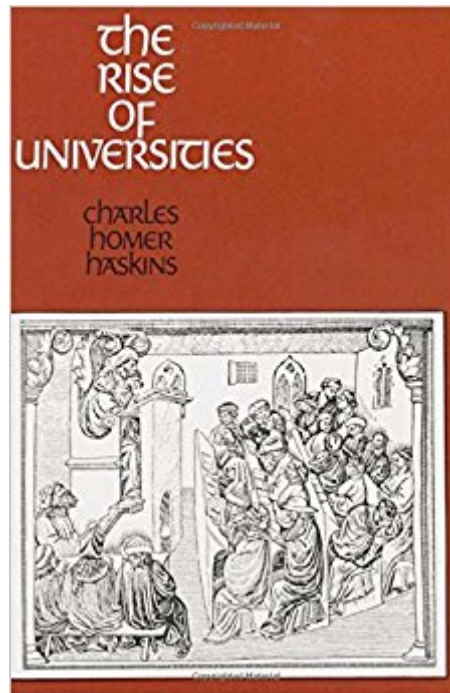




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The Rise Of Universities



Synopsis

The origin and nature of the earliest universities are the subjects of this famous and witty set of lectures by the man whom eminent scholars have called "without exaggeration . . . the soul of the renaissance of medieval studies in the United States." Great as the differences are between the earliest universities and those of today, the fact remains, says Professor Haskins, the "the university of the twentieth century is the lineal descendant of medieval Paris and Bologna." In demonstrating this fact, he brings to life the institutions, instruction, professors, and students of the Middle Ages.

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Customer Reviews

"This book does not claim to be a finished product or a final answer to any of the fundamental issues raised; but it is a stimulating experience to share his thinking as this writer comes to grips with them in his sincere and profound way. There is throughout a simplicity and human touch about the man that captivates the reader." *—The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* "The book displays a breadth of learning, a coherence of argument, and an economy of expression which make it a delight to read. Carrying his scholarship lightly, the author leads his audience easily and intimately into no less a topic than 'certain of the changes... brought about in mankind by the advent of civilization,' i.e., by the rise of cities." *—Yale Review* "A work which has remained unsurpassed in the conciseness and vividness of its account." *—Theodor E. Mommsen*

Charles Homer Haskins was born in Meadville, Pennsylvania, in 1870. He received his doctorate from The Johns Hopkins University. He taught at Johns Hopkins, the University of Wisconsin, and from 1902 until his retirement in 1931, at Harvard University, where he also served as Dean of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences. At the end of the First World War, he served with distinction on the American Peace Delegation in Paris as chairman of the Division of Western Europe. His books include *Norman Institutions* (1918), *The Rise of Universities* (1923), *Studies in the History of Science* (1924), *The Normans in European History* (1925), *The Renaissance of the Twelfth Century* (1927), and *Studies in Mediaeval Culture* (1929). He died in Cambridge, Massachusetts, in 1937.

Haskin's text, "The Rise of Universities," is fascinating for a number of reasons. First, the story is superbly told in this set of three lectures given in the very early 1920's at Brown University. Second, the insights Haskins inserts at various points of the discourse are worthy of great consideration, and we very easily feel we are listening to someone who is an expert in the subject, one who knows far more than he is telling at the given moment. Third and finally, we realize we are reading a "historical" book, not just because the subject concerns history, but because Haskin's own role in helping re-introduce the medieval world to a new generation of American scholars was history in the making. His more famous and acclaimed text, "The Renaissance of the Twelfth Century," was a critical component in doing just that, but here we see Haskins "where it all started," in the lecture room at Brown, and we close our eyes and imagine we are sitting in on these discourses exactly as they appeared nearly one hundred years ago. The work comprises three lectures on the medieval university, the first focusing on the earliest universities in terms of their structure, organization, and even linkage to today's universities, the second on the medieval university professor, and the third on the medieval university student. The material is presented in an extremely accessible manner, and one need not be a medievalist or medieval historian to follow the content. Much of the content is simply fascinating to anyone who wonders where today's universities can trace their lineal heritage. We read about the attempt to "date" the start of the world's oldest universities (Paris, Bologna, Oxford, Cambridge, and others), the differences between "northern" and "southern" universities, the specialties of each of the institutions, and the motivations for creating both student and teacher guilds. We also read about issues that faced the medieval professor, including the management of the classroom and its' students, the awarding of degrees, and even a little about medieval instructional techniques. We learn, too, about student life during these years, including the ever-constant quest to find money to finance schooling, the in-town brawls, and the requirements for exiting the university with an official degree. A special "extra" is the inclusion of some of the poetry

written by medieval students and preserved through the years. This is not an in-depth look at the subject, nor was it ever intended to be. (For such a book, try out *A History of the University in Europe: Universities from 1945 to Present* by Hilde de Ridder-Symoens, which, at four volumes, is not only highly detailed, but also current and exceptionally well written.) What it is, though, is an excellent introduction to the topic that still contains many good insights on the topic and is well developed and clearly presented. As such, this book likely has two main audiences: those who wish for an introduction on the topic, and also those who are medievalists and wish to become more acquainted with Charles Haskins himself, a key personage in the field. Highly recommended.

This is a positively marvelous monograph on the early university. Divided into three sections, the university, the teachers, and the students, we are provided with a fascinating picture of medieval higher education.

Charles Homer Haskins wrote a short but instructive account of the Catholic universities and the Age of Scholastic Learning. As Haskins indicated in this book, there was a plurality of Scholasticism. In fact, he called the phenomenon "Scholasticisms" Haskins indicated that Medieval Catholic universities were quite informal compared to contemporary structured university systems. Haskins also informed the reader that what some call The High Middle Ages was a time of the development of parliamentary political and legal systems, Gothic architecture, the beginning of Big Capitalism, etc. Haskins began this study with a brief description of Catholic university organization. The Medieval University was located where the students and masters (teachers) could rent buildings and arrange accommodations in a city or town. In other words, unlike the modern university campus, there was no campus, no established buildings or grounds, and no specially built facilities. Such European campuses and buildings only began in the late 14th. and 15th. centuries (the late 1300s and 1400s). Haskins informed his readers that what were called universities were actually guilds of masters and students. Both the masters and students had to be well organized to avoid predatory lending, rents, food prices, etc. Merchants and those who profited from university life were economically forced to lower prices, interest rates, rents, etc. The fact was that students and masters could relocate easily. The local businessmen, landlords, bankers, etc. had to figure that a lower profit was better than no profit. There were unique characteristics of Medieval universities. The masters taught basic and advanced classes. The universities were international in that all teaching, learning, and scholarship were done in Latin, and students would be admonished or even fined for not using Latin. Students and masters were not confined to one university. Often students would

attend lectures at different universities prior to taking examinations at the University of Paris for example. The use of Latin was so prevalent that the area around the University of Paris was and is called the Latin Quarter. Haskins gave a brief but useful description of the curriculum of Medieval universities. The undergraduate courses were called the Trivium-Rhetoric, Grammar (Latin Grammar, writing, and the classics), and logic. The latter was usually based on Aristotle's treatises on logic. The Quadrivium consisted of studies of Astronomy, Music (the pensive Gregorian Chant), Plane Geometry, and Arithmetic which may have included algebra. As some readers may know, these seven areas of study were known as The Seven Liberal Arts. When students successfully finished the complete Liberal Arts curriculum, they could teach the Seven Liberal Arts upon approval of the university chancellor and/or local bishop. Haskins then gave a brief description of more advanced studies which included Law (Canon Law and Secular Law), Medicine, and Theology. The latter was called Queen of the Sciences and could include 16 years of study. As Haskins mentioned, the University of Paris officials took so much pride in their School of Theology that they forbade the study of secular law. The most honored Regeant Master of Theology of the Catholic Church was St. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) who attended and then taught at the University of Paris where some historians state he did his best work. Haskins presented the conditions under which masters taught. If a master could not get five students to attend his class, he was fined. Masters had to be thorough and could not end lectures early. The masters at the University of Bologna in Italy had to get student permission for leaves of absence. The masters were fined for lack of punctuality and thoroughness of their teaching. Haskins stated that the masters at the University of Paris got organized into a guild or corporation first and could more easily negotiate with organized students. Haskins also presented "the other side of the coin" in describing student life. Many students were poor and could not afford books. Books were expensive because they had to be hand copied and well bound. Poorer students had to go to the bookseller and rent sections of the texts. One student started studies in theology, and when his father discovered the cost of a Bible, suggested to his son to study something else. Students did not have ready access to libraries. Learning was based on memory and thinking. Books were so scarce and costly, that they were loaned. Haskins made the point that later libraries were the depository of masters' lectures which gradually began to increase in size. Haskins gave a good description of student behavior and discipline. Some Medieval students were indeed unruly. Students were required to attend Mass. If students missed class for no bona fide reason, they could be fined and in some cases flogged. Haskins suggests that some students visited the pubs and socialized so much that they figured a whipping was well worth it. Haskins also presented a good account of student poetry and a class of

students who could be roughly called the *Ordo Vagorum*. These were wandering students who never finished the curriculum and had too much fun as "professional students." Haskins has brief excerpts of their poetry which should interest readers. Haskins had some interesting comments about academic freedom. What moderns call academic freedom was prevalent in the Medieval universities. A part of academic life consisted of disputations, and these debates were lively and intelligent. Masters could enter the realm of discovery and new knowledge. However, the masters could not undermine the intellectual authority of past learning. The fear was extreme skepticism which would undermine any a priori foundations. Yet, persecutions and repression were extremely rare according to Haskins. Haskins also stated he could not find one example of a master or student being persecuted for believing in free trade, socialism, non-violence, etc. Such views have resulted in political overtones and repression during the 20th. and now 21st. century. Haskins is also clear that teaching and learning were taken very seriously during the Middle Ages. Politically correct nonsense and sloppy thinking would have been scorned. Learning and reasoned debate were honored which has disappeared from much of contemporary university life. The demand on students to read and think was intense. Haskins confined much of this book to the University of Bologna which may have started as early as 1158 if not earlier. According to Haskins, the first Medieval university may have been at Salerno as early as 1076. The focus of Haskins' book is the study of the University of Bologna and the University which is enough for the beginning student of Medieval universities. This is a short book, but it is well written. For anyone who wants to know more Haskins provided an excellent bibliography. Haskins' book makes a connection between Medieval universities and modern universities. Readers should know there is a connection. Unfortunately too many "experts" argue that earlier events and men were from the moon when in fact, they were historical events and individuals who should be studied and appreciated.

Although rather brief in terms of length, it is based upon Haskins's three lectures, this book provides an excellent basic source for information relating to the founding and rise of the university in Western Europe. The university remains one of the greatest achievements of the Middle Ages and this book allows one access to a basic understanding of their establishment. Additional sources of supplemental readings are provided for the student of education wishing to delve deeper into this subject. Well presented and quite resourceful.

Very good, but not long enough.

Thank you

Written in the early 1900s and sort of elitist sounding.

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