

*CENTRO*  
*PER LA STORIA DELL'UNIVERSITÀ DI PADOVA*

**EARLY MODERN UNIVERSITIES  
AND THE SCIENCES**

Editor  
**VITTORIA FEOLA**

**FrancoAngeli**

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# *Preface*

*Filiberto Agostini\**

*Early Modern Universities and the Sciences* is the result of the fruitful collaboration between the University of Padua, its Departmental Center for the History of the University, and Scientiae, a vibrant scholarly community devoted to the study of knowledge production practices in the early modern era. The volume addresses issues of teaching and reforms at a number of early modern European Universities, about some of which not much has been done yet. Thus, our book makes a significant contribution to the history of Universities by beginning to fill those gaps, as well as by exploiting a wealth of primary sources that can rarely be found in traditional histories of the Academe. Indeed, the diversity and richness of its documentary apparatus is such that hard choices were necessary when dealing with their many languages. Readers will necessarily come from the international scholarly community; as such, I hope their attitude will be one of initial surprise and later understanding. Translating too much would have impaired the reading flow and would have caused the loss of meaning in an instance too many.

*Early Modern Universities and the Sciences* has the ambition to surprise readers for two main reasons.

First, it aims to provide an informative overview of teaching practices across early modern European Universities. In so doing, it challenges several previously accepted analyses, and supplies new perspectives on the increasingly blurred differences between logic teaching in Catholic and Protestant institutions. This should prompt further research about the substance behind confessional wars of words.

Secondly, it shows that reforms were just an important part of academic life in many European universities as teaching was. In other words, it looks as though university teaching and reforms were two sides of the same double-edged sword, that of the penetration of empirically-inclined methods into

\* Director of the Center for the History of Padua University.

university research. Another way to put this can be that Renaissance scholarship found in University teaching and reforms its avenue of influence on European and other societies. The history of the institutionalisation of knowledge is, therefore, of primary importance as far as the very identity of the West is concerned.

*Early Modern Universities and the Sciences* is a collection of essays that uses the history of the Universities to contribute to many different fields of learning, in a spirit quite akin to those Scientiae practitioners of the past, albeit it sternly looks to the future.