Review


Steven Reid’s book is a well-researched and interesting study of Scottish universities in the decades after the Reformation Parliament in 1560. Although its primary concern is the role played by Andrew Melville in the establishment and re-establishment of these universities, *Humanism and Calvinism* makes a larger contribution to our understanding of Scottish education in the post-Reformation period.

The book follows Melville by way of his experiences with educational institutions. From the study of Melville’s time in Scotland, Paris, and Geneva, Reid explains the profound influence of the French educator Petrus Ramus on Melville’s intellectual approach. Melville’s various attempts to implement Ramist pedagogy and their accompanying controversies are a consistent theme in the book. Reid then moves to an examination of Melville’s work with the Scottish universities. From his resuscitation of Glasgow University to his role in the establishment of Edinburgh University, Melville’s pursuit of a Reformed educational programme in Scotland is presented in clear terms. His work at St. Andrews is given in the most detail owing to the greater availability of sources for that university. In St. Andrews, as the principal of St. Mary’s College, Melville envisioned the creation of an ‘anti-seminary’ in part to combat the Jesuit educational programme he had witnessed during his own education on the
continent. In this task he had little success, which brings forth another of the book’s themes—Melville’s general failure to gain any consistent or long-term traction for his educational approach.

Reid’s book is at its best in its explanation of the variety of forces that delayed, deferred, or plainly denied the implementation of Melville’s programme of education. As might be expected from a life spent attempting to modernize educational institutions, Melville’s time in Scotland was one surrounded by near continuous conflict. Skirmishes with local officials, conservative educators, or King James VI and I often conspired against Melville’s success. These conflicts were subject to the changing conditions of religious and political life on both the local and national levels. As a result of these fluctuations, Melville could land an influential position at a university at one time and a place in jail at another.

Melville’s lack of overwhelming success in re-making the Scottish universities also speaks to the elusive existence of a specific ‘Melvillian’ educational programme. The book is careful to avoid overstating what a ‘Melvillian’ programme actually was. Instead, Reid does well to point out that success or failure of Melville’s agenda was subject to a myriad of local factors. Also, when Melville did achieve success, he often achieved it with the help of others inclined to his way of thinking. The contributions of Melville’s nephew, James Melville, at St. Andrews are most notable in this regard.

This book is valuable for both its subject matter and its approach to the sources. It offers a high-quality update to our understanding of Scottish universities in the post-Reformation era. It also exemplifies a historiographical approach that calls attention to important local peculiarities while tying these events into larger national and international conditions. The appendix of this book offers several interesting charts and graphs relating to student matriculations.
at Scottish universities. The statistical evidence in this section is valuable for quantifying some of the material found in the body of the text and will certainly be of value for those looking to continue work in this field. Historians interested in education in this period, in Scotland and elsewhere, would be wise to read *Humanism and Calvinism*.

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