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Christopher Dowe. *Auch Bildungsbürger: Katholische Studierende und Akademiker im Kaiserreich.* Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2006. 384 S. EUR 44.90 (paper), ISBN 978-3-525-35152-9.

Reviewed by Mark Jantzen (History Department, Bethel College, Kansas)

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Mediating and Moderating Modernity for Catholics

This book examines how Catholic students and academics in the late nineteenth century mediated between a Catholic worldview and hierarchy resistant to many aspects of modernity and a Protestant-dominant culture skeptical of Catholics' ability to adapt to, much less contribute to, modern German society. Christopher Dowe argues persuasively that educated Catholics performed this task well and that reclaiming their story highlights the diversity of both late Imperial German educated elites and German Catholicism. Catholic academics passed on many modern ideas and practices to a broader Catholic public by engaging in public debates on topics ranging from Social Darwinism to historical-critical study of the Bible. They also modeled more individualistic modes of piety. By staking out claims that embraced some aspects of modernity while keeping others at arm's length (all while using criteria that kept key Catholic tenets at the center of their thought), Catholic academics also helped to moderate the form of modernity that many Catholics eventually accepted. The publications of German Catholic student fraternities provide the main source material for this study.

Dowe complicates the much-debated notion of a Catholic milieu, but does not reject it outright. His study focuses on the 40 percent or so of Catholic students who sought out and joined Catholic fraternities, an action he associates with an active interest in and acceptance of traditional Catholicism. Thus Old Catholics are not included in this study, nor are the slight majority of Catholic students who joined non-Catholic fraternities or none at all. A major argument for claiming that joining a Catholic fraternity was indeed a conscious decision for a particular identity is the fact that these groups rejected dueling in any form, a commitment to Catholic teaching that made them stand out in the German university landscape. Because this study is based largely on Catholic student fraternity newspapers, the question of how widely such self-identification nonetheless can capture most of Catholic-educated elite thinking in Imperial Germany determines how widely applicable the findings of this study might be. The task is made more difficult by the fact that, as Dowe acknowledges, editorial policy of these student newspapers was designed to steer coverage away from topics that were too controversial or too critical of the church. When this editorial bias is directly

analyzed, the insights are rich (p. 282), but more often we are simply told that editors closed down debates (pp. 94, 112, 234), raising the general question of how representative these newspaper accounts can be of Catholic academic thinking. The lack of sustained analysis of the sources themselves undermines the otherwise persuasive claim to have captured Catholic elite thinking for us.

The first chapter provides an organizational history of the national associations of fraternities that published newspapers and set guidelines for local chapters. Since these organizations provided the bulk of the archival material for this study, they are a major focus of analysis. There were two main groups, the Verband der katholischen Studentenvereine Deutschlands (KV), founded in 1866, and the Cartellverband der katholischen deutschen Studentenverbindungen (CV), which grew out of older associations going back to the 1850s. The CV included local chapters from Austria, while the KV's members all came from the German Empire–a fact that allows for interesting analysis of how Catholic students finessed or even ignored contentious questions of Germany's borders after 1870. In addition, the CV was composed of fraternities that required students to wear colors, while the KV did not. Unfortunately no analysis of the impact of this distinction on the perception of Catholic students among their non-Catholic colleagues is included. Why did this issue divide Catholic students and what was at stake? Other types of organizations also existed, such as Unitas (which mostly gathered local fraternities of theology students), devotional organizations (like Marian congregations), and service organizations (such as those associated with the Society of St. Vincent de Paul). Membership between the fraternities and these latter two types of organizations frequently overlapped, so the focus remains on the fraternities, which were lay-led and provided more extensive source material.

The lay-led nature of the fraternities also makes them an interesting case study in lay Catholic identity, the focus of chapter 2. Although a number of theology students were members and numerous priests were alumni, decisions at all levels were made on the basis of majority vote. Thus clubs eventually decided to hold dances, even though priests were forbidden to dance. Yet members were expected to uphold church devotional practices, including weekly mass attendance and annual confession. Participation as a fraternity in Corpus Christi processions became an important point of public identification with the church. At the same time, however, Catholic students turned away from the devotions that marked much of rural Catholic piety. By favoring and promoting more private and hence individualistic forms of Catholic piety, Dowe argues, Catholic academics played an important role in changing what counted as acceptable Catholic piety without, however, moving closer to a secular stance.

Daily student life, especially attitudes toward sex, alcohol, and dueling are examined in chapter 3. Overall Catholic students differed little from their Protestant counterparts, suggesting that an all-encompassing Catholic milieu did not exist. Several key differences remained, however. In contrast to the mainstream attitude among Protestant students embracing freedom from tradition, Catholics understood freedom to lie in recognizing legitimate limits, including those of church teaching and tradition. Thus premarital sex or other forms of sexual expression remained taboo, although the arguments for chastity over time became more medical and less theological. Rejection of the duel was likewise grounded in a sense of freedom, namely from the strictures of an illogical and antiquated honor code. On this topic Catholic students were more likely to deploy Enlightenment and liberal arguments against dueling than theological teachings. Catholic students who wanted to duel had to join non-Catholic fraternities. On the perennial student topic of alcohol, Catholic students mirrored the larger society, although one distinct gender difference was noted. Catholic sororities, which were organized only shortly before the Great War, mostly served tea and supported the fledgling abstinence movement within the fraternity community.

The social problems of the late nineteenth century stirred considerable debate and some action among Catholic students, the subject of chapter 4. Catholic students had at least some practical experience with these issues since most of them were active in St. Vincent de Paul societies. A young priest, Carl Sonnenschein, founded an organization in 1907 that organized students for work in this area. Similar to the shift in the rationale for chastity, work with the poor was originally grounded in Catholic teachings of Christian love for the neighbor, but later the rhetoric of the elite's responsibility toward the *Volk* predominated.

The longest chapter in the book is devoted to the question of God and country. Catholics did not see "country" in every case as the ultimate focus of loyalty, so at most they could only be moderate nationalists. Unfortunately the case that would have tested this thesis most clearly, the Austro-Prussian War of 1866, receives virtually no analysis here. In part the sources, which only

pick up after 1866, create this lacuna. In part, it exists because Catholic students created their own version of German national history and identity in order to prevent a sharp clash of loyalties. Thus they celebrated a "federal nationalism" that argued that national identity need not be fixed to one state. After 1870 this rhetoric applied to those Germans, particularly in the south, who had their own heads of state in addition to the German emperor. On the positive side, Catholic students celebrated diversity among Germans, in sharp contrast to many liberal Protestants who saw a national security threat in excessive diversity. At the same time, this version of German "unity in diversity" was doubtless fed by anti-Prussian feelings among many Catholics.

In terms of history, Catholic students celebrated Boniface, credited with bringing Christianity to the Germanic tribes, instead of Luther, and marked 1813, when Catholic students helped to throw off French occupation, instead of 1870. In fact, a Boniface Association was created to respond directly to the Gustav Adolphus Association, which supported the Lutheran diaspora. Catholic student newspapers were reticent to publish much on 1870 because of Catholic reluctance to join the German Empire. Likewise, Catholic fraternities were slow to join university-wide Bismarck celebrations until late in the 1890s, when memories of the *Kulturkampf* had faded. Given the CV's Austrian connections, the group was particularly slow to join this Imperial German fad. Once the Great War broke out, whatever distance remained from the mainstream understanding of German national identity quickly faded, although Catholic students throughout argued against accepting Social Darwinist views of the nation.

The final chapter analyzes the growing tension between a Protestant-infused culture of science at the universities and a circle-the-wagons approach among some Catholics toward modernity. Catholic students were certainly caught between these poles and they responded by moderating the most extreme claims of both. They highlighted broad areas of limitation to papal infallibility, rejecting the authority of the *Index* over Galileo, for example (p. 233). The *Syllabus of Errors* (1864) was also clearly flawed, although editorial policies set limits on criticism of that papal document. Catholic scientists, student newspapers argued, should operate on the principle of methodological doubt, refusing to accept that church doctrine could answer scientific queries or set research agendas. This rhetoric was aimed at Protestants who argued that Catholic adherence to a "medieval" papal worldview meant Catholics were incapable of working in the natural sciences. At the other extreme, Catholics rejected the claim that a single infallible, autonomous individual was capable alone of investigating and comprehending the world. They argued instead for a middle ground in the form of a "Catholic science," a slogan developed by Georg von Hertling, professor of philosophy and later imperial chancellor. The idea was to place all non-theological fields of study on a scientific basis with perhaps a few exceptions for basic questions of worldview. The main theologian to promote this view, Hermann Schell, was indexed for his efforts, but remained popular among Catholic students nonetheless. The Catholic refusal to accept unreservedly the ideology of an autonomous individual nonetheless remained an excuse in some circles not to offer Catholics full professorships.

The section of this chapter that deals with Catholic academic engagement with debates over historical critical methods as applied both to history and theology is particularly instructive. For example, acceptance of the Italian state was highly controversial, but was considered a debatable topic for Catholic students much earlier than in other Catholic circles. In terms of the history of Catholic piety, Catholic students borrowed a page from their Protestant counterparts and branded as hopeless "pietists" conservatives who sought to protect saints and their legends from critical investigation. Catholic student newspapers reviewed at length important works of liberal Protestant scholarship, even if only to refute those arguments. This engagement of German culture picked up especially in the 1890s. At that point, in fact, the Catholic bias of valuing diversity in education made it easier for Catholic fraternities to work with students at the new technical universities than it was for Protestant fraternities, which doubted the quality of TU students.

A short concluding chapter reiterates the key findings: namely, that Catholic academics remained typical of other Catholics in most regards, but were unique in their advocacy of a Catholicism that opened itself to wider German society. They adopted a more individualistic piety without becoming more secular, illustrating that a modernization theory that posits religion's growing irrelevance does not fit Catholicism in Imperial Germany. Perhaps the most valuable contribution of this study is to highlight the diversity within German Catholicism at a time when German historians are recognizing the importance of diversity both in the writing of Germany history and in contemporary German society.

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