

Renaissance and Reformation Renaissance et Réforme



Kirwan, Richard (ed.). Scholarly Self-Fashioning and Community in the Early Modern University

Paul F. Grendler

Volume 36, numéro 4, automne 2013

URI : <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1090966ar>

DOI : <https://doi.org/10.33137/rr.v36i4.20994>

[Aller au sommaire du numéro](#)

Éditeur(s)

Iter Press

ISSN

0034-429X (imprimé)

2293-7374 (numérique)

[Découvrir la revue](#)

Citer ce compte rendu

Grendler, P. (2013). Compte rendu de [Kirwan, Richard (ed.). Scholarly Self-Fashioning and Community in the Early Modern University]. *Renaissance and Reformation / Renaissance et Réforme*, 36(4), 167–169.
<https://doi.org/10.33137/rr.v36i4.20994>

© Canadian Society for Renaissance Studies / Société canadienne d'études de la Renaissance; Pacific Northwest Renaissance Society; Toronto Renaissance and Reformation Colloquium; Victoria University Centre for Renaissance and Reformation Studies, 2014

Ce document est protégé par la loi sur le droit d'auteur. L'utilisation des services d'Érudit (y compris la reproduction) est assujettie à sa politique d'utilisation que vous pouvez consulter en ligne.

<https://apropos.erudit.org/fr/usagers/politique-dutilisation/>

érudit

Cet article est diffusé et préservé par Érudit.

Érudit est un consortium interuniversitaire sans but lucratif composé de l'Université de Montréal, l'Université Laval et l'Université du Québec à Montréal. Il a pour mission la promotion et la valorisation de la recherche.

<https://www.erudit.org/fr/>

Kirwan, Richard (ed.).

Scholarly Self-Fashioning and Community in the Early Modern University.

Farnham, UK, and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2013. Pp. x, 220. ISBN 978-1-4094-3797-0 (hardcover) \$124.95.

This volume began as a workshop at Trinity College, Dublin, in May 2009. Richard Kirwan, in his introduction, explains that the purpose of the volume is to “uncover the role of self-fashioning in the forging of academic communities.”

In the first article, Jonathan Davies studies four manuals of behaviour for Italian university students written by Bartolomeo Meduna, Orazio Lombardelli, Cesare Crispolti, and especially Annibale Roero (*Lo scolare*), between 1588 and 1604. Davies cites two of my books, which he found absolutely worthless in his reviews, and tells the reader that I barely mentioned Lombardelli and Roero in my *The Universities of the Italian Renaissance* (2002). In fact, I discussed them in greater depth than he admits, and I introduced Lombardelli in an earlier book (1989). The gist of Davies’s article, here, is that Roero urged university students to learn to fight with a sword, a sign of the violence found in Italian universities. I had gone over the same ground and made the same points in “Fencing, Playing Ball, and Dancing in Italian Renaissance Universities” (in *Sport and Culture in Early Modern Europe*, ed. John McClelland and Brian Merrilees [Toronto: CRRS, 2009], pp. 295–318), which he does not cite. I mention it, because this is the third time that Davies has belittled my scholarship then mostly repeated it. The two other examples are his article “Italian Universities and the Wars of Italy” (2006, 299–307) and his book *Culture and Power: Tuscany and its Universities 1537–1609* (2009), both published by Brill.

The remaining articles in Kirwin’s volume deal with academics in northern, mostly Protestant, Europe. Kirwan discusses the “generic image of the scholar” in German universities: a sharp mind, good character, diligence

in studies, academic peregrination, good teaching, sociability, and marriage. Although the qualities are mostly obvious, it is good to see them listed; and the original German and Latin, which he gives for his translations, is welcome. Marian Füssel discusses the links between doctoral degree and noble rank, and sees evidence for the view that learning ennobled one in German universities. He discusses clothing (what someone with a doctoral degree was entitled to wear), ceremonies, portraits, and funeral monuments. Andreas Corcoran analyzes what two German academics wrote about witchcraft: Hermann Goehausen saw burning witches as doing God's work for the benefit of state and society, while Christian Thomasius criticized the metaphysical assumptions behind witch burning.

Gráinne McLaughlin analyzes a Latin poetry collection in praise of Oliver Cromwell, edited by John Owen, a Puritan academic at Oxford University. Owen praised Cromwell for keeping Oxford safe; he saw both Cromwell and Oxford as Christianizing forces in Great Britain and throughout Europe. Jason Harris discusses a speech of David Rothe, a member of the Irish student community at the University of Paris and newly appointed bishop, on the occasion of the feast of St. Brigid, patron saint of Ireland, on 1 February 1620. Rothe linked the lives of the Irish students in Paris to the saints and scholars among their ancestors. Among other things, Rothe exhorted Irish students to complete their studies and to return to Ireland as missionaries. As such, his speech indicates how the Irish exile community in Paris represented itself. The articles of McLaughlin and Harris are written for fellow specialists and lack basic information—including life dates of the protagonists—that non-specialist readers would find useful.

Ingo Trüter points out that Johannes Eck changed the facts in his autobiographical writing in order to promote himself and enhance his career, including presenting a false account of how he obtained a lectureship at the University of Ingolstadt. Although Trüter sees this as self-fashioning, it was old fashioned lying in order to improve his image to the public, something that a few academics still do today. Kenneth Austin analyzes letters of Luther, who pleads for a higher salary for Philip Melanchthon, and letters of Calvin, in which he tries to persuade a Hebrew scholar to come to the Geneva Academy for a low salary. Austin concludes that both men viewed Protestant universities as the means by which society could be reformed. While Austin tends to judge Protestant universities more favourably than Catholic universities, when they

were caught up in the religious conflicts of their age, he greatly simplifies (57) what I wrote about Italian universities in the Counter Reformation. And his citations to Luther's works are incomplete.

The volume as a whole provides material about academics, their behaviour, and how they saw themselves. Some of it is interesting, some of it ordinary and unsurprising. Certain omissions weaken the book's value to scholars: for example, the final bibliography is extensive, but does not give pagination for articles in collective volumes; and some authors fail to give the original Latin or German for translated passages, or do so only for the chief figure in the article. In general, the theoretical frameworks—of self-fashioning, charisma, and so on, into which the articles are inserted, sometimes at too great a length—get in the way of the good original material.

PAUL F. GRENDLER, *University of Toronto Emeritus*