H-Net Reviews
in the Humanities & Social Sciences

Martin Kintzinger. *Wissen wird Macht: Bildung im Mittelalter.* Stuttgart: Jan Thorbecke Verlag, 2003. 203 S. EUR 22.90 (broschiert), ISBN 978-3-7995-0116-3.

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Published on H-German (June, 2005)

How Knowledge Served Power in Medieval Europe

"Knowledge is power" wrote Francis Bacon in 1597, thereby providing an all-purpose slogan to justify private and public expenditures for education. Martin Kintzinger modifies this slogan to "knowledge becomes power" for the title of his overview of education in the Western European Middle Ages and its relationship to power. The book is marketed by the publisher as a work of general nonfiction, and it has received considerable acclaim in Germany.[1] Accordingly, the projected audience is the educated reader who might be interested in learning more about education in the Middle Ages. With occasional references to the modern state of education in Germany, the author reinforces the idea that the medieval relationship between knowledge and power was a complex but by no means unique one.

There are no footnotes, but there is a bibliography of 157 items of "literature and sources for further reading." From time to time Kintzinger appropriately credits a particular insight to a modern scholar by listing a name in parenthesis after he makes a particular point. Curiously, though, five of the seventeen scholars cited in the text do not appear in the bibliography–Peter Classen (twice), Herbert Grundmann, Herve Martin, Henri Pirenne, and Bertrand (not Bernhard) Schnerb. Even though the author is not primarily addressing a scholarly audience, one would think that it should be easier for readers to find the arguments presented by people cited.

I have a few other minor quibbles. An index would have been highly appropriate for such an information-rich volume, since it was not rushed into print to capitalize on something that happened yesterday. There ought to have been plenty of time to provide such a basic courtesy to the reader. The maps reproduced are so reduced in size as to be illegible without a magnifying glass (pp. 96-97, 100-101). In a few cases, the reason for including a particular illustration is murky: a discussion of Vincent of Beauvais (p. 177) is accompanied by an illustration from *De proprietatibus rerum* of Bartholomaeus Anglicus, who is mentioned in the text only on page 32 in the discussion of an illustration from a fifteenth century manuscript of "Barthelemy l'Anglais" showing children engaged in learning. This discussion presumably refers

to the manuscript illumination reprinted on page 178, but what will the non-specialist reader make of this? This is the sort of inconsistency, one might note, that creating an index often helps to identify. One diagram shows the familiar juxtaposition of the four bodily fluids of humoral pathology, their characteristics, the four elements, the four seasons, the four ages of man, and the four temperaments (p. 134). But nothing in the text refers to the diagram. On the whole, though, the illustrations are relevant to the discussion and enhance the points being made by the author.

As for the book as a whole, it is an entirely praiseworthy volume. In just over 150 pages of text, Kintzinger provides the reader with a tightly reasoned overview of learning in its social context during the Middle Ages. In the first part ("Knowledge of the Middle Ages and Knowledge in the Middle Ages: Pathways to Modernity"), he begins by noting that even as present-day politicians demand improvements in education, to meet the challenges of a "knowledge society," they and the public are at best confused about what actions are most appropriate. On the one hand, people demand that education be useful, on the other hand, the public fascination with history persists. He frames his discussion of medieval views of learning around the motifs of the "dance of death" and "dwarfs standing on the shoulders of giants." The former shows both the medieval awareness of how all professions contribute to making up society and of the omnipresence of death. The latter, attributed to Bernhard of Chartres, illustrates both the dependence of knowledge on tradition and its continuing growth. One might add that the modern cliche of "broadening one's horizon" follows rather directly from this image.

Perhaps the most important distinction in part 1 is that between *Bildungswissen* (knowledge transmitted through formal education) and *Handlungswissen* (know-how). It is especially useful for us, in an age when more and more trades and professions require formal training, to remember that the vast majority of medieval people acquired know-how through on-the-job training with minimal or no formal education; this was nonetheless useful and essential knowledge. By creating terms that allow both types of knowledge to be given their due, Kintzinger establishes a framework for understanding how medieval society was completely dependent on knowledge.

The first part concludes with a discussion of the career of Konrad of Megenberg (1309-1374), descendant of a courtly family. Konrad went to school in Erfurt, received a master's degree in Paris, was appointed rector of the cathedral school at St. Stephen's in Vienna, and eventually became a canon, and probably the head of the school, in Regensburg. Because he was a prolific author, we are able to learn a great deal from him about life at the university and about the communication between teacher and pupils that occurred in a medieval schoolhouse. Kintzinger might also have noted that Megenberg wrote not only in Latin but also in German, and his *Book of Nature* is one of the most popular vernacular works of the late Middle Ages. Indeed, the rise of vernacular literacy, while touched on at various places by Kintzinger but not discussed in depth, opens a new market for transmission of knowledge that would soon explode with the rise of the printing press and the Reformation.

Part 2 ("Monk's Cell and Power Center: Pathways out of the Middle Ages") provides an overview of developments from monastic culture and Carolingian rule to universities, cities, and late medieval rulers. Even non-medievalists probably assume that an enormous shift occurred during these 750 years, from the limited role of a few intellectuals at the Carolingian courts to the growth of bureaucracies requiring large numbers of literate workers in all sorts of institutions by the end of the Middle Ages, though they may not know much about the details. The transition from a few court intellectuals educated in monastic schools and a small number of cathedral schools, in the eighth century, to the vibrant schools of the eleventh and twelfth centuries is discussed in the first nine chapters of part 2. Well-chosen anecdotes from chronicles highlight the role of discipline in these schools, illustrate how texts were used, emphasize the role of oral culture, and show how the schools were an elite community, both by birth and by the precepts of their education.

Kintzinger highlights the increasing importance of cathedral schools under the Ottonian emperors of the eleventh century and refers to comparable developments in England and France. When he then moves to the flourishing of intellectual life in the twelfth-century cathedral schools of France, he might have added an important nuance from the work of C. Stephen Jaeger, who coined the term "charismatic culture," to emphasize the predominantly oral educational culture of the eleventh century with its emphasis on the development of a moral being.[2] Jaeger sees this "old learning" as having been consciously overturned by the cathedral schools of the twelfth century. Kintzinger, on the other hand, shows clearly what was revolutionary about the new learning: the increasing unwillingness of teachers to "harmonize"

all the contradictions in Christian texts.

Kintzinger's presentation of this history is particularly impressive in its demonstration of connections between the growth of power and the spread of formal education, with reference to the significance of regional differences. Most notably, the success of the French court in centralizing power along with its ability to harness secular education to its own purposes allowed cathedral schools in the twelfth century and universities in the thirteenth to flourish far beyond what was possible given the more limited needs of the ducal and provincial courts that dominated the German landscape. The rise of urban culture in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries led to a growing recognition of the advantages accruing to educated officials, merchants, tradesmen, and entrepreneurs and opened a pathway into an educated elite for citizens who were not of noble birth. The responses of clerical and secular institutions to these educational needs included both the top-down founding of universities and an explosion of new types of schools for both Latin and vernacular education all over Western Europe.

In describing the growth of urban education, Kintzinger notes how the groundwork for moving beyond the traditional liberal arts and the higher faculties of theology, philosophy, and medicine had been laid already in the twelfth century by Hugh of St. Victor, with his definition of seven mechanical arts to correspond with the seven liberal arts. Knowledge in the mechanical arts became increasingly important in the later Middle Ages, particularly as "big technology," such as gunnery and mining, became vital for the economies of entire regions. Here would have been another place where a discussion of vernacular texts might have added an important nuance, particularly because both translations from Latin and works created in the vernacular demonstrate an entirely new readership that extends beyond the bounds of school subjects.

Other topics that receive attention in the later chapters of part 2 include the struggle, between secular and clerical authorities, for control of Latin schools in the cities; the uniqueness of the self-governing institutions created by universities; and the education of social elites who long resisted formal education for themselves. In a brief epilogue, Kintzinger notes that the Middle Ages did not differ from our contemporary world in using education to create a forward-looking society. Education that does not meet the needs of society fails to live up to its mission, and a society that does not rely on knowledge to guide its decisions will fail to be a good society. His final words are: "Refusal [to serve society] as well as uncritical toadying will lead equally to meaninglessness and ineffectuality and strengthen the power of the ignorant" (p. 191).

Anyone with an interest in the Middle Ages or in the history of education will profit from reading Kintzinger's book. It draws on the insights of recent scholarship to show how society's need for knowledge plays a decisive role in determining what kinds of learning, both practical and formal, are likely to flourish at a given time. A book such as this is not the usual venue for introducing new research results, but it is an opportunity to provide a synthesis of scholarship. Kintzinger has done this with great success, and his book can be read with profit by even the most specialized scholars (perhaps especially by them).

Notes

[1]. Reviewed in German by Stephanie Irrgang for H-Soz-u-Kult (December, 2003). Available online at `http://www.hnet.org/reviews/showrev.cgi?path=111891079098163.`

[2]. C. Stephen Jaeger, *The Envy of Angels: Cathedral Schools and Social Ideals in Medieval Europe, 950-1200* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994).

Citation: William C. Crossgrove. Review of Kintzinger, Martin, *Wissen wird Macht: Bildung im Mittelalter.* H-German, H-Net Reviews. June, 2005.

URL: http://www.h-net.org/reviews/showrev.php?id=10596