

Eric Piltz, Gerd Schwerhoff (Hg.), Gottlosigkeit und Eigensinn. Religiöse Devianz im konfessionellen Zeitalter, Berlin (Duncker & Humblot) 2015, 530 S. (Zeitschrift für historische Forschung. Vierteljahresschrift zur Erforschung des Spätmittelalters und der frühen Neuzeit. Beiheft, 51), ISBN 978-3-428-14481-5, EUR 69,90.

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»Gottlosigkeit« was a term used by the clergy and magistrates in late medieval and early modern Europe for a great variety of people: from religious enthusiasts, non-conformists, heretics, blasphemers, witches, to transgressors of sexual norms, the lazy, or even the poor. In short, »godless« is a term of abuse used by those who thought of themselves as »godly« that can be applied in a procrustean manner depending on time and circumstance. Catholic preachers used it to decry Protestants, just as Luther lambasted »papal lies« on saints as godless. Keenly aware of the polyvalent meaning of this term, the editors of these 18 papers chose another concept as balance: »Eigensinn«. What they want to indicate is agency, on the part of those labelled »godless«. However, this is perhaps not the most appropriate term. For one, its English equivalents – willfulness and obstinacy – do not quite convey the individual agency of the religious non-conformists. Furthermore, regarding intentionality there is a great difference between those who committed »sexual crimes« and those who espoused heterodox religious doctrines, not to say of the religiously and morally indifferent masses who could be labelled »godless«. A more accurate concept is in the subtitle of this volume: »Religious deviance in the confessional Age«.

Created by the clergy and magistrates, »religious deviance« is not a subject that can be studied only from the perspective of their producers, as the editors forcefully argue in their well-considered introductory essay. Offering both a conceptual and historiographical reflection, they argue that the field of early modern Europe has evolved from »church history« to »religious history« with the paradigm of confessionalization; and now, with the emphasis on the diversity, multiplicity, and complexity of religious deviance as a historical phenomenon, the field has truly entered into the study of social, political, and cultural history. Compared to the confessionalization paradigm, what distinguishes this approach is a broadening of perspectives: not limited to the Holy Roman Empire, five of the papers deal with non-German subjects; the frequent citations of Anglo-American scholarship and French sociologists show a strong theoretical interest; and there is a recognition that the study of religious deviants cannot be limited only within the history of Christianity but must also include Jews, Muslims, and all other alterities so defined. After this overview by Piltz and Schwerhoff, Harold Maihold surveys jurisprudence in medieval Europe in order to understand the legitimation and limitations of a theocratic jurisprudence in the punishment of religious deviance. Together, these two essays constitute the opening section.

The remaining essays are organized into four sections, reflecting the diverse themes inspired by the subject of religious deviance. A first group of three articles, tightly connected, address »Preaching and Polemic«. They analyze the production of the discourse on Godlessness. While Andreas



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Holzem surveys 16th century Catholic sermons condemning Luther, Marina Münkler analyzes one writing by Luther, »Die Lügend von St. Johanne Chrysostomo«, in which she contrasts the Protestant debunking of Catholic saint legends and their own sanitized version of exemplary lives. The third contribution by Annemarie Hagmayer compares funeral sermons for territorial officials in Electoral Saxony under the rule of Christian I (1589–1613) in order to highlight the use of »Calvinist« as a pejorative label. In the next section, five contributions address »Deliktfelder« and demonstrate the broad spectrum of behavior that provoked the condemnation and punishment of godly clerics and magistrates. Gerd Schwerhoff compares the idea of godlessness in witchcraft and cases of cursing, and points out that ultimately, despite similarities, the differences are striking. Francisca Loetz points out the problem of criminalizing sexual sins, an area in which the increasing tendency to criminalize sins also had its limitations. Johannes Dillinger reflects on assassinations and rebellions as types of political crimes, coming up with the interesting observation that Catholics engaged in the first but Protestants resorted to the later. Sebastian Schmidt analyses poverty as religious deviance because it may reflect a lapsed moral condition. Finally, Alexander Kästner offers an interesting analysis of suicide in legal and theological texts of the early modern period.

The five papers of the next section also highlight the diversity and complexity of the phenomenon of religious deviance by reference to groups branded as such. Astrid von Schlachta discusses the effort by Anabaptists to distance themselves from the label of deviants by analyzing a court case in 1767 Baden, in which two teenage girls, who had converted with their father to Catholicism, returned to the Mennonite community where their estranged mother lived. Daniel Eissner discusses Pietist artisans as religious over-achievers (*Übererfüller*), and finds there were very few of them. Yvonne Kleinmann uses the case study of Rzeszów in Poland to illustrate the peaceful co-existence of Catholics and Jews, who each formed about half of the population, and that the former's religious spleen was directed at the new Protestant immigrants rather than Jews. In Manja Quakatz's paper, the few Muslim prisoners-of-war who worked as sedan-chair porters in Munich are presented. The fifth paper in this section, by Lionel Laborie, discusses the religious deviance of the Quakers, Muggletonians, Fifth-Monarchy men and other enthusiasts in Restoration England. A group of three essays are grouped under the heading »Dissimulation und Eigensinn«. Martin Skoeries analyzes the debates regarding Nicodemism, pointing out that the choice between dissimulation and martyrdom was not as clear-cut as the anti-Nicodemites would have it because many people were confused by the dogmatic controversies between the various confessions and had difficulty identifying themselves with one or another church. This idea of a fuzzy religious boundary is also important for the Dutch thinker, Dirck Volckertszoon Coornhert, who envisioned a universal church, but one in which there is ample dogmatic and doctrinal flexibility, making his ecclesiology and soteriology similar to those of Sebastian Franck and Caspar von Schwenckfeld. In the last essay, Jürgen Müller turns to the paintings of Pieter Bruegels the Elder to analyze the motif of *Blindensturz*, or the blind leading the blind.

Demonstrating the complexity of religious deviance in the confessional age, this collection of essays represents both the *status quaestionis* of early modern religious history in Germany and offers fruitful suggestions for future directions of research.

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