

Alan S. Ross, *Daum's Boys: Schools and the Republic of Letters in Early Modern Germany*. Studies in Early Modern European History. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015. Pp. xiv+236 pp. £70.00.

The past ten years have witnessed a surge in literature about the German intellectual world during and after the Thirty Years War. Earlier work on German universities by Notker Hammerstein, a stream of publications on *historia literaria* and polymathy, the articles flowing from the pen of Martin Mulsow, and the attention for disputations in the work of scholars such as Hanspeter Marti and Sari Kivistö have all shown that the institutions and networks of learning suffered less from the Thirty Years War than its gruel destruction would lead us to assume. Scholars, teachers, and the learned book trade proved remarkably resilient. Individual German states might have attempted to exert rigid control over their educational system, but from a bird's-eye view, the patchy territories of Germany show not only a large number of schools and universities but also a highly diverse and incredibly competitive market. Political fragmentation did not cripple the educational system, but actually enriched it.

The recent historiography has also shown how much the German Republic of Letters (the *Gelehrtenrepublik*) was institutionalized in these schools and universities. A scholar in Germany did not have to feel isolated in the countryside: if there was no university close by, there was at least a Latin School or Territorial School. All the more surprising, therefore, is the dearth of attention for the secondary system of education. This neglect is largely due to a lack of sources. Whereas research into universities and their students is facilitated by relatively well-kept archives of curators and professorial senates, by serial sources such as registers of enrollments and of doctoral dissertations, there is very little material available on the life of Latin Schools. Historians have a myopic view of them for their reliance on state archives and law-givers; their many stipulations, as Alan Ross repeatedly argues, disclose little about their enforcement. It appears that Latin Schools were, in fact, tremendously flexible and independent in attending to local needs and regional competition. Perhaps the lack of historians' interests in Latin Schools can also be explained because of the lack of intellectual excitement the daily routine of a Latin School raises: despite the constant adaptations in pedagogical method, little was taught or discovered that was truly innovative. And yet Latin Schools were often centers of learning outside courts and academia, and not the receptacle for would-be Republicans of Letters with stalled careers.

A strong point of the book under review is its stress that German Latin schools played a crucial double role in education: their lowest forms tailored to a German-speaking market of artisan families, and the higher forms targeted aspiring students.

Enterprising rectors could negotiate considerable freedom to experiment with teaching. Thus in Zwickau, the Latin school offered lessons not only in Greek but also in Hebrew, Arabic, Aramaic, and Syrian. Remarkably, one of its rectors collected one of the largest seventeenth-century private libraries (around 10,000 books, many collected through carefully maintained relations with printers and proofreaders). The owner was the omnivorous and extremely active letter writer Christian Daum, proud author of a book consisting of 3,000 variations on the phrase *Fiat justitia, aut pereat mundus* (“with both meter and meaning of the original verse remaining intact”—a fact that made Leibniz curious enough to ask Daum after his art of combining).

In this elegant monograph, Alan Ross reconstructs with admirable clarity and consistency Daum’s strategies for obtaining a respectable position within the Republic of Letters. Helped by Daum’s archive, the self-fashioning of Daum is treated in tandem with a reconstruction of the microcosm of Zwickau’s Latin School. Life at this school in the small village becomes almost tangible through details such as the still extant graffiti in the attic of a house occupied by a schoolmaster and his young lodgers or by Daum’s complaint that he daily had to commute 300 meters to his work.

Ross conducted detective work not only in Daum’s papers, which include the matriculation records that this indefatigable teacher kept of his pupils, but also in his more than five thousand letters. He waded through Daum’s books and through the city archives, but his selections are never burdensome. The author’s study of the patron-client relations in the correspondence of Daum (who remained in contact with many former pupils, who continued to pay services to him for much of their careers, due to their “lop-sided” relation of “friendship” with the former master) is scattered with insightful observations, such as that “the patron-client relationship between two scholars was often less clearly defined than, say, that of an aristocratic patron to his client, since a scholar could quickly overtake his former benefactor in seniority” (170). The historiographically rather unique reconstruction of the career paths of 770 pupils shows convincingly that the school was successful in enhancing social mobility of families: not quickly, but steadily over generations. This is to say that Latin Schools did not just serve established elites. Ross’s study of the bilingual books used at school (based partly on a fine list of prize books) shows how Latin gradually took over from German when pupils ascended to the higher forms—which not all pupils did. Some took the first two forms only, and often more than once. The geographical mobility is also surprising, in particular in the higher forms. Less than 1 percent of the pupils ran through the entire curriculum in Zwickau. Others followed a variety of career paths, clearly visualized here.

The only disorientation readers of this book might experience is that one never quite knows whether the focus is on Daum and the lower and middle echelons of

the Republic of Letters, on the school in its urban social setting, or on the education and career of Daum's pupils. Ross has integrated all of these aspects in this bottom-up micro-history. Fortunately, he does so with reference to recent and critically evaluated literature, on the basis of excellent scholarship in the sources (e.g., 119 n. 48), and occasionally in comparison with *Fürstenschulen*, *Landesschulen*, and the German Jesuit school system. If only we had more such studies as this, then we could start adding force to the conclusion that despite the so-called Scientific Revolution, it was the poly-historical humanist tradition that in Germany (like it did in Amsterdam, as this reviewer concluded in his own dissertation a dozen years ago) continued to drill every new generation until long into the eighteenth century. That message is starting to sound louder and louder, repeated as it is by other historians of scholarship of what we might start calling a "school" in historiography. This is a valuable message at a time that the humanities are neglected more and more by the neoliberal ideology that pervades academia.

Dirk van Miert

Noël Golvers, *Libraries of Western Learning for China: Circulation of Western Books between Europe and China in the Jesuit Mission (ca. 1650–ca. 1750)*. Vol. 1: *Logistics of Book Acquisition and Circulation*; Vol. 2: *Formation of Jesuit Libraries*; Vol. 3: *Of Books and Readers*. Leuven Chinese Studies 23, 26, and 30. Leuven: Ferdinand Verbiest Institute, 2012–15. Pp. 1875. US\$234.00 (paper).

"In the entire world there is not one nation, not even in Europe, where the use of writing and books is more familiar and even more necessary than in China," stated the Flemish missionary Ferdinand Verbiest in the late seventeenth century (1:16). He also opined that for this reason Chinese civilization was most suited to the Jesuits' aspirations, despite the cultural and geographical distance. The Jesuits were, more than the other Catholic orders, focused on scholarship, to serve the greater glory of God. They instigated libraries as the intellectual backbone of their Chinese mission: to support their teaching either directly, with devotional books, or indirectly, through erudition. The Chinese, having grasped the accuracy of Western knowledge, would be more willing to accept the teaching of the Christian God.

The three volumes under review, counting almost 1,900 pages, are the magnum opus of Noël Golvers, a Latinist with ample experience studying the China mission.