assertion (p. 52) that Pol de Limbourg mentions "...the 4 seasons" in his *Gemini* (Pl. IV); *Rex versum* for *Rex versuum* (p. 146); *sacrae pagine* (p. 158); *disputa* (p. 233) apparently meaning "disputation" (*disputatio*) or "disputed questions" (*quaestiones disputatae*). Even the prefatory Biblical citation — "*Invisibilia enim epsius, a creatura mundi, per ea que facta sunt intellecta conspiciuntur*" — contains three errors, only two of which are corrected in the *errata*.

Although this collection fails in its grand design, and suffers in detail from editorial laxity, it contains much of value for one interested in exploring various aspects of medieval thought and culture.

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Collected Works of Erasmus, Volume 4, The Correspondence of Erasmus, Letters 446 to 593: 1516 to 1517, translated by R.A.B. Mynors and D.F.S. Thomson, annotated by James K. McConica. Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1977. Pp. xvi, 448. \$25.00

The fourth volume of Erasmus' correspondence maintains and builds upon the impressive accomplishment of the earlier volumes of the series. The 149 letters cover a period of a little less than a year, from August 1516 to June 1517, bringing the English translation abreast of the first two volumes of P.S. Allen's critical edition of the correspondence.

The present edition is heavily indebted to Allen, of course, but it is refining and extending the work of the Allen edition. More extensive cross-referencing within the correspondence, identification of additional classical references, the tracing of the numerous allusions to the *Adagia*, the calculation of monetary equivalents, and the citation of the ample Erasmus scholarship of the twentieth century are elements of the distinctive contribution of the present edition. One letter, Ep 480A, was redated and in a small number of cases the work of translation has led to corrections

of Allen's Latin text (e.g. Ep 554). The rareness of such corrections is a testimony to the solidity and durability of the Allen edition.

The translation, solely by R.A.B. Mynors in this volume as in Volume 3, is clean and clear, aiming not only at rendering the meaning of the correspondents but at giving the modern reader a sense of the literary style of which these letters were *exempla* for a broad, classically educated public. Erasmus was extremely self-conscious about matters of form (Ep 531 to Budé):

... I always aimed at pure and not elaborate language, and a solid masculine style, rather than something brilliant or theatrical, one designed to convey the subject-matter before displaying the writer's gifts. . . . But, while I have no desire for an elaborate style, I should like, if I could, to achieve one that was pure, appropriate, easy and clear; though when I say easy I do not mean lacking in sinews and barbed points when the subject calls for them.

The translation conveys such a mature Erasmian style, more synthetic and elaborate than most twentieth-century English usage but clear and spare nonetheless. Mynors avoids excessive literalism, he renders particular words differently as the context demands and seeks modern equivalents for nearly untranslatable proverbs. (Of course, the style of the translator cannot avoid intrusion in ways that will not please everyone. This reviewer still regards "not but what" as a stilted rendering of "quanquam" [or "tametsi"], even after being habituated to it a dozen times or more.)

The introductions to the particular letters, composed like the annotations by James K. McConica, are concise and objective, avoiding any danger that the letters themselves might be "put into the shade," as the humanists were fond of saying. An economical means of indicating the sources of the letters in sixteenth-century epistolary volumes and manuscripts is continued from volume 3.

A partial exception to this self-denying editorial scholarship is McConica's effort to clarify the import of Erasmus' preoccupation with the dispensation from Leo X (Ep 518) and the closely related issues of his illegitimate birth and the circumstances of his entry into the Canons Regular of St. Augustine. From the opening letters to Leo was not to free himself from "monasticism," but rather "the need for habilitation after apostasy and the other penalties imposed by the Augustinian statutes McConica does indeed clarify (against the imprecise statements of some current scholarship, e.g., Robert Stupperich) that Erasmus' objective in petitioning Pope Leo was not to free himself from "monasticism," but rather "the need for habilitation after apostasy and the other penalties imposed by the Augustinian statutes for laying aside his religious habit. . . , and the need for a new dispensation allowing him to hold more than one benefice" (p. 188). Since this issue took place entirely within the framework and procedures of pre-Reformation Catholicism, it is appropriate that a modern Catholic scholar should restore our historical perspective upon it. McConica's closely reasoned argument that, although Erasmus was illegitimate, his father was not necessarily a priest at the time of his birth is unobjectionable; but does this really do much to restore the questionable authenticity of the *Compendium*, or that he did compose it but cannot be relied upon in his accounts of his birth and youth.

The Erasmians loom large in this volume — two-thirds of the letters and nearly three-fifths of the text were written by persons other than Erasmus. Not all of these

were "Erasmians," of course, not Erasmus' newly reconciled "friend," Maarten van Dorp, the theologian of Louvain, not Hieronymus Dungersheim, the Leipzig theologian, nor Georg Spalatin, expressing the reservations of the Wittenberg theologian, Dr. Martin Luther. But the correspondents were mostly from the international company of "viri multi et excellentes," to whom one of their number, Ulrich Zwingli, would later credit his recovery both of learning and religion: Philip Melanchthon (Ep 563: "if any German can, he will make a new Erasmus"), Johannes Oecolampadius, Wolfgang Capito, Beatus Rhenanus, Thomas More, Heinrich Glarean, Peter Gillis, William Latimer, Guillaume Cop, Hieronymus Emser, to name only the most prominent of an assemblage that would play a fateful role in the religious struggles of the next decades. These men mixed the period's effusive, sometimes fulsome, language of male friendship with slogans full of portent for the future. For instance, Oecolampadius:

Where in the world, my source of glory and delight, am I to look for you? To what ill-defined messenger shall I entrust my all too definite longing for you, that he may pass it on to the Desiderius I so much desire? . . . Your aphorisms ring in my head, and one especially, one golden word that cannot be too highly valued, that we should seek nothing in the Scriptures saving only Christ. (Ep 563)

Mixed with such letters was the correspondence with printers, ecclesiastics, statesmen and the occasional humanist of equal rank and self-confidence, Pirckheimer, Reuchlin and, most prominently, Budé, who engaged Erasmus in a friendly but tough-minded exchange on their different ideals of literary style.

For all his perfunctory disclaimers, Erasmus used his celebrity to advance his cultural program. During the time period covered in this volume the enterprise of the published correspondence of Erasmus was begun under Erasmus' own slightly veiled direction, as Martens of Louvain published the *Epistolae ad Erasmum* of October 1516 and the *Epistolae elegantes* of April 1517. Certainly this was the high point of Erasmus' celebrity. The courts of Burgundy and France competed to attract him against the offers of the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Republic of Venice and various and sundry lesser princes and ecclesiastics. The dispensation he sought from the pope was intended to clear the way for his reception of a plurality of benefices.

The letters provide clues to the sources of this vast reputation — besides the newly appeared *Novum Instrumentum*, celebrated but not free from controversy, the *Adagia* seems to have been the work that most impressed his correspondents (e.g. Ep 569: "to a competent and unbiased critic it would suffice by itself to make perfectly clear how far Erasmus outstrips all other entrants in the literary race, as far as the trumpet drowns the flute or the chatter of crickets overbears the buzzing of bees."). Ranking behind the fame of these works, in which even the hypercritical Budé acknowledged that Erasmus rose above his wonted "triviality" to realize some of his great potential, we encounter the continuance of the literary and religious reputations of the *Moria* and the *Enchiridion* and the more specialized interest in the edition of Jerome, which was currently becoming available. The correspondence also mirrors the demand that led Erasmus to begin to work during this time upon the first of his Paraphrases of the New Testament, that of St. Paul's epistle to the Romans.

Leaving aside the issue of whether Erasmus had internally integrated his literary and religious commitments into a grammar or rhetoric of theology, these months between the publication of the *Novum Instrumentum* and the Ninety-Five Theses were ones in which he and his band of learned friends seemed capable of articulating the highest spiritual and temporal ideals of the Latin West. The period of the appearance of *Utopia*, polished and patronized by Erasmus, seemed indeed to presage a new golden age. So Erasmus wrote to his benefactor, Leo X, only months before the glitter of his pontificate would begin to be obscured by the lengthening shadow of the Lutheran crisis:

For in this age, under your most auspicious leadership and through your saintly wisdom, I foresee that three of its greatest blessings will be restored to the human race: that true Christian piety which in so many ways is now decayed, the study of the humanities in part neglected hitherto and in part corrupted, and that public and perpetual harmony of the Christian world which is the fountain and the parent of religion and learning. These will be the undying trophies of Leo the Tenth. . . . (ep 566)

The excellence of this carefully edited and beautifully printed volume rests in its capacity to evoke once again that blighted hope in its entire plausibility.

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Paul Christianson. *Reformers and Babylon: English Apocalyptic Visions from the Reformation to the eve of the Civil War*. Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 1978. Pp. x, 285. \$17.50.

Paul Christianson's first book attempts a synthesis of original sources and recent interpretations. There is a dire need for such an overview, which would bring together the work of those historians who have demonstrated the importance of the end of the world as a seventeenth-century theme. Christianson seeks to add to our knowledge, but one feels that, even more, he is attempting to bring order and coherence to our cumulative understanding of this expanding subject.

The author's separation of 'apocalyptic' (a general term) from 'millennial' (a belief in the literal reign of the saints on earth), and the distinction of four types of apocalypticism (mainstream; separatist; radical puritans who regarded the Church as Laodicea; and very radical puritans who desired root-and-branch reform) are offered early in the book (pp. 7, 10-11), and provide both the confines and main theme of the study. Christianson lays much stress in his basically chronological approach on the contribution and continuing importance of John Bale. He is undoubtedly right to do so, and this forms one of the more important statements of the work. It was Bale, argues Christianson, who drafted while in exile the new framework for interpreting the prophecies of St. John as the true history of the Bible, and stressed Revelation as the central passage in the Bible (pp. 14-15). At the same time, because he emphasizes the dispossessed as God's agents, Bale stood outside the mainstream of apocalyptic thought that still relied, at least in part,