



FOR WISDOM OR SATAN'S POMPS?

THE EARLY UNIVERSITY OF PARIS
AND ITS CRITICS, C. 1215–1260

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238 HRCB

The university is one of medieval Europe's most enduring legacies, but, as with today, the medieval university was not without its critics. Indeed, some modern scholarship has argued that the emergence of the University of Paris in the early thirteenth century was a direct response to the various criticisms of the culture of the Parisian schools across the twelfth century. Yet the formation of this new institution did not bring an end to complaints directed at schools or their scholars. This paper considers the views of several critics of the new University of Paris, examining their assertions in light of other contemporary views and within the broader religious, social, and intellectual currents of thirteenth-century Western Europe. Had the new university become, as one pope claimed, "wisdom's workshop," or was it, as one humble chaplain would contend, plagued by the pervasive pursuit of the "pomps of Satan"?

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Illustration from a fourteenth-century manuscript shows Henry of Germany delivering a lecture to university students in Bologna. Artist: Laurentius de Voltolina; *Liber ethicorum des Henricus de Alemannia*; Kupferstichkabinett SMPK, Berlin/Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Min. 1233.

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