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William Clark, *Academic Charisma and the Origins of the Research University*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006. Pp. 662; illus. US$48.00 (cloth). ISBN: 0-226-10921-6.

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William Clark's *Academic Charisma and the Origins of the Research University* is an extraordinary scholarly achievement without parallel in the history of the research university and global higher education. It is superseded only by Hastings Rashdall's classic three volume *The Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages*.[1] Each uses extensive archival research either to explore the beginnings of the medieval university and its mission with its focus on teaching or its corollary, the modern university, with its preoccupation on research, especially among the German universities at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Clark points to the critical distinction early on in his work: "The English universities of Oxford and Cambridge became centered on colleges during the early modern era, while the German universities or, rather, the Protestant ones, became centered on faculties" (28). This institutional differentiation further played itself out in the essential characteristics and academic scholarship of each type. For Clark, this quintessential dimension of the research university, framed through a Weberian "topos," is the idea of charisma which he operationalizes in the guise of the modern researcher or professor who advances "academic knowledge." He portrays the professor as a person of "extraordinary abilities or powers" whose academic authority provides the "ability to rationalize and routinize" structures and processes to create the bureaucracy necessary to develop the modern university research institute and system (15-18).

Using different historiographic approaches to investigate the historical record, Rashdall provided higher education scholars with a new portrayal of the dynamics through a more traditional intellectual history. This history made the interplay among the *collegium*, *studium generale*, and *universitas* critical to understanding the institutional development of Paris, Oxford, and Bologna on the one hand, while Clark explored through a Foucaultian lens the coalescence of the professor, research seminar, dissertation, and Doctor of Philosophy degree on the other that were fundamental to the development of research universities at Berlin, Gottingen, Jena, and elsewhere. Essential to both were the faculty masters of the medieval *universitas* who became the modern *Herr Doctor Professor* with the newer earned Doctor of Philosophy degree. Its intellectual roots were in the *ius ubique docendi* that gave the medieval scholar the right to teach anywhere. Through a powerful combination of intellectual and material history, Clark consistently draws on the historical origins of various aspects of the research university to show the interrelationships that brought about an organic development from the medieval institution to the research university.

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[1] Hastings Rashdall, *The University of Europe in the Middle Ages. Volume 1: Salerno, Bologna, Paris; Volume 2: Italy, Spain, France, Germany, Scotland; Volume 3: English Universities, Student Life*, eds. F.M. Powicke and A.B. Emden (London: Oxford University Press, 1958).

With this overview, a review of the structure of the book provides an opportunity to discuss how this "professorial charisma" and university bureaucracy that was formed by state policy developed the essential components of the modern research university in Germany and how this kind of university was differentiated from previous higher education institutions.

> The origins of the research university lie in a transformation of academic manners by ministries and markets. German ministers of state and avatars of the market worked, as they saw it, to reform and modernize benighted academics. As a consequence of their efforts, a joint bureaucratization and commodification of academic practices took place, from which the research university emerged.
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> A German Protestant academic had to pass muster with bureaucratic or rationalized criteria for appointment, which included productivity in publication, diligence in teaching, and acceptable political views and lifestyle. But to achieve success, one also had to acquire fame, be in fashion, and display "originality," a spark of genius, in writings. This became a new sort of academic charisma tied to writing for "applause" and "recognition." The modern academic emerged, I shall argue, from the cultivation of this new legible charisma. (3-4)

In many ways, this "odd" massive tome of some 662 pages, as he acknowledges (3), seeks to show how this charisma lies at the root and heart of each component of the modern research university.

Rather than using a more traditional narrative history approach to show the development of this institution, Clark achieves this scholarly masterpiece by employing initially a more classic French framework of the Diderot and d'Alembert encyclopedia or more contemporary American academic handbook. The 300-page Part One of his book uses a topical format to analyze, in separate chapters, the major components of the research university. Individual chapters are dedicated to the lecture catalogue, the lecture and disputation, the examination, the research seminar, the Doctor of Philosophy degree, the appointment of a professor, and the library catalogue. Each chapter is crafted by mining the archives of the German universities of Gottingen, Heidelberg, Jena, Halle, and Berlin, Jesuit universities, and Prussian states to show the changes in moving from medieval scholasticism and university traditions to the more modern German research and bureaucratic ones. It is a grand *tour de force* in the history of European higher education scholarship for few have used the German records, material history of catalogues, illustrations, and paintings, as well as published research to create such a powerful argument for these changes and developments.

The second part of the book is more unusual and reveals broadly the intellectual and philosophical roots of Clark's analytic methodological approach. Clearly, he employs the analytical approach of Michel Foucault. Buried deep in his fifty-six pages of references, Clark notes twelve references to Foucault's works — why in a book on the modern German research university? It was to acknowledge Foucault's methodological approach, for example in his books, *The Order of Things*,[2] and *Power/Knowledge*,[3] to highlight the importance of material history as a lens to explore the power dynamics related to the development of the lecture, examination and disposition, research seminar, professorial appointments, and library catalogue. Coupling this material history to archival documentation offers the reader a

[2] Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (New York: Vintage, 1970).

[3] Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977*, ed. and trans. Colin Gordon et al. (New York: Pantheon, 1980).

powerful argument for how institutional change occurred and the modern German research university developed.

A dramatic change from the book's early encyclopedian approach is reflected in the opening chapter title of the second part: "Academic Babble and Ministerial Machinations." State officials put professorial "academic babble" to work to create the research university: "Academic babble was an energy, a force, powerful but ephemeral, was noise, rumor, and gossip, something that circulated orally. Ministerial machinations harnessed it, transformed it, made it substantial, and put it to work. The first was grist and the latter the mill—academic babble milled by ministerial machinations objectified noise in a frame machine" (339). What was this noise? Intriguingly, it was the inchoate force of assessment and accreditation in our contemporary academic world. Some of us faculty members in the United States know the power of using regional accrediting reports to understand professional academic change within our colleges and universities. Clark uses the same strategy by exploring the visits of Prussian ministers to transform the institutions into more acceptable bureaucratic state enterprises. In contrast to a more traditional historical methodology, Clark takes a Foucaultian approach in giving an explicit role to this backroom dynamic: "Much of the book has attempted to add to the recent illumination of the positive unconsciousness of our modern academic order" (432). Clark acknowledges Foucault by pointing out the importance of these "private" state visitations: "From an eighteenth-century perspective, this recalls, as noted, Foucault's thesis that modern sovereignty tends to occult itself. Such structures and practices of self-registration and impersonal review would make the visitation of the early modern police state illiberal. In the same spirit, the modern grading system made the academic rod seem unenlightened" (371). In other words, by capturing and analyzing the oral history of such dynamics, he hoped to further demonstrate his argument and its rationale.

Subsequent chapters mine this untapped source. "Ministerial Hearing and Academic Commodification" continues to explore these reports but does so from the ministry of the state whose bureaucrats visit many universities across the country. Finally in the last chapter in this section, "Academic Voices and the Ghost in the Machine," Clark explores in greater detail the notion of academic knowledge, *Wissenschaft*, through the voices of academic professors as a way of understanding how professors, as a "chorus," created the modern research university. Interestingly, Clark points to Johann Gottlieb Fichte himself as the lead singer, one might say, who in the 1790s at the University of Jena "became one of the first German professors who began officially lecturing without a set text. Departure from an actual or even virtual textbook as a basis for lecturing constituted the ultimate break with the sermon" (410). In others words, the cleavage from the medieval university and its scholasticism had occurred. The faculty was now free to use their genius to create original knowledge in the lecture hall. In so doing, Fichte introduced creative thought — the intellectual voice — into university teaching.

The genius of this professorial voice had authority and power that supposedly brought objectivity to the subject matter. "Taken in a more common sense, the disembodied genius raises the specter of the creative and original agent in science and academia, the subjectivity fabricating objectivity. If objectivity constitutes the modern machine, the latter genius plays a ghost haunting it" (405). In this chapter, Clark's attention to the professorial individual and collective voice is crafted under his "musings" of bringing more analysis to voice versus the academic "obsession with visualizations in some studies in recent decades." Again, he acknowledges his debt to Foucault who noted how "studies of visualization constitute an archaeology of modern research." Clark seeks to counter such restrictions by exploring the vocal to understand the modern "charismatic rationality" in creating the German research university (432).

In the epilogue chapter, Clark reflects that "this book seems to be about how academics became who and what they were and maybe are," where the "originality of the researcher's work" created "a new sort of academic charisma" (442, 475). In the process of becoming the modern professor, academics led by

Fichte created a professional research environment that was epitomized at the University of Berlin. In closing, Clark crafts some smaller vignettes on the implications of these German developments for the French and American university systems.

Three final comments complete my remarks on this extraordinary scholarly achievement. First, is Clark's thesis on academic charisma as convincing as previous explorations of the German idea of research and the creation of the German research university? Still, I find Laurence R. Veysey's *The Emergence of the American University*[4] and its chapter on "Research" more satisfying in providing higher education scholars with the intellectual dynamic that led to the creation of the German research university and its relation to American higher education. Veysey's focus on *Wissenschaft* offers a more concise exploration of the quintessential idea responsible for its development. With an interesting acknowledgement of rhetoric, given Clark's approach, Veysey wrote:

> The German university of the mid-nineteenth century did not reflect anything like an uncompromising spirit of positive science. Instead, German rhetoric about academic purpose appears to have centered upon three quite different conceptions: first, on the value of non-utilitarian learning, freely pursued without regard to the immediate needs of the surrounding society (hence "pure" learning, protected by *Lehrfreiheit*); second, on the value of *Wissenschaft*, or investigation and writing in a general sense, as opposed to teaching (*Wissenschaft* did not necessarily connote empirical research; it could just as easily comprehend Hegelian philosophy); finally on their epistemological side, German statement of aim continued to run toward some form of all-encompassing idealism.[5]

Nevertheless, Veysey did not provide anywhere near the exploration of the divergent developments that brought about the German research university that Clark has so masterfully done. Clark's emphasis on charisma and newer Foucaultian historiography, however, sometimes impedes a more direct analytic grasp of the intellectual idea that older more intellectual historiography, such as Veysey's, readily provides. While Clark acknowledges Veysey's treatment (462-463), he offers no substantive response to Veysey's now classic scholarship.

Second, perhaps more than any other recent higher education book, Clark's work has garnered a host (read "chorus" here!) of reviews. He has created a website (www.academiccharisma.net) which alone links some thirty reviews between 2006 and 2008. The best come from my history or higher education colleagues, James C. Albisetti, Philo Hutcheson, W. Bruce Leslie, and Sheldon Rothblatt.[6] They, along with most others, point to this "odd" book and offer a mixed review with consistently extraordinary praise for the depth and breadth of research in the German archives. A few mention the Foucaultian intellectual labyrinth, noting that it is not for the academic faint of heart. Overall, their praise comes from

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[4] Laurence R. Veysey, *The Emergence of the American Research University* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965).

[5] Ibid., 126.

[6] James C. Albisetti, review of William Clark's *Academic Charisma and the Origins of the Research University*, in the *History of Education Quarterly* 48, 1 (2008): 139-142; Philo Hutcheson, review of William Clark's *Academic Charisma and the Origins of the Research University*, in *The Review of Higher Education* 30, 2 (2006): 206-207; W. Bruce Leslie, review of William Clark's *Academic Charisma and the Origins of the Research University*, in *Reviews of New Books* (Spring 2006): 102; Sheldon Rothblatt, review of William Clark's *Academic Charisma and the Origins of the Research University*, in *American Scientist Online* (September-October 2006).

gaining incredible new knowledge about the development of the German research university and its implications for understanding American higher education.

Finally, I praise the University of Chicago Press for publishing this mixed work — it is in many ways three different books from an encyclopedia on the German research university, a history of the transition from the medieval university to its modern counterpart, and a look at a new type of historiography in the Foucaultian tradition. In other words, this intellectual accomplishment is a great ride for the higher education scholar. It is full of delights, surprises, disappointments, and challenges. Each offers further opportunities for greater reflection and thought. What could delight a true scholar more!