

Part 3, "Travel, Race, and Conversion," returns to the overall experimental approach of the project and the tone of part 1. Starting with Keith P. Luria's "Narrating Women's Catholic Conversions in Seventeenth-Century Vietnam," the reader is confronted with a critical reflection on women's enculturation from Eastern thought to Christian faith. "I wish to be no other but as he': Persia, Masculinity, and Conversion in Early Seventeenth-Century Travel Writing and Drama" by Chloë Houston addresses early modern women's conversion between Islam and Christianity. Daniel Vitkus's chapter, "Turning Tricks: Erotic Commodification, Cross-Cultural Conversion, and the Bed-Trick on the English Stage, 1580–1630," argues a secular literary perspective on religious conversion. Kathleen Lynch's contribution, "Whatever Happened to Dinah the Black? And Other Questions About Gender, Race, and the Visibility of Protestant Saints," is the final essay, a wistful linguistic perspective on conversion in gender history. Lynch's thoughtful contribution examines the notion of gender and black skin color in seventeenth-century London; her conclusion, however, transports the reader from the early modern period back into the framework of contemporary Anglo-American racial controversies.

The present collection on conversion is a conference volume with a difficult task: to envision early modern gender and religious change through literary and historical research on the word, act, and world of conversion in early modern Europe from an interdisciplinary perspective. The chapters in *Confessions* are the product of Anglo-American early modern scholarship, which seems to homogenize the conclusions. A more comprehensive international view on the topic might be the next step. Indeed, at least one theological contribution on conversion, gender, and religious change in the early modern period may have challenged and enriched the noteworthy achievement of *Confessions*.

Rebecca A. Gisellebrecht, *Universität Zürich*

Erasmus and Calvin on the Foolishness of God: Reason and Emotion in the Christian Philosophy. Kirk Essary.

Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2017. xx + 278 pp. \$80.

This is a close reading of Erasmus and Calvin bringing significant results. Essary studies the two scholars on Paul's comment in 1 Corinthians 1:20, rendered as "Has God not made foolish the wisdom of this world?" The "foolishness of God" turns out to be a highly important insight leading to the denouncing of worldly wisdom as folly, and recognizing the misplaced appropriation of human reason in doing the work of theology—which these two humanist scholars brought to the fore. The cross of Christ, insists Paul, is a stumbling block and an offense to the philosophers of this world who try to understand it only with the tools of worldly reason. This stark contrast led "prominent sixteenth-century interpreters to suggest that an alternative religious epistemology, as

well as a new method of teaching, is necessary for Christian wisdom to be fully realized" (xiii). The foolishness of God, outlined by Paul in 1 Corinthians as well as Colossians 2, came to serve as "a foundational feature of biblical-humanist theology in the sixteenth century as well as a lens through which to interpret competing philosophies, theological approaches, and other biblical texts" (162).

It was Erasmus who first set forth this understanding and throughout the book Essary compares Erasmus and Calvin on this topic and approach. He shows that Calvin was constantly engaged with Erasmus's exegetical labors on the New Testament. Through study of Calvin's commentaries Essary finds that Erasmus was "an underappreciated influence on his thought" (163). Erasmus exercised a "cross-cultural influence" on sixteenth-century exegesis and "Erasmian Christian humanism loomed large over biblical scholars for several decades" after Calvin's death (163).

To explain this, Essary initially compares Erasmus's and Calvin's dedicatory letters for their exegetical studies of 1 Corinthians. Chapters 2–4 analyze the exegesis of Paul's writings on folly in the first half of the sixteenth century. Closest attention is given to Erasmus and Calvin but also helpfully included are the exegetical findings of Heinrich Bullinger and Konrad Pellikan, both of whom obviously used Erasmus's comments. Chapters 5–6 look at the concept of Christian philosophy. This moves beyond the 1 Corinthians passage to show how Paul's discourse on folly was important in the Christian philosophies constructed by biblical humanists in this period. Chapter 6 connects the importance of the reception of Paul's perspective on folly to affectivity, as expressed by Erasmus and Calvin. Essary notes that affectivity is increasingly recognized as important by historians of this period. He demonstrates its significance by comparing Erasmus's and Calvin's writings on Jesus's emotions in the Gospels, expressed in their theological works, commentaries, and a sermon. Diminishing emphases on reason as a primary authority in biblical-theological anthropology and epistemology meant a fuller appreciation of the role emotions play in piety and in theological understanding came to the fore. A special example of this is the comparison of Erasmus and Calvin on the fear and sorrow experienced by Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane.

References to Erasmus's *The Praise of Folly* and Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion* throughout this book show how exegetical findings relate to broader literary and theological discussions (and vice-versa). These also help situate Erasmus and Calvin in the broader contexts of sixteenth-century biblical humanism. A splendid feature of this book is its one hundred pages of notes, providing original source texts for the English translations in the volume.

Erasmus and Calvin saw Paul as attacking human reason and human eloquence. Paul wanted the Corinthians to replace these in their hearts and minds with the wisdom of God and the preaching of the cross of Jesus Christ. The cross is not recognized by natural reason as significant, but human reason cannot comprehend and convey divine matters. For Erasmus, through Christ has come "true and saving wisdom, so that you have no need of philosophy" (24). True wisdom is located in the folly of Christ's

self-emptying. Christian philosophy imparts Christ so “the Christian experiences Christ not in seeking to understand God syllogistically, but through the preaching and hearing of the Word” (55). This led to the humanist shift from dialectic to rhetoric.

Donald K. McKim, *Germantown, Tennessee*

Archeologies of Confession: Writing the German Reformation, 1517–2017.

Carina L. Johnson, David M. Luebke, Marjorie E. Plummer, and
Jesse Spohnholz, eds.

Spektrum: Publications of the German Studies Association 16. New York: Berghahn,
2017. vi + 346 pp. \$130.

When historians write on others' reports of the past rather than on the past itself, historical interpretations immediately become documents of their own circumstances and time, with one eye on the event, the other on the circumstances of the author from whom the interpretation sprang. This collection of fourteen essays related to historical reporting on and usage of sixteenth-century events labeled the German Reformation, specifically the movement led by Martin Luther and his Wittenberg circle, provides stimulating, provocative assessments of historical reports and analysis of this movement, placing its earlier interpreters in context and revealing the perspectives and biases of twenty-first-century interpretations of these interpreters. Carina Johnson's helpful orientation to the volume reviews several modern theories regarding the professional construal of biographical and historical writing, revealing that these theories reflect the biases of our age as much as the objects of their theorizing did of theirs.

A review can only present a few essays. Merry Wiesner-Hanks provides a fascinating, most useful overview of attempts to recognize women who played vital roles in the reformations of various parts of Western Christendom in the confessional histories of the eighteenth century, the amateur histories of the later nineteenth century, and the very slow progress of serious historical assessment of women that has taken place in the closing decades of the twentieth and opening decades of the twenty-first centuries. She reflects on the methods and contributions which she herself has made in the company of a group, largely of women scholars, in analyzing understandings of gender, marriage, and related topics as they have worked from the perspective of contemporary Western society.

Ralf-Peter Fuchs and Richard Schaefer provide two studies relating to nineteenth-century Roman Catholicism in the writing of Reformation history: Fuchs on how continuing Roman Catholic presence in the county of Mark was suppressed in several Protestant renderings of its religious history; Schaefer on Roman Catholic theologians' interpretation of Luther's impact on Western culture. They criticized his views of rea-