CHAPTER ONE

Foundings

> The institutions which the Middle Age has
> bequeathed to us are of greater and more
> imperishable value even than its cathedrals.
>
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UNIVERSITIES, LIKE CATHEDRALS and parliaments, were unique creations of Western Europe and the Middle Ages.[1] They arose in the twelfth century in the midst of propitious change. The "barbarian" and "infidel" invasions from the north, south, and east had finally been thwarted, and the Crusades had even begun to direct Europe's martial energies outward. The resulting political stability, increased agricultural productivity, and new and improved roads fostered the growth of population, towns, trade, and the Roman Catholic Church.

As the Papacy extended its reach, it became clear that the inward-looking monasteries and even the newer cathedral schools

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1 Although it developed a few curricular features in common with the madrasa and owed a deep intellectual debt to Islamic scholarship, "the university, as a form of organization, owes nothing to Islam." It was "a new product . . . utterly foreign to the Islamic experience." George Makdisi, *The Rise of Colleges: Institutions of Learning in Islam and the West* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1981), ch. 4, at 224, 225. See also Toby E. Huff, *The Rise of Early Modern Science: Islam, China, and the West*, 2nd ed. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003 [1993]), 149–59, 179–89, on the prevailing scholarly consensus. Darleen Pryds suggests that madrasas shared some key features and functions with *southern* European universities, such as the royally founded University of Naples and other Iberian universities, which differed significantly from their northern counterparts in Bologna, Paris, and Oxford. But she demonstrates neither influence nor causation in either direction. "*Studia* as Royal Office: Mediterranean Universities of Medieval Europe," in William J. Courtenay and Jürgen Miethke, eds., *Universities and Schooling in Medieval Society* (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 83–99, at 95–98.

could not provide the advanced training needed by the Church's growing ranks of priests, missionaries, and administrators. Nor could the rudimentary town schools prepare the personnel required by the burgeoning civil bureaucracies, particularly royal and imperial, that sought to preserve the fragile peace and to promote the social welfare. Those schools taught only the Seven Liberal Arts of antiquity and the early Middle Ages, and not the influx of "new" Greco-Roman and Arabic learning—in philosophy, mathematics, science, medicine, and law—that arrived after 1100 through Italy and Sicily but chiefly via Arab scholars and translators in Spain.[2] These conditions stimulated the advent of the university, one of the very few European institutions that have preserved their fundamental patterns and basic social roles and functions over the course of history.[3]

The earliest universities and even a few later ones have no firm birthdates. This causes no end of trouble when their older selves wish to celebrate major milestones. Cambridge has it easy in the ninth year of every new century because it was established—and well documented—in 1209 by professors and scholars fleeing

2 Olaf Pedersen, *The First Universities*: Studium generale *and the Origins of University Education in Europe*, trans. Richard North (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), ch. 4; A. B. Cobban, *The Medieval Universities: Their Development and Organization* (London: Methuen, 1975), ch. 1; Gordon Leff, *Paris and Oxford Universities in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries: An Institutional and Intellectual History* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1968), 127–37; Charles Homer Haskins, *The Renaissance of the Twelfth Century* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1927); Robert L. Benson and Giles Constable, eds., *Renaissance and Renewal in the Twelfth Century* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1982); R. N. Swanson, *The Twelfth-Century Renaissance* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999).

3 In 1982 Clark Kerr, a former chancellor of the University of California, noted that "about eighty-five institutions in the Western world established by 1520 still exist in recognizable forms, with similar functions and with unbroken histories, including the Catholic church, the Parliaments of the Isle of Man, of Iceland, and of Great Britain, several Swiss cantons, and seventy universities." *The Uses of the University*, 3rd ed. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1982 [1963]), 152. Walter Rüegg exaggerates the university's uniqueness in the foreword to *Universities in the Middle Ages*, Hilde de Ridder-Symoens, ed., vol. 1 of *A History of the University in Europe* [*HUE*], gen. ed. Walter Rüegg, 4 vols.(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), xix.

Oxford after a legal and literal battle with the city and king over the discipline of the university's members.[4] But the earliest bona fide universities have had to be more arbitrary in selecting commemorative dates. In the latest and most comprehensive history of European universities, Bologna's founding is located sometime at the "end of the twelfth century," while Paris, Oxford, and Montpellier secured their corporate existence in the "beginning of the thirteenth century."[5]

The earliest founding dates are hard to pin down because those institutions were not created by royal, papal, or imperial decree but instead grew slowly and incrementally, leaving thin paper or parchment trails. Like most twelfth- and thirteenth-century universities, they began as schools belonging to monasteries, towns, or cathedral chapters. Some schools featured only a single charismatic teacher, such as Peter Abelard, who attracted clerics and the occasional layman interested in education higher than they could find locally. But the gathering of critical numbers soon led to the need for physical enlargement, faculty specialization, and new organization.[6] These

4 Damian Riehl Leader, *The University to 1546*, vol. 1 of *A History of the University of Cambridge* [*HUC*], gen. ed. Christopher Brooke (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 16–19; Alan B. Cobban, *The Medieval English Universities: Oxford and Cambridge to c. 1500* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 44–45, 53–54.

5 Jacques Verger, "Patterns," *HUE* 1:62–65. The Wikipedia entry "Medieval University" is much more confident in assigning (mostly fictitious) birthdates to the earliest universities. En.wikipedia.org/wiki/Medieval_university.

6 Pedersen, *First Universities*, ch. 4; Helene Wieruszowski, *The Medieval University: Masters, Students, Learning* (Princeton, N.J.: D. Van Nostrand, 1966), 15–26, 119–28; John W. Baldwin, *Paris, 1200* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2010), ch. 5; C. Stephen Jaeger, *The Envy of Angels: Cathedral Schools and Social Ideals in Medieval Europe, 950–1200* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994), chs. 5, 8–11; Stephan C. Ferruolo, *The Origins of the University: The Schools of Paris and Their Critics, 1100–1215* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1985); Astrik L. Gabriel, "The Cathedral Schools of Notre-Dame and the Beginning of the University of Paris," in Gabriel, *Garlandia: Studies in the History of the Medieval University* (Notre Dame, Ind.: The Mediaeval Institute, University of Notre Dame, 1969), ch. 2; R. W. Southern, "From Schools to University," in *The Early Oxford Schools*, ed. J. I. Catto, vol. 1 of *The History of the University of Oxford* [*HUO*], gen. ed. T. H. Aston, 8 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), ch. 1.

nascent universities only later received legal sanction, often piece-meal, from the powers-that-were, whereas later institutions largely did so in full at their starts.

Many *studia*, or advanced schools, functioned effectively as universities before they received privileges or full recognition from the pope, or even before they drafted statutes by which to govern themselves. Bologna, Paris, and Oxford were operating as genuine *studia generalia* no later than 1215. That is, their guild-like organizations of masters and students exercised a high degree of legal autonomy, elected their own officers, controlled their own finances, attracted students from a wide area (*generale*), offered instruction in one or more of the higher faculties of law, medicine, or theology as well as the seven foundational liberal arts, and conferred degrees and teaching licenses that were, in theory at least, honored by other universities.[7] Bologna's first statutes were not written until 1252, and its status as a *studium generale* was not confirmed until 1291, when the pope gave its graduates the privilege of *ius ubique docendi*, "the right to teach anywhere" papal power reached. Paris received the same privilege the following year, although it had statutes on the books in 1215 and 1231. For reasons unknown, Oxford—across the English Channel—never received the pope's confirmation as a *studium generale*, despite the pleas of two kings. Cambridge and Edward II were successful in 1318.[8]

In addition to their urban settings, universities were characterized by their formal privileges, which distinguished them from other social institutions. These grants, rights, and immunities sprang from Roman precedents that protected teachers and scholars of the liberal arts, particularly grammar and rhetoric. The medieval Church extended this protection because the arts were necessary to read and interpret Scripture. Even lay scholars without the tonsure enjoyed clerical status, subject to ecclesiastical law, and were immune from the jurisdiction of feudal and local civil courts. In 1155 Emperor Frederick I (Frederick Barbarossa) issued the Authentic *Habita* to guarantee protection and safe conduct to all teachers

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7 Cobban, *Medieval Universities*, 32–33.
8 Verger, "Patterns," *HUE* 1:36, 45; Cobban, *Medieval Universities*, 29, 59, 61.

and students traveling to and from seats of learning throughout the Holy Roman Empire.[9]

As soon as faculty and students began to organize into their respective guilds and confraternities for academic effectiveness and self-protection, those in high authority gave them yet more written *privilegia*. These they carefully preserved in bound volumes and resorted to when local, church, or royal officials sought to ignore or deny them.[10] Clergymen with church benefices, or "livings," were allowed to draw their salaries while they were absent pursuing university degrees or teaching.[11] All students, faculty, and even university booksellers enjoyed deferment from military drafts and municipal obligations, such as night watch, guard duty, and roadwork. Scholars were not to be physically assaulted or their premises invaded. If they were arrested, they could choose their judges. Qualified M.A. and doctoral degree candidates were to be issued the *licentia docendi* (the license to teach) without fee, promise, or condition.[12] Customs duties could not be laid on scholars' books, nor could those volumes be seized for debt. Rents were to be fair and premises clean; study-disturbing noise and noisome smells emanating from the work of neighbors were prohibited. The quality and price of food, drink, books, and writing parchment were regulated. In Paris at least,

9 Pearl Kibre, "Scholarly Privileges: Their Roman Origins and Medieval Expansion," *American Historical Review* 59:3 (April 1954), 543–67; Pearl Kibre, *Scholarly Privileges in the Middle Ages: The Rights, Privileges, and Immunities of Scholars and Universities at Bologna, Padua, Paris, and Oxford* (Cambridge, Mass.: Mediaeval Academy of America, 1962); Paolo Nardi, "Relations with Authority," *HUE* 1:78.

10 In 1262 Pope Urban IV appointed two prelates from outside Paris as Conservators of Apostolic Privileges to preserve intact the privileges granted to the University of Paris. Kibre, *Scholarly Privileges*, 119 and 119n150.

11 Walter Rüegg, "Themes," *HUE* 1:17, 18; Aleksander Gieysztor, "Management and Resources," *HUE* 1:109; Jacques Verger, "Teachers," *HUE* 1:151; Kibre, *Scholarly Privileges*, 33, 63, 93n27, 96n40; Lynn Thorndike, *University Records and Life in the Middle Ages*, Columbia University Records of Civilization (New York: Columbia University Press, 1944), 250–53; Cobban, *Medieval Universities*, 26–27.

12 Gaines Post, "Alexander III, the *Licentia docendi*, and the Rise of the Universities," in *Anniversary Essays in Mediaeval History, by Students of Charles Homer Haskins, Presented on His Completion of Forty Years of Teaching*, ed. Charles H. Taylor (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1929), 255–77.

scholars' houses were tax exempt. Needless to say, the favoritism shown to the scholars often exacerbated town-gown tensions, which frequently burst into violence.[13]

The most essential privileges were two. The first was the *studium*'s right to incorporate as a legal entity and to run its own affairs, much like a craftsmen's guild. The second was the right, once so organized, to offer degrees and teaching licenses after examination and according to the faculty's sole judgment. The larger corporation of scholars (*universitas magistrorum et scholarium*) created its own sub-units, enacted and enforced statutes, designed seals, elected officers, and controlled modest coffers. The professors, or "masters" (*magistri*), were organized into disciplinary faculties—of arts or one of the three learned professions—each with its own dean, a rotating rector to administer the entire university, and often a chancellor to represent royal or papal as well as university interests. Particularly in the southern universities, the students, initially vulnerable strangers from many parts of Europe, formed themselves into "nations," congregations based roughly on natal regions and headed by elected proctors. Bologna had as many as sixteen nations in the dominant law faculty at one time. For convenience's sake, they soon coalesced into two larger configurations, *cismontane* and *ultramontane*, based on the students' origins south or north of the Alps.

Paris, where only the masters and senior scholars of the arts faculty formed nations, had four primary groups: French, Norman, Picard, and English. The latter enrolled scholars from the British

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13 Thorndike, *University Records*, 19–20, 38, 123–24, 215, 391; Wieruszowski, *Medieval University*, 136–37, 157–58, 168–69, 181, 183; *The Medieval Student*, ed. Dana Carleton Munro, vol. 2, no. 3 of *Translations and Reprints from the Original Sources of European History* (Philadelphia: Dept. of History, University of Pennsylvania, 1899), 2–10; Cobban, *Medieval English Universities*, 257–74; Hastings Rashdall, *The Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages*, rev. and ed. F. M. Powicke and A. B. Emden, 3 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1936 [1895], 3:427–35; Joan B. Williamson, "Unrest in Medieval Universities," in Douglas Radcliff-Umstead, ed., *The University World: A Synoptic View of Higher Education in the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, vol. 2 of Medieval and Renaissance Studies Committee (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh, 1973), 56–83; Rowland Parker, *Town and Gown: The 700 Years' War in Cambridge* (Cambridge: P. Stephens, 1983).

Isles, Flanders, Holland, the Germanies, Scandinavia, Hungary, and Slavic lands.[14] In less cosmopolitan Oxford, like Paris a faculty-dominant *studium*, the sovereign congregation of regent (teaching) masters in arts was divided into northern (*boreales*) and southern (*australes*) islanders. University governance was administered by a chancellor, two proctors (one from each nation), and a half-dozen bedels with bailiff-like powers.[15]

The first four major universities—Bologna and Montpellier in southern Europe, Paris and Oxford in the north—soon found imitators in large towns and cities seeking intellectual prestige, trained personnel, and, not least, income from student populations.[16] Eighteen universities that got their start in the twelfth century survive today. By 1400 the number of viable universities nearly doubled, due in part to several established in Central Europe after the Great Papal Schism in the Church began in 1378. The total grew to at least sixty-three by 1500, covering the continent from Catania (1444) in Sicily to Uppsala (1477) in eastern Sweden, from Lisbon (1290) in coastal Portugal to Cracow (1364) in southern Poland.[17]

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The sequence of *studium*-founding was much the same, but the process was often compressed and speeded up. Heidelberg, for one, received full university status in 1386 after a trio of Bavarian dukes pleaded with Pope Urban VI to grant the city permission to establish a university "with all faculties included on the model of the *studium*

14 Gray Cowan Boyce, *The English-German Nation in the University of Paris in the Middle Ages* (Bruges: Saint Catherine Press, 1927); Astrik L. Gabriel, "The English-German Nation at the University of Paris: 1425–1483," in Gabriel, *Garlandia*, ch. 8.

15 Pearl Kibre, *The Nations in the Mediaeval Universities* (Cambridge, Mass.: Mediaeval Academy of America, 1948), ch. 1, 160–66; Cobban, *Medieval English Universities*, 90–92, 103–106; A. B. Emden, "Northerners and Southerners in the Organization of the University to 1509," in *Oxford Studies Presented to Daniel Callus*, Oxford Historical Society, n.s., 16 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964 [for 1959–1960], 1–30.

16 On the economic gains to be had from student and faculty migrations, see Thorndike, *University Records*, 310, 334.

17 Verger, "Patterns," *HUE* 1:62–65, 69–74.

of Paris and with all the privileges granted to this latter." Eight months later, after conveying to the pope an honorarium for his bull, the dukes and their council completed the foundation by promising to "endow and protect it with privileges." Good to their word, a new rector hired away from a church in Cologne and two other Paris masters were immediately given "a large stipend" to hire faculty in the arts and theology. In less than a year, the university was legally founded on a solid basis and lectures began on logic, the Bible, and Aristotle's *Physics*.[18]

Despite their juridical presence, the earliest universities were not easy to identify or to locate. For many decades, they were "disembodied," largely anonymous except to near neighbors, because they operated out of rented quarters and were conspicuously lacking in signage.[19] A prospective student coming to town in search of "the university" would not find what a modern American student would—highway exit signs, a central administration building, an office of admissions, a big library, or a landmark clock or bell tower, much less an imposing sports stadium or gymnasium. In a crowded urban setting, he would find no "campus" at all. He would have better luck seeking out a well-known, sartorially identifiable faculty member or master, who not only might explain the institution's hows if not whys but also would likely probe the lad's academic qualifications: was he born male and free, a baptized Christian, at least fourteen years of age, able to read and understand spoken Latin and, preferably, to write it as well? If he passed, the master might have him sign a parchment *matricula* and take him under his wing as a member of his academic *familia* and supervised inmate of his rented multiroom quarters.[20] An oath before the rector to obey the

18 Wieruszowski, *Medieval University*, 186–87.

19 W. A. Pantin, "The Halls and Schools of Medieval Oxford: An Attempt at Reconstruction," in *Oxford Studies Presented to Daniel Callus*, 31–100, at 31–32.

20 Unfortunately, no individual masters' matriculae have been found. The oldest extant *rector*'s matriculation register is that of the Prague law faculty, beginning in 1372. Rainer Christoph Schwinges, "Admission," *HUE* 1:177–80, at 180. At some universities, prospective students had up to 15 days to choose their master. Thorndike, *University Records*, 274 (Bologna, 1404); Alan Cobban, *English University Life in the Middle Ages* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1999), 8 (Cambridge).

university's statutes and the payment of a fee adjusted to his social status completed his admission and earned him clerical status and its legal protections, although he might have to treat his new master and a few friends to food and drink as the first of several costly rites of academic passage.[21]

A century or so later, new students would have discovered the *beginnings* of an identifiably academic landscape. A number of residential halls, hostels, and colleges sprang up to house, feed, protect, and govern students, initially only a privileged minority of older graduate students but later younger arts students and even preparatory students as well.[22] From the early fourteenth century, the halls of Oxford and hostels of Cambridge were rented houses each overseen by a mature faculty *domus*, or principal. The principal assumed not only the regent master's disciplinary duties—confiscating weapons, seeing that lectures were attended and fees paid, keeping women at bay— but also some of the university's pedagogical functions as well.[23] By the early fifteenth century, all Oxbridge scholars were required to reside in approved university residences. A major reason was to root out licentious "chamberdeacons" who rented cheap rooms from local landlords, "sleeping by day and haunting taverns and brothels by night, intent on robbery and homicide."[24]

21 Matriculants in later universities, particularly in Central Europe, also took an oath to the sponsoring prince, king, or realm. Schwinges, "Admission," *HUE* 1:180–87; Robert Francis Seybolt, ed. and trans., *The Manuale Scholarium: An Original Account of Life in the Mediaeval University* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1921), ch. 1, at 20n4.

22 Some of the early Oxbridge and Paris colleges admitted a few poor grammar students or choristers. Cobban, *Medieval English Universities*, 182–83, 368–69; Astrik L. Gabriel, "Preparatory Teaching in the Parisian Colleges during the Fourteenth Century," in Gabriel, *Garlandia*, ch. 4.

23 Rainer Christoph Schwinges, "Student Education, Student Life," *HUE* 1:213–22; Cobban, *Medieval English Universities*, ch. 4, 174–80.

24 W. A. Pantin, *Oxford Life in Oxford Archives* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), 10 (from a 1410 statute). Thirteenth-century Paris confronted similar challenges from student crime. University officials sought to outlaw not only "unstudious . . . gamesters or haunters of whores and taverns," but also roving bands of armed students who "rape women, break into inns, oppress virgins" and rob, "wound or kill . . . many persons . . . by day and night." Thorndike, *University Records*, 77, 79 (statutes of 1269 and 1280).

In the major universities of England and France, the search for order began in the late thirteenth century with the construction and endowment of residential colleges, largely for advanced students in the professional faculties.[25] These facilities were often enclosed quadrangles that were accessed by defensible gated entrances to protect their scholars and faculty fellows from aggrieved townsmen. They also featured amenities such as chapels, libraries, dining halls, and classrooms in addition to living quarters.[26] Numerous though scattered, they gave universities more recognizable shapes and faces until the universities began in the next century to raise a variety of distinctive buildings for communal purposes. In 1320 Oxford completed the stone Congregation House to house its embryonic library and to host faculty meetings.[27] Later, the, two-story, Divinity School and contiguous quarters for other faculties were erected, which eventually morphed into the Bodleian Library. In Bologna, the Collegio di Spagna (1365–67) surrounded an arcaded courtyard, establishing a model for enlarged palazzos in other Italian universities.[28] By 1500 most universities could be recognized by their

25 Colleges remained scarce in provincial France and in Spanish and Italian universities, and even those in the northern universities housed only 10–20 percent of the student population. The first college in Paris—the Collège des Dix-huit (1180)—accommodated only 18 poor scholars in theology; the more famous college known as La Sorbonne (1257) began with 16 and expanded to 36. Cobban, *Medieval Universities*, 150; Verger, "Patterns," *HUE* 1:62; Gieysztor, "Management," *HUE* 1:116, 118; Schwinges, "Student Education," *HUE* 1:218 and 218n17.

26 Cobban, *Medieval Universities*, ch. 6; Pedersen, *First Universities*, 226–28; Verger, "Patterns," *HUE* 1:60–62; Gieysztor, "Management," *HUE* 1:116–19; Schwinges, "Student Education," *HUE* 1:213–22; Astrik L. Gabriel, "The College System in the Fourteenth-Century Universities," in Francis Lee Utley, ed., *The Forward Movement of the Fourteenth Century* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1961), 79–124; Astrik L. Gabriel, *Student Life in Ave Maria College, Mediaeval Paris: History and Chartulary of the College*, Publications in Mediaeval Studies 14 (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1955).

27 The University of Orléans's early fifteenth-century *Salles des Thèses* served the same functions.

28 For a photograph of the collegio's courtyard and arcade, see Berthe M. Marti, ed. and trans., *The Spanish College at Bologna in the Fourteenth Century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1966), opp. p. 128.

specialized buildings and distinctive architecture.[29] In becoming so heavily "embodied," however, they lost their early bargaining power in which both students and faculty could simply threaten to move to a rival city, as Oxford scholars did to Cambridge and many of Bologna's lawyers did to Vicenza and Padua. For all their advantages, endowed lectureships for faculty in the colleges later had the same result.[30]

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The prospective students who came looking for a higher education, if not always a degree, were a socially mixed lot and changed composition over the university's formative three centuries. Initially, many were mature or novice priests, friars, and monks sent by their superiors to upgrade their skills and usefulness to the Church. Like most medieval students, they had pronounced vocational goals, only more so.[31] Their careers had begun in the Church, and they wanted them to end there, on higher rungs of the preferment ladder, of course. Yet the majority of students were middling-class urbanites, possessed of the scholastic backgrounds to take advantage of university offerings and the resources, familial or sponsored, to stay and pay for the relatively expensive course: room and board; matriculation, lecture, disputation, and commencement fees; fees for membership in student "nations;" socially and academically appropriate clothing; books, parchment, and entertainment.[32] Earlier, the sons

29 Gieysztor, "Management," *HUE* 1:136–39.

30 Ibid., 1:139; Cobban, *Medieval Universities*, 155–56.

31 Cobban, *Medieval Universities*, 8, 12, 18–19, 218–19, 237; F. M. Powicke, *Ways of Medieval Life and Thought: Essays and Addresses* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1951), ch. 10.

32 As universities proliferated, they tended to recruit from local regions rather than the whole continent, in turn reducing the students' need for protective and socializing nations. On the cost of university education, see Schwinges, "Student Education," *HUE* 1:235–41; Cobban, *Medieval English Universities*, 311–13; Cobban, *English University Life*, 36–42. The growth of international credit arrangements—loans, credit notes, and currency exchange—enabled students to study all over Europe. C. H. Lawrence, *The Medieval Idea of a University: An Inaugural Lecture* (London: Bedford College, University of London, June 1972), 3.

of noblemen and upper gentry had been conspicuous by their paucity except in Italy, but gradually they were attracted to the universities at least for cultural polish and social connections and younger sons for training for careers in the church or the law.[33]

Matriculants from the poorer classes, *pauperes* often without surnames or connections, made up between 15 and 25 percent of the best-documented universities, most in northern Europe, especially Germany. In the absence of a concerted social commitment to improve the lot of poor students, most universities simply allowed them to forgo matriculation fees and to pay discounted lecture fees, but often only "until the onset of better fortune," when they were expected to pay their debts.[34] Several Paris and a few Oxbridge colleges were endowed with provisions for poor students, particularly in the arts and theology. True paupers were given the license to beg (in the spirit of mendicant friars). Many students, not only the poor, worked their way through college by serving faculty and rich classmates, toiling in dining halls and kitchens, singing in local church choirs, tutoring younger students, gardening, laboring in college construction, and copying manuscript books for stationers.[35]

The growing popularity of higher education throughout Europe led to the proliferation of universities but only fluctuating growth in student enrollments because of epidemics, wars, drought, grain prices, and competitors. Paris was initially the largest university, with perhaps 5,000 students, but by 1464 its population—masters, students, and staff—numbered half that. At their height, Bologna, Toulouse, Avignon, and Orléans matriculated at least 400–500 students annually. Oxford seldom exceeded 2,000 students in all but equally seldom fell to fewer than 1,500. Cambridge settled for several

33 Schwinges, "Student Education," *HUE* 1:202–211; Cobban, *Medieval Universities*, 196–202; Cobban, *Medieval English Universities*, 300–303, 313–18.

34 Schwinges, "Admission," *HUE* 1:187; Schwinges, "Student Education," *HUE* 1:209; Jacques Paquet, "L'universitaire 'pauvre' au Moyen Age: problèmes, documentation, questions de méthode," in Josef Ijsewijn and Jacques Paquet, eds., *The Universities in the Late Middle Ages* (Louvain: Leuven University Press, 1978), 399–425.

35 *HUE* 1:209–11; Cobban, *Medieval Universities*, 148–50, 196–201; Cobban, *Medieval English Universities*, 303–10.

hundred, never more than 1,300, before 1500. German enrollments likewise numbered only a few hundred.[36]

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No matter how small they were by modern standards, medieval universities faced disciplinary challenges from their variegated and rambunctious student populations. The first line of defense against student—primarily undergraduate—disorder was the university statutes, which were written early and applied often. In 1209 Pope Innocent III, a former student in Paris, urged the nascent university there to turn its "decent customs" into "written statutes."[37] Statutes were crucial bulwarks because every matriculant swore to obey them, even if he did not know what they enjoined or how numerous they were. They accumulated as quickly as did boisterous student escapades. The earliest statutes invariably assigned the primary oversight of students' conduct to their faculty masters. At Paris, for example, orders in 1215 from the papal legate made it clear that "no one shall be a scholar at Paris who has no definite master" and "each master shall have jurisdiction over his scholar." Sixteen years later, Pope Gregory IX not only forbade the Parisians to "go about town armed" but also reiterated that "those who pretend to be scholars but do not attend classes or have any master shall by no means enjoy the privileges of scholars."[38]

With hard-won experience, the assembled faculties drew up further statutes to deal with a wide variety of offences. In 1314 the University of Toulouse worried that "superfluity of clothing" was both contrary to "an approved mediocrity" befitting clerics (as all university scholars were regarded) and the financial cause of many dropouts. So the faculty set price limits on "cloths and garments" and regulated what kinds of outfits various degrees of scholars could

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36 Schwinges, "Admission," *HUE* 1:189–93; Cobban, *Medieval English Universities*, 121–22; J. I. Catto, "Citizens, Scholars and Masters," *HUO* 1:156; Leader, *University to 1546, HUC* 1:35–36.

37 Wieruszowski, *Medieval University*, 137–38.

38 Thorndike, *University Records*, 29, 30, 38, 118.

wear.[39] In the late fourteenth and early fifteenth century, the rector of Heidelberg had his hands full warning his scholars not to catch the burghers' pigeons, attend fencing schools or brothels, parade around in masks, play at dice, scale the city walls, attack its gates or bridges, or blaspheme the Holy Family or saints by swearing oaths upon their "head, hair, viscera, blood" or in "any other farfetched . . . or enormous manner." It's a wonder that he had any time to remind them to "attend each week at least some lectures." His counterpart at Angers felt obliged to rule against the students' "bringing or keeping women in the library" because it was what he deftly called "occasion for sin."[40]

Universities also had a hard time enforcing two statutes pertaining to inter-student behavior. One was a widespread admonition to speak Latin, the language of instruction, even out of class in university residences. But those who persisted in speaking the "vulgar" vernacular could only be fingered by fellow students who heard them lapse. Despite official expectations, most students were loath to report their classmates for such a petty offence. So systems of fines and paid spies were instituted, especially in German universities. "According to ancient custom," rectors and proctors (their enforcers) secretly appointed undergraduate "wolves" (*lupi*) to spy on offending *vulgarisantes*, whose names were reported, entered in a register, and read publicly every Friday.[41] In a colloquial Latin dialogue between students published first in Heidelberg in 1481, one victim (who had

39 Thorndike, *University Records*, 150–54. In the late fifteenth century, Heidelberg students were fined for wearing fancy dress, such as silk sleeves, pointed shoes, stomachers, and truncated tunics. Seybolt, *Manuale Scholarium*, 78, 117–18. For the most part, medieval students dressed little differently from their lay age-mates. A few Oxford, Cambridge, and Paris colleges put their fellows in colored livery; uniform black gowns were an invention of the sixteenth century. Dress regulations were aimed chiefly at the masters, whose garb was borrowed from the secular clergy but occasionally took a fashionable turn. Cobban, *English University Life*, 48–49; Gieysztor, "Management," *HUE* 1:139–41; Rashdall, *Universities of Europe*, 3:385–93; W. N. Hargreaves-Mawdsley, *A History of Academic Dress in Europe until the End of the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963).

40 Thorndike, *University Records*, 150–54, 260–61, 320, 332; Wieruszowski, *Medieval University*, 195–96.

41 Rashdall, *Universities of Europe*, 3: ch. 13; Thorndike, *University Records*, 78 (Paris college statute, 1280).

been reported a dozen times) swore revenge upon his anonymous ac-cuser, but his interlocutor told him that he could have been indicted a *hundred* times: "To tell the truth, I haven't heard a single word from you in Latin for a whole week." If we don't speak Latin, his friend continued, "our speech would be as barren, as absurd, as nothing on earth" like the laity's or "*beani*'s."[42]

A second, virtually unenforceable, statute sought to prevent first-year students, or freshmen—*beani*, or *bejauni* in the student argot, from *bec-jaune*, "yellow-beak"—from being unduly hazed, hurt, or "mulcted" (fined or assessed) by their seniors. Such impositions were ancient rites of initiation that all-male student bodies devised to welcome newcomers to their privileged, misogynist, and cultured company. Most of these exercises in male bonding took the form of removing or "purifying" the freshman's offensive goatlike features: his stench and his ugly buck teeth, horns, and beard. Although the novice was occasionally compared to an ass, a worthless toad, a dumb ox, or a wild boar, the bestial goat was the favorite analogue because of its medieval associations with physical filth, sexual lasciviousness, uncontrolled libido, peasant rusticity, and diabolically horned Jews.[43] The "cure" that would make such a creature fit for polite academic society involved symbolically sawing off his horns and extracting his teeth (with pliers) and actually shaving his beard (in sewer water), and applying ointments and administering pills (made from horse or goat excrement). For good measure, he might be forced to "confess" a host of sins, ranging from theft and rape to heresy and perjury, and

42 Seybolt, *Manuale Scholarium*, 66n4, ch. 11, esp. 72–73. See Ruth Mazo Karras, "Separating the Men from the Beasts: Medieval Universities and Masculine Forma-tion," in *From Boys to Men: Formations of Masculinity in Late Medieval Europe* (Phila-delphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003), 66–108, 181–94 at 78 and 185n49, for a close Leipzig predecessor, *Conversational Latin for New Students*, by Paul Schneevogel (Paulus Niavis).

43 Modern American fraternity rituals are still known to cast initiates as goats, "the dumbest species on earth." Ruth Mazo Karras, "Separating the Men from the Goats: Masculinity, Civilization and Identity Formation in the Medieval University," in Jacqueline Murray, ed., *Conflicted Identities and Multiple Masculinities: Men in the Medieval West* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1999), 189–213, at 212n67, citing Larry Colton, *Goat Brothers* (New York: Doubleday, 1993).

to purchase "penance," sometimes from a costumed "abbot," with a nice dinner and good wine for his new brethren.[44]

The time-honored force of such clandestine social customs, as modern university administrators keep discovering, drew from their medieval counterparts' numerous but largely futile attempts to eradicate—or even moderate—them. In 1340 Parisian officials outlawed the taking of "any money from a Freshman because of his class or anything else, except from roommates . . . or as a voluntary gift." Any landlords or students who knew that "any corporal violence or threats" had been made to a freshman were to report the offenders with dispatch. Orléans and Angers ruled that students' books were not to be seized to pay the initiation fee (*bejaunium*). In the fifteenth century, the university in Valence tried to prohibit the mulcts upon freshmen, particularly the poor, because several had dropped out due to the expense of the required banquets or "the improper and insulting things . . . said and done to them, when they could not pay so much money." At Avignon, protesting scholars formed a new charitable fraternity to supplant the "nefarious and incredible actions at the advent of each novice or what is vulgarly called the purgation of the Freshmen." They believed that those customs had something to do with God's bringing down on the university epidemics which "in times past" had scattered the student population.[45]

As persistent as student customs and adolescent behavior could be, university officials did not lack the disciplinary tools to deal with both. Proctors and bedels were rough and ready to apprehend offenders, by the scruff of the neck if need be. Yet despite the youth of many undergraduates, corporal punishment was seldom resorted to until the fifteenth century, when residential colleges received more and younger laymen and upper-class scions who were less focused on professional careers, taking a degree, or spending their evenings bent over a candlelit book. Before then, misbehavior was effectively dealt with by fines (which hurt *pauperes* the most), denial of college "commons" (food and drink), mulcts of candle wax or "sconces"

44 Rashdall, *Universities of Europe*, 3:376–85; Schwinges, "Student Education," *HUE* 1:230–31; Karras, "Separating the Men from the Beasts."

45 Karras, "Separating the Men from the Beasts," 101; Thorndike, *University Records*, 192–93, 322, 353, 365–66.

of wine, incarceration in university jails, postponement of degrees, suspension or expulsion from the college or university, banishment from town, or, as a last resort, excommunication from the Church.[46]

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As most students quickly discovered, the seriousness of a university's discipline was a faithful reflection of the seriousness of its intellectual goals and curriculum. Even the most carefree (or careless) freshmen soon realized that the length, cost, rigor, and competitive character of a university education demanded from them attention, effort, and resources if they wanted to remain in *statu pupillari* (student status) and to enjoy its considerable privileges and opportunities. In generalizing from his own student days at early Paris, Jacques de Vitry, a prolific preacher, crusading bishop, and cardinal, captured the range of motivations that matriculants brought to medieval universities. "Almost all the students . . . , foreigners and natives, did absolutely nothing except learn or hear something new. Some studied merely to acquire knowledge . . . ; others to acquire fame . . . ; others still for the sake of gain." His disappointment that "very few studied for their own [religious] edification, or that of others" says more about the prelate's zeal for converts than it does about the mixed and largely secular motives of thousands of young men going off to the university,[47] for although the universities were associated with the Church, they were not directly part of it, as a mendicant friary or a cathedral school was.[48]

46 Rashdall, *Universities of Europe*, 3:358–75; *HUE* 1:227, 229; Pedersen, *The First Universities*, 236–41; Cobban, *English University Life*, 43–47; Thorndike, *University Records*, 261, 349 (mulcts of wax).

47 Munro, *Medieval Student*, 18–19, at 18. Vitry likely borrowed St. Bernard's indictment of his monastic brothers to impugn the newer generation of university students. Lawrence, *Medieval Idea of a University*, 11.

48 Toulouse was the first and a rare example of a university founded directly by the Church, but it soon resembled other universities in its self-government and faculty control. It was established in 1229 by Pope Gregory IX specifically to combat the Albigensian heretics in the French Midi. Its initial faculty was recruited from Paris during the latter's dispersion during a town-gown quarrel. For a short time, Dominicans, the shock troops of the anti-heresy crusade, dominated all four faculties, particularly theology. Rashdall, *Universities of Europe*, 2:160–73.

The universities' primary goal, the reason for their creation, was not to produce edified Christians or zealous clergymen, but to prepare professionals to maintain and lead the established social order, secular as well as religious. They pursued that goal through faculty teaching, student study, and the collective pursuit of accepted and acceptable learning. Unlike their modern counterparts, medieval universities were not in the business of "research" or the pursuit of new knowledge and innovation for its own sake. The capital-*t* Truth was already largely known, certainly from the Bible and the teachings of the Mother Church and also from a relatively small number of authoritative authors and texts, some that needed to be *re*discovered from classical antiquity, but all of which needed to be properly interpreted, understood, and, if possible, reconciled. This was the task that university curricula—all of which were cut from the same cloth—sought to perform, and their students were well aware and in large measure willing, if not always eager, to cooperate.

Not unlike today, the higher professional faculties (law, medicine, and theology) depended on the preliminary preparation of undergraduates in the liberal arts and sciences and, to a lesser extent, in the three philosophies (natural, moral, and metaphysical). This was largely a six- or seven-year process that led to the B.A., the lower degree, and the M.A., the upper degree, in the arts faculty. Most students were content or forced by circumstance to stop at the B.A.[49] Only those who sought to teach at the upper secondary or university level or to pursue a degree in the other learned professions continued for two or three more years for the M.A., six or eight in medicine and law, and as many as fifteen in theology, thirty-five being the minimum age for Th.D.s (Doctors of Theology).[50]

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49 Drop-out estimates range from 50 to 80 percent; in the fifteenth-century German universities, only 3 or 4 in 10 students received a B.A., 1 in 10 the M.A. Verger, "Teachers," *HUE* 1:147; Schwinges, "Student Education," *HUE* 1:196; Peter Moraw, "Careers of Graduates," *HUE* 1:254; Karras, "Separating the Men from the Beasts," 69; Cobban, *Medieval English Universities*, 354–57. I use the familiar modern American initials for Bachelor and Master of Arts (B.A., M.A.) instead of the invented contemporary abbreviations for *Baccalarius* and *Magister in Artibus* (A.B., A.M.).

50 Schwinges, "Student Education," *HUE* 1:235.

The degree sequence of the higher faculties resembled that of the arts. In each, the doctorate was less a separate degree than a title of mastery conferred after a rigorous private examination by several senior masters and an easier public inaugural disputation, with the award of the *licentia docendi* (the universal license to teach) by the university chancellor and induction (*inceptio*) of the candidate into the masters' guild. The former gave the candidate permission "to teach, to ascend the master's chair [*cathedra*], to comment, to interpret, to defend [in disputations] and to practice all activities of a doctor here and everywhere, in all countries and places."[51] The latter ceremony often occurred in a church and involved orations by the candidate's new peers and the bestowal upon him of a biretta or cap (to crown his achievement), a ring (to connote his betrothal to learning), an open book (to mark his dedication to teaching), and perhaps the kiss of peace. He was now prepared to assume the full range of professorial duties in a university. At Paris, Oxford, and Cambridge, he was indeed obligated to teach for one or two years of "necessary regency."[52]

The liberal arts curriculum through which most masters had passed was devoted to the *trivium*, the three verbal disciplines of grammar, rhetoric, and logic (or dialectic), and the *quadrivium*, the four mathematical subjects of arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy. Obviously missing from this rigid curriculum fashioned from classical and early medieval precedents were modern subjects

51 Wieruszowski, *Medieval University*, 172 (a fourteenth-century Bologna citation); see also Thorndike, *University Records*, 309. The papal or imperial privilege of teaching at "all" other *studia generalia* was not recognized even among the oldest and largest universities. Oxford and Paris refused to admit each other's doctors without administering their own examinations and licenses. Provincial universities were certainly denied parity. In founding Salamanca, Pope Alexander IV expressly exempted Paris and Bologna. Rashdall, *Universities of Europe*, 1:13–14; Cobban, *Medieval Universities*, 30–31. For Paris's complaint that "England" (Oxford and Cambridge) and Montpellier were not automatically accepting her "licentiates" (masters), "no matter how great [their] reputation[s]," see Thorndike, *University Records*, 123.

52 Schwinges, "Student Education," *HUE* 1:234–35; Gordon Leff, "The *Trivium* and the Three Philosophies," *HUE* 1:325; Rashdall, *Universities of Europe*, 1:224–31; Pedersen, *First Universities*, 262–70; Leff, *Paris and Oxford*, 147–60; Cobban, *Medieval English Universities*, 171–72.

such as history, poetry (regarded as pagan or profane), the social sciences, and the applied (or disreputably "mechanical") sciences.[53] The natural sciences came into view—in books, not labs—through the extensive study of Aristotle's natural philosophy and through glosses and updates by professors such as Oxford's Roger Bacon and Robert Grosseteste and Paris's Jean Buridan. More philosophical training came from exposure to Aristotle's other works and to the writings of Boethius (d. 525), Duns Scotus, William of Ockham, and the Arab commentators Averroës and Avicenna.[54]

The liberal arts were regarded hierarchically, but the order shifted with the rise of universities in the early thirteenth century. A century earlier, the trivium had outranked the quadrivium, and grammar and rhetoric outshone logic. But the appearance of the main body of Aristotle's works in Latin translation by 1200 rearranged the university syllabus. In the law-dominated faculties of Italy, rhetoric retained its dominance, but in the northern universities, the quadrivium increased its appeal, and logic assumed the top position overall, beneath only theology, the "queen of the sciences."[55] By the third quarter of the thirteenth century, the shift in Paris had so

53 The Goliardic tradition of songs was the students' response to the curricular lack of even classical poetry. See John Addington Symonds, ed. and trans., *Wine, Women, and Song: Students' Songs of the Middle Ages* (London: Chatto & Windus [1884] 1907).

54 Verger, "Patterns," *HUE* 1:41–42, ch. 10; Huff, *Rise of Early Modern Science*, 180–89; Edward Grant, "Science and the Medieval University," in James M. Kittelson and Pamela J. Transue, eds., *Rebirth, Reform, and Resilience: Universities in Transition, 1300–1700* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1984), 68–102; David L. Wagner, ed., *The Seven Liberal Arts in the Middle Ages* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984; Leff, *Paris and Oxford*, 138–46; J. M. Fletcher, "The Faculty of Arts," *HUO* 1: ch. 9; P. Osmond Lewry, "Grammar, Logic and Rhetoric, 1220–1320," *HUO* 1:ch. 10; J. A. Weisheipl, "Science in the Thirteenth Century," *HUO* 1: ch. 11; Leader, *University to 1546, HUC* 1:chs. 4–6. For the development of medieval philosophy and its role in the university curriculum, see John Marenbon, *Medieval Philosophy: An Historical and Philosophical Introduction* (London: Routledge, 2007); Marenbon, *Medieval Philosophy*, Routledge History of Philosophy, vol. 3 (London: Routledge, 1998); David Knowles, *The Evolution of Medieval Thought* (Baltimore: Helicon Press, 1962).

55 Leff, "*Trivium*," *HUE* 1:307–8. As Robert de Sorbon reminded the fellows of his Paris college, "The sword of God's word is forged by grammar, sharpened by logic, and burnished by rhetoric, but only theology can use it." Charles Homer Haskins, *Studies in Mediaeval Culture* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1929), 46.

alarmed Henri d'Andeli that he penned a satirical poem, "The Battle of the Seven Arts," which he staged just outside Orléans, where Grammar fought to survive against Paris's Logic. Although Grammar recruited Homer and the set-book grammarians Donatus and Priscian, it was no match for the cavalry of Paris, where "the arts students . . . care for naught except to read the [Aristotelian] books of nature" and "children" of fifteen learn to "prattle" logic instead of discourse in elegant Latin. The higher faculties "did not care a fig about their dispute": Theology returned to Paris and "left the arts to fight it out together." The timorous Orléans medical faculty "all would turn to money making / If they saw in it no danger."[56]

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The contemporaneous advent of the Aristotelian corpus and the major universities of Paris, Oxford, and Bologna also gave rise to a signature spirit of inquiry and a pedagogical style that has come to be known, especially after Renaissance humanists assailed it, as "scholasticism," or the work and methods of the "schoolmen" (*scholastici*). Aristotle endowed the universities not only with "a common theoretical framework in a common vocabulary" but also with "the substantive knowledge to go with that framework for each of the recognized branches of knowledge." The universities adopted a pedagogy that fit the new logic-heavy curriculum precisely while building on some of the techniques of the great teachers and cathedral schools that preceded them.[57]

The main vehicles of instruction—always in distinctly scholastic, highly abbreviated Latin—were the lecture (*lectio*) and the disputation (*disputatio*). Lectures were of two kinds: "ordinary," given only by regent masters at "the doctoral hour" (beginning as early as 5 a.m.

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56 Louis John Paetow, ed. and trans., *Two Medieval Satires on the University of Paris: La Bataille des VII Ars of Henri D'Andeli and the Morale Scholarium of John of Garland* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1927), 39, 43, 44, 47, 58, 59.

57 Verger, "Patterns," *HUE* 1:43–44; Leff, "Trivium," *HUE* 1:319 (quotation); John W. Baldwin, *The Scholastic Culture of the Middle Ages, 1000–1300* (Lexington, Mass.: D. C. Heath, 1971); William Turner, "Scholasticism," in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, 16 vols. (New York: Robert Appleton Co., 1907–14), 13:548–52 (also http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/13548a.htm).

and as late as 7 a.m., depending on the season), and "extraordinary,"
or "cursory," given in the afternoon by younger masters but more
often by new "bachelors" (*baccalarii*) in their early twenties who were
working toward their M.A.s, kin to modern American T.A.s (grad-
uate teaching assistants). At least once a week, in the afternoon or
evening, mostly within the master's *familia* of advisees in the hall or
college, the same teachers would offer a review session (*repetitio*) on
the master's lectures to ensure that the main points were memorized
and lacunae filled. Ordinary lectures were devoted to systematically
reading out, but mostly explaining and commenting on problems
in, the canonical texts assigned. This offered the faculty their best
chance to say something original and up to date, as long as it was
not perceived as heretical.[58] Yet as masters and former masters such
as William of Ockham, John Wycliffe, and Jan Hus sometimes dis-
covered, their freewheeling arguments and conclusions *could* lead to
trouble with external authorities for themselves and for the reflected
reputation of their alma maters. In that, universities and their pro-
fessors have remained true to form.

Since arts students were not expected to purchase their own
books because of the expense, they relied largely on aural memory
or, more rarely, took abbreviated notes on wax or cheap parchment
tablets on their laps. The wax tablets gave rise to a distinctive script
consisting of straight lines and downward strokes to avoid plowing
an uphill furrow in the wax with the metal stylus.[59] Those who were
inattentive or not blessed with sharp recall were known to make a
ruckus or throw stones to slow the delivery of lecturers who, with
university approval, "utter[ed] their words rapidly so that the mind
of the hearer can take them in but the hand cannot keep up with

58 Schwinges, "Student Education," *HUE* 1:232; Cobban, *English University Life*,
170–74; Pedersen, *First Universities*, 250–54; Mary Martin McLaughlin, *Intellectual
Freedom and Its Limitations in the University of Paris in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Cen-
turies* (New York: Arno Press, 1977 [1952]); J.M.M.H. Thijssen, *Censure and Heresy at the
University of Paris, 1200–1400* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998).

59 Richard H. Rouse and Mary A. Rouse, "Wax Tablets," *Language and Com-
munication* 9:2–3 (1989), 175–91. See also Charles Burnett, "Give him the White Cow:
Notes and Note-Taking in the Universities in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries,"
History of Universities 14 (1995–96), 1–30, at 17.

FIGURE 1. Laurentius de Voltolina painted Bologna professor Henricus de Alemania speaking *ex cathedra* (from his raised chair) in the 1350s. Alemania's 23 male students ranged from young undergraduates to greybeards. At least one takes notes, ten follow (and perhaps gloss) the lecture in their own texts, and others chat or doze.

them," as in model sermons and lectures in the higher faculties.[60] Scholars in the higher faculties had an easier time of it because they were obliged to buy their textbooks and bring them to class to follow the lecture by making interlinear glosses or marginal notes (including cartoon portraits of the lecturer). They were also favored by having slanted desks provided, whereas the younger arts students had

60 Thorndike, *University Records*, 237; Jan Zolkowski, "Latin Learning and Latin Literature," in Nigel Morgan and Rodney M. Thomson, eds., *1100–1400*, vol. 2 of *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain* [*CHBB*] (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 238; Charles Burnett, "The Introduction of Scientific Texts into Britain, c. 1100–1250," *CHBB* 2:453; M. B. Parkes, "The Provision of Books," in J. I. Catto and R. Evans, eds., *Late Medieval Oxford*, vol. 2 of *HUO* (1992), 470.
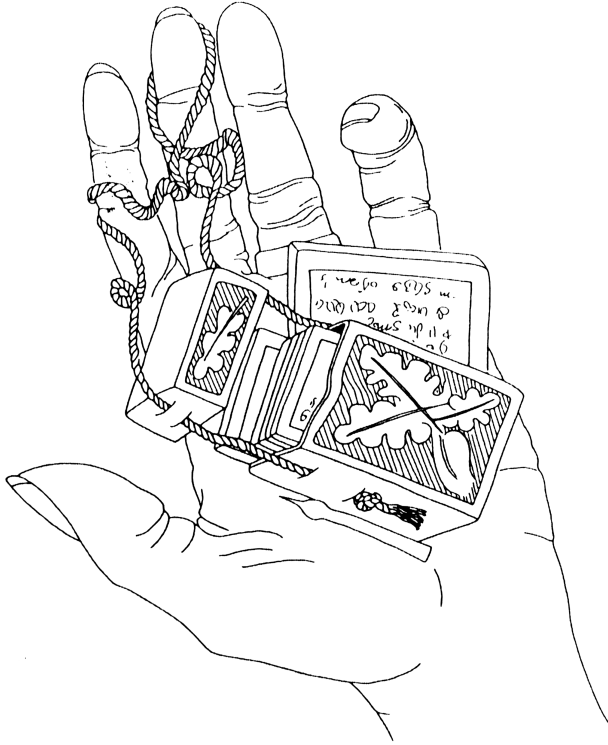
FIGURE 2. Medieval students often took class notes on wax tablets with a pointed stylus. This reconstructed set of eight small tablets, kept in a leather pouch and attached by a cord to a belt, was used in fourteenth-century York, England, in lieu of scraps of parchment.

only benches and were sometimes forced to sit on the straw-covered floor to suppress their pride.[61]

One of the signal innovations of the medieval university was the firm linkage of examinations with teaching as a way to evaluate the student's comprehension and application of what he had been

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61 Thorndike, *University Records*, 246; Gieysztor, "Management," *HUE* 1:138; Parkes, "Provision of Books," *HUO* 2:407. In all faculties, the sons of nobles and prelates were seated in the front row, but well-to-do students of bourgeois origins were sometimes allowed to buy themselves an honorary seat on the "noble bench." Schwinges, "Student Education," *HUE* 1:206.

taught. The main instrument for doing that was the oral disputation, which was conducted ordinarily between two scholars according to Aristotle's well-defined syllogistic rules of engagement.[62] The conduct of disputations reflected the master's "ordinary" lectures, which established a textual authority's thesis and argument, presented counter-theses and objections from other authorities, offered his own commentary in an effort to clarify or resolve the question, and then often applied his results to contemporary problems in religion, politics, and law. The popular model for this dialectical approach was Peter Abelard's *Sic et Non* (*Yes and No*), an attempt to reconcile the contradictions in biblical and patristic sources. But the method developed fully in the mid-twelfth century with the arrival of the "new learning" grounded in Aristotle and spread into French cathedral schools and Italian law schools just as the new universities were being established. Gratian's *Decretum* (c. 1140), the basis of canon law, and Peter Lombard's *Book of Sentences* (c. 1160), the dominant theology text, set the standard for dialectical procedure. Both, like most lectures and disputations, revolved around questions (*quaestiones*).[63]

Disputations were conducted in three forms. Younger arts students learned and practiced the art in private sessions in their master's classroom or quarters. But they learned the fine points of verbal fencing—where logic counted more than rhetoric—by observing regular public disputations between older students, particularly bachelors or masters. In these a presiding master (*praeses*) posed a question germane to the subject and an appointed "respondent" attempted to reply and answer objections made by the master and other classmate "opponents." The next day the *praeses* would "determine," or sum up the debate, without necessarily resolving all of the points *pro* and *contra*.[64]

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62 The six books comprising Aristotle's *logica nova* (new logic), especially *The Topics*, were foundational in setting the dialectical/disputational agenda. For a list of debating rules laid down for the Collège de Sorbonne in 1344, see Thorndike, *University Records*, 198–201.

63 Monika Asztalos, "The Faculty of Theology," *HUE* 1:410–11; Leff, *Paris and Oxford*, 120–21.

64 Nancy Siraisi, "The Faculty of Medicine," *HUE* 1:326–28; Leff, *Paris and Oxford*, 167–73; Pedersen, *First Universities*, 258–64, 267; Ku-ming (Kevin) Chang, "From

The third form of disputation was the *quodlibeta*, which began
and continued with written or oral questions "on whatever" from
any members of the large public audience, consisting of students
of all ages, masters, prelates, and other urban eminences.[65] These
disputations occurred largely in churches or cathedrals in conjunc-
tion with baccalaureate examinations during Advent and Lent. In
thirteenth-century Paris, they might also feature as many as four
respondents, one from each "nation." Because of their somewhat
freer form, they could also become occasions for "piling on" the
candidate or, if the respondent was a licentiate or master, for set-
tling old intellectual or personal scores. The unpredictable choice of
topics held the possibility of introducing and airing "hot" topics in
current events.

Some subjects proved a little too hot for officials' taste, namely
sex and religion. By the early sixteenth century, and probably much
earlier, German masters and bachelors had to be warned not to pose
quodlibetal questions "of little importance which are also commonly
called *facetiae* or 'salts,' shameful, lascivious and impudent, which
by their allurements may attract or provoke the religious or inno-
cent youth ignorant of sexual matters, or any others, to unseemly or
illicit lust." Much earlier, thirteenth-century Paris's hot arts topics
included any "purely theological question," such as "the Trinity and
incarnation." Any master who posed a question having to do with
"the faith and philosophy" was expected to "settle it in favor of the
faith" in his concluding "determination."[66]

Oral Disputation to Written Text: The Transformation of the Dissertation in Early
Modern Europe," *History of Universities* 19:2 (2004), 129–87, esp. 131–45; *The Cambridge
History of Later Medieval Philosophy from the Rediscovery of Aristotle to the Disintegration
of Scholasticism, 1100–1600*, ed. Norman Kretzmann, Anthony Kenny, and Jan Pinborg
(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), ch. 1, esp. 21–29; Alex J. Novikoff,
"Toward a Cultural History of Scholastic Disputation," *American Historical Review*
117:2 (April 2012), 330–64; Alex J. Novikoff, *The Medieval Culture of Disputation: Peda-
gogy, Practice, and Performance* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013).

65 For a dozen topics thrown at an Italian bachelor of divinity in 1429, see Thorn-
dike, *University Records*, 307–8.

66 Cobban, *English University Life*, 174–76; Thorndike, *University Records*, 104
(Paris, c. 1240), 372 (Heidelberg, 1518). On the general question of academic freedom,

Disputations served several purposes beyond the curricular. In a pre-Gutenberg age, they served masters as oral publications, complete with "footnotes" in the form of references to authoritative texts. The large and important public audiences that heard the masters' inaugural and quodlibetal disputations and the somewhat smaller assemblies that attended their weekly encounters could easily size up their intellectual trajectory and thrust over time, as we might by reading a scholar's works chronologically. Their opponents' renderings—sometimes rendings—of their positions lent critical perspective. In addition, the oral cast of the disputation influenced the textual form of many medieval books. Like Lombard's *Sentences* and many other scholastic texts, Thomas Aquinas's various *summae* were mounted on questions and ridden to conclusion on the dialectical procedures of disputation. The proliferation of written dialogues, debate poems, recorded disputations, visual images of debate, and even antiphonal music suggests that by the thirteenth century "a culture of disputation" had taken root in Europe, particularly in the north.[67]

Medieval students—graduate and undergraduate—found other important uses for the disputation. In their masculine microcosmos, where marriage and fatherhood were postponed, aristocratic jousts and swordfights were prohibited, and team sports were a phenomenon of the future, the ritual combat of disputing was a nonlethal alternative to warfare and a fair field upon which to establish one's masculinity and social status.[68] Although his father had been a Breton warrior-knight, Abelard confessed that he, the first-born son, "totally abdicated the court of Mars to be received into the

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see William J. Courtenay, "Inquiry and Inquisition: Academic Freedom in Medieval Universities," *Church History* 58:2 (June 1989), 168–81.

67 Chang, "From Oral Disputation to Written Text," 133–34, 143–45; Novikoff, "Toward a Cultural History," 332, 364; Jody Enders, "The Theatres of Scholastic Erudition," *Comparative Drama* 27:3 (Fall 1993), 341–63.

68 William J. Courtenay, *Schools & Scholars in Fourteenth-Century England* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1987), 29–30; Karras, "Separating the Men from the Beasts," 67–68, 88–95; Walter J. Ong, "Agonistic Structures in Academia: Past to Present," *Daedalus* 103:4 (Fall 1974), 229–38. Ong argues that learning Latin in all-male, corporally disciplined schools and wielding the language in a special fashion in a university setting was the equivalent of a tribal male "puberty rite" (231–32).

bosom of Minerva" well before he met Heloise. "Since I preferred the panoply of dialectical arguments to all the documents of philosophy," he wrote, "I exchanged other arms for these and esteemed the conflict of disputation more than the trophies of war."[69] The well-regulated practice of verbal fencing, with its sharp logical thrusts and deft parries, provided frequent occasions for the public display of skill, style, and endurance and of measured pride accruing from worthy performance as well as decisive victory.

As the early agonistic training against one's masters gave way to more consequential matches against one's peers, the temptation to rely on rhetorical tricks rather than logical precision, to lose one's composure, and to let conceit show its brazen face drew warnings from magisterial mentors. In *Metalogicon* (1149), a spirited defense of the trivium, Paris-educated John of Salisbury warned, first, that "we should not dispute everywhere, and always, on all sorts of topics." The verbal combat of disputation should remain in the academy, where two evenly matched opponents resort only to "proper weapons" and follow the established rules of the game. In disputations, as opposed to inductive arguments, rhetoric, whose goal is to persuade, should give way to logic, which seeks to convince. Ill-temper, verbosity, quibbling over definitions, ignoring syllogistic form, showing off, and feigning confusion were all signs of "perversity" and an unworthy opponent. A century later, John of Garland with less sportsmanship coached disputants, especially bachelors about to "determine," to "listen attentively, replying briefly to objections; conceal your own ignorance but exhibit the ignorance of your opponent by trimming him down as if you were hazing a yellow-bill [*bec-jaune*] student."[70] The competitive, even combative, spirit that animated academic jousting went a long way to help university students not only establish their superiority to women and the uneducated but also define themselves as men and intellectuals in a Latin West increasingly attuned to their value and eager for their services in church and state.

69 Thorndike, *University Records*, 3.

70 *The Metalogicon of John of Salisbury: A Twelfth-Century Defense of the Verbal and Logical Arts of the Trivium*, ed. and trans. Daniel D. McGarry (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1955), 189–202; John of Garland, *Morale Scholarium*, 160.

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From the twelfth century to our own, universities have always been bibliocentric, although the role of books has changed over time. The earliest university seals and coats of arms feature a book and often a hand in the act of donation or of pledging an oath on the Bible or a volume of the university's privileges or statutes.[71] As much as medieval teaching and learning depended on mouth and ear, early students depended heavily on books and eyes for their educations.[72] Having studied, indeed mastered, them to earn their positions, professors read out and commented on a number of standard books in the syllabus. Students argued about what they heard publicly and read privately and used their notes to create minibooks for their own purposes, even sale. Curious, inventive, and ambitious faculty wrote new books and tracts to resolve problems in old ones, to better explain the texts' lessons for new generations, and to apply those lessons to pressing current issues.[73] To assist all of their members, residential halls, colleges, and universities slowly began to collect books for reference, study, and lending. To provide adequate supplies of vital reading material, universities encouraged a host of bookmakers (including scribes, parchmenters, binders, and illuminators) and dealers to locate in their midst and then often regulated many of them to ensure the academic quality of their products.

Scholars in search of books, primarily but not exclusively in the higher faculties, could obtain them in four ways (in addition to theft,

71 Astrik L. Gabriel, "The Significance of the Book in Mediaeval University Coats of Arms," in Gabriel, *Garlandia*, ch. 3.

72 The use by Italians of a twelfth-century translation of an eleventh-century Arabic book on optics to invent eyeglasses in the late thirteenth century did much to help nearsighted scholars, particularly those over forty, by promoting the corrective properties of convex lenses. By the fourteenth century, saints and scholars reading books with handheld spectacles made frequent appearances in portraits. Edward Rosen, "The Invention of Eyeglasses," *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences* 11:1–2 (Jan. and April 1956), 13–46, 183–218; Vincent Ilardi, *Renaissance Vision from Spectacles to Telescopes* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 2007), 13–18.

73 Daniel Hobbins, "The Schoolman as Public Intellectual: Jean Gerson and the Late Medieval Tract," *American Historical Review* 108:5 (Dec. 2003), 1308–37.

which then as now was not unheard of because books were so valuable). They could *buy* them, if they could afford the relatively high prices of handwritten (*manus-scriptus*) parchment codices, which all university books were for the first 250 years until paper became common and then mechanized movable-type printing was invented. They could *borrow* them from willing friends, masters, or libraries. They could laboriously *copy* the desired volume or hire someone—a fellow student in need of cash, a professional scribe—to do so. Or they could essentially *write their own* pocket-sized books from lecture, sermon, reading, and disputation notes by adding their own glosses, commentaries, and synopses.[74]

In the professional faculties, students were normally required to bring to class the texts on which their masters were lecturing. Especially during their first few years, theology students needed their own Bibles and copies of Lombard's *Sentences* and were admonished to carry them to class in order to make glosses between lines and in the margins. Future lawyers were obliged to bring their Justinians and Gratians for the same reason. Even in the Heidelberg arts faculty, every student was urged to have his own texts of Aristotle "which he should gloss, if he knows how to write [a surprising clause in a university statute]. If he does not know how to write, he shall

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74 Kristian Jensen, "Textbooks in the University: The Evidence from the Books," in L. Hellinga and J. B. Trapp, eds., *1400–1557*, vol. 3 of *CHBB* (2002), ch. 16, at 355, 357; Parkes, "Provision of Books," *HUO* 2:424–26. Masters also produced full-sized books consisting of their "ordinary" lectures and learned commentaries, often recorded by a student and corrected by the master. These *glosses* on canonical texts were so popular and useful that manuscripts were formally laid out and often ruled to accommodate both text and commentary. The text was scripted in larger letters in one or two columns in the middle of the sheet; the glosses were written in a smaller hand between the textual lines and in all four margins to produce a kind of hypertext. Mary A. Rouse and Richard H. Rouse, *Authentic Witnesses: Approaches to Medieval Texts and Manuscripts* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1991), ch. 7; M. B. Parkes, "Layout and Presentation of the Text," *CHBB* 2:60–62; Rodney M. Thompson, "Parchment and Paper, Ruling and Ink," *CHBB* 2:154: Jeremy Catto, "Biblical Exegesis, Theology, and Philosophy," *CHBB* 2:219–21, 223–24; Zolkowski, "Latin Learning," *CHBB* 2:236; Nigel Ramsay, "Law," *CHBB* 2:253; Peter Murray Jones, "University Books and the Sciences, c. 1250–1400," *CHBB* 2:453–55.

pay careful attention . . . lest he annoy or impede the master" or other scholars "by clamor or insolence."[75]

To purchase these volumes, students resorted to stationers (*stationarii*) or booksellers (*librarii*), many of whom were under university supervision. In 1323 the University of Paris was served by twenty-eight booksellers in the Latin Quarter besides numerous keepers of open-air bookstalls on the Left Bank of the Seine. At the end of the thirteenth century, Bologna tried to limit its licensed stationers to five, although many other dealers were subject to municipal authorities. In 1346 Oxford had only four on its approved list.[76] If stationers wanted to do business with the university's bookish population, they had to swear an oath and give security that they would adhere to university rules and price limits. New book prices tended to follow the market, but the large secondhand trade was subject to university controls on mark-ups, sales, and condition.

Authorized texts had to be "good and legible and faithful" versions of exemplary originals, which, being hand produced rather than mechanically reproduced, were always difficult to verify.[77] In the larger universities, it was the duty of university-appointed boards of masters and bookdealers to see that exemplars were as accurate as possible and were never sold to persons outside the university's precincts without prior approval. At Bologna, the weekly tasks of the board were so onerous that its faculty members were excused from all other administrative offices and service duties for the year. To prevent artificial shortages from driving up demand and prices, stationers were obliged to put any secondhand book up for immediate sale and to write on the inside cover the name of the seller and the price he was paid for it. In Paris, the bookseller's commission

75 Thorndike, *University Records*, 194 (Paris, canon law, 1340), 244–45 (Paris, theology, 1366), 353 (Heidelberg, arts, 1466).

76 Rashdall, *Universities of Europe*, 1:423; Gieysztor, "Management," *HUE* 1:128; Elisabeth Leedham-Green, "University Libraries and Book-Sellers," *CHBB* 3:329.

77 Alfonso X el Sabio, *Siete Partidas* (1256–65), quoted in George D. Greenia, "University Book Production and Courtly Patronage in Thirteenth-Century France and Spain," in Donald J. Kagay and Joseph T. Snow, eds., *Medieval Iberia: Essays in the Literature and History of Medieval Spain* (New York: Peter Lang, 1997), 103–28, at 110.

was capped at 1.5 percent. If he tried to charge more, he could be
blacklisted from all university business.[78]

Stationers dealt not only in whole codices but also in constituent
quires, or *peciae*, of various lengths. Following ancient Roman and
monastic techniques, some standard university texts were "mass"-
produced by teams of scriveners or copyists writing to dictation,
quire by quire. These, in turn, were delivered unbound to stationers
or booksellers, who could then have them bound (in vellum, leather,
or boards) or lend individual peciae out to students or hired scribes
for further copying. (Thus the constant need for inspection of all
texts to ensure their faithfulness to the best available exemplars.) The
regulated pecia system, complete with university price lists, seems to
have originated in Bologna and other Italian universities early in the
thirteenth century. It spread to at least eleven universities, mostly in
southern Europe, and also to Oxford, Paris, and Toulouse. In less-
or unregulated iterations, it undoubtedly found its way to many other
university towns before petering out in the mid-fifteenth century as
printing made texts much cheaper and more readily available.[79]

Stationers also sold the "paper" of the day—parchment (*mem-
brana*), made from young sheep, calf, or goat skins. Like books, this
academic necessity was closely regulated for price and quality by the
major universities. Paris's rules in 1291 underlined the importance
of parchment for book-making and note-taking. Although most
arts students took class notes and scholars incised first drafts with a

78 Rashdall, *Universities of Europe*, 1:189–90 (Bologna), 421–23 (Paris); Thorndike,
University Records, 100–102 (Paris), 166–68 (Bologna); Gieysztor, "Management," *HUE*
1:128; Pedersen, *The First Universities*, 232–35. See also Richard H. Rouse and Mary A.
Rouse, "The Book Trade at the University of Paris, ca. 1250-ca. 1350," in Louis J. Batail-
lon, Bertrand J. Guyot, and Richard H. Rouse, eds., *La Production du livre universitaires
au moyen âge: exemplar et pecia. Actes du symposium tenu au Collegio San Bonaventura de
Grottaferrata en mais 1983* (Paris: Éditions du Centre Nationale de la Recherche Scien-
tifique, 1988), 41–114; also in Rouse and Rouse, *Authentic Witnesses*, ch. 8.

79 Pedersen, *First Universities*, 234–35; Graham Pollard, "The *Pecia* System in
the Medieval Universities," in M. B. Parkes and Andrew G. Watson, eds., *Medieval
Scribes, Manuscripts & Libraries: Essays Presented to N. R. Ker* (London: Scolar Press,
1978), 145–61; Thorndike, *University Records*, 112–17 (Paris price list, 1286), 166–68 (Bo-
logna, 14th c.), 259 (Montpellier law faculty, 1396).

pointed stylus on wax tablets, their revised compositions were ultimately transferred, in a more fluid cursive hand, to more expensive parchment sheets with reed or quill pen and ink.[80] In order to hold down the price of parchment, Paris officials sought to restrict sales to the courtyard of St. Mathurin's Church, which was patrolled by university bedels and a quartet of sworn parchment-dealers. The university's dealers were given a 24-hour head start before foreign or other dealers were allowed to sell. Despite oaths, fraud was inevitable in such a competitive and lucrative market. Accordingly, the university ruled that sellers could not "hide good parchment, if they have it with them," in order to drive up the price. Scholarly customers were to "buy nothing by candlelight in secret" and forbidden to buy for resale. Sellers were to profit no more than 2.5 percent. So vital was parchment to academic life that the university regulations were to be read every year "in sermons and in classes."[81]

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In the end, if a scholar could not beg, buy, or build his own books, he might, if he had enough seniority, borrow them from his collegiate residence or a university library. But if England is any guide, residential halls and hostels had few books and fewer libraries, although they largely housed graduate students who had most need of them.[82] Moreover, until the fifteenth century, universities saw little reason to build expensive libraries for collective use. Oxford did so as early as 1320 only because of a large donation from a bishop, but the library did not open for general use until 1412. Large donations from Humfrey, Duke of Gloucester, beginning in 1435 led to the construction of a larger library in 1478 on the second floor of the new Divinity School. Cambridge took the first three-quarters of the century to

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80 Rouse and Rouse, "Wax Tablets," 175, 177, 183; Burnett, "Give him the White Cow," 9, 12–15.

81 Thorndike, *University Records*, 119–23.

82 Among Oxford's numerous halls and Cambridge's hostels, only four (two at each university) appear to have had small libraries for their residents. Cobban, *Medieval English Universities*, 153, 381–82.

complete its Schools Quad with separate libraries for three of the faculties, but the divinity library was functional by 1416. Salamanca and Cracow were not far behind in launching libraries for their own advanced scholars.[83]

Until the sixteenth century, few undergraduates were allowed to borrow books from or even to study in university *or* college libraries. The official reason given for excluding them from Oxford's Congregation House library was that "an importunate multitude of students would prejudice in various ways the books of the university" and inconvenience serious scholars by the "excessive tumult of popular concourse."[84] Oxford dons seem to have been less worried than their Angers counterparts that undergraduate study dates might be "occasions for sin," though it may have crossed their minds. A more pragmatic reason for excluding undergraduates was that university libraries housed very few titles in the arts faculty syllabus. The books in academic libraries were largely hefty folios devoted to the classics in law, theology, and philosophy (and occasionally medicine), which were chained to the shelves to prevent theft or removal. When opened on the small lecterns or desks provided, they encroached on the access of two or three potential readers.[85]

Beginning in the thirteenth century, graduate students and masters had a better chance of finding the books they needed or wanted in their own colleges, if they were fortunate enough to be members. Both the "Sorbonne" (est. 1257) and the College of the Treasurer (est. 1268) allowed their initial fellows to "receive books from the common store" but forbade them "on no condition [to] remove or lend them

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83 Parkes, "Provision of Books," *HUO* 2:470–83; Cobban, *Medieval English Universities*, 86, 381; Leedham-Green, "University Libraries and Book-sellers," *CHBB* 3:316–18; Gieysztor, "Management," *HUE* 1:138.

84 By 1453 Oxford's worries had been realized: an "importunate throng of [graduate] students . . . crowded each other" at the small and too-few desks and "got in each other's way." Parkes, "Provision of Books," *HUO* 2:477–78.

85 When Oxford established a new arts course in 1439, the books appropriate to it were housed separately in a new chest in the Congregation House, overseen by the chaplain-librarian. Regent masters and hall principals could borrow books from it after registering, in case of loss, a price of each greater than its replacement cost. Parkes, "Provision of Books," *HUO* 2:478, 479–80.

FIGURE 3. The most valuable books in medieval college libraries, usually large folios, were often chained and could be read only on a narrow desk below. This half-press in the library of Merton College, Oxford, retained a number of chained volumes well into the twentieth century.

out of the house" to be "copied or even studied, because thus they might be lost or mutilated or soiled."[86] Like most medieval colleges, Bologna's Spanish College, opened in 1370, kept books for its fellows in two places: a book cupboard and a larger library, where the books were chained. None of the books were to be "loaned to anyone, either within or without the college, under any pretext whatsoever." If a book was lost, the miscreant would "forfeit food and clothes and all emoluments owed [him] by the college" until he had replaced it with his own funds. If a fellow stole so much as "one sheet" of parchment from the library, he was "expelled irrevocably from the house."[87]

Oxford's earliest colleges operated much the same way. Merton College (est. 1264) was the first to add a substantial library to its fabric (1373–78) and New College (est. 1379) the earliest to include a library in its original design. Following the precedent of neighboring friaries and monasteries, their collections and other Oxford holdings were divided into a chained, or reference, component (about 20 percent) and a larger lending, or circulating, section. The fellows normally had keys to the *libraria*, but they could not remove the books, even when they were unchained. From the lending portion, which was stored in multiply locked chests in the college's treasury, the fellows, according to seniority, received annual allocations (*electiones*) of books for preparing and delivering their lectures. Absentminded professors frequently lent these smaller volumes to colleagues or lost them before the due date, which hastened the demise of the system in the early sixteenth century, as did the availability of affordable printed books.[88]

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86 Thorndike, *University Records*, 77, 90.

87 Marti, *Spanish College at Bologna*, 283–87.

88 Cobban, *Medieval English Universities*, 382, 385–86; Parkes, "Provision of Books," *HUO* 2:431–32, 455–61, 481; Neil R. Ker, "Oxford College Libraries before 1500," in Ijsewijn and Paquet, *Universities in the Late Middle Ages*, 293–311, at 294–95; H. W. Garrod, "The Library Regulations of a Medieval College," *The Library* n.s. 8:3 (Sept. 1927), 312–35; Roger Lovatt, "College and University Book Collections and Libraries," in Elisabeth Leedham-Green and Teresa Webber, eds., *To 1640*, vol. 1 of *The Cambridge History of Libraries in Britain and Ireland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Leedham-Green, "University Libraries and Book-sellers," *CHBB* 3: ch. 15.

Part of the reason for the strict regulations was the small size and relative rarity of most college collections. All of their books were parchment manuscripts, which were difficult to produce and expensive to acquire and replace. Unlike a modern university library's vast and heterogeneous holdings, most medieval collections—largely the gifts of founders and other wealthy or pious donors—were indispensable to the concentrated scholastic curriculum. Before 1500, the largest Oxford college libraries numbered between 400 and 800 volumes. Cambridge's seldom topped 200.[89] Despite their size, they were not easy to use once entrance was gained. Even inflexible codex catalogues, lists on the face ends of book presses, and short titles and shelf marks written on the fore edges of the books (which faced out to accommodate the chain clasps) presented difficulties because the books might be organized by subject, date of acquisition, or size. Finding a book was only half the battle. Finding a place to read it was the other. In the early libraries, a patron opened the volume on a lectern or desk below tall or above short shelves and stood to read. Later, by popular demand, narrow seats were added. Later still came polished, finely constructed presses, which can still be seen in many Oxford and Cambridge libraries. Most libraries, open only a few hours during the day, were oriented east to west and the shelves and presses were situated perpendicular to the walls between the windows to take advantage of the light.[90]

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As they do today, universities in medieval Europe played a number of roles in their respective societies. But they spent much less

89 N. R. Ker, "Oxford College Libraries before 1500," in Ijsewijn and Paquet, *Universities in the Late Middle Ages*, 293–311. In contrast, the Sorbonne's catalogue in 1338 listed 1,722 books, 330 (19 percent) of which were chained. Cobban, *Medieval English Universities*, 383–84, 385n151; Richard H. Rouse, "The Early Library of the Sorbonne," *Scriptorium* 21 (1967), 42–71, 227–51; also in Rouse and Rouse, *Authentic Witnesses*, ch. 9.

90 Burnett Hillman Streeter, *The Chained Library: A Survey of Four Centuries in the Evolution of the English Library* (London: Macmillan, 1931), frontispiece, 57–58, 62, ch. 3.

time and effort than ours do defending the efficacy and utility of their faculties, curricula, and graduates. For they—the collective *Studia*—quickly became key institutions in the maintenance and direction of society, along with the *Imperium* or *Regnum* (empire or kingdom) and the *Sacerdotium* (church). They became repositories of knowledge, ancient and modern, and special workshops of judgment and opinion, "intellectual smith[ies], to which metal of every kind could be brought" by emperors and kings, princes, popes, and parliaments. "Almost anything might be referred to the judgment of the masters," whose learned commentaries often tackled sensitive issues of the day.[91] Admittedly, they were not incubators of startling new discoveries or practical inventions, as modern research universities are expected to be. They had nothing to do with the birth of the hourglass or the mechanical clock (both of which were welcomed to calibrate the academic day), three-field crop rotation or the blast furnace, cannons or the water-driven paper mill, spurs or spectacles, much less rat traps or the movable-type printing press. As economic engines they were of modest horsepower and reach. At best, their localities and regions benefitted from their steady, innumerable purchases from landlords, tavern keepers, grocers, parchment makers, book-makers and stationers, tailors, builders, glaziers, prostitutes, and many other purveyors of the mundane and the entertaining.

What they contributed most to a society increasingly dependent on written documents and devoted to the rule of law was trained personnel for the administration of the church and state. To European culture they contributed a substantial increase in literacy and a theoretical elevation and methodological refinement of thought in many disciplines, which in turn improved the efficacy of several practical arts, from surgery to the teaching of introductory Latin

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91 Powicke, *Ways of Medieval Life*, 185. Paris theology masters, for example, played key intellectual and personal roles in persuading Pope Innocent III (the former Paris student Lothario di Segni) and the Lateran Council of 1215 to discredit and outlaw customary ordeals by fire, water, cold, and combat from ecclesiastical law, which example eventually led to their disappearance in secular law. The masters' learned glosses on the Bible, patristic decretals, and canon law undermined age-old arguments and assumptions that sustained the use of ordeals. John W. Baldwin, "The Intellectual Preparation for the Canon of 1215 against Ordeals," *Speculum* 36:4 (Oct. 1961), 613–36; Baldwin, *Paris, 1200*, 204–10.

grammar. Although we know little about most university alumni, especially those who took no degrees, it is certain that the Church at all levels was the principal employer of graduates throughout Catholic Europe. At the lowest level, parish priests who took leave for two or three years to attend university classes in the arts, canon law, or theology learned at a minimum a better grade of Latin with which to conduct their services and heard many model sermons by university preachers, some of whom also wrote manuals on the art of preaching. In England, Cambridge sent a third of its alumni whose careers are known into parish work, while Oxford men consistently won places in the upper echelons of the Church. In the thirteenth century, Oxford claimed a third of the bishoprics in England and Wales, Cambridge only 2 percent. Two centuries later, Cambridge had worked its way up to 21 percent, but Oxford commanded 70 percent of the seats; 46 percent of the occupants had previously taught at Oxford. Deanships of cathedrals and leadership positions in friaries and monasteries followed the same Oxford-dominant pattern.

By 1320 more than a third of Paris's theology masters had become bishops, abbots, or cardinals in the French hierarchy. More than another third held offices in cathedral chapters, and many students followed their masters' paths into church work. In Germany's new, small, and poor universities (fifteen founded before 1506), the arts faculties enrolled 75–80 percent of all students, creating an oversupply by 1480. Since only 3 percent earned higher degrees, it is not surprising that the majority of German alumni, with or without degrees, gravitated to minor church careers at the parochial level.[92]

92 C. H. Lawrence, "The University in State and Church," *HUO* 1: ch. 3; Jean Dunbabin, "Careers and Vocations," *HUO* 1:568; T.A.R. Evans, "The Numbers, Origins and Careers of Scholars," *HUO* 2:521–28; Leader, *University to 1546*, *HUC* 1:44; Verger, "Teachers," *HUE* 1:150; Moraw, "Careers," *HUE* 1:261, 270–73, 275; Stephen C. Ferruolo, "'*Quid dant artes nisi luctum*?' Learning, Ambition, and Careers in the Medieval University," *History of Education Quarterly* 28:1 (Spring 1988), 2–22; John W. Baldwin, "Masters at Paris from 1179 to 1215: A Social Perspective," in Benson and Constable, *Renaissance and Renewal*, 158; John W. Baldwin, "*Studium* and *Regnum*: The Penetration of University Personnel in French and English Administration at the Turn of the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries," *Revue des études Islamiques* 46 (1976), 199–215; Jacques Verger, *Men of Learning in Europe at the End of the Middle Ages*, trans. Lisa Neal and Steven Rendall (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame

As Europe's increasingly complex and litigious urban population grew, the Papal Schism (1378–1417) created dueling courts and curias in Rome and Avignon. Individual states and emperors sought to expand their authority in the gaps created by the decline of the "Universal Church." Sensibly, career-minded university students moved from theology to legal studies and sought employment upon graduation in imperial, royal, and noble service as well as ecclesiastical administration, which required similar sets of skills. Although the Church sought its share of canon lawyers, most regional episcopates and dioceses preferred those trained in civil law, as did the newly emerging urban and state bureaucracies. Toward the end of the thirteenth century, the philosopher-scientist Roger Bacon, former master at Oxford and Paris, lamented that "the civil lawyers have so bewitched prelates and princes that they receive nearly all the rewards and benefices; so all the best people, even those with the most aptitude for theology and philosophy, dash off to study civil law, because they see the jurists enriched." An increase in the number and seriousness of aristocratic matriculants in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries also bumped up legal enrollments.[93]

University training in law, logic, rhetoric, and disputation served alumni well who entered ecclesiastical or lay administration.[94] England's King Edward III certainly thought so when he endowed King's Hall in Cambridge in 1337. His intention, he said, was that "youths of conspicuous ability may be instructed and made more apt for public counsels . . . and may be able to enrich the Catholic

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Press, 2000 [1997], chs. 4–5. Between 1216 and 1499, 57 percent of the English bishops had attended Oxford; only 10 percent were Cantabrigians. Cobban, *Medieval English Universities*, 394–96.

93 Dunbabin, "Careers," *HUO* 1:574 (quotation); Cobban, *Medieval English Universities*, 394–96; Courtenay, *Schools & Scholars*, 365–66.

94 In undergraduate rhetoric classes, students were taught the *ars dictandi*, the art of official letter writing, and in the South the *ars notaria*, the craft of the notary public. Training in the creation and handling of legal and business documents was invaluable for administrative careers. Cobban, *Medieval Universities*, 221–23; Charles Homer Haskins, *Studies in Mediaeval Culture* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1929), chs. 1, 6, 9.

religion and strengthen the royal throne and the commonwealth with far-sighted advice."[95] In societies of "competing rights and privileges, conferred by a hierarchy of authorities and jealously guarded," skills honed in universities were given wide scope.[96] Careers could be made in diplomacy, propaganda, registries, courts, accounting, estate administration, and parliaments. The ability gained from disputation to "see two sides of a problem, to apply authority flexibly in solving it, and to defend [their] action[s] articulately" gave many university graduates an advantage in the competition, other things—such as birth, wealth, patronage, and seniority—being equal.[97]

Beyond their contributions to government, religion, the economy, and the personal careers of their masters and alumni, universities enhanced European culture by focusing powerfully and steadily on the life of the mind. Although under their aegis and nurture the pursuit of knowledge, secular and sacred, became an end in itself, the "incessant exercise of human reason" that went on in its precincts did much to remind Europeans that culture meant more than planting and reaping food for the body. By promoting intellectual seriousness and excellence, universities also altered the nature of what constituted intellectual achievement and redefined it in academic terms. Universities institutionalized knowledge through early forms of disciplinary specialization, group effort and inspiration, dissemination of new and challenging ideas, and the professionalization of the scholar through rigorous

95 Alan B. Cobban, *The King's Hall within the University of Cambridge in the Later Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), 13n4.

96 Cobban, *Medieval Universities*, ch. 9, at 219.

97 Dunbabin, "Careers," *HUO* 1:573 (quotation), 576, 583–93; Moraw, "Careers," *HUE* 1:246, 277; Verger, *Men of Learning in Europe*, 30–33; Courtenay, *Schools & Scholars*, 146:

Although a brilliant university career did not ensure a distinguished ecclesiastical career, no one viewed it as a handicap. . . . The most useful royal servant (and the one most likely to receive a significant ecclesiastical appointment and income) was one who was of good family and bearing, sufficiently good at accounts, skilled in negotiation and diplomacy, and willing always to obey royal commands; one, perhaps, whose love of king and country . . . exceeded his love of books and ideas.