monastic schools, which had done so much to preserve and enrich culture during the times of Charlemagne and Otto the Great (r. 936–973). Monastic schools were superseded north of the Alps by schools in urban churches, often cathedrals, and in Lombardy by semi-secular municipal schools. Both cathedral schools and municipal schools had long existed, but only in the eleventh and twelfth centuries did they rise to prominence. Many now became centers of higher learning of a sort that Europe had not known for centuries. Their enrollments increased and their faculties grew until, in the later twelfth century and after, some of them evolved into universities (see Map 7.1).

Map 7.1 Some Medieval Universities No European region can claim to be the “birthplace” of university education. In 1200, the first universities were spread across the European landscape—from Oxford in England to Salerno in southern Italy, with Paris, Montpellier, and Bologna in between. In the centuries that followed, universities were rapidly founded elsewhere, so that by the fifteenth century, almost every region of Europe had its own university.