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Klaus Wriedt. *Schule und UniversitÖÂ¤t: BildungsverhÖÂ¤ltnisse in norddeutschen StÖÂ¤dten des SpÖÂ¤tmittelalters–Gesammelte AufsÖÂ¤tze.* Leiden: Brill, 2005. Figure + illustration + bibliography + index. EUR 110.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-90-04-14687-7.

Reviewed by William C. Crossgrove (Departments of German Studies and Comparative Literatures, Brown University)

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Getting Educated in North German Cities of the Late Middle Ages

Klaus Wriedt, professor emeritus of medieval history at the University of OsnabrÃ¼ck, has collected eleven previously published essays in this volume of studies on schools and universities in northern German cities during the late middle ages. Nine were originally published in the proceedings of conferences at which they were delivered orally and have been retained in their original form except for minor corrections of errors. As a result, words directly addressing the theme of a particular conference repeatedly occur and reinforce the notion that each essay was written for a specific occasion. Another chapter was originally published in a Festschrift, and only "Personengeschichtliche Probleme universitÃ¤rer Magisterkollegien" originally appeared in a journal in 1975. The others appeared over a twenty-year period (1983-2003). Wriedt refers to the thesis of Fritz RÃ¶rig (inspired by the work of Henri Pirenne on Flanders) that the spread of literacy and the rise of urban educational institutions in northern German cities were intimately linked with the needs of the merchant classes. One reason for concentrating on northern German cities is to modify RÃ¶rig's thesis by providing more detail on what actually happened. A further reason, according to Wriedt, is that much of the old Hanseatic territory encompassed by his studies belonged to the German Democratic Republic, such as the universities at Erfurt, Rostock and Greifswald, where scholarly interests were directed elsewhere after World War II. He also stresses that he is providing only individual case studies and outlines of problems rather than comprehensive historical treatments. Similar disclaimers repeatedly occur in the individual contributions.

The first three chapters deal with schools in the Hanseatic cities. Wriedt is convinced that RÃ¶rig overstated the degree of conflict between city councils and the church in the development of new schools in the northern German cities. The details he cites nonetheless frequently refer to arguments that took place over who had the right to operate schools, even as Wriedt is trying to demonstrate that this was not the norm. He is undoubtedly correct in asserting that conflict was less common than has sometimes been claimed, and it becomes overwhelmingly obvious that each case has its own set

of circumstances, often involving personal connections among leading families in the relevant cities. The existing schools run by the churches produced people literate in Latin who could take on menial tasks in city government, such as record-keeping and correspondence, but this training did not confer any particular social advantage on them, especially in the centuries before the Reformation. Furthermore, rich merchants involved in overseas trade also made use of people literate in Latin for similar purposes. The growth of schools, in other words, met the need for literate individuals, but it did not provide a route into the upper echelons of bourgeois society. Meanwhile, the rise of schools that taught vernacular literacy was readily tolerated by the traditional school authorities, since these schools were not allowed to teach the liberal arts. They did, however, meet the practical needs of merchants as well as provide personnel for administrative records increasingly created in the vernacular language.

The next four essays deal with the relationship between the bourgeoisie and study at the new universities of northern Germany. Wriedt discusses the kinds of job opportunities that gradually became available for university graduates in city administration, at secular and religious courts and in the schools and universities themselves. One can say, in summary, that such positions were still quite limited around 1400, but slowly increased in the following decades. Another aspect of the changing situation is the gradual growth of new sources of scholarship support for young men wishing to study. In addition to self-financing for the children of wealthy families, the assignment of clerical benefices and the endowment of funds for studying at particular universities increased during the course of the fifteenth century. An intricate web of personal relationships tended to define who benefited from these opportunities. Wriedt finds little evidence that a university education was a pathway into the governing elites of the cities, and the relatively few learned members of city councils tended to be members of established families who happened to have received university educations. Those who studied primarily for the social prestige of being educated were also more apt to attend a French or Italian university. To be sure, lawyers were increasingly hired by cities and many agreements with local law faculties to provide legal services to university cities are attested. As in the earlier chapters, the overriding impression one comes away with is that "all history is local." Each case that Wriedt studies appears to depend on so many interpersonal relationships that it is difficult to formulate any larger generalizations.

The eighth through tenth contributions focus on three individual institutional histories: the universities of Rostock and Erfurt and the cathedral school at LÃ¼beck, which almost became a university. In the case of Rostock, Wriedt especially emphasizes the details of how the university was actually founded as a joint effort of the city of Rostock, the dukes of Mecklenburg and the religious institutions around Rostock. While Rostock has often been called a "Hanseatic university," it is commonly categorized as a ducal foundation rather than an urban one, since the papal bull of 1419 that led to its founding was instigated by the dukes of Mecklenburg. Nonetheless, Rostock was not initially permitted a theological faculty, which suggests that the primary impetus for its founding and the bulk of its support in fact came from the city. It was, in other words, neither strictly a ducal nor strictly an urban foundation.

In the case of Erfurt, Wriedt especially concentrates on the university's success in the early years from its founding in 1392 into the eighth decade of the fifteenth century. During this period, of universities in the Reich, only Vienna had more students. Erfurt suffered decline after that, partly due to local conflicts and partly because of the founding of many competitors in the north in the second half of the century. It never fully recovered its status as a university with a supra-regional attraction, and settled into a role as a regional university by the beginning of the Reformation. The odd thing about this essay is that it was presented at a conference on Adam Ries, who spent a few years in Erfurt around 1520 before he became known as a court mathematician and author of popular books on arithmetic, but who seems to have had little to do with the university. Wriedt makes it clear in the opening paragraphs that he is simply providing background to show what the university was like during Ries's sojourn in Erfurt.

The chapter on LÃ¼beck takes up the question of whether LÃ¼beck came close to having the theological instruction offered at its cathedral become the basis for a university in the early fifteenth century, a suggestion made in 1982 by Peter Moraw, the honoree of the Festschrift in which the article was first published. Wriedt quickly demolishes the evidence offered by Moraw, emphasizes the close relationship between Rostock and the theologians in LÃ¼beck and raises doubts that such an effort was really made. Then he admits at the end that there are still many unanswered questions and that Moraw may have been right but not

quite in the way that he thought.

The final contribution, a reflection on the usefulness of studying the careers of individual persons to learn about the history of university masters' *collegia*, was published eight years before any of the other chapters and prefigures what seemingly becomes Wriedt's favorite analytical tool. It fits less well with the rest of the volume in one sense, because the individual cases discussed involve conflicts of interest felt by the delegations to the Council of Constance from Cologne and Vienna, rather than from the northern German cities studied in the other essays, conflicts brought on because these individuals represented both clerical and collegial interests. In other words, it is methodologically relevant, but less so thematically.

The volume includes a bibliography of twenty-two items published between 1991 and 2003 (pp. 259-260), intended to provide the reader with an idea of the direction of recent related scholarship and concludes with a relatively detailed index of persons, places and topics (pp. 261-267). Modern scholars are generally included in the index if they are mentioned in the text, though those cited only in the numerous footnotes are not. Since no attempt is otherwise made to update the individual articles or to provide any generalizations other than those included in the original publications, the index is an extremely valuable tool for those wishing to "mine" the volume for their own work.

Wriedt is evidently rather resistant to generalizing about what was occurring in northern German schools and universities as a whole. The reader with only a casual interest in the topic, one seeking some overall perspectives, will probably find it frustrating to read these previously published articles. The overwhelming sense that one comes away with, as noted earlier, is that each case is different and all that one can really do is to study the details. We are, of course, not talking about a situation where there were scores of universities, hundreds of schools and thousands of teachers and students to consider, so a methodology that focuses on individual facts about the chief actors is necessarily going to bring out an enormous amount of detail. At a basic level of analysis, moreover, it is undoubtedly also a more accurate reflection of what actually happened. Still, many readers might have wished for a chapter in which Wriedt tried to summarize his views, perhaps returning to the issues he raised in the brief preface. Since the various chapters collected here were mostly published in conference proceedings, it is useful to have them available in one place. We see in them some of the results of careful historical research, and as such they will be useful for scholars interested in the history of schools and universities in northern Germany.

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