translation is accurate and closely approximates the diction of the original, so that in proper combination with the dactylic rhythm, a sense of authenticity is communicated to the reader—never an easy task for a “creative” translator. Even so, it is sometimes difficult to escape the comic in any presentation of pastoral poetry to the modern reader, as for example in *Eclogue* III 9 where Daphne speaks:

So let it be. But take care, keep your greedy hands
where they should be.

Again the translator cautions us about the serious risk that in any translation into English dactylics, the rhythm may become tedious, but except, perhaps, for the tenth eclogue, which includes a lengthy catalogue of ancient writers, his effort is worth the risk.

Professor Bergin adds an introduction of ten pages which is brief and expository with ample references to more complete studies of the problems arising from a closer examination of the *Carmen*. The book then concludes with a section of notes containing a brief introduction to the theme and content of each poem along with brief explanations of the topical references. While the book adds few critical comments to our estimation of Petrarch's contribution to literature, yet it will afford the English-speaking reader a reasonable access and introduction to an unfamiliar aspect of Petrarch's poetic composition.

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J. Kelley Sowards. *Desiderius Erasmus*. Twayne's World Authors Series, 353. Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1975. Pp. 152.

The author's purpose was “to present to modern readers a brief survey of Erasmus as a man of letters.” Format, content and approach had to fit the norm established for a series subtitled “A Survey of the World's Literature.” Operating within set limits, the author could not have produced this lively and balanced account without a remarkable degree of familiarity with Erasmus's works. Also the book has greatly benefited from the fact that he is by training an historian. Although he rightly disclaims any intention of presenting a “comprehensive biography,” he achieves a happy synthesis between topical and chronological approaches and reinforces his presentation of Erasmus's writings with well-selected points of biographical, political and religious history. The result is a self-contained study ideal for serious students with little or no previous knowledge of Erasmus and his times.

This is not to say that scholars possessing some previous acquaintance with Erasmus should ignore it. Through his penetrating study of the *Julius exclusus*, published with an English translation (Indiana University Press, 1968), Dr. Sowards had earlier established himself as one of the handful of specialists whose judgment on any particular question concerning Erasmus must receive careful consideration. The present volume has given him an opportunity to add many new accents to ongoing scholarly discussions. In a general way, his view of Erasmus seems to me somewhat more indebted to an interpretative tradition reaching back from Huizinga to Voltaire than was the case with the recent biography by R. H. Bainton. Although he parallels Bainton in underlining that “biblical scholarship . . . consumed most of the time and energy of Erasmus,” he does not, I think, impress upon his

readers that the religious writer, the devotee of *philosophia Christi*, therefore deserves the best part of their attention. At least an equal share is being directed to the satirist, the witty critic of contemporary weaknesses. This is well in that students are led to discover, in the first place, some of Erasmus's most readable and lovable pages. Moreover, Dr. Sowards does not present satire as an end in itself but as a means to an end, that end being moral and religious uplift. He does, nevertheless, move away from Bainton's radical emphasis on Erasmus's spiritualism. It may not do full justice to Erasmus if the *Praise of Folly*, the *Colloquies* and also the *Ciceronianus* are presented primarily as satirical works. But then, how many incomprehensible, or at least unreadable, essays have been produced in an attempt to capture his complexity? One would certainly expect that Dr. Sowards's book will lead many readers to the point of developing their own approaches to Erasmus. The careful formulation of many brief statements makes it clear that a good deal more might be said on the point in question. For example, we read, and by the very formulation are invited to qualify, that "Erasmus had no very great interest . . . in visual art" and also "no very strong sense of history." "His works are bare of descriptions of nature" (yet, one might add, sufficiently document his appreciation of nature). Even the discussion on the precise degree of Erasmus's involvement in the composition of *Julius exclusus* will perhaps continue in spite of Dr. Sowards's persuasive arguments for his sole authorship.

After dealing with Erasmus's satirical writings and with his Christian scholarship, the book offers, with good reason, a slightly shorter treatment of his controversial writings and his protests against war. Especially impressive is the lucidity of the short section devoted to his controversy with Luther over Free Will. In his opening paragraph Dr. Sowards states calmly that Erasmus is almost unknown "to modern readers, even fairly sophisticated ones." One certainly wishes this little book a great many fairly sophisticated readers, for it is admirably suited to enlighten their ignorance concerning Erasmus.

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Joseph W. Houppert. *John Lyly*. Twayne English Authors Series, 177. Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1975. Pp. 169. \$8.25.

Twayne's English Authors Series generally serves the useful if unexciting purpose of providing up-to-date summaries of the work of, and the state of modern scholarship on, the various authors covered by the series. Houppert's Lyly volume deals with biographical information, Lyly's prose narratives, and the plays, and covers in workmanlike fashion, within the limitations noted in Houppert's Preface, both the works themselves and the critical ground up to the early 1970s. Houppert's labour does not seem, however, to have been one of great love: witness the weak and brief final chapter on Lyly's reputation and influence. It is only four pages long, lacks positive force, and certainly does not inspire the reader to take Lyly's works down from the shelf.

One trouble with the volume is a deadening excess of blow-by-blow, sometimes speech-by-speech plot summary: an excess even though the book is aimed at a readership of "students and teachers who [are] . . . not specialists in sixteenth-century literature" (Preface). Perhaps the series publisher insisted on this detail; if so, the insistence was a mistake. More-