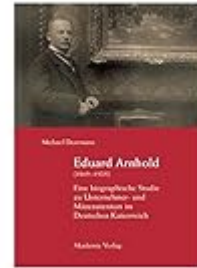




Michael Dormmann. *Eduard Arnhold (1849-1925): Eine biographische Studie zu Unternehmer- und Mäzenatentum im Deutschen Kaiserreich.* Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2002. 414 S. (gebunden), ISBN 978-3-05-003748-6.



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Since the mid-1990s, German historians have produced several local studies on *Mäzenatentum* (Berlin, Frankfurt am Main, Mannheim, etc.) and a small number of biographical studies such as the recent biography of James Simon. The book under review, though not without flaws, is a valuable contribution to this new and expanding field. Michael Dormmann attempts to present a biographical study of an eminent Jewish-German philanthropist who invested financial means into social, cultural and scientific public institutions. Eduard Arnhold, a wealthy industrialist of Berlin, was involved in the Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gesellschaft zur Förderung der Wissenschaften (KGW). He established, with the help of Wilhelm von Bode, an extensive private collection of modern art, which Dormmann describes as being not yet *museum-sreif* in the conservative and backwards-looking period of the Wilhelmine Empire (p. 122). Arnhold supported artists by handing out fellowships, purchasing art and financing art competitions, and thus became a *Mäecenas* in the true meaning of the word. The most memorable achievement of Arnhold, however, was the donation of the Villa Massimo to the Prussian government in 1914. This artistic colony in Rome was to provide space and financing for twelve German artists each year to study Roman art and develop their own style. Last, but not least, Arnhold participated and contributed money to more than sixty Jewish and non-Jewish *wohltaetige Vere-*

ine.

The novelty of Dormmann's book lies in the connection of an entrepreneur's biography with the study of the philanthropist. Most of the previous investigations into patronage and philanthropy have focused exclusively on the financial support of public institutions but have neglected to elaborate on the sources of the riches distributed by the philanthropists. Wealth and how it had been acquired determine whether and how industrialists invest money into public philanthropies. It is here that this study could have provided new insights. The author suggests that the way in which Eduard Arnhold achieved wealth and prosperity influenced his engagement in philanthropy. The reader, however, will search unsuccessfully for a discussion of this assumed connection. It remains open whether and how Arnhold's success as an entrepreneur influenced his decision to support scientific, social and cultural public institutions. When Arnhold's involvement in the KGW is described, the reader is left with the astonishing observation that Arnhold avoided receiving any personal and business benefits from the scientific research he helped to finance. This evaluation contradicts previous findings and interpretations of philanthropic activities in which a direct or indirect connection between philanthropic engagement and private benefit has been established.

In contrast to earlier German studies on philanthropy, Dorrman broadens the scope of investigation by including a discussion of the provision of private social welfare. His discussion of Arnhold's support for Jewish and non-Jewish associations allows for an interesting insight into the tension of his integration into German society and *Buergertum* (*Verbuergerlichung*) and maintaining a separate Jewish identity. However, the author dedicated only fourteen pages to Arnhold's scientific philanthropy and about twenty pages to a description of Arnhold's involvement in social philanthropy, while his support for the arts stretches over sixty-one pages (including detailed descriptions of the acquisition of certain paintings for his private collection). Worth mentioning is also his leap into the period of the Weimar Republic. It is a common assumption that philanthropy ceased in this period due to the disastrous economic situation after World War I and the expansion of state activity into the financing of public social, cultural, and educational institutions. Within about ten pages, the reader learns that some of the philanthropies financed by Arnhold were abandoned but that Arnhold and his wife focused their attention on selected institutions and secured their survival. The Johannaheim, an orphanage and school for girls, to name just one example, survived until 1943. Dorrman's book certainly is a step away from the older school of philanthropy research, which focuses nearly exclusively on support of artists and financing of public art collections during the Wilhelmine period. However, the author's discussion of social philanthropy remains superficial and fails to analyze the importance of private social welfare in German society before state interventionism and after as a form of complementary provision of social welfare,

best understood as a "mixed economy."

The terminology used throughout the book underlines these deficits. Dorrman insists on staying within the framework of concepts and definitions such as *Maezenatentum* and *buergerliche Sozialreform* instead of developing his own concepts and approaches. This leads to confusion, when terms such as *gemeinnuetziges Handeln* are used interchangeably with *Maezenatentum*. The very loaded term *Philanthropie* is used in a headline without discussing the term in the following chapter. To define *Maezenatentum* for the purpose of such a study as simply the provision of private means for public purposes (p. 96) is certainly not sufficient to provide a theoretical basis for such a broad study. The book thus reflects the general problem of German philanthropy research. Historians still shy away from a systematical and theoretical analysis of private support for public social, cultural and educational institutions which could challenge stereotypes about the state-centered and obedient German bourgeoisie. As Michael Dorrman points out near the end of his book, Eduard Arnhold is not the obedient *Untertan* from Heinrich Mann's classic work (p. 201). Instead, he was a self-confident citizen who, independently of government and authority, created what modern social scientists like to call civil society.

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