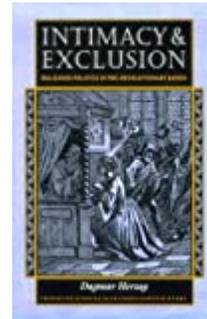




**Dagmar Herzog.** *Intimacy and Exclusion: Religious Politics in Pre-Revolutionary Baden.* Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1996. x + 252 pp. \$19.95 (paper), ISBN 978-0-691-04492-7; \$57.50 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-691-04493-4.



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To what extent does sexuality inform or define politics? In *Intimacy and Exclusion*, Dagmar Herzog examines the sexual mores expounded publicly in Baden during the 1830s and 1840s to argue that sexuality did indeed shape politics on the most heated conflicts of the time. Liberals locked horns with Catholic conservatives over the anti-celibacy movement, mixed (interconfessional) marriages, and legal recognition of the German-Catholic sect (*Deutschkatholiken*). By extension, the author argues, Liberal advocacy of Jewish emancipation owes much to the conflict over the “sexual and romantic rights” of German Christian males.

Politics in pre-revolutionary Baden has its own rich historiographic legacy, emphasizing the evolution of church-state relations, freedom of conscience, and civil rights. Herzog demonstrates, however, that much of the contemporary public discourse on these issues concerned gender and sexuality. In their battle against Catholic conservatism, Liberals supported an anti-celibacy movement. Arguing that celibacy is unnatural and that only marriage allows male and female sexuality full and wholesome expression, the Liberals supported state intervention to reform the Catholic clergy by allowing priests to marry. Forced celibacy was medieval, they argued, and offensive to any modern notion of freedom of conscience as well. But perhaps more offensive was the

Catholic Church’s attempt to control or limit mixed marriages. Liberals defended interconfessional marriage, insisting that marriage is an individual’s decision, not beholden to secular or ecclesiastical authority.

By the mid-1840s, these political debates shifted to the state’s interest in religious groups other than the “mainline” Catholic and Protestant denominations. According to the author, Liberals supported the new German-Catholic sect in its bid for legal recognition because it espoused a reformed religion with sexual values that matched the liberal perspective. The *Deutschkatholiken* publicly criticized the Roman Catholic clergy for its aberrant sexuality and for the way priests in the confessional shared the most intimate secrets of a marriage. These attacks seemed only to endear the *Deutschkatholiken* to liberal parliamentarians, and Herzog illustrates how arguments on the basis of individual conscience also helped revive the debate over Jewish emancipation. If the state can recognize the *Deutschkatholiken*, then why not the Jews? Catholic conservatives condemned *Deutschkatholizismus* and stirred up anti-Semitism among the masses which, the author suggests, pushed the Liberals to embrace more fully the cause of Jewish emancipation.

Having laid out the public discourse over clerical celibacy, mixed marriages, and freedom of religion, Her-

zog devotes the second half of the book to a critique of the “feminist vision” and philo-Semitism of the religious dissenters. The *Deutschkatholiken* embodied progressive attitudes toward religion and sexuality, yet while praising the virtues of sex in marriage and the right to choose a spouse out of love, German-Catholic preachers also maintained that women are fundamentally different than men. German-Catholic leaders occasionally spoke of women’s equality as part of their reform agenda, but they also sermonized against feminine weakness and remained somewhat suspicious of women, who might not deserve equality after all. Jews were also perceived as suspect because of their “orientalism,” and in the final analysis, the dissenters’ philo-Semitism amounted to Jewish conversion to the new, ostensibly Christian, religion.

Herzog reveals the limits of philo-Semitism and feminism among most *Deutschkatholiken*, but closes her study with a critique of Gustav Struve, Carl Scholl, and Louise Dittmar—the most radical voices from one cell of the movement. The author shows that on the eve of the 1848 Revolution, Struve, Scholl, and Dittmar moved completely away from traditional Christianity in an effort to create a “religion of humanity.” Dittmar is clearly the star of this study. A self-taught philosopher whose public career Struve and Scholl helped launch through the Mannheim Monday Club, Dittmar was one of the few feminists of that period to challenge the concept of the differences between the sexes. For Herzog, therefore, this convergence in 1847 of religious dissent and political radicalism provided the space in which Dittmar could elaborate a theory of gender as social construction.

Therein lies the fundamental premise of this study. The fifth and last chapter, “The Feminist Conundrum,” begins: “Although some contemporary feminists insist that women are fundamentally different from men, and that the goal of feminism is to reorganize society in line with ‘female values,’ many of the most sophisticated feminist theorists of the 1980s and 1990s have challenged the ‘commonsense’ notion that differences between men and women are self-evident or grounded in nature” (p. 140). This study is clearly driven by a specific theoretical framework, which may be intellectually satisfying, but which overwhelms the broader historical analysis of religious politics. This book engages the reader in a labyrinthine search for ideas that match current feminist theory. Louise Dittmar is thus “rediscovered” (or vindicated?), but her significance for “religious politics in pre-revolutionary Baden” is tenuous at best. Coming from Darmstadt, and having delivered a few lectures at

the Mannheim Monday Club, Dittmar had very little to do with Baden. Even her friends, Struve and Scholl, do not really define the religious politics of Baden. Herzog points out that Struve became a leading revolutionary in 1848, but his star rose and fell quickly, and, as the author demonstrates, he and Scholl did not speak even for the few *Deutschkatholiken* in Baden. To what extent do these few radicals help us understand the religious politics of Baden in the *Vormaerz*?

What is most lacking in Herzog’s study is a rigorous discussion of religious history. The author never mentions *Kulturprotestantismus*, which is essentially what the Liberals and the dissenters advocated. Married clergy, the unnaturalness of celibacy, a rapprochement with Jews—these issues were all raised in the Reformation. By the nineteenth century, liberals associated modernity with Protestant culture and morality, if not with direct affiliation to a Protestant denomination. And while Herzog points out that Jews rejected *Deutschkatholizismus*, because it abnegated their religious traditions and cultural identity, the author does not mention that Catholics and Lutherans made the same valid argument. Herzog asserts that the Liberals and dissenters fought to stop the “religious right” from “defining the content of Christianity,” yet an analysis of conservative religious thought is lacking in this work. The institutional churches certainly tampered with the form, but not the content, at least not in the fashion Herzog suggests. It was rather the shortlived—and blatantly opportunistic—*Deutschkatholiken* who sought to redefine the content. The author provides some insight into feminist theory and Liberal historiography, but the treatment of religious history is cursory and idiosyncratic.

As an analysis of sexuality, there is room for further research as well. Herzog describes positively the German-Catholic attempt to “spiritualize sex,” in which married sex can be grace-filling. The author never mentions that marriage is a sacrament in Roman Catholicism. There is a vast legacy of theology, not limited to Christianity, that would help inform this discussion of religion and sexuality. The book also dismisses celibacy without suggesting that the celibate life might be a positive alternative to the German Christian male morality Herzog criticizes. Nor does the author mention women’s religious orders and the last decade’s historiography regarding their sexual identity, which might fit well with Dittmar’s argument that a woman might “consecrate herself” to a higher love than marital love. Certainly there is much to criticize in traditional Christian sexual morality, but moral theology and religious history could help

inform this study of sexuality and religious politics.

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