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Vom Nutzen der Historie. Festschrift für Hans-Christof Kraus zum 65. Geburtstag

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On the occasion of the 65th birthday of Professor Hans-Christof Kraus, his colleagues and friends decided to honour his contribution to historical scholarship. Professor Kraus, working since 2007 at the University of Passau, is a highly respected historian with a long publication record on a broad range of topics including the political history of Germany and Great Britain from the 18th to the 20th century, the history of education and science, constitutional and administrative history and the history of political ideas. In recognition of his commitment, fellow academics have compiled a *Festschrift*, which includes thirty-one studies from his field of expertise.

After providing a brief introduction that highlights Professor Kraus's achievements, the book is divided into six sections, each following an overarching motif. The first part is devoted to research on historical science. It begins with a contribution from Laura Pachtner, in which she deals with the assessment of Tassilo III, and his image in Bavarian historiography. She concludes that after his death, the portrayal of the duke was mostly negative to legitimise the Carolingian takeover.

However, towards the end of the 18th century, there was a renewed interest in the duke and his patronage of the church in particular. Ulrike Hörholdt continues with her research on the role of Supreme Presidents in the Prussian provinces and the impact they had on the foundation of the early historical societies. She shows that these have been widely supported, especially in the newly acquired territories, where they served to calm possible opposition by promoting regional patriotism under Prussian auspices. Klaus Nietmann sets his focus on the editorial work of historians Hermann Krabos and Georg Winters, who in 1910 started to work on the *regesta* of the House of Ascania. Finally, Uwe Walter presents an unpublished text by historian Alfred Heuß debating the connection between the Army and the State in the Roman Republic, which was disrupted by Roman expansion, thus resulting in the creation of a monarchy.

Bernhard Löffler opens the second section titled "Historical perceptions and interpretations" with his study dealing with Bavaria's relationship to the Orient. Based on a study of travelogues and the *Völkerschau* phenomenon,

he confirms the existence of the orientalist conceptions among 19th-century Bavarian travellers. We then move to the issue of Theodor Fontane's relationship with the Jews. Thomas Brechenmacher found that although anti-Semitism was common in Fontane's private documents, the writer was aware of his prejudices and actively suppressed them in his works. Marc von Knorring focuses on the image of Prussia in the eyes of German elites during the Weimar Republic. After analysing 141 autobiographies, the author concludes that Prussia was not often mentioned and when it was, the mentions were largely negative. The exception was a small part of the autobiographies which evaluated Prussia positively, largely due to its great personalities. Benjamin Hasselhorn examines the 1938 fake interview of Wilhelm II for the American journal KEN, in which the former emperor expresses his criticism of Adolf Hitler. Hasselhorn speculates that the forgery may have been an attempt to discredit Hitler's regime, but he admits that this hypothesis is unfounded.

The third section is dedicated to *Geistgeschichte* and the history of ideas. In his article, Horst Möller employs a comparative approach to the study of intellectual class in France and Germany from its emergence in the late 18th century to the present. He rejects the idea of fundamental differences between German and French intellectuals, but rather he observes many resemblances between these two groups. Helmut Neuhaus informs the reader about the correspondence between

Immanuel and Karl Hegel, two sons of the famous philosopher Georg W. F. Hegel. His examination dealing with their personal lives, travels, career and the role of their father and his legacy offers an interesting probe into the daily life of German intellectuals in the 19th century. A comparative approach is also applied in the study by Cristiana Senigaglia, who compares the attitudes of Oswald Spengler and Max Weber toward modernity. While Spengler fears the impact on human culture and collective society and views its rationalisation solely negatively, Weber, while concerned about the freedom of the individual, can also see positives. Peter Hoeres explores the ideas of constitutional lawyer Carl Schmitt, especially his views on the Bismarckian period and the concept of *bellum iustum*. His insights are very intriguing, though they could nevertheless further benefit from the inclusion of observations related to the culture of war as explored by, for example, John D. P. Keegan. Martin Otto closes the section with his evaluation of the selection of German Jurists in Joachim Aubert's handbook on the burial places of famous Germans, Austrians and Swiss. He deems that despite certain shortcomings, the selection is rather representative.

The following section deals with the constitution and political systems in theory and practice. Eckhard Jesse analyses the changes in the German political system from the end of the Holy Roman Empire in 1806 to the reunification in 1990 and the role of various internal and external factors.

Matthias Stickler focuses on the topic of coronations in Germany during the 19th century, which he calls the “crisis period of the coronation”. While the tradition of coronation survived in Austria-Hungary, secularisation and the federal character prevented its continuation in the German Empire. Dominik Geppert offers an interesting probe into the life of a member of both Prussian and German parliaments through the character of historian Hans Delbrück. Frank-Lothar Kroll follows with an overview of the efforts to restore the monarchy in Germany in the 1950s, particularly the activities of Hans Joachim Schopes. Kroll compares them to restoration attempts in Spain, Romania and Bulgaria and concludes that all of them offered substantially more favourable conditions than Germany, where democratic rule quickly gained legitimacy. Tilman Mayer discusses the topic of whether there was a national movement in Germany during its period of division. He argues that in East Germany, a national movement developed in a latent form, which yearned for freedom and reunification, and this movement fully manifested itself in 1989. Christian Thies moves away from historical topics to address the radical criticism of the current democratic system, which views it as fundamentally flawed. He discusses the viewpoints of three authors – Michael Mann, Hans Hermann Hoppe and Jason Brennan. Although he is sceptical of their proposed solutions, he agrees that it is necessary to stress the danger of idolising democracy as a perfect sys-

tem, as it only leads disaffected people to political radicalism.

The penultimate section focuses on politics and political culture. Wilhelm Brauner opens with a study summarising the history of the first German horse-drawn railway from Linz to České Budějovice. Hans-Werner Hahn focuses on a specific case of the Prussian occupation of Nassau and its integration within Prussia and the rivalry between the governmental president Gustav von Dienst and the leader of the Nassau liberals. Monika Weinfurt delves into an interesting issue of the dual identity of the German Empress Victoria, the eldest daughter of Queen Victoria. Victoria aimed to maintain a dual identity and act as a bridge between Germany and Great Britain. Ulrich Lappenküper examines different relationships, one between Bismarck and the leader of Austrian pan-Germans, Georg von Schönerer. While Bismarck maintained his distance for political reasons, Schönerer remained a great admirer of the Iron Chancellor, despite disagreeing with him on many issues. Wolfram Pyta discusses the influence of Chancellor Theobald von Bethmann Hollweg on the development of German parliamentarism, focusing in particular on his efforts to institute equal suffrage in the elections to the Prussian parliament, which ultimately caused his downfall. In his study, Martin Hille traces the growth of NSDAP in Upper Bavaria using the example of the Tölz district. The Nazis faced stiff competition from the BVP and the Farmers’ Union (Bauernbund), which prevented them from

gaining support in rural areas. The Nazis' support was mostly limited to towns until the economic crisis of the 1930s, which changed the situation.

The final section titled "Great Politics – War and Peace" is mostly dedicated to classic diplomatic history. Lothar Höbelt examines the relationship between Austrian Habsburgs and the Russian Tsar Peter the Great. He challenges the notion that Habsburgs and Peter's Russia were natural allies, arguing that the rapidly changing political landscape precluded a long-term agreement. Ute Planert focuses on the emergence of catholic and loyalist German nationalism in the Bresigau region during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars. She suggests that a unique form of patriotism developed in Breisgau. With the peace of Pressburg and the handover of the region to Baden, this patriotism lost its loyalist element and in exchange embraced broader ideas of German nationalism. Sven Prietzel discusses the peace treaties concluded by Napoleon Bonaparte. He found that in his early years, Napoleon generally negotiated balanced peace treaties. However, this changed following the War of the Third Coalition, after which Napoleon began to set draconic terms, demanding large territorial changes and financial contributions, which made any lasting peace in Europe unachievable. Andreas Rose in his contribution analyzes the criticism of British Foreign Secretary Edward Grey by members of his own Liberal Party. He establishes that liberal critics saw Grey as an imperialist whose policies are even worse than

those held by the Conservatives. Winfried Baumgart informs us about the initiative to publish the memoir of a German officer Ernst Paraquin. Unfortunately, with the original memoir being located in Moscow, the publication efforts struggle due to the current conflict. Baumgart provides a brief account of Paraquin's life, illustrating the topics for which his memories may offer crucial evidence. Finally, the study by Rainer F. Schmidt deals with the delicate issue of the Allied bombing of German cities during the Second World War. Schmidt puts forward an idea based on archival research, that Churchill intentionally aimed to provoke Germany into a bombing campaign and thus burning any bridges that might yet lead to peace. He also argues that the main aim of the bombing toward the end of the war were not military objectives, but an attempt to fully break the German spirit and build a foundation for occupation – an objective at which the Allies succeeded at the cost of high civilian casualties. However, one cannot agree with Schmidt's other assertion, namely that the British were unaware of the irrationality of their actions, as he has shown, their actions were motivated by admittedly harsh, but rational assumptions.

The Festschrift is missing a conclusion to this remarkable selection of essays and follows with a complete publication history of Professor Kraus. Without any doubt, the publication may be considered a very valuable work. It covers a wide range of topics related to German history, making

it appealing to all academic readers with a general interest in the subject, though they may find certain contributions more challenging. It will be particularly enlightening for those in-

terested in 19th and 20th-century German historiography, political and social history, and nationalism.

Josef Vodička

