For Desiderius Erasmus, the hermeneutics of conversion begins with cognitive conversion, a conversion of the faculty of understanding together with the assumptions concerning the relation between the intellect and the senses. Erasmus’s account of *metanoia* in his *Enchiridion* (1503) and its application in his *Novum Instrumentum omne* (1516) provides a useful point of reference for an exploration of a momentous shift in sixteenth-century cognitive ecology.