

**READINGS IN THE HISTORY
OF EDUCATION:
MEDIAEVAL UNIVERSITIES**

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Readings in the History of Education: Mediaeval Universities by Arthur O. Norton

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PREFACE

THESE readings in the history of mediaeval universities are the first installment of a series, which I have planned with the view of illustrating, mainly from the sources, the history of modern education in Europe and America. They are intended for use after the manner of the source books or collections of documents which have so vastly improved the teaching of general history in recent years. No argument is needed as to the importance of such a collection for effective teaching of the history of education; but I would urge that the subject requires in a peculiar degree rich and full illustration from the sources. The life of school, college, or university is varied, vivid, even dramatic, while we live it; but, once it has passed, it becomes thinner and more spectral than almost any other historical fact. Its original records are, in all conscience, thin enough; the situation is still worse when they are worked over at third or fourth hand, flattened out, smoothed down, and desiccated in the pages of a modern history of education. Such histories are of course necessary to effective teaching of the subject; but the records alone can clothe the dry bones of fact with flesh and blood. Only by turning back to them do we gain a sense of personal intimacy with the past; only thus can we realize that schools and universities of other days were not less real than those of to-day,

teachers and students of other generations not less vividly alive than we, academic questions not less unsettled or less eagerly debated. To gain this sense of concrete, living reality in the history of education is one of the most important steps toward understanding the subject.

In selecting and arranging the records here presented I have had in mind chiefly the needs of students who are taking the usual introductory courses in the subject. Students of general history—a subject in which more and more account is taken of culture in the broad sense of the term—may also find them useful.

Within the necessarily limited space I have chosen to illustrate in some detail a few aspects of the history of mediaeval universities rather than to deal briefly with a large number of topics. Many important matters, not here touched upon, are reserved for future treatment. Some documents pertinent to the topics here discussed are not reproduced because they are easily accessible elsewhere; these are mentioned in the bibliographical note at the close of the volume.

In writing the descriptive and explanatory text I have attempted only to indicate the general significance of the translations, and to supply information not easily obtained, or not clearly given in the references or textbooks which, it is assumed, the student will read in connection with this work. It would be possible to write a commentary of genuinely mediaeval proportions on the selections here given; doubtless many of the details would be clearer for such a commentary. Some of these are explained by cross-references in the body of the text; in the main, however, I have preferred to let the documents stand for their face value to the average reader.

I have given especial attention to university studies (pp. 37-80) and university exercises (pp. 107-134) because these important subjects are unusually difficult for most students, and because surprisingly few illustrations of them from the sources have been heretofore easily accessible in English. In particular, there has not been, I believe, a previous translation of any considerable passage from the much discussed and much criticised mediaeval commentaries on university text-books. The selection here given (pp. 59-75) is not intended for continuous reading; but it will fully repay close and repeated examination. Not infrequently single sentences of this commentary are the outcroppings of whole volumes of mediaeval thought and controversy; indeed anyone who follows to the end each of the lines of study suggested will have at command a very respectable bit of knowledge concerning the intellectual life of the middle ages. The passage requires more explanation by the teacher, or more preliminary knowledge on the part of the student, than any other selection in the book.

The sources from which the selections have been made are indicated in the footnotes to the text. My great indebtedness to Mr. Hastings Rashdall's "Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages" is also there indicated. Messrs. G. P. Putnam's Sons and Mr. Joseph McCabe generously gave me permission to quote more extensive passages from the latter's brilliant biography of Abelard than I finally found it possible to use. Mr. Charles S. Moore has been my chief assistant in the preparation of the manuscript; most of the translations not otherwise credited are due to his careful work, but I am responsible for the version finally adopted in numerous passages in which the interpretation depends on a knowl-

edge of detailed historical facts. In conclusion, I have to thank Professor Charles H. Haskins and Professor Leo Wiener for information which has spared me many days of research on obscure details, and Professor Paul H. Hanus for suggestions which have contributed to the clearness of the text.

A. O. N.