

Abstract and translated table of contents of:

Bert Becker, *Georg Michaelis: Preussischer Beamter, Reichskanzler, Christlicher Reformator, 1857-1936: Eine Biographie* [Georg Michaelis: Prussian Official, Imperial Chancellor, Christian Reformer, 1857-1936: A Biography], Paderborn: Schoeningh, 2007, 892 pages.

This book is the biography of the vastly underrated figure Georg Michaelis who bestrode the pinnacle of German politics during a tumultuous and decisive period in the nation's history, and who is justly deserving of new interest and appreciation from scholars of modern history. Georg Michaelis, one of the last and least studied German imperial chancellors, is usually seen as one modern German history's "great unknowns". His brief term of office during the turbulent summer and autumn of 1917 is dismissed as a mere footnote in the twilight of the second Reich. Michaelis' 1922 memoirs, published under the dry title *For State and People*, and a handful of biographical sketches - the best and most important one by Rudolf Morsey - have hitherto offered the most illuminating portrait of this obscure and somewhat enigmatic personality. The conventional, complacent view is challenged in this biography. Distilling a vast trove of unpublicised and, until now completely unknown primary and secondary sources in no fewer than 40 different archives and libraries, and family documents, the book offers new insights that paint a different picture of Michaelis, recasting the life and deeds of one of Germany's most undervalued government officials and politicians.

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