

Gender in Early Modern German History

Edited by
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1. Meanings of gender in early modern German history

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Meanings of gender are historically situated. This book's terrain is Germany, largely within its current political boundaries, during the period 1500–1800. Early modern Germany was a highly complex society. It was politically polycentric, made up of territorial courts, imposing Imperial cities, strong village communes, small archbishoprics, supra-regional alliances, and Imperial political and legal institutions.¹ Beginning in the 1520s, the Reformation movements convulsed Germany. The debates that were set in motion, which so differentiated the towns and territories by confession, constitute the frame in which this book must be located. The first half of the sixteenth century was one of radical debate and experiment. Its most dramatic manifestations were the short months of the Peasants' rebellion in 1525 and the Anabaptists' taking of Münster in 1534. After the Peace of Augsburg in 1555, Germany became a truly extraordinary patchwork of bi-confessional cities like Augsburg, cities of either Protestant or Catholic confession, and of many small states whose rulers determined their confessional allegiance.

From 1555 onwards, reform movements were increasingly subsumed within developing state policies of order and control.² Sustained harvest failures, more rigid social stratification, confessional conflict, a cultural distancing of elites from non-elites, and the onset of major witchcraft prosecutions in the 1590s, soon created a climate in which social relations were intensely conflictual.³ This particularly affected attitudes towards the poor, to young people and to women. Throughout the period, hospitality, charity and generosity were scaled down, vagrants and 'bastard-bearing' women harassed, and sexually transgressing youth punished. Rules of citizenship, guild-membership and communal belonging were tightened and linked to new standards of respectability and wealth.⁴ Confessional cohesion was increased, especially after Calvinism was introduced in some territorial states as a third confession distinct from Lutheranism and reformed Catholicism. Political and religious frictions culminated in the Thirty Years' War (1618–48) and in further attempts to solidify state control through social regulation in the second half of the seventeenth century.

These processes interacted with various local, political and religious structures, and so they necessarily had diverse effects. This diversity has heightened historians' awareness of the intricacies of change and has led them to stress a history of gradual modification rather than a history of radical shifts.⁵ Instead of concentrating merely on the Reformation period and on the sixteenth century, they now increasingly focus on long-term patterns of confessional, state and communal development, and to the role of gender in social regulation, or in the *longue durée* of small town and village life.⁶ Attention is given to policy implementation rather than only to policy-making, to the period culminating c. 1800, and to the practices of all social groups.⁷

This volume explores meanings of gender within this expanded vision of German history. Much writing about early modern Germany available in English, and about gender in particular, has focused on certain parts of Southern Germany – on large cities like Nuremberg and Augsburg, and areas such as Franconia and Swabia. One aim of this collection is to broaden this outlook geographically with articles on Hamburg, Counter-Reformation Munich in Bavaria, and territories in the north, west and east of Germany. Moreover, since scholars have tended to focus on Lutheran Germany, this collection presents research about neglected topics, such as the effects of the Counter-Reformation on nuns, Marian symbolism in village communities, or conflict in a bi-confessional city. Instead of isolating 'female experience', each contribution highlights how men and women assimilated or altered gender norms as they interacted with each other. These perspectives aim to convey the multifacetedness and dynamics of gender experiences, politics and everyday life across early modern Germany. For this was anything but a 'traditional' society, in which the interpretation of norms was clear-cut and static, and authority easy to obtain. Rather, people and institutions attributed shifting meanings to gender, which were mediated by complex ideas about supernatural influences on men and women, or about the workings of passion and reason, at a time of unparalleled religious reform and socio-economic change.⁸ Much effort went into applying gendered categories to specific contexts and causes. Women were commonly regarded as the desirous and hence irresponsible sex, because they were ruled by passion rather than by reason. They were supposed to live under male control. One aim of this volume is to draw attention to processes through which attributions of meaning were or were not rendered plausible, and to the larger social and economic costs of such gender stereotypes.⁹

All this raises the methodological question of how gender can be used as a wider analytical category; that is, what it tells us about how societies work. One of the most important arguments in writing on gender, developed by the anthropologist Marilyn Strathern, has been that sex difference offers itself as a binary division to which social values may be attached, and which naturalise them within a 'natural' gender hierarchy. An idealised masculinity is equated

with positive values of self-sufficiency. This quality is understood to reside in the ability to abstain from unreasonable demands on others, to control the passions and to work for the common good.¹⁰ Femininity is linked to narrower interests and a greater concern for personal good, and to weaker control over the passions. Crucially, however, individual women are never entirely identified with sexual stereotypes. They can become 'good' in so far as they distance themselves from the negative components of femininity, by acting for the common good.

The figure of the witch provides the classic early modern European example of such gender imagery and of the ways it could influence women's behaviour. Here, as in many societies, women were believed to have a greater inclination to witchcraft. Women who lacked resources or fertility were feared for the likelihood that they, more than men, would envy those who had goods, animals, children and potency, and be unable to control their destructive passions. A woman with the capacity for emotional openness, generosity, and sustained reciprocal exchange, by contrast, demonstrated that she was not a witch.¹¹ Similarly, the figure of the 'whore' was important in the language of insult because it created a reverse image of the respectable woman householder. While the wife worked to sustain resources for her family, kin and the community, the whore wastefully seduced men to spend their income on pleasure and whore's pay. Whores 'consume domestic resources for their maintenance; they also bring into the household profits from illicit sources', so that 'whoredom creates a financial exchange that disrupts both the income and expenditure of the household'.¹² They subverted a 'natural' order of fertility, reproduction, commitment and time in a society in which caring for the 'common good' was a yardstick of moral behaviour.

A good example of how such distinctions further functioned to signify 'relationships of power' is provided by one of Luther's and Melanchthon's pamphlets (Plate 1) from the beginning of our period. It illustrates how the Reformation movements used gender images to mark the Catholic church as antisocial. The 1523 pamphlet featured a woodcut of a monster, which had allegedly been found in Rome in 1495.¹³ Luther and Melanchthon wrote that God had sent the monster as a true depiction of the papacy and its aberrant power. To them, every part of its body bore meaning. And a very striking body it was: the pope was shown as a feminised and sexualised ass. 'The womanish body and breasts', the reformers explained, signified the pope's body, that is his cardinals, bishops, priests, monks and students. Those and similar whorish folk and pigs only had resort to eating, drinking, fornication and voluptuousness. They went unpunished and free to lead an insolent life, just as the monster carried its woman's belly naked and free.¹⁴ Well into the mid-sixteenth century the woodcut was reissued in new editions, with its feminised representation visually strengthened. It associated this with an embodied notion of the pleasure a woman derived from her naked belly and breasts, which stood for a concern with the self rather than responsible

Der Papstesel zu Rom



Plate 1. The Pope-Ass, from Philipp Melanchthon, Doct. Martinus Luther, *Deutung der zwei gewlichen Figuren Papstesels zu Rom un Munchkalbs zu Freyberg in Meyssen funden*, Wittenberg 1523.

life with others. As Lyndal Roper has shown, the Reformation's initial appeal in towns rested substantially on its contrasting monks' sensual indulgence with male artisans' sobriety, the latter being represented as a model of social order.¹⁵ The equation of the papacy with a hybrid male–female, effeminate-animal monster touched the audience's fear of mixed categories, and also a desire for clear codes of reliable and civilised 'male' and 'female' behaviour.

In these ways, gender analysis is clearly crucial for our understanding of early modern German society. Print (the new mass medium of the period) along with social movements and new or reinforced institutions (such as state and civic moral courts as well as local church courts), newly reinforced gender distinctions throughout the period by focusing on a social order in which only chaste daughters, enclosed nuns or married women gained respect. The problematisation of gender hierarchies and behaviour was a response to perceived problems of social order. What was perceived as people's dangerous antisocial passions, such as sexual desire, which, it was now feared, would lead to incest, illegitimacy or infanticide, could be categorised in terms of gender and symbolised through images of purity and pollution.¹⁶ Bastards and even prostitutes working for unmarried men were no longer integrated socially.

At the same time, Luther's and Melancthon's pamphlet shows the potential fragility of such codes of civility. Few men were controlled at all times. Nor did they want to be, for another code of masculinity required them to play with the limits of self-control through heavy drinking and to build social trust in the experience of a mutual loss of control in male company.¹⁷ There also existed a more exuberant vision of a common good which was maintained through emotional openness and generosity and which required men to acknowledge feelings such as empathy, despair and care, and was distant from the notion of a self-sufficient self.¹⁸ Among elites, a widened group of learned men from bourgeois backgrounds experimented with highly emotional humanist languages of friendship in their correspondence. Reformers sought to develop new repertoires of feeling in their marriages.¹⁹ Indeed, educated women had confidence enough to expect that intimacy, and to rebuke men when it was withheld. They could write love-letters with astounding honesty, such as Anna Bühler, the young mayor's daughter in Schwäbisch-Hall, to a *Juncker*:

Noble, kind, and most darlingsly gracious sir. I should write your grace a long letter, but I am now so confused that I don't know what I should do . . . You send me messages every day, one saying you are coming, the other that you are not. The messenger reminds me of a cat I send off in the night to Limpurg that both licks my face and claws my back . . . This is how I see things.²⁰

Hence, Strathern's argument about sex difference as facilitating the naturalisation of attitudes towards the social good can help us analyse how gendered categories express basic values underpinning society. But we also need to register the extent to which conflicting codes of normative social behaviour

could be developed, and the relative diversity of social roles which people could still adopt in specific contexts. As has just been implied, early modern German men were confronted with several codes of masculinity. The dominant one instructed that their honour depended on fearlessness and combativeness as well as the withdrawn (*eingezogenes*) behaviour befitting a bourgeois *Biedermann* – a term which became common currency during the sixteenth century denoting respectability and honesty. The boundaries of what counted as positive emotion and negative passion were not always clear-cut. They were both debated and felt confusedly, especially when new practices of social relating developed. People did not merely behave according to socially structured scripts, and in a changing society behavioural ‘scripts’ often did not exist. Moreover, individuals organised their emotional and mental experience on the basis of their peculiar life history and character. People had ‘options’ about how to behave – whether to aspire to become a saint or to become a witch, whether to remarry for a third time or to remain single, whether to accuse a witch or keep away from courts. Material conditions and hence socio-political notions such as the ‘common good’ were highly important to early modern people because economic safety was so fragile. People had to rely on one another, and especially husband and wife, because most agrarian and crafts production was now organised around the labouring couple. Most workshops could not afford to employ journeymen. Familial support was crucial in many villages, because even basic farming tools could be split up through inheritance – a brother and sister inheriting different parts of a plough. Help during the harvest, in case of war, death or illness, or if there was a breakdown of credit relations, was crucial. Even so, we cannot understand these people’s action principally in terms of a material ‘interest’ which is dissociated from psychic structures and social values.²¹ There existed, for instance, a clear sense of emotional well-being in relationships independent of mere material care. Anna Büschler’s and many married wives’ complaints convey the anticipation of this. They ask for care, respect and trust as the basis of a relationship. Such needs were linked to powerful physical experiences, such as illness, intimacy, sexuality, fertility or sterility, pregnancy, childbirth, nursing and aging.²² These experiences were difficult to express in consciousness and language, but formed a strong part of what accounted for human motivation.²³

In sum, then, gender distinctions can tell us what was regarded as productive and social behaviour, and what was rational or uncontrollable in societies. They reveal how fears about loss of control were mapped on to gendered as well as class-related images. Gender analysis is about the ways in which these distinctions are expressed in the verbal, physical and symbolic languages with which men and women make sense of the world and their experiences of feeling, phantasies and embodied dimensions of subjectivity. Gender history assesses those past evaluations and expressions, their meanings for men’s and women’s relationships, their political function and their human quality.

In order to understand better the precise relationship between subjective and social experiences, historians have recently turned away from an exclusive focus on social groups, 'structure', language and representation, to the stories of individuals and communities, the history of the body, emotions and sense perception.²⁴ Seeking to contextualise male and female everyday experiences, much German research has attended to household relations, since the early modern household was at once a political, productive and familial entity and the space in which people spent much of their time. Heide Wunder has demonstrated how married couples needed to co-operate, and how ideas about complementary equality between the sexes cut across hierarchical notions of gender roles.²⁵ Hans Medick, David Sabean, Claudia Ulbrich and others²⁶ have likewise questioned the harmony and alleged stability of a patriarchal *Ganzes Haus* and investigated familial strategies to build up social, economic and emotional support and the extent of conflict and dynamics of conflict resolution among kin.²⁷ Ulbrich's important recent study of an eighteenth-century village for the first time integrates gender history fully into a community's microhistory.²⁸ The village she investigates was called Steinbiedersdorf and had a large Jewish population, in which up to 20 per cent of Jewish households could be headed by a woman. It was also a village with a history of protest and intra-communal political factions. The study therefore presents us with the typically complex realities of German communal life across a century. Within this setting, Ulbrich uncovers individual life-stories of 'ordinary' women within different social contexts. While female power within the household remains a focus of her analysis, Ulbrich also follows women on to the streets, into the courts, the church or synagogue to examine which roles they played outside the home and marriage. Her analysis examines how women could claim needs and interests in each of these settings *vis-à-vis* men or other women depending on their status, religion and the personality of those involved. Here, we come closest to an *histoire totale*, which is fully rooted in a sense of place and its people as socially conditioned, but also individually responsive human beings.

Other microhistories provide much material similarly to look at men's lives and relationships within the household and community from a gender perspective. David Sabean's two-volume study of the South-German village Neckarhausen, for instance, has created a model historical anthropology of kinship and production, with much material to reconstruct gender identities between 1700 and 1900.²⁹ One man's story in Sabean's study illustrates how tightly notions of personhood, the social good and gender were interlinked, and again how misleading the notion of a stable household unit and fixed gender roles is in regard to early modern society.³⁰ It moreover reminds us that gender was negotiated not only by women *vis-à-vis* their husbands or a guild-master, but by fathers in relation to their sons and daughters, or by men in relation to older wives, third marriages and other men in the village. This is one reason why

our understanding of masculinities and femininities is necessarily intertwined. Finally, the story alerts us to the social and psychic complexities of subjective experience. Because we need attentiveness to engage with such stories, and with the pathos and strangeness of ordinary lives, I want to present Sabean's case and my reading of its gendered dimensions in detail. It takes us to the end of our period.

Neckarhausen was a largely wheat-growing village of about four hundred inhabitants which lay not far from Stuttgart, and in which every daughter and son was entitled to the same share of any inheritance. Sabean's story describes Gall Feldmaier, who was born there in 1750, as the son of a village judge. He was left with a legacy of some social capital and aspiration, but no property, and became a farm servant. Aged 27, Feldmaier took a surprising decision. He married his half-brother's sister-in-law, a rich, post-menopausal widow with several children who legally retained all her property. The union breached accepted roles (there was no equality of wealth, gender, age, and no commitment to reproduction and patrimony). Feldmaier could therefore easily have been deemed lazy, a strange and bad man. Instead, he managed to become a village mayor. He achieved credit by acting on behalf of widows and their children. He secured his five stepsons' wealth. This, however, meant that after his wife's death, Feldmaier was a man of humble means again. But since he had proven himself a good husband, stepfather and administrator, another wealthy widow with young children soon married him. She died after two years. Only now, aged 56, did Feldmaier marry a woman of equal property (a 41-year-old widow with young children), and they unexpectedly had a child. He dropped dramatically in the tax lists, but still held the office of mayor. Soon, however, allegations were made that he had dealt illegally with communal property. By 1812, he had lost his office, and people no longer wanted him to act for them in disputes and settlements. After his third wife's death, he lived with their daughter on alms and her small income. Already in her thirties, the daughter had five illegitimate children by different fathers whom she could not name. All Feldmaier left when he died were unusable clothes and bedcovers – and records in the village archive.

How can we make sense of such a life-story – the rise and fall of a village mayor, his preparedness not to reproduce, and his unexpectedly conceived daughter's behaviour? The story is striking in several respects. First, it underlines how, in a society which passed on most productive resources through inheritance and in which key natural resources, such as wood, were communally shared, fairness and the right balance of self-interest, and interest for kin and friends and for the community, were related to property management. They defined a person's integrity and standing. Secondly, it demonstrates how a man could benefit by refraining from building his own patrimony in order to look after women's interests. As long as his rich wives were alive, Feldmaier had a comfortable life and respectable social role. This was at a time when

Neckarhausen women were intensifying their labour and claiming more independence and equality. However, it seems as though Feldmaier later paid the price for overstepping codes of manliness. Through his third marriage he lost the protection of a rich woman and her kin. He could now be perceived as someone seeking self-interested financial gains through his office as a mayor. Thus, the accusation of corruption could be levied only because he lacked sufficient protection, and it would have come from men who were likely to have harboured scepticism against someone who aligned himself with women. Third, his stepchildren's and daughter's behaviour deserve comment. Even though Feldmaier spent much effort helping to bring up and care for his stepchildren and arranged matches for several of them within the kin-network, they distanced themselves from him when he was old, poor and politically tainted. Perhaps, in retrospect, they may have doubted the integrity of his motives in caring for them. This shows how differently acting selfishly or for others' good could be perceived, and how the enforcement of a specific perception depended on people's alliances. Finally, Feldmaier was a man who had married older, infertile women and had no son. His only child, the daughter, ensured that her children retained his name, because they were illegitimate and she remained unmarried. There was no patrimony to sustain them. In this sense his daughter was precisely what Feldmaier had tried to avoid most in his life: she was propertyless, and with children who would never have any approved social role. Perhaps it was in reaction against being an unintended child, or against his careful alliance-making throughout his life, that she had unwanted offspring with random men, and she did so only while she lived with her father. An interest in gender and subjectivity thus leads us to ask about the interrelationship between the social and psychic aspects of character formation within the structures of early modern kinship organisation and material life. We can understand neither communal politics nor early modern people without it.

In pointing to the issues raised here, we have come a long way from subsuming early modern German gender history under the model exam question of whether the Reformation strengthened patriarchy or marital equality. What we know about German demographic, political, religious and social structures, and the quality of the records to be found in German archives provide the basis for a richer understanding of gender relations and subjectivities in the early modern period. The aim of this volume is to introduce research which helps us to get there, through thick description and interpretation, by privileging case-studies as a mode of historical enquiry and by attending to the many different settings in which early modern German men and women could develop and express their identities.

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Gender in Early Modern German History is divided into four parts addressing masculinities, transgressions, politics and religion in order to convey these

multiple ways in which gendered identities interacted with different social, religious and institutional structural settings. In order to counteract more static notions of patriarchal power, Heide Wunder opens this volume by stressing the flexible, and even playful, ways in which male control could be established in marriages. Early modern couples were ‘working couples’. Much of the labour and decision-making were shared, and so it was wise for the man not to provoke his wife’s resentment.³¹ She quotes the diarist Hermann Weinsberg’s account of how he heard his father make a contract with his wife, that she should rule one week and he another; and if there was a quarrel, he would ask her whose week in government it was and abide by her judgement. A husband’s good government therefore rested on *Gleichmut* – in his control of emotions and passions. Such control was ‘embodied’. As Wunder shows, what it meant to become a man was to wear breeches. Boys were about six years old when they were fitted with their first pair of breeches. (Felix Platter immediately dirtied his by eating too many cherries!) Breeches symbolised male power and potency. The upper classes wore them strikingly striped and with bulging codpieces, the early modern man’s wonderbra. But at the same time breeches exposed the loss of male bodily control, in sexual excitement or incontinence. Disciplines of shame were in place for men, too, and Wunder shows how boys learnt to give each other confidence in regard to women through their bonding as youths. Once married, they were confronted with much trickier demands on their authority, resulting in shared debates with their womenfolk, rather than in female submission.

Eva Labouvie continues the enquiry into meanings of manhood by looking at men who were prosecuted as witches in the Saar region, the Rhine-Palatinate and Lorraine, an area made up of Catholics, Lutherans and Calvinists. She finds that between 1575 and 1634, 157 men were accused and 130 sentenced to death by their own communities, for in this region prosecution was organised from below, by communally elected ‘witch committees’. Although here as elsewhere men made up around 20 per cent of the accused, so far historians have focused almost exclusively on women as witches. Labouvie uses the records to explore the village conflicts which led to a man’s accusation. Most accused men were older than average and widowed. They also had a reputation for needless quarrelling, unfair dealings with money, and flirtation. An accusation was the outcome of jealousy and ill-will among local men. The charge of witchcraft related to the practice of love-magic or magic relating to male labour and duties, in fields and in the home, which was usually protective but had now allegedly been misused. Labouvie’s article therefore documents how men’s assertion of power and potency was watched suspiciously by other men and checked against a value system of ‘respectability’ which emphasised sexual loyalty and fairness to one’s kin and business partners. A man’s reputation as dishonourable or evil required the building up of a powerful interpretative community whose members lobbied for his extinction. It is evident now that men’s witchcraft trials in early modern

Europe are a rich, yet under-used source for historians, and Labouvie's chapter shows how, by illuminating men's daily lives, they may change our sense of how men interacted, how attitudes to power, wealth and poverty could be argued over, and how virility and fertility were given meaning.

German archives are famous for their detailed court records, which often lend themselves to case-studies of the kind undertaken by all three chapters in this volume's second part. Its themes are transgressions, and, by implication, the instinctive knowledge of the acceptable which was being transgressed. Alison Rowlands analyses an extraordinary court case in Rothenburg ob der Tauber in 1569. The municipal midwife fashioned puppies for a young married woman and lured her into pretending that she had given birth to them. People responded with empathy and gifts, while the town council sought to determine whether the monsters were a divine message, a bad portent, or simply a fraud. Rowlands provides valuable information about the social position of midwives, midwifery being the only civic office a woman could hold independently. In the end the midwife was banished for attempting to use a providential sign system which could be operated only by God or the Devil. Rowlands aptly conveys the need for such clarity at a time of severe harvest failures, when efforts to establish orthodox Lutheran teaching and government were also under way. The case poses intriguing questions about the two women's relationships. Like many witchcraft accusations, it encourages gender historians to address complex dynamics of feeling among women, shaped by age, rivalry, and projections of shared goals.³² It also points to distinct early modern perceptions of reality and fantasy. This issue remains an important theme in the section.

Lyndal Roper's chapter likewise features an evil old seductress who misled others into such transgressive fantasies that they became a problem of public order. Her case comes from the Imperial, bi-confessional city of Augsburg in 1723. The seductress was a seamstress who allegedly led a group of children into witchcraft. The children had engaged in sexual and diabolical games, which often attacked their parents' marital bed. Roper explores the historical force of sexual fears and fantasies exposed in this case. She shifts the traditional focus of this theme from adult to parent-child relationships, and shows how, for instance, partners who remarried could project their own confusion and guilt on to children in their care. Roper charts the transformation of some earlier themes in witchcraft accusations as they were accommodated in the story, and argues that the prominence given to this case stems from a renewed eighteenth-century fascination with the nature of fantasy and sexual pleasure, which was now explored through children's practices. This work may open the way to a new history of the family which is aware of the complex emotional repertoires involved in parent and stepparent-child relations. It is also crucial for a history of childhood which might pay attention to the historically specific psychic materials – in this case Catholic and diabolical imagery and objects – which children encountered.

Finally, her chapter shows how the ways in which Catholic, diabolical children should be treated were worked out in a bi-confessional city and to what extent opinions differed by confession.

Mary Lindemann provides the last, and most spectacular, case-study in Part 2. It is set in Hamburg in 1701 and records the case of a woman called Maiden Henry, or Heinrich, who was sentenced to death on the wheel for multiple crimes, among them transvestism and murder. Heinrich had a dildo attached to her body in an Amsterdam brothel, and she and her wives reported how it moved and ejaculated. Lindemann uses her case to uncover how early modern women might change their sexual identity, and how this was linked to concepts of the body which emphasised the mutability of genitalia and the symmetry of male and female bodies. Maiden Heinrich reminds us also of the many people in early modern society who experimented with their appearances while they travelled, who lived outside fixed communal bonds, and perhaps frequently adopted different personae.³³ We once more encounter an intriguing merging of fantasy and reality, in a form which now seems alien to us. Hamburg authorities punished the Maiden harshly because s/he signified a corruption of gender distinction and a divine order which, at a time of intense local Pietist and Lutheran controversy, they were anxious to defend.

Merry Wiesner finally sums up how gender research on early modern Germany enables us significantly to modify grand theories currently in vogue in both history and cultural studies. These themes presume that subjectivities, attitudes or social institutions changed in particular ways during the period. She takes the example of sexuality, and engages with Foucault's notion that there was no sexuality before the eighteenth century. She engages also with Gerhard Oestreich's and Heinz Schilling's concept of social disciplining, and Thomas Laqueur's idea that a two-sex replaced a one-sex model of gender difference in the eighteenth century. Wiesner points to the importance of discourses of sexuality in emerging states before 1800, and questions a Foucauldian chronology which sees the Catholic Church as the dominant institution for the problematisation of sexuality in the medieval and early modern world. Moreover, it is clear that sexual behaviour was not simply problematised from above, as crude versions of the social disciplining argument claim. Sex could be a problem of social order in communities which practised partible inheritance and a system of common rights. It was also a problem in communities which underwent processes of economic stratification or population growth, because the rights of illegitimate children were difficult to define. Wiesner's review thus presents research which has focused on the interlocking of enforced State and Church ideas of holy, stable, tax-paying households and communities' moral norms and economic strategies in a corporate society.

These contributions on 'transgressions' and sexuality throw light on the ways in which the confessional tension between Lutheran-Catholic or Orthodox

Lutheran–Pietist ruling elites shaped their responses to subversions of a God-given, ‘natural’ order. The next section addresses another political arena, by looking at communities from below, their interrelationship with growing state control, and the place of gender imagery in political contests. Germany witnessed vigorous peasant protest in several regions after the Peasants’ War, and yet we know relatively little about the participation of women or the rhetoric of gender in them. In Part 3 Renate Blickle provides a pioneering study which focuses on a Bavarian community in 1629. Many protesting men had been banished from the village. Their wives, now legally treated as widows, were in sole charge of children, household and farmland. Blickle explores the battle of one such woman to regain her husband, and demonstrates how she had to adopt a rhetoric of regret, contrition, and submission to an all-powerful Maximilian I. She had first defended her husband’s innocence. It is unlikely that she would have internalised submission, or that the ruler thought she had done so; but at least she had learnt to pose her request in a language of proper deference, so that, after some years, he pardoned her husband. Blickle documents how such experiences of and challenges to authority could be central to many couples’ lives. Through such action, women were integrated into communal political action, and given a political role. Rottenbuch peasants would march many miles to Munich, men and women would form a circle to attract Maximilian’s attention, and place a destitute mother and her child in the middle in order to plead for their communities’ future. This shows how mothers were acknowledged as a distinctive group within political communities, capable of making their own arguments against violence. It shows, too, how they could become icons in collective claims for a community’s generational future.

Ulinka Rublack turns to a very different scenario: an early eighteenth-century Württemberg town which protested against the ducal governor’s promiscuity and his use of power. A close reading of the enquiry which ensued does not show a commune acting in unison. Rather it reveals the extent of alliance-making which state-building engendered, and which in this case involved women as go-betweens to present gifts and sometimes their bodies to officials. The chapter reconstructs an imaginary language of generation and child murder which became connected to a fight for civic liberties and which animated the uproar against the governor. It therefore provides a close reading of communal rhetorics and factionalism, the political imagination, and the effects of absolutist sex regulation on communal relations and political contests. It attempts to connect the literatures on state-formation and gender history, and to contribute to a ‘new’ political history, charting the changing relationships between local government and the state through microscopic studies of conflict and everyday political practice. Moreover, it advocates a study of what James Scott has termed ‘hidden transcripts’ in communities which were not involved in political protest.³⁴ But it adds to Scott’s focus on hidden tactics of resistance a more

disturbing awareness of the collusions into which subjects entered in order to mitigate the effects of power.

Part 4 moves on to religious practice. It raises questions about the emergence of distinct confessional cultures in the early modern period and women's place within them. The first two articles focus on women's commemorative practices. Ulrike Strasser gives a striking account of how the enclosure of nuns in Munich convents in 1621 could be experienced and presented. While later convent chronicles depict claustration as beneficent to their piety and community, Strasser has unearthed a contemporary manuscript account which reveals that claustration was resented. She argues that the later chronicle constitutes a disturbing later collusion into a narrative of their consent to reforms. These printed chronicles, however, have since provided the basis for church historians' accounts of a successful implementation of Tridentine reforms and of female acquiescence. The manuscript account, by contrast, allows us to picture convent life before the Italian friars marched over the Alps, and it recaptures the grief many of the nuns evidently felt when they were forced into submission. Hence we may understand later nuns' decision to repress this history of coercion in order to avoid depression and also to lobby for support. Strasser uses her material to ask pertinent methodological questions about historians' interpretations of seemingly contradictory narrative evidence, and argues that the attempt to recapture women's emotional experiences in the past can generate future visions of women's lives.

Ulrike Gleixner turns to Pietist elites in Württemberg, and likewise stresses the neglect of women's own historical accounts by later male historians. She shows how Pietist women cultivated secular hagiographies of pious female ancestors, collecting their letters and personal possessions, and writing long biographical accounts. These accounts emphasised an exemplary conduct in life through good deeds, like visiting the sick, and the endurance of hardship, misfortune and death through trust in God. Pietism highlighted not individual achievement, but daily pious practice, which marked believers out as the elect. Gleixner recreates an unusually vivid picture of Pietist women's experiences, their emotional choices and distinct uses of biographical literary traditions. The persistent focus on female ancestors in the manuscript writings uncovers women's aims, showing how they saw themselves as contributing to a *Heilsgeschichte*. In unearthing these alternative female narratives, Strasser and Gleixner are undertaking a kind of historical archaeology. It both documents and continues a practice of female history writing, which does not remain tied to the past, but sees memory as a source of strength in the present and future.

Dagmar Freist ends this part by connecting the question about confessional identities to the previous theme of how the state regulated social and religious life. Her article examines confessionally mixed marriages and hence the extent

of religious tolerance in the later part of the early modern period. She finds that in some areas as many as twenty per cent of all marriages were confessionally mixed. Freist uses her evidence to test the claim that confessional tension and antagonism declined after the Peace of Westphalia in 1648. Her account shows that territorial rulers usually insisted that children be educated in the faith adopted in the territory. If the husband's faith deviated, this gave rise to debate about whether his command of the wife was reduced. Mixed marriages were generally treated as rebellious, a threat to obedience and the union of spirit and body in marriage. They engendered legal and theological discussions about the political status of individual conscience and will against the reason of state. Hence in the long run these people's choices catalysed arguments which laid the basis for religious tolerance proper. Meanwhile, however, as Freist vividly describes, couples faced difficult decisions about their exercise of faith and life together which were shot through with gendered notions of authority in the family and women's rights for independent expression. Historians often claim that the end of the Thirty Years' War marked the beginning of an era of religious tolerance. Freist demonstrates that fears about the independence of women in mixed marriages are crucial in explaining the glaring continuities of confessional intolerance far into the eighteenth century. Confessionalism needs to be understood as a theology of gender in these terms.

In sum, this volume endorses a strong linkage of gender and social history. It relates, above all, to the lived experiences of ordinary men and women in the past, whose choices mattered. Gender history is vital for enquiries about the nature of power in early modern society, because it always asks in whose interest structures were reproduced. It points to the complexity of past subjectivities which need to be explored further, with contemporary experiences of the physical, emotional and imaginary in mind; of shifting symbolisations of evil, sexual symbolisms, of perceived boundaries between the 'real' and 'fantastical', family structures and spiritual worlds. Practice (rather than prescriptive ideas), individual experience, and local context or place, form the key categories of this book. The volume points to the records and readings which allow us to recover multiple perspectives of female and male experiences in early modern German society, and to the material which allows us to re-envision meanings of gender in the past and present.

NOTES

I would like to thank Lyndal Roper, Vic Gatrell, Katja Lehman, Ben Morgan, Ulrike Gleixner, Martin Dinges and Alison Rowlands for their comments and help.

- 1 The best current introductions are provided by essays in Bob Scribner and Sheilagh Ogilvie (eds.), *Germany: A New Social and Economic History*, 2 vols. (London, 1996); and Tom Scott, *Society and Economy in Germany, 1300–1600*, Basingstoke, 2002.

- 2 This argument has been made most forcefully by Heinz Schilling. For a summary of his view see his article 'Confessional Europe', in Thomas A. Brady *et al.* (eds.), *Handbook of European History 1400–1600*, vol. II (Leiden, 1995), 641–82.
- 3 These contexts are well set out by Wolfgang Behringer, *Witchcraft Persecutions in Bavaria: Popular Magic, Religious Zealotry and Reason of State in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, 1997), chs. 2, 7; and Thomas Robisheaux, *Rural Society and the Search for Order in Early Modern Germany* (Cambridge, 1989).
- 4 These perspectives follow Gerhard Oestreich's influential work *Neostoicism and the Early Modern State* (Cambridge, 1982); the specific effects of these processes for women are addressed by Merry Wiesner, *Working Women in Renaissance Germany* (New Brunswick, 1986); Wiesner, *Gender, Church and State in Early Modern Germany* (London, 1998); Ulinka Rublack, *The Crimes of Women in Early Modern Germany* (Oxford, 1999).
- 5 This diversity is well illustrated by Hans Medick's seminal work, *Weben und Überleben in Laichingen 1650–1900. Lokalgeschichte als Allgemeine Geschichte* (Göttingen, 1996), and by Jürgen Schlumbohm, *Lebensläufe, Familien, Höfe. Die Bauern und Heuerleute des Osnabrückschen Kirchspiels Belm in proto-industrieller Zeit, 1650–1860* (Göttingen, 1994).
- 6 Medick, *Weben und Überleben*, Sheilagh Ogilvie, *State Corporatism and Proto-Industry: The Württemberg Black Forest 1580–1797* (Cambridge, 1997), and Robisheaux, *Rural Society*, exemplify this trend in economic and social history; the late Bob Scribner's works exemplify it for the social history of religion, see his 'The Reformation, Popular Magic and the "Disenchantment" of the World', *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 23 (1993): 475–94, reprinted in R. W. Scribner, *Religion and Culture in Germany (1400–1800)* (Leiden, 2001), ch. 14; R. Po-Chia Hsia and R.W. Scribner (eds.), *Problems in the Historical Anthropology of Early Modern Europe* (Wiesbaden, 1997); the trend has further been promoted by studies on the confessionalisation process, see Schilling's summary article and bibliography in Brady *et al.* (eds.), fn. 2, and Ronnie Po-Chia Hsia's important survey *Social Discipline in the Reformation: Central Europe 1550–1750* (London, 1989).
- 7 For pioneering studies see David Warren Sabean, *Power in the Blood: Popular Culture and Village Discourse in Early Modern Germany* (Cambridge, 1984); Norbert Schindler, *Widerspenstige Leute: Studien zur Volkskultur in der Frühen Neuzeit* (Frankfurt-on-Main, 1992). The focus on policy-making and practices has been taken up by much path-breaking work conducted by historians of crime and deviance. For a summary of this research and extensive footnote references see Gerd Schwerhoff, 'Kriminalitätsgeschichte im deutschen Sprachraum. Zum Profil eines verspäteten Forschungszweiges' in *idem* and Andreas Blauert (eds.), *Kriminalitätsgeschichte: Beiträge zur Sozial- und Kulturgeschichte der Vormoderne* (Konstanz, 2000), 21–68.
- 8 Excellent general outlines are provided by Heide Wunder, *'He is the Sun, She is the Moon': Women in Early Modern Germany* (Cambridge, Mass., 1998); Merry Wiesner, *Women and Gender in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, 1993); Merry E. Wiesner-Hanks, *Christianity and Sexuality in the Early Modern World: Regulating Desire, Reforming Practice* (London, 2000); Olwen Hufton, *The*

- Prospect Before Her: A History of Women in Western Europe* (London, 1995); Gisela Bock, *Frauen in der europäischen Geschichte. Vom Mittelalter bis zur Gegenwart* (München, 2000).
- 9 See Ulinka Rublack, *The Crimes of Women*, 156–58, 265.
 - 10 This argument is well developed by Marilyn Strathern, ‘No Nature, No Culture: The Hagen Case’, in C. MacCormack and M. Strathern (eds.), *Nature, Culture and Gender* (Cambridge, 1980), 166–90.
 - 11 For the best general introduction to these social dynamics of witchcraft see Robin Briggs, *Witches and Neighbours: The Social and Cultural Context of European Witchcraft* (London, 1996).
 - 12 Laura Gowing, *Domestic Dangers: Women, Words, and Sex in Early Modern London* (Oxford, 1996), 91; the same argument has been made by Martin Dinges, ‘“Weiblichkeit in Männlichkeitsritualen”? Zu weiblichen Taktiken im Ehrenhandel im Paris des 18. Jahrhunderts’, *Francia* 18 (1991): 71–98.
 - 13 For a good summary and discussion see Bob Scribner, *For the Sake of the Simple Folk: Popular Propaganda for the German Reformation*, 2nd edn (Oxford, 1994), 127–33.
 - 14 Philipp Melancthon, Doct. Martinus Luther, *Deutung der zwei grewlichen figuren Bapstesels zu Rom un Munchkalbs zu Freyberg in Meyssen funden* (Wittenberg, 1523).
 - 15 Lyndal Roper, *The Holy Household: Women and Morals in Reformation Augsburg* (Oxford, 1989).
 - 16 Davis, *Society and Culture in Early Modern France* (Stanford, 1975); Lyndal Roper, *Oedipus & the Devil; Holy Household*; for recent developments of such themes see, for example, Beate Schuster, *Die Freien Frauen. Dirnen und Frauenhäuser im 15. und 16. Jahrhundert* (Frankfurt-on-Main, 1995); Peter Schuster, *Das Frauenhaus: Städtische Bordelle in Deutschland 1350–1600* (Paderborn, 1992); Ulinka Rublack, ‘Wench and Maiden: Women, War and the Pictorial Function of the Feminine in German Cities in the Early Modern Period’, *History Workshop Journal* 44 (1997): 1–22; Susanna Burghartz, *Zeiten der Reinheit, Orte der Unzucht: Ehe und Sexualität in Basel während der Frühen Neuzeit* (Paderborn, 1999); for an English version of some of her arguments see Burghartz, ‘Tales of Seduction, Tales of Violence: Argumentative Strategies before the Basel Marriage Court’, *German History*: 1 (1999) 41–56.
 - 17 For important contributions to the history of manhood in early modern Germany see Roper, *Oedipus & the Devil*, chs. 5–7, and Martin Dinges (ed.), *Hausväter, Priester, Kastraten: Zur Konstruktion von Männlichkeit in Spätmittelalter und Früher Neuzeit* (Göttingen, 1998). For approaches to early modern manhood in general see in particular Elizabeth A. Foyster, *Manhood in Early Modern England. Honour, Sex and Marriage* (Harlow, 1999).
 - 18 For a preliminary discussion of such matters see Ulinka Rublack, ‘Fluxes: The Body and the Emotions in the Early Modern Period’, *History Workshop Journal* 53 (2002).
 - 19 The most useful introduction to these ideas in English remains Steven Ozment, *When Fathers Ruled: Family Life in Reformation Europe* (Cambridge, Mass., 1983).

- 20 Steven Ozment, *The Bürgermeister's Daughter. Scandal in a Sixteenth-Century German Town* (New York, 1997), 58f.
- 21 For a first discussion of these themes, which remains important, see Hans Medick, David Sabean (eds.), *Interest and Emotion: Essays on the Study of Family and Kinship* (Cambridge, 1984).
- 22 See Ulinka Rublack, 'Pregnancy, Childbirth and the Female Body in Early Modern Germany', *Past and Present* 150 (1996): 84–110.
- 23 See Lyndal Roper, 'Jenseits des linguistic turn', *Historische Anthropologie* 3 (1999): 452–66.
- 24 Natalie Davis, *Women on the Margins: Three Seventeenth-Century Lives* (Cambridge, Mass., 1995), with two chapters on German women; for this trend more generally see Alain Corbin, *Le monde retrouvé de Louis-François Pinagot* (Paris, 1998), and Ulrich Raulff, *Der unsichtbare Augenblick: Zeitkonzepte in der Geschichte* (Göttingen, 1999), 118–42; for micro-studies covering a wide range of facts of social life, see Medick, *Weben und Überleben*; David Warren Sabean, *Property, Production and Family in Neckarhausen, 1700–1870* (Cambridge, 1991), and *Kinship in Neckarhausen, 1700–1870* (Cambridge, 1998).
- 25 Wunder, 'He is the Sun, She is the Moon': *Women in Early Modern Germany*, Cambridge, Mass., 1998., esp. the conclusion.
- 26 See, for example, Claudia Opitz, 'Neue Wege der Sozialgeschichte? – Ein kritischer Blick auf Brunners Konzept des "ganzen Hauses"', in *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 20 (1994): 88–98; Renate Dürr, *Mägde in der Stadt. Das Beispiel Schwäbisch Hall in der Frühen Neuzeit* (Frankfurt-on-Main, 1995), esp. ch. 1; Michaela Hohkamp, 'Macht, Herrschaft und Geschlecht: Ein Plädoyer zur Erforschung von Gewaltverhältnissen in der Frühen Neuzeit', *L'Homme* 2 (1996): 8–17.
- 27 Medick, *Laichingen*; Sabean, *Property, Production*; Claudia Ulbrich, *Shulamit und Margarete. Macht, Geschlecht und Religion in einer ländlichen Gesellschaft des 18. Jahrhunderts* (Vienna, 1999); see also Norbert Schindler, 'The Mill at Bluntau: A Family of Poachers in the Late Eighteenth-Century Salzburg Countryside', *German History* 1 (1999): 57–89.
- 28 Ulbrich, *Shulamit und Margarete*, chs. I and VIII.
- 29 Sabean, *Property, Production and Family*; and *Kinship*.
- 30 Sabean, *Kinship*, 310–15.
- 31 This argument is developed in her seminal work, 'He is the Sun, She is the Moon'.
- 32 For explorations of this theme in regard to birth and fertility see Roper, *Oedipus & the Devil*, ch. 10; Eva Labouvie, *Andere Umstände: Eine Kulturgeschichte der Geburt* (Cologne, 1998), esp. 65–102; Labouvie, *Beistand in Kindsnöten. Hebammen und weibliche Kultur auf dem Land (1550–1910)* (Frankfurt-on-Main, 1999).
- 33 Rudolf Dekker and Lotte van de Pol, *The Tradition of Female Transvestism in Early Modern Europe* (Basingstoke, 1989).
- 34 James C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven, Conn., 1990).