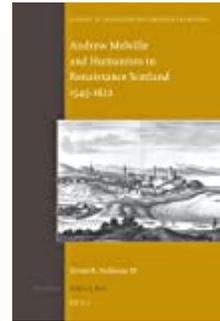




E. R. Holloway. *Andrew Melville and Humanism in Renaissance Scotland.* Leiden: Brill, 2011. 375 pp. \$132.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-90-04-20539-0.



Steven J. Reid. *Humanism and Calvinism.* Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate Pub. Co., 2011. xiv + 328 pp. \$124.95 (cloth), ISBN 978-1-4094-0005-9; ISBN 978-0-7546-9846-3.

Reviewed by David G. Mullan (Cape Breton University)

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Commissioned by Siobhan M. Talbott (Keele University)

The history of humanism in Scotland embraces institutions and individuals. Foremost among institutions are the country's universities, and prominent among the individuals are George Buchanan and Andrew Melville. The universities have been studied individually by modern scholars, while the standard biography of Buchanan has been written by I. D. McFarlane; Melville was the subject of a study by Thomas McCrie in 1819. In 2011 two books appeared which will now take central places in the further study of Scottish humanism. Both originated in Scottish PhD theses and the authors have made use of each other's work.

Ernest R. Holloway III has written the modern study of Melville, *Andrew Melville and Humanism in Renaissance Scotland, 1545-1622*. Although it has some of the dimensions of a biography one hesitates to call it one because of the paucity of primary sources. Melville did not produce any self-writing, and without his nephew James Melville's *Autobiography and Diary* (published in 1842), we would be lacking even the most basic data of a life. Holloway points to various inaccuracies in this text, writ-

ten as it was thirty and more years after the events described, and so even it must be used with caution. What Holloway does is to investigate the places, names, and episodes introduced by James Melville and in this way constructs a narrative which at least provides a satisfying context for Andrew's career. Andrew Melville was not a prolific writer, and so his own writings do not illuminate the book except in chapters 6 and 7.

In chapter 1 Holloway deconstructs the Melville legend in which he is portrayed as the successor to John Knox and the missionary of Genevan Presbyterianism: it is the contention of the present work that the legendary and mythical images of the academic reformer and divine have developed primarily as a result of not properly situating his life and work within the Northern Renaissance, especially as it emerged in Paris and other French centers (p. 29).

Andrew was born in Angus on August 1, 1545. He studied Greek under a French master at Montrose; Holloway takes us on a tour of Greek in Scotland, and states that the ancient language was known by only a few in the

country. Andrew continued at St Andrews and in Paris, though the full extent of his studies in both places is not known. He was much influenced by Petrus Ramus, who was not anti-Aristotelian, and whose approach was essentially conservative in character, seeking to separate the historic Aristotle from scholastic modes of interpretation (p. 76). Melville also studied Hebrew, which served as a preparation for the study of theology, to which he was dedicated from his mother's womb (p. 71, and repeated on p. 95). He met Buchanan, who became a father figure to young Andrew and may have influenced his politics. After about two years in Paris Andrew moved on to Poitiers to pursue legal studies. During a lull in the French Wars of Religion in 1569, he went to Geneva.

Melville is hardly visible in a barrage of prose about those scholars whom he would have known there. Holloway does clarify what Melville did—he taught in the second (highest) class in the *schola privata*, beneath the *scola publica*, which was the Genevan Academy proper. He had ample opportunity to advance his humanistic studies with experts in the linguistic fields, and also had occasion to study theology. In 1574 he returned to Scotland; Theodore Beza sent a letter to the kirk praising Melville for his learning, his religion, and his work as a teacher.

Melville wanted an academic post in Scotland as a means of promoting the New Learning, and accepted an offer from the University of Glasgow. The university was almost extinct when Andrew arrived, and he took on the lion's share of teaching responsibilities in the absence of capable regents. His teaching brought about a rapid rise in the number of students, and Holloway emphasizes how he used table talk to contribute to the education of his charges. Eleven of twenty-one graduates went on to become ministers. Andrew's work in the kirk is noted. He preached at Govan, was moderator of the general assembly in 1578, and had a share in the work of the commission which drew up the *Second Book of Discipline* in that year. In 1577 he had written the *Nova Erectio* for his university which secured the institution's finances and provided for a principal and three regents. The new foundation had a thoroughly humanistic character and marked a sharp break with medieval education, with specialist instruction in the various disciplines in place of the traditional regents who stayed with the same students through all the years of their education (p. 182).

In 1580 Andrew Melville moved to St Mary's College at St Andrews and set about reform of the institution, but Holloway writes that "the extent of Melville's re-

forms at St Andrews was not nearly as successful as his nephew portrays in his *Diary* (p. 191). He attempted to establish Ramus there, but was not notably successful. He did not neglect the ancients, including Aristotle, though he was also on a commission of the general assembly in 1583 which delineated the propositions in Aristotle which were allegedly contrary to Christianity. He continued his service in the life of the kirk, and played a role of sufficient importance that the king feared his influence.

Melville continued writing neo-Latin poetry, and achieved his greatest works between 1587 and 1607. These include a poem for the coronation of Queen Anne of Denmark, a poem for the birth of Prince Henry, and the *Gathelus*, a myth of Scotland's foundation. He was influenced by Virgil and Horace, and also incorporated biblical themes and images. Of note also is Melville's *Anti-Tami-Cami-Categoria* (c. 1604), in which he satirized Anglican ceremonies. The poem further alienated the king's affections for Melville and the Presbyterian kirk.

Melville and seven Presbyterian ministers were summoned to London by the king in May 1606. More satirical poetry came forth from Melville, and he was sent to the Tower of London, where he would remain for four years. Holloway focuses on the Melvini Epistolae, a series of letters exchanged between Andrew and his nephew James. Here one sees a very human Andrew, a far cry from the hagiographical version supplied by McCrie. The letters reveal "a side of the humanist not portrayed in many of the Presbyterian histories of the early seventeenth century ... a man subject to all of the frailties, fears, and insecurities of humanity" (p. 271).

In April 1611, James VI and I finally released Andrew Melville upon the request of the duc de Bouillon and allowed him to take up a teaching post at the Protestant academy at Sedan. There he remained until his death in 1622. It was hard going at Sedan—the number of students was rather small—but his time was brightened by the presence of a younger Scot, Arthur Johnston, who, while not devoted to Presbyterianism, was an avid humanist and a gifted neo-Latin poet. Once again, in the absence of fuller information about Andrew, Holloway turns to a thorough investigation of those people whom he knew.

The book is especially valuable as a tour through certain aspects of the Northern Renaissance. Melville is at times a specter but one who draws our attention to more substantial figures in the background who are certainly

brought to life by Holloway. This more than any new information about Andrew Melville will be the enduring legacy of the book. One must also mention the substantial bibliography which will keep researchers in Holloway's debt for years to come.

The title of Steven J. Reid's *Humanism and Calvinism: Andrew Melville and the Universities of Scotland, 1560-1625* is not necessarily a good guide to the contents, as humanism and Calvinism are not always front and center. The book is more an history of the universities of Scotland between the Reformation and the death of James VI, with humanism and Calvinism providing some, but not all, of the material between the covers. Likewise, though Andrew Melville finds a place in the subtitle, and while he was prominent in university life in Scotland, he was by no means the sole actor, and sometimes others took center stage. The book begins with the assertion that "education was the cornerstone of any Protestant society," and attention was paid to it by the reformed kirk right from its beginning. At the time, there were three universities—St Andrews (1412), Glasgow (1451), and King's College in Aberdeen (1495). By the time of the Reformation, St Andrews consisted of St Salvator's, St Leonard's, and St Mary's colleges. The primary task of the book is to trace Andrew Melville's role in producing a network of Protestant seminaries from the remains of a very Catholic system of higher education, and the effect this process had on intellectual life in the Scottish universities (pp. 1-2). The constructed narrative draws heavily on manuscript sources, which are rather more extensive for St Andrews's colleges than for the other universities.

Chapter 2 follows Melville from birth to Geneva. What is distinctive about the interpretation is the notion that Melville did not have a lifelong predilection for the study of theology. Rather, even up to his arrival in Geneva he was committed to the arts, and it was his meeting with Thomas Cartwright and Walter Travers there that convinced him to follow a new path. "However," writes Reid, perhaps the most profound influence on Melville that convinced him to pursue a career in divinity came not from the teaching staff or colleagues around him, but from the outrage he felt at the massacres in France in August 1572 (p. 74).

At Glasgow, Melville set to work to implement reforms with a humanistic program of study which was supportive of the Reformed religion. The college was re-founded on July 13, 1577 and the *Nova Erectio* reinforced the new tone which Melville had set from the beginning.

The financial footing of the college was made more stable by the annexation of the parish of Govan. Our knowledge of Melville's teaching program is altogether based on James Melville's late reminiscences, but Reid finds it likely that Andrew had complete freedom to do as he wanted.

Before Melville's arrival at St Mary's College in St Andrews there were numerous attempts at reform, some of them under Melville's influence, and he was hopeful that his reforms would be instituted throughout the medieval universities; "However, within four years of Melville's arrival at St Mary's any prospect of such a unified and cohesive settlement lay in tatters" (p. 96). The universities became caught up in national politics, with coup and counter-coup encircling the young king. The Black Acts of 1584 led to the furtherance of the power of Episcopacy in the realm, and the attempted eradication of Presbyterianism from the universities.

St Leonard's provides some real insight into tuition in the 1590s through the survival of the *College Orator's Book*, a large collection of essays and poetry by St Leonard's students from the first half of the 1590s, recited by students in the third and fourth year of their MA degree (p. 156). The orations show learning in both Greek and Latin applied to republican and classical themes, though Greek was used much less than Latin, suggesting that few students gained proficiency in the language. The orations also demonstrate the little impact of Ramism on their studies.

Reid entitles chapter 6 "The Rise of the Moderates" in St Andrews, addressing the years from the royal visitation of 1597 until Melville's departure in 1606. The king was now very much in charge, and an era of stability descended upon the university. Student numbers increased, and the masters generally accepted the new state of affairs. There is little documentation for the decade, except in the area of tuition, for which there are surviving *theses theologicae* and *philosophicae*. The theological theses show a standard Calvinism, and Reid wonders whether Melville was simply following what he had seen at Geneva twenty years earlier. MA theses from St Salvator's and St Leonard's evince Aristotelianism and contain criticism of Ramus; it is evident that Ramism was the sole preserve of Melville and his supporters.

Chapter 7 marks a break in the St Andrews narrative as the book turns toward the foundations of a couple of Protestant colleges in Edinburgh (1583) and Marischal College (1593) in New Aberdeen. Reid places their foundation within a wider European context which saw the

creation of new Protestant colleges in a number of countries to foster confessionalism.

The final chapter looks at the universities of Scotland after the end of the Melvillian era. His principalship at St Mary's was vacated in April 1607, and he never returned to Scotland. He was replaced by Robert Howie, who had by now accommodated himself to the new regime. Royal intervention in appointments and discipline continued, and the king contributed to the building of a centralized library at St Andrews. What had happened to Melville's vision of theological education? It had been replaced within a decade of his departure (p. 249). But Greek survived in the curriculum, and so one part of Melville's program of educational reform was achieved and conferred upon posterity. Ramus, however, was gone, and does not reappear in theses (to 1625, at least) after 1616. There followed a return to Aristotelianism and what Reid calls the ossifying of university culture. Aristotle and scripture became the new standards of education, and Melville's humanist vision was overturned (pp. 261, 265).

Thus Reid leads the reader through the history of the Scottish universities from the Reformation to the death

of James VI and I. It is a story of educational idealism and political realism, royal politics and local initiative, Ramism and persistent Aristotelianism, Presbyterianism and Episcopalianism. The book is meticulously researched and clearly written, and will long serve as a standard history.

What has happened to the art of copyediting? There are at least nine typographical errors in Holloway's chapter 8, and in Reid's chapter 2 there are five, most of them reversed French accents, while the accent is missing from Dauphin's on p. 184. Montbaliard is misspelled on p. 252. There is no substitute for a careful authorial eye when preparing books. Also, twice on p. 12 Reid uses 'hopefully,' which might jar some readers.

These distractions aside, the two books supply a rich feast of material for plotting the Renaissance in Scotland. We are not likely to learn much more about Andrew Melville than what Holloway has provided, while Reid has given us a new and more or less complete history of the Scottish universities up to 1625. The authors deserve praise and gratitude for their sterling efforts.

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