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### Grendler, Paul F. The University of Mantua, the Gonzaga & the Jesuits, 1584–1630

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Shakespeare's name, but lists *Timon of Athens* and *Two Noble Kinsmen* under the names of Shakespeare and his presumed co-authors (Thomas Middleton and John Fletcher, respectively). Another slip occurs when Giddens declares that "the ESTC is not a hundred percent complete" then adds helpfully in brackets "May 2001." Either this represents a typographical error for May 2010, or Giddens is publishing information ten years out of date.

Giddens' text is admirably brief, and handsomely illustrated. Few scholars in the field would not find this book useful and every library ought to hold a copy. However, it is printed in a wide format and bound in paper. This is the sort of book that one would wish to handle frequently, but it is too large to carry in a pocket. My own copy is already scuffed and the corners are beginning to curl.

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**Grendler, Paul F.**

*The University of Mantua, the Gonzaga & the Jesuits, 1584–1630.*

Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009. Pp. xx, 287. ISBN 978-0-8018-9171-7 (hardcover) \$62.

Paul Grendler is a distinguished scholar in the study of Italian universities in the Renaissance / Reformation period. His most comprehensive study is *The Universities of the Italian Renaissance*, 2002. His new book on the university at Mantua is a detailed study of a school which was begun by the Gonzaga Dukes of Mantua to enhance the prestige of their family and Mantua, and by the Jesuits to foster education and the Catholic faith. In his preface Grendler asks, "Why study a university that lasted only a few years?" He gives several answers. Here one can trace the whole history of the university from start to finish — 1624–1629. There are unusually detailed documents showing how the Jesuits and the ducal family worked together to organize and finance the Jesuit college. The relationships of the Gonzaga, the Jesuits, and the lay faculty in the later schools of law and medicine were generally smooth. The initial Jesuit college concentrated on the humanities.

When Jesuits opened colleges in university cities and then expanded their curricula, local universities often saw them as a threat and often worked successfully to have them abolished, for instance in Paris, Louvain and Padua. Mantua was different: the Jesuit college came first and was supported by the Gonzaga Dukes, who later added colleges of law and medicine which remained independent of the Jesuits. The new university was called the Peaceful University of Mantua. In 1625–26 it had between 288 and 298 students; most came from all over Italy, but there were four Germans. The university hoped to enrol more students from northern Europe. In 1625 Duke Ferdinando ordered all his subjects studying abroad to transfer to his new University within three months. He also raised taxes to support his university.

To attract students to the new law and medicine colleges Duke Ferdinando (ruled 1613–26) ordered the chancellor to scour around Italy and report back on the most prominent law professors in Italy. He was ready to pay a huge salary to a professor who could enhance the school's reputation. His choice was Giacomo Antonio Marta. Chapter 4 is devoted to Marta, a Neapolitan whose first book was a defence of the immortality of the soul, published when he was twenty. His most important book was on church/state relations and jurisdiction published in Mainz in 1609, with many later editions. What the Duke Ferdinando did not know was that Marta was also a well paid undercover spy for James I of England. By 1625–26 the university had twenty-nine professors, eleven in law, eight in medicine, plus ten Jesuits teaching language, philosophy and theology. Chapter 5 covers the new medical school. Here the star was Fabrizio Bartoletti, lured from the University of Bologna in 1625. Three years later there were twelve professors in the medical school and fourteen in the law school. Grendler provides several tables of which professors taught what courses.

The Jesuit college began in 1584. Grendler devotes an appendix (pp. 251–54) to nineteen Jesuits who taught at the college during the university period, 1624–1630. They taught Latin and Greek grammar and literature, logic, natural philosophy, metaphysics, mathematics, moral theology, casuistry and scripture. Many had doctorates and several published books. Often the Jesuits used a textbook approach rather than lecturing line by line on Aristotle and other classic texts. In theology they followed Aquinas. After 1599 their curriculum was based on the Jesuit *Ratio Studiorum*. It seems that the Jesuits teaching undergraduate and the professors of law and medicine had few contacts.

Grendler suggests that in this Mantua was similar to most twenty-first century universities.

The university was short lived for three reasons. Duke Ferdinando died on October 29, 1626, with no direct heir. His younger brother Duke Vincenzo II took over but was “feckless, morally obtuse and physically weak” (p. 229) and died in 1627. Now there were two contenders, one backed by the Habsburgs, the other by the Bourbons, and civil war. In 1629 Mantua withstood a siege, but then plague broke out. In 1625 Mantua had 29,710 people; the population doubled by 1630, thanks largely to refugees, but the plague killed 10,000 in five months of 1630. There was a second, successful siege in 1630; the soldiers sacked the city. The Jesuits boarded up their college, which suffered only minor damage. In 1627, 1628 and 1629 there was famine. Peace was reached in 1631, and Carlo Gonzaga-Nevers became Duke of Mantua. By 1676 Mantua had only 19,000 people. Shortly before the siege and plague in 1630 most students, professors and Jesuits fled the city. Later the Jesuits tried to re-establish their college, but the ranks of both students and Jesuits were thin; there were only three lower classes in 1632. By 1646 the Jesuit college had 165 students. The Peaceful University was never revived.

This is a work of great erudition: manuscript sources, rich footnotes, maps, genealogical charts of the Gonzaga family, thirteen pictures (mainly people, buildings and title pages of books by the university professors). The bibliography runs twenty-one pages. The book is well organized and clearly written. Grendler frequently draws on his previous research to make comparisons between the Peaceful University and other Italian universities. His interpretations of the people and events seem very fair. Some readers may find his chapter on Marta too detailed.

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