

Buchbesprechungen

Anticlericalism in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe, ed. by Peter A. Dykema and Heiko A. Oberman, Leiden: Brill 1993 (Studies in Medieval and Reformation Thought 51), XI, 704 S., ISBN 90-04-09518-7, hfl 380.50

This volume of forty essays plus introduction is the result of a major international colloquium held in September 1990 on the subject of anticlericalism as an «agent of change» in the later Middle Ages and Reformation. In his introduction, Heiko Oberman indicates the dual purpose of the volume: on the one hand, the work intends to offer a foundational guide to the subject of anticlericalism which, in the editor's view, has been inadequately examined by both social and intellectual historians; on the other hand, the work looks toward offering a model for the interchange between social and intellectual history. These two aspects of the work, of course, explain one another: the transition from late medieval to early modern Europe cannot be adequately understood unless both social or socio-political and intellectual currents are examined and, optimally, brought together for mutual illumination. Not only is it the case that social inquiry is peripheral to the work of intellectual historians, and intellectual history peripheral to the inquiry of social historians, it is also nearly impossible, given the abundance and diversity of the documentation, for a single historian to deal adequately with both sides of this equation. An international colloquium, designed from its inception as leading toward such a volume, provides perhaps the best solution to the problem.

From this perspective, the present volume must be counted as a major success. Oberman's introduction well sets the stage and announces basic themes, Peter Dykema's fine «thematic bibliography» points the reader toward the best collateral literature in the field, and many if not most of the contributors evidence considerable sensitivity to the possibility for breadth of vision springing out of the original colloquium format of the essays. Central themes – particularly themes concerning the diversity of the phenomenon of anticlericalism and its «carriers» and the indeterminacy of its nature and result – unite the volume.

The volume is organized into four sections: 1) the Late Medieval Setting; 2) the Transition to Early Modern Society; 3) Reform and Reformation: the Call for Change; and 4) Toward the Confessional Age. In each of these sections, rather than attempt to build a corporate generalization concerning the nature of anticlericalism, the several authors are sensitive to one of the guiding themes of the volume, namely, that anticlericalism varied from place to place, manifesting different symptoms in the Low Countries than it did in German lands or in Italy, different characteristics in the urban than in the rural setting;

or, again, different patterns at different times and when expressed by different kinds of «carriers» – lay and clerical, peasant and privileged, and so forth. In their geographical spread, the essays focus on Germany, England, France, Spain, Strasbourg, Florence, Geneva, Bohemia, the Low Countries. Thematically the essays address such diverse themes as lay anticlericalism, «clerical anticlericalism», literary approaches to the critique of the clergy both in late medieval verse, Italian Renaissance poetry, Reformation era pamphlets.

Given the number and diversity of these essays, it is quite impossible to offer analysis of every individual study. The remaining comments of this review, therefore, tool to one particularly important aspect of the volume that unites the essays. Throughout the volume there is a methodological inquiry into the problematic nature of previous discussions of the subject and into the difficulty even of speaking of such a thing as «anticlericalism» that determines the direction for all future study in this field. Thus, Kaspar Elm begins the first essay in the volume, «Anticlericalism in the German Middle Ages,» with his own somewhat startling discovery that virtually none of the standard reference works offer any discussion at all of the subject of anticlericalism and that the word itself appears in lexis primarily as a result of developments in the nineteenth century. Nor, as the essays by Brady, Blickle, Karant-Nunn, Elm, Hillerbrand, Steinmetz, and Straus indicate, do the modern issues at the root of the term in contemporary lexis apply to the late medieval and sixteenth-century context: for the issues cannot be exhausted in a simple juxtaposition of clergy and laity, but must rather be explained as lay opposition to certain kinds of clericalism (papal, local episcopal, monastic, and so forth) or as clerical opposition to other forms or exercises of clerical power and office, or, again, as either a lay or clerical antimonasticism or antisacerdotalism. Just the fact that anticlericalism cannot be simplistically identified as a phenomenon of the laity or as an attack on ecclesial piety is a significant note.

So too is the sense that anticlericalism is both attitudinal and behavioral, noted in Scribner's essay – with the qualification that the attitudinal or spiritual forms of anticlerical expression do not have either an invariable or a predictable result in behavior. Here again, the variety in thought and action clearly stems from the varied social and economic status of the individual or group in which anticlerical sentiments arise over against the highly variegated ecclesial context in which the clergy function as a social group, an economic power, or a force in the political, cultural, legal, and moral as well as the purely religious or sacerdotal spheres. Thus, Scribner documents an instance of conflict between a traditional pastor in Memmingen and an evangelical preacher in the same town and the preacher's popular following. The ensuing conflict involved the town council and the evangelical party as well as the two preachers or pastors, and the traditional pastor received the brunt of anticlerical sentiment as the city moved through public disputation to ecclesiastical reformation.

From a very different perspective, Hendrix's essay documents aspects of the clerical side of the problem: rather than take the view of the anticlerical attack, Hendrix examines the perspective the clergy under fire. Among other documents, Hendrix examines the reflections of an Augustinian prior on episcopal negligence in the supervision of prospective clergy – lazy students become priests and unskilled candidates are elevated to rich and secure benefices. Here, the prior of a monastery acknowledges the complaints of the Reformation and complains against the secular clergy. In other words, the clergy themselves and, in particular, clergy who did not leave the church for the Reformation, provide a focus and explanation for anticlerical sentiments. Thus, Karant-Nunn writes of «clerical anticlericalism», Brecht discusses Luther's early questioning of the character and practice of preaching, and Hsia's essay distinguishes between «clerical self-criticism» and «radical rejection of the clerical estate».

The volume under review is so rich in perspectives and examination of sources, some of which are archival and have never before been examined in detail, that a review might become endless. Suffice it to say, by way of conclusion, that this is an extremely significant volume both because of the quality and diversity of the many contributions and because of the cohesive historical and methodological vision that underlies it. It should serve both as a survey of the very diverse problem of anticlericalism in the later middle ages and early modern era and as an impetus to further study on a refined methodological level. Above all it offers a warning that the social and intellectual historians of the Reformation cannot afford to ignore one another or have recourse in facile ways to one another's cherished «isms».

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Der Fluch und der Eid. Die metaphysische Begründung gesellschaftlichen Zusammenlebens und politischer Ordnung in der ständischen Gesellschaft, hrsg. von Peter Blickle, Berlin: Duncker & Humblot 1993 (Zeitschrift für Historische Forschung, Beiheft 15), 145 S.

Die Autorin und die Autoren der drei Aufsätze – *André Holenstein, Heinrich Richard Schmidt* und *Eva Labowicz* – sind sich in zwei Dingen einig: Erstens besaßen Fluchen und Schwören durch ihre metaphysische Begründung wichtige politische und gesellschaftliche Funktionen in der frühneuzeitlichen Ständegesellschaft; zweitens büßte diese Begründung vom 17. zum 18. Jahrhundert im Zuge der «Entzauberung der Welt» und des «Rationalisierungsprozesses» an Bedeutung immer mehr ein. Sie kommen allerdings auf sehr verschiedenen Wegen zu diesen Ergebnissen – gerade das macht das Spannende an diesem Heft aus. Dabei bleiben aber gelegentliche Widersprüchlichkeiten