

Universities

Since the time of Charlemagne (d. 814), schools in the medieval west were attached to monasteries and cathedrals. The aim was to create a body of educated priests and administrators. Basic study consisted of the *trivium*, which included grammar, rhetoric, and logic as well as the *quadrivium*, which included arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and music, or the theory of music. Collectively, these are known as the seven liberal arts. Those who studied at schools attached to monasteries were trained to become monks. Those who studied at schools attached to cathedrals ideally trained to become priests. Those who did not ultimately become priests, but rather served church officials in secular ways, were nevertheless called clerics because of the context of their training. The growth of secular and ecclesiastical bureaucracies in the High Middle Ages required a new type of trained individual and many of more of them. Bureaucracies needed civil servants, especially those who knew Roman law. The revival of the study of Roman law was indebted to the rediscovery of a copy of the *Codex Justinianus*, the codification of Roman law, including imperial edicts, commissioned by Emperor Justinian (535-567) in the sixth century. Rediscovered some time around the middle of the eleventh century, students studied it in earnest by the 1070s. The city of Bologna in Italy became the center of this study with the first school dedicated to Roman law appearing in 1088. The civil law of the *Codex* was especially useful to kings and emperors who sought to justify the extension of their authority and rights. Popes also sought to justify their authority in a legal manner. Thus, the study of canon law, or those laws pertaining to the Roman Catholic Church and its officials, became another popular area of study as popes matched secular rulers' bureaucracies with their own and tackled legal issues such as the Investiture Controversy (b. 1078), which brought into question who had the right to award and invest the symbols of a church office—the emperor or the pope—in imperial regions.

By the eleventh century, there was a significant increase in the interest of learning. Certain teachers, called masters, developed reputations for expertise in specific areas of learning, which ranged from particular theological approaches to expertise in law or medicine. These masters traveled and rented space to teach paying students. However, there was a slight problem with students grouping around masters. As a group and as individuals, often in towns they were not from, itinerant masters and students had no legal status. They often experienced hostility from locals and suffered from a shortage of affordable food and housing. The precarious position that the master and students found themselves in changed when popes, bishops, kings, and emperors began issuing decrees for their protection and granted certain rights, such as freedom to travel and exemption from certain taxes. Authorities did this by acknowledging the schools led by masters and those who attended them as corporations, using the common term for a collective body, *universitas*. Universities were organized like guilds. They set standards and conditions for study, advancement, and content, and they granted licenses, or degrees. In Italy, the students controlled the guild, formulating standards for lectures and hiring masters. In other areas of Europe, masters controlled the guilds. At times, bishops, kings, and popes, all of who granted recognition of

universities, attempted to intervene in the content. In some cases, they were successful in silencing masters on certain topics; however, universities enjoyed a good deal of academic freedom. The arts faculty, which taught the seven liberal arts, prepared students for advanced study in theology, law, or medicine.

University study offered a means of advancement through royal, ecclesiastical, and communal offices. Many students came from the ranks of the lesser nobility lacking a patrimony and from the merchant class. High tuition costs and rent gouging by locals spurred the development of communal houses for students, or colleges. Patronage by those who hoped to reap the benefits of the professional training students received to become lawyers, doctors, theologians, and administrators led to gifts of buildings, owned by the university, for the purposes of study. Scholars now had a distinct status and would, in turn, patronize others who sought the same status, producing a new body of educated individuals committed to the benefits of professional learning in Europe.