

Christoph Stadel is not what he appears to be!

John Tyman

However, this is not an accusation of hypocrisy or deceit, but a personal tribute from one who has known Christoph as an academic colleague and personal friend for a long, long time.

I did not prepare a 'scientific article' in his honor because its inclusion in your *festschrift* would not do him honor! I no longer consider myself an "academic" and at times like these I doubt if I ever was! Among my few claims to fame, however, I can claim to be the one who first lured Christoph from a classroom to a lecture theatre. I was then head of the Department of Geography at Brandon University in Western Canada, and was thrilled when Chris responded to our advertisement for a lecturer in Cultural Geography. To that point in time all the members of the Department had been trained in Britain, and Chris' arrival proved to be a breath of fresh air.

Between September 1968 and January 1976, when I took up an appointment in Australia, we shared similar academic interests and enthusiasms, and a similar commitment to the principles of justice and world peace. We shared a common conviction that our religious beliefs should be manifested in our actions. I remember Chris as an active promoter of WUS (the World University Service), raising funds through annual sales of handicrafts, that would allow students from 'the developing world' to study abroad.

It was Christoph, too, who showed me that cultural geographers could combine work with pleasure, organizing expeditions to foreign lands for academic purposes, but having fun in the process! This I have done... following him to the Atlas Mountains, the Alps, the Andes and yet further afield... with my camera at the ready. And since I moved to Australia we have contributed images to each other's projects.

But, as I say, he is not the man he appears to be. Most of those who read this will think of Christoph as an inhabitant of mountainous regions, scaling the steepest of slopes with a notebook and camera in his hand: but that is only what he *appears* to be. At heart, I believe, he is not a mountain goat but a man of the plains. Like myself his roots are buried in the Canadian Prairies. My fondest memory of Christoph is visiting him in Austria in 2001, when he lived in a farmhouse (near Thalgau if my memory serves me correctly). The windows of his house opened onto beautiful mountain scenery, with snow-covered peaks and grassy meadows. And I for my part live in what is arguably the most beautiful part of Australia, in a region of mountain slopes and subtropical rainforest. Yet, as we talked of "the old days" at his kitchen table we both wept at our remembrance of our years on the Prairies!

Many men, when they need to relax, and have time to be themselves, untroubled by everyday concerns, head for the mountains: and there is even Scriptural justification for finding strength there, above the plains. But Christoph heads in the oppo-

site direction... downslope... to the Prairies... where he spends summer in the cottage he maintains there still. I know this because every year he sends me mouth-watering postcards of Prairie landscapes.

So don't be fooled by the image of Christoph as a mountaineer, for his interests and enthusiasms span both mountains and plains. He is a man of diverse interests and enthusiasms, who lives life to the full. Wordsworth actually wrote a poem about him:

Who is the happy Warrior? Who is he
That every man in arms should wish to be?
– It is the generous Spirit, who, when brought
Among the tasks of real life, hath wrought
Upon the plan that pleased his boyish thought:
Whose high endeavors are an inward light
That makes the path before him always bright:
Who, with a natural instinct to discern
What knowledge can perform, is diligent to learn;
Abides by this resolve, and stops not there,
But makes his moral being his prime care.

Christoph Stadel is such a man!

And I remember him at this moment in time with much affection and great respect.

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