

2. Queering Judaism and Masculinist Inventions: German Homonationalism around 1900

As John C. Fout has emphasized, “a ‘new’, historically specific stage in the history of sexuality” (Fout 1992: 389) occurred around 1890. The time saw not only the founding of psychoanalysis and sexology but also the production of multiple “sexualities, including the ‘homosexual,’ the racialization/gendering of antisemitism, and the sharp increase in contemporary Christian homophobic discourse (the ‘Christian Values’ movement)” (Boyarin 1997: 208-209). This chapter argues that current (homo)nationalism, which has its focus on the “Muslim Other” (Puar 2007) must be placed in a historical genealogy. The case study focuses on the Second German Empire, wherein the discourse of political crisis was represented by a “male gender crisis,” which revolved round the Kaiser and his alleged “homosexual” circle. Just as with debates within the incipient gay movement, the discourse focused on the dispositif of “normal masculinity” as representative of the nation/state. The chapter addresses a religious contour of, and possible Jewish inflection in, this discursive constitution of homosexuality. The sexualization of Jewish religion played a significant role in marking an internal differentiation between an “effeminate,” “degenerate” Jewish homosexuality and an “ultra-virile,” Aryan, and state-supportive “inversion” of the “masculinists” around Hans Blüher. They were the right-wing, antisemitic part of the early gay rights movement in Germany. Their key model of an ideal state became the homoerotic “Male Band” as a misogynist and antisemitic form of male society.

Genealogies of Contemporary Discursive Struggles

Since the early European headscarf debates and the diverse discourses of homonationalism (Puar 2007), not to forget the “muscular Islamophobia”

(Scheibelhofer 2013: 1) of “angry white men” (Kimmel 2013: 1), gender, religion, and sexuality have increasingly become sites of Western identity politics. They have operated as markers and media of “boundary debates between the religious and the non-religious” in Western “multiple secularities” (Kleine and Wohlrab-Sahr 2016: 2). Today it is mostly the Muslim Other, it’s religion and culture, that is constructed as Europe’s enemy. Especially here, but also in the US, the discursive tension between secularism — as an enactment of political, mostly Western supremacy — and (foreign) religion has influenced the ongoing public discourse on *Self* and *Other*. During the time of Enlightenment the “Jewish Question” that means the debate around the possible assimilation of the Jewish minority was the litmus test of political universalism. As Jonathan Hess argues, it was the question “of how participation in a modern, secular state could ever be compatible with the Jews’ suborn adherence to an antiquated, Oriental religion. (Hess 2002: 4.)” During the Hobsbawmian long 19th century European national discourse was connected to a heteronormative gender order and a heroic embodiment of masculine hegemony (Mosse 1985, 1996; Brunotte 2015b). Today, however, as Paul Mepschen asserts “LGBTIQ rights and discourse are employed to frame Western Europe as the ‘avatar of both freedom and modernity’ but to depict its Muslim citizens, especially, as backwards and homophobic.” (Mepschen 2019: 82; citing Butler 2008: 2).

In some Western European countries, especially in the Netherlands, homonationalism has been spread broadly over different political parties and has been connected to social-democratic as well as right-wing world views. An often orientalized, presumably homophobic Islam has played a significant discursive role as the “religious” antagonist of modern “secular nostalgia” (Bracke 2011: 32). Joan Scott coined the term “sexularism” to emphasize the metonymical relation between current ideologies of secularism and issues of sexuality (Scott 2009). My analysis takes a historical perspective on the discursive construction of the opposition between religious and secular cultures in Europe, unearthing an entanglement between historical antisemitism and *avant la lettre* homonationalism. In a recent article Sarah Bracke and Luis Manuel Hernández Aquilar (2021: 1-21) systematically use the concept of the “Muslim Question” to analyze contemporary European discourses and practices to produce the Muslim minority as an “alien body” (*ibid.* 1) to the nation (cf. Farris 2014: 296-297). They (*ibid.*: 5) claim:

While European nation states have been shaped by different kinds of questions [...], the “Jewish Question” is a paradigmatic instance of such contestations and definitions of national belonging and citizenship, and resonates significantly with the “Muslim Question” in terms of a deep-rooted conceptual entanglement of race and religion in the production of difference.

Following Sara Farris (2014) Bracke and Aquilar Hernández bring “*the ‘Jewish Question’ and the ‘Muslim Question’*” to bear upon each other (ibid.: 4). Based on a well-established (Brunotte et.al. 2015) historical approach like that of Gil Anidjar (2012, 2014) and Ivan Kalmar/Derek Penslar (2005), this chapter emphasizes that Europe had historically not only formulated “different Questions,” (Anidjar 2012) but that also orientalism had a long pre-modern history in “the Christian West’s attempts to understand and manage its relation with both of its monotheistic Others [Judaism and Islam, U.B.] the Western image of the Muslim Orient has been formed, and continues to be formed in inextricable conjunction with Western perceptions of the Jewish people.” (ibid.)

Especially since the late 18th century Western orientalism has always included the Jews and has not only been focused on Muslims and Islam (cf. Kalmar Penslar 2005). Against this historical backdrop, the chapter concentrates on the sexualized version of the “Jewish Question” and the discursive intertwinement of Jewishness and homosexuality around 1900. It focuses on the intersection of religion, gender, and race within the early German homosexual emancipation movement in late imperial Germany (Somerville 2000; McCall 2005; Crenshaw 1991). The goal is to unearth a right-wing homonationalism *avant la lettre* in Germany.

Following Stoler’s early criticism of Foucault, I will add a colonial-orientalist perspective to analyze the genealogy of sexuality (Stoler 1995: 5–6; Massad 2007; see also Brunotte et al. 2015; Rohde et al. 2018). In contrast to Europe’s older colonial, homoerotic fantasies (Aldrich 2003; Massad 2007; Boone 2014), today’s homonationalism often depicts male Muslims as patriarchic, backward, and homophobic (Mepschen and Duyvendak 2012). To be able to analyze the overall picture of the colonial dimensions within the history of sexuality, we have to include Europe’s “inner Orient” (Rohde 2005: 1) and “internal outsiders”: the Jews (Brunotte et al. 2017: 1). This perspective is especially relevant for the case study on Germany. The very nature of Germany’s colonial exceptionalism -- that is, its late colonialism -- had a decisive impact on the perception of a racial Other *within* the contact zone of an internal colonial encounter. This inner colonialism articulated itself in German antisemitism.

The inclusion of antisemitism in the research field of orientalism offers exciting perspectives on the study of the intertwinement of colonialism, gender, religion, and sexuality. Furthermore, “the project of Jewish emancipation (in the late 18th century) provided the ultimate test, in practice, of the rational ideals of Enlightenment” (Hess 2002: 6) and of secular universalism.

In reference to Stefan Dudink’s work on sexual nationalism (Dudink 2011; Dudink and Jaunait 2013), I support the hypothesis that current homonationalism does not represent a unique political development, nor is it completely new; rather, it can and must be placed in a complex historical genealogy.

From such a perspective the current *configuration* of homosexuality and nation — from exclusion to inclusion, from margin to center, from other to self — is new. The *discursive materials*, however, out of which this configuration has been crafted are not necessarily new and may well be old. The move from old to new nationalism appears then as a move within the same discursive field. (Dudink 2011: 260)

The case study suggests analyzing the possible discursive intersection of Jewishness and homosexuality around 1900 in Germany. Also Matti Bunzl follows the antisemitic “racial contour of the modern discursive figure of the homosexual” back to its historical embeddings and differentiations in *fin-de-siècle* Germany (Bunzl 2000: 338). “German historiography has rarely explored the relationships between these discourses and their potentially reciprocal effects” (Bruns 2018: 90). In the Anglo-Saxon sphere, however, Jewish studies and queer studies were first brought together in the anthology *Jews and Other Differences: The New Jewish Cultural Studies* (Boyarin and Boyarin 1997) as well as in Daniel Boyarin’s book *Unheroic Conduct: The Rise of Homosexuality and the Invention of the Jewish Man* (1997). The editors Daniel and Jonathan Boyarin positulate an entangled history of modern constructions of gender/sexuality and antisemitism. This chapter builds on their work.

The Male Gender Crisis and the Protestant Moral Purity Movement

As thorough historical analysis has shown, the state was not only an exclusively male domain of power in nineteenth-century nationalist discourse, but it also had a masculine connotation (Mosse 1985; Dudink 2011; Brunotte and Herrn 2008). Within the German Second Empire (1888–1918) the discourse of political crisis was intertwined with a discourse of “male gender crisis” (Fout

1992). The latter revolved around Kaiser Wilhelm II and his purportedly homosexual circle of aristocratic friends. Before the beginning of the Eulenburg-Moltke trial between 1906 and 1908, Prince zu Eulenburg-Hertefeld, a close friend of the emperor, was already accused of being a homosexual. The identity of the nation was, however, based on the codes of honorable, "masculine" behavior. Widely propagated by the daily press and parodied in caricatures through the figure of the aristocratic officer involved in homoerotic scenes, the German military was confronted with a scandal. The debate around the political quality of "normal masculinity" and the then recently coined term homosexuality spoke not only of violating the anti-sodomy paragraph 175 of the German *Strafgesetzbuch* (Criminal Code; henceforth, § 175 StGB) but also of a downright degeneration of the state. In this discourse, the figure of the (feminized) aristocrat and that of the homosexual became "the symbol of a threatening 'feminization' of the state and the German nation" (Bruns 2008b: 79; see also zur Nieden 2004: 329). Strengthened by leading sexologists such as Richard von Krafft-Ebing, the discourse on "moral decay," "sexual perversion," and "pathology" became interwoven with notions of degeneration (Krafft-Ebing 1886: 265). The most powerful opponent of sexual reform was, however, the Protestant moral purity movement and church-related organizations. In general, moral purity commentators agreed with Krafft-Ebing's findings about sexual behavior, "but his views on the decriminalization of sexual activities between consenting adults they saw as hateful" (Fout 1992: 393). The purity activists fought against "moral decline," women's emancipation, and homosexuality. The majority of the moral purity movement, all promoters of "Christian family values" and the patriarchal gender order, came from "elite male professions" (406). They founded numerous male associations, such as the Men's League for the Battle against Immorality (*Männerbund zur Bekämpfung der Unsittlichkeit*) or the German League for the Battle against Women's Emancipation (*Deutsche Bund zur Bekämpfung der Frauenemanzipation*), to defend Christian norms and the degeneration of society and state. From a traditional Christian view, homosexuality was a sin, which would lead to a "decline in the family life of the nation" (414).

In connection with the Eulenburg trial and the public debate on homosexuality, "healthy" masculinity became a popular icon of national identity politics in Germany. A strong re-masculinization of the state was supposed to serve as the most effective remedy against the decadent circle around the emperor. However, contrary to the goals of the moral purity movement, the Eulenburg trial and the public debate on gender and sexualities also popular-

ized the knowledge production on homosexuality. As Harry Oosterhuis (2000) claims, a multiplication of public discourses on sexuality also opened up new fields of gay self-invention. Yet, within national sexual politics in Wilhelmine Germany (Wilhelm II, 1888–1918), not only homosexuals were “internal Outsiders” (Brunotte et al. 2017: 1), but also Jews. Bunzl even postulates that the construction of the homosexual as the nation’s “constitutive other” was intrinsically linked to the antisemitic figure of the effeminated and hypersexualized male Jew (Bunzl 2000: 339). The two groups, male Jews and homosexuals, were characterized through the same bodily and mental traits and merged into the embodiment of a dangerous conspiracy (Mosse 1985).

“Third Sex” versus Masculinism: The Inner Division in the Discourse on Homosexuality

Against the background of the intertwinement of state- and gender-crises discourses, and a general dialectic of discursive repression and creation of sexualities in *fin-de-siècle* Germany, it is not surprising that the first gay rights movement started in Berlin. In October 1928 Wystan Hugh Auden moved to Berlin; his friend Christopher Isherwood followed him a few months later. Especially important to the lasting connection between London intellectual circles and those of Berlin were also the writers associated with the Bloomsbury Group. “The Berlin-Bloomsbury connection started before the First World War [...] and was cemented by Alix Strachey’s extended stay in 1924–25, when she was translating Freud and being analyzed at the Berlin Psychoanalytical Institute” (Evangelista/ Stedman 2021: 29). It is Christopher Isherwood of course who has been most closely associated with Berlin, but Virginia Woolf also visited the city in the late twenties. The core of the Berlin myth consisted in the city’s reputation for sexual tolerance and gender emancipation. In contrast to the strict normative rules in Britain, which still lay in the long shadow of the Wilde trials of 1895 and the tragic case of Allan in 1918 that put an abrupt end to British *Salomania*, in Berlin male and female homosexuality were broadly discussed and tolerated. Here, activists and sexologists explored new emerging intermediate forms of desire and sexual identities. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick illuminated how

the newly crystallizing German State was itself more densely innervated than any other site with the newly insistent, internally incoherent but

increasingly foregrounded discourses of homosexual identity, recognition, prohibition, advocacy, demographic specification and political controversy. Virtually all of the competing, conflicting figures for understanding same-sex desires — archaic ones and modern ones, medicalized and politicized; those emphasizing pederastic relations, or gender inversion — were coined and circulated mainly in Germany in this period, and through German culture, medicine, and politics. (Sedgwick 1994: 66)

The intersection of politics, i.e., the state, and struggles about the definition of sexualities and gender is striking in Sedgwick's description. As Andrew Hewitt (1996) states, it was the moment of historical crisis of traditions in late imperial Germany, out of which new homosexual identities and, I would add, an early form of right-wing homonationalism emerged. Already in the late 1860s, the German lawyer Karl Heinrich Ulrichs started a redefinition process of sexuality and homosexuality in nineteenth-century Europe (Beachy 2015). Ulrichs fought against the criminalization of same-sex love by arguing for its "naturalness" (Herrn 2008: 175) as an inborn desire. His core thesis was that of a "female soul in a male body" (Ulrichs 1994: 47). One of Ulrichs's further contributions to the early gay rights movement was his influence on the Jewish social democrat, medical doctor, and sexologist Magnus Hirschfeld. In 1897, Hirschfeld founded the Scientific Humanitarian Committee and petitioned the *Reichstag* to reform § 175 StGB of the German penal code, which criminalized sexual acts between males. Inspired by Ulrichs, Hirschfeld considered homosexuality as an inborn condition and a "third sex," which includes a surplus of "female substance." Later, however, in his theory of sexual intermediates (*Zwischenstufentheorie*), he introduced the idea of a multitude of sexualities and genders (see Hirschfeld 1910; Herrn 2008). Magnus Hirschfeld's left wing of the homosexual rights movement represented a reasonable counterpart to the Protestant moral purity movement. Yet, the historical context of the discursive struggles around 1900 (see Brunotte 2004, 2010; Bruns 2008a) indicates that the debate on homosexuality additionally functioned as a political ventriloquist for a more general modern crisis: the crisis of the "masculine" state. In the heated debates, the contrast between a "threatening" feminization and a "healthy" re-masculinization of the nation became a discursive tool, and "normal" masculinity functioned as a central category of reference for strategies to foster the ideal of hegemonic masculinity.

Hence, within the homosexual rights movement a group of activists emerged who argued for a fundamental, "healthy" masculinity of male-

male Eros and male social associations. Oosterhuis characterizes them as a “homosocial resistance to Hirschfeld’s homosexual putsch” of a “third sex” (Oosterhuis 1983: 305). Hewitt coined the term “masculinists” (Hewitt 1996: 80) to characterize this group, which was represented by Benedict Friedländer, Adolf Brand, and later Hans Blüher. They were a faction in the homosexual emancipation movement “that perceived male-male Eros as a distillation of fundamentally masculine social instinct, and that therefore resists any attempt to explain homosexuality as a form of effeminization” (Hewitt 1996: 81). The masculinists were connected to the German youth movement and the right-wing “conservative revolution” in Germany (Breuer 1995). Most of them were scholars and artists who constituted the “self-proclaimed elite of manly men who pursued *eros uranios* and formed the Greek-miming *Gemeinschaft der Eigenen* (Community of the Special Individuals)” (Geller 2003: 98; see also Oosterhuis and Kennedy 1992).

The newly emerging *Männerbund* model of homosocial associations was based on the male fantasies associated with the late German colonial adventures, as well as the experience of romanticized and later openly *völkisch* male associations and bands of comrades organized around charismatic leaders (Widdig 1992; Brunotte 2004). In this historical context the male band as the new basis of the political began to be discursively placed in contrast to the women- and Jewish-coded family. Jews and women were in turn “held responsible for both the bureaucratic anonymity of modern public life and the ‘feminization’ of social life” (Geller 2007: 165).

From 1912 onward, Hans Blüher, author, sexologist, and early chronicler of the *Wandervogel* movement, fought against § 175 StGB and campaigned for the decriminalization of homosexuality. In the third volume of his book on the German *Wandervogel*, he describes the youth movement as an “erotic phenomenon” (Blüher 1912: 1). As a young man he was fascinated by psychoanalysis and influenced by Sigmund Freud (Neubauer 1996; Brunotte 2004: 70–89; Brunotte et al. 2017: 195–221). In these early years, Blüher contributed to Hirschfeld’s Scientific Humanitarian Committee and sometimes published in his *Yearbook for Sexual Intermediate Types*. He refused all negative sexologist and psychoanalytical definitions of homosexual desire that saw it as “deviant,” “symptomatic,” or “displaced.” Rejecting “third sex” theory as well as the mainstream homophobic assertion of the effeminate homosexual, he claimed, “sexuality creates (indeed, must create) two fully developed, originary and indestructible types of man: one desires men, the other women” (Blüher 1919b: 167). All theories that pathologize inversion, he

stated, “only take account of singular cases of illness and ignore the *Typus inversus*. A sincere, complete and satisfying dedication to one’s own sex is never a mere avoidance of incest” (Blüher 1919b: 163). As Jay Geller points out, Blüher’s early cooperation with Hirschfeld and his cooperation with Freud

led several reviewers in Austrian *Wandervogel* journals to attack Blüher . . . questioning his German identity. Such remarks as “Hey, is Blüher a Jew?” and “Blüher’s book is sick. There is something like a struggle between the German race and another!” were printed. (Schmidt in Geuter 1994: 95; English translation in Geller 2007: 172 and 280)

In response to this criticism Blüher radically differentiated himself and his theories of “normal,” “healthy” inversion from any Jewish connotations and broke off his cooperation with Hirschfeld and Freud. To strengthen the model of the *super virile* men-loving man, the *Typus inversus*, and the elite of manly man at the core of the new state, Blüher defined a second type of homosexuality along the lines of gender and race differences: the feminized and “degenerated” Jewish homosexual. In a letter to Freud from July 13, 1912, he described three versions of “inversion,” two of them marked as “pathological”:

the feminine one . . . is characterized through a specific somatic constitution and is based on Hirschfeld’s theory of intermediate phases, the normal [inversion] in the ancient sense, which I have explained to you is [by contrast] thoroughly healthy. The other versions one can well define as pathologic. (Blüher cited in Neubauer 1996: 142)

In radical contrast to Hirschfeld’s model of the homosexual as a “third sex,” Gustave Friedländer — whose influence on Blüher cannot be overestimated (Bruns 2018: 91–93) — created the notion of the homosexual hero of man (*Männerheld*) as the charismatic center of male associations: “both Blüher and Friedländer were concerned with establishing a continuum from homosexual desire through to patriotism, a concern that will lead Blüher to foreground in his work the theory of the state” (Hewitt 1996: 103). With his central thesis, that all relations between men, from friendship up to the state, are libidinously charged and therefore “Eros determines their relationships, wherever men communicate with one another,” Blüher ‘has introduced a sexual dimension into the study of politics and the state’ (Schoeps 1988: 143; Sombart 1988: 159). He was the first theorist who developed a state theory based on male-male eroticism and an early form of right-wing homonationalism. Blüher systematically synthesized the antisemitic and homophobic tendencies of

the public mainstream discourse on sexualities in Wilhelmine society and radicalized a discursively constructed opposition between the “healthy” Germanic inversion and the “degenerate” homosexuality of “effeminate” Jews.

Excursus: Jews and Judaism as Models of the Other in Colonial Discourse

As announced at the beginning of the chapter, I add a colonial perspective to analyze the genealogy of sexuality. Particularly in view of the long history of Christian anti-Judaism, the historical chronology of internal and external boundaries must be read as a reversal of the chronological course of events. “From the very beginning of European expansion Judaism was employed in the decipherment of religions, and Jewish ancestry was used as likely explanation for the people Europeans encountered” (Parfitt 2005: 53). Certainly, anti-Jewish discourse in the early modern age was mostly based on religious and ethnic differences. Nevertheless, the modern intertwinement of religious, cultural, and sexual-physical differences had precursors in religious history. As James Thomas (2010: 1738–39) emphasizes, the “discourses of modern racism not only antedate the social taxonomies arising out of nineteenth-century scientific thought, but it was Christianity which provided the vocabularies of difference for the Western world.” Similarly, the queer gendering of Jews and their modern “queer sexualization” (Boyarin et al. 2003: 7) have a long, pre-modern genealogy. This genealogy has been intertwined with the “representation of the Jews as a carnal people . . . extending back to Patristic ideas of the Jews as a people of the flesh” (Eilberg-Schwartz 1992: 5). The idea that Jewish men differ from non-Jewish men by being delicate, meek, or effeminate in body and character is also deeply rooted in European Christian history. Many myths have emerged around Jewish circumcision. In the thirteenth century, for example, historians reported that their contemporaries believed Jewish men suffered from monthly blood flux and were like women. In antisemitic discourse, the circumcised Jew was depicted as the horrifying representative of an unfit and “crippled” masculinity. Jay Geller views circumcision even as a dispositive that determined discourses and practices in the formation of European Christian identity and alterity from the very beginning:

“Circumcision” became both an apotropaic monument and a floating signifier that functioned as a dispositive, an apparatus that connected biblical

citations, stories, images, phantasies, laws, kosher slaughterers, . . . ethnographic studies, medical diagnoses, and ritual practices . . . in order to produce knowledge about and authorize the identity of *Judentum* — and of the uncircumcised. (Geller 2007: 11)

In 1985, George Mosse already demonstrated that the stereotype of the effeminate Jewish man had become a central target of antisemitic discourse only around 1900. At this historical moment the link between Jews and women was extended to include the imaginary connection between Jews and homosexuality (Boyarin 1997; Brunotte 2015a: 199–202). Antisemitic discourse both characterized Jewish men as feminine, nervous, and unfit for military service and also classified European Jewry as a whole as a “southern people,” “semi-Asian,” or even as Europe’s “internal Outsiders” (Brunotte et al. 2017: 1). In his groundbreaking study *Unheroic Conduct: The Rise of Heterosexuality and the Invention of the Jewish Man* (1997), Daniel Boyarin claims that the antisemitic stereotype of the feminized Jewish male is also a product of the hegemonic concept of Western European heterosexuality (see also Baader et al. 2012). Yet, the Jewish man was characterized by a somewhat paradoxical contrast: on the one hand as “female” due to his circumcision *and* as fixated on family, on the other hand as “female” *and* in proximity to a pathologized homosexuality. Susannah Heschel emphasizes that it was precisely the fluctuation in antisemitic discourse that made the Jewish man appear “both as a man in the most extreme sense, a sex-obsessed predator, . . . as well as an abnormal man, one who is effeminate and even menstruates” (Heschel 1998: 86). Heschel underlines that the feminization of Jewish men derived from their religious, prescribed circumcision resulted in a central stigma of “queer foreignness” in Christian identity discourse.

Hans Blüher: Male Band (Männerbund) versus “Jewish Decadence”

As the excursus demonstrates, the antisemitic attacks of the masculinists around 1900 built on the long (Christian) history of “queering” Judaism. In 1913, Blüher started his discursive battle against the Jewish sexologist and gay rights activist Magnus Hirschfeld and his theory of the “sexual intermediate types.” His attacks against Hirschfeld’s (model of) homosexuality were fundamentally antisemitic in character. Blüher concentrated all the traditional, anti-Judaic and antisemitic stereotypes of the degenerated, womanly Jew to

inflect a negative model of modern homosexuality “by images of racialized Jewish difference” (Bunzl 2000: 338). Within these discursive struggles the putative effeminate, Jewish homosexual became the embodiment of purportedly modern, urban degeneration. Blüher (1914) stated that Hirschfeld and his followers were “truly deformed men . . . whose racial degeneracy is marked by an excessive endowment of female substance” (13). In the conclusion of his essay *Three Fundamental Forms of Homosexuality* from 1913 he claimed, “[effeminacy] is a form of decadent homosexuality that grows out of racial mixing [Rassenmischung], inbreeding [Inzucht], and misery [Verelendung]” (Geller 2007: 169 and note 50). These characteristics of sexual life of a society in decline were qualified as Jewish. However, in his chronicle of the *German Youth Movement*, Blüher (1912) mobilized *völkisch* ideology and stated that the membership of these associations of comradeship was characterized by means of a “strongly emphasized German racial type” (161). For Blüher the *super virile* male band was at the core of the social and the state. It was based on the “love for the Hero of Men” (Blüher 1918: 35; Blüher 1912: 57). In his text *Secession Judaica* (1922), wherein the author proclaimed the exclusion of the Jews from German society, Blüher connected gender and race to explicitly ascribe effeminacy to the Jews as a “race.” He stated, “the correlation of masculine nature with German essence and a feminine and servile nature with the Jewish essence is an unmediated intuition of the German people, which from day to day becomes more certain” (Blüher 1922: 49; English translation in Geller 2007: 177). As is shown in this quote, his masculinist *male band* was also a political weapon against the modern dissolution of the two-sphere gender order. The male band was built as the counterpart to the woman- and Jewish-coded family and the democratic modernization of society. Women and Jews were held responsible for both the bureaucratic anonymity of modern public life and the “feminization” of social life (cf. Brunotte 2004: 84; Geuter 1994: 161).

Male Band as a Colonial Transfer

The concept of the male band was a traveling theory and the product of knowledge gained through the belated German colonial adventure in Africa (cf. Brunotte 2004). As a product of the “imagined ethnography” (Kramer 1977: 1), the term *Männerbund* was an invention of the German ethnographer Heinrich Schurtz in his book *Altersklassen und Männerbünde* (Age Classes and Male Bands) from 1902. Far more important than its academic reception was the

immense cultural-political impact that the indigenous organizational model of the *Männerbund* had on German politics. The *male band* advanced not only to the matrix of the “conservative revolution” but, far more, it became “the key concept of the political culture in Germany” (Sombart 1988: 171; see Widdig 1992). *Männerbund* was the term Schurtz used to describe the coming together of boys of the same age during their *rites de passage*. Schurtz explained that in many indigenous societies strong secret communities and sacred warrior bands developed from these originally temporary institutions of male-only associations. In his defense of the male band, Schurtz took up the contemporary gender-political debates on women’s emancipation and the threat of a “feminization of society.” Against this cultural background, Schurtz’s thesis received its cultural and political relevance. It is not the family, but “rather the free association of male bands that constitute the progressive and culture-forming foundations of society and are the vehicle of almost all higher cultural developments” (Schurtz 1902: 61). Schurtz’s fantasies of primitive manliness and male associations provided role models for the emigration (*Auswanderung*) of the male *Wandervogel* youth from the Wilhelmine fatherland.

Eventually, it was Hans Blüher who connected Schurtz’s theory of the male band with the debate on the masculinity of the state and with the discourse on homosexuality. He stated that Schurtz skirted the homoerotic basis of these male associations and cited Karsch-Haacks’s 1911 study on *Das Leben der gleichgeschlechtlichen Naturvölker* (The Same-Sex Love Lives of Primitive Tribes) to prove the “strong inclination toward inversion” in indigenous societies (Blüher 1921a: 99).

Erotics of State and “Race”

Finally, I analyze three central passages from Blüher’s work. In these passages, the intertwining of misogyny and antisemitism explicitly connects to his state and male band theory. In his version of a homonationalism *avant la lettre*, and following the Platonic model, the state is based on male-male Eros (see Brunotte 2004, 80–103). For Blüher, Eros is no sexological or biological, but a (philosophical) concept, and also an affective as well as meaning-making cultural force. In *Die Rolle der Erotik in der männlichen Gesellschaft* (The Role of the Erotics in Male Society) he programmatically claims, “beyond the socializing principle of the family that feeds off the Eros of male and female, a second principle is at work in mankind and ‘masculine society,’ which owes

its existence to male-male Eros, and finds its expression in male bonding" (Blüher 1919b: 7). Blüher continues to explain:

In all species where the familial urge is the sole determinant . . . the construction of a collective is impossible. The family can function as a constitutive element of the State, but not more. And *wherever nature has produced species capable of developing a viable state that has been made possible only by smashing the role of the family and the male-female sexual urges as sole social determinants.* (Blüher 1919b: 6–7, emphasis in original; English translation in Geller 2007: 176)

The antisemitic inflection of the hatred against effeminate homosexuals in masculinist discourse is well documented (Hewitt 1996; Bruns 2008b). This antisemitism was not only connected to the construction of the figure of the Jew as the stereotypical effeminate homosexual and *vice versa*, but also clearly linked to Blüher's theory of the ideal state. In the second volume of *Die Rolle der Erotik* (1919b), in a footnote, he creates the Jewish anti-type to the male-bonded society. This anti-type connects the feminization of the Jews with their presumed "hypertrophy of the family," and defines Jewry in general as a "race":

With the Jews it is as follows: they suffer at one and the same time from a weakness in male-bonding [*Männerbundschwäche*] and a *hypertrophy of the family*. They are submerged in the family and familial relations, but as to the relations among men, the old saying holds true: *Judaeus Judaeo lupus*. Loyalty, unity, and bonding are no concern of the Jew. Consequently, where other people profit from a fruitful interaction of the two forms of socialization (i.e., the family and the *Männerbund*), with the Jews there is a sterile division. Nature has visited this fate upon them and thus they wander through history, cursed never to be a people [*Volk*], always to remain a mere race. They have lost their state. There are people who are simply exterminated as peoples and therefore disappear, but this cannot be the case with the Jews, for a secret process internal to their being as a people constantly displaces the energy typically directed toward male bonding onto the family . . . Consequently, the Jews maintain themselves as *race* through overemphasis of the family. (Blüher 1919b: 170, emphasis in original; English translation in Hewitt 1996: 123 and 125)

Blüher solves the mystery of the stateless survival of the Jews by feminizing them. Accordingly, the Jews submit exclusively to the female private sphere of the family and to the femininely connoted reproductive instinct. However,

especially since the modern claim of Jewish assimilation into the secularized majority culture was raised, the problem of Jewish difference has taken on an extra threatening aspect. Therefore, it was ultimately the gender difference of Jewish “effeminate” masculinity that threatened the hegemony of the German male band. What the masculinists wanted to avoid was to allow “the unmanned or unmanly into the public sphere” (Geller 2007: 6–7). Blüher could only explain the survival of the stateless Jewish community through their devotion to the (for him) “female” family and to the reproductive instinct. As a consequence of their devotion to the womanly private sphere they “suffer from a weakness in male-bonding” and cannot participate in the state. Finally, Blüher (1919b) defines the Jews as a “mere race” (123).

The Sacralization of the Male Society as Nucleus of a New Religion

In the previous quotes, Blüher does not mention the role of Judaism as a religion and the role of lived religiosity as a medium and means of their survival in Diaspora. He also does not recognize male-focused Jewish religious practices such as attending a synagogue for prayer and study as a possible form of male bonding. From the early 1920s onwards, however, religion and religiosity began to play a stronger role in his definition of the “Aryan male band.” In *Die Rolle der Erotik* Blüher attempts to build Christian charity on the love for the hero of men (Blüher 1919b: 231–232). He regards the circle of disciples around Jesus as the first *Männerbund*, which revolved around the highest of “men’s heroes” (247). Blüher further elaborates on this topic in *Die Aristie des Jesus von Nazareth* (The Aristea of Jesus of Nazareth) from 1921 and *Der Menschensohn* (The Son of Men) from 1920, in which he claims that Jesus’ Eros was of pagan quality. Eros refers particularly to Jesus’ own sex/gender (Blüher cited in Brunotte 2004: 89 and 447). In the second volume of *Die Rolle der Erotik* Blüher stated, “the sacred in the *Männerbund* and the male-male eroticism always combines with an exuberance of the human. It is an intoxicating and solemn event. Something builds itself up in male societies that occurs nowhere else: the covenant arises in the hour of the highest charge” (Blüher 1919b: 217).

As a discursive result of this sacralization, the male-bonded state has acquired the traits of a soteriological model that is a model of a state that asks for sacrifices and offers transcendence. The new state “presupposes the potential insignificance of the individual, service to the whole, sacrifice to the transcendent collective” (Blüher 1919b: 4–5). As Klaus von See (1992) writes,

Blüher established the *Männerbund* in the 1920s “as the nucleus of a new religion, a new empire, or even a new humanity” (98). The tendency towards a sacralization of the male society, the state, and its homoerotic Eros on the one hand and its Christological interpretation on the other went hand in hand. He sought “to raise the state as high as possible . . . and to let the individual merely disappear in front of it.” He called this view of the state “sacred” (Blüher 1919b: 2–3). At the end of *Die Rolle der Erotik* he even declares the new covenant to be a seal of the old covenant that was broken in its youth, a “sacrament” (221). In *Familie und Männerbund* (Family and Male Band) he speaks of *Männerbund Mysterien* (male band mysteries) and *heilige Päderastie* (holy pederasty) (1918: 36). Supposedly Christian morality and the camaraderie of men, the repeatedly emphasized “love of the hero” (Blüher 1919b: 247) should become the basis of the state. Similar to Nietzsche and his *Übermensch*, Blüher ultimately tried to reinstate the hero by connecting Germany with classical Greek and Germanic heroes, for, according to Blüher, “Herakles, Theseus, Siegfried . . . these sons of gods are men’s favorites set in heaven” (Blüher 1921a: 246). At the beginning of Blüher’s masculinist campaign against the § 175 StGB, however, the theory of male society based on the elite of homoerotic men also served as a discursive tool to defend his beloved Emperor Wilhelm II. Nicolaus Sombart analyzes this early political function of Blüher’s theory as follows:

If the central statement within the Eulenburg trial was “homosexual men are threatening the security of the state; homosexual men are not fit for the hard work of politics,” then Blüher claimed, “the state is sustained by a male-masculine eroticism and politics is essentially and exclusively an affair of homoerotic men!” (Sombart 1988: 169)

Within the political power struggle in late imperial Germany and the Weimar republic, Blüher inscribed the masculinist version of homoerotism into the new right-wing models of hegemonic masculinity. (see Brunotte 2004 for the further reception history of the *Männerbund* in the Weimar Republic and under National Socialism)

Conclusion

The analysis of the discursive struggle concerning homosexuality around 1900 in Germany has shown that masculinity was a key reference within the debate. It further demonstrates that the figure of the homosexual was defined in

terms of a racialized gender dichotomy. To participate in the normative model of hegemonic masculinity, the masculinists invented a new category of homosexuality. They constructed a contradiction between a Germanic, healthy, men-loving invert and the figure of a decadent, feminine, Jewish homosexual. Not homosexuality *per se*, but homosexuality already racialized as Jewish, became the key link between homophobia and racism.

This chapter has uncovered the existence of a racialized, right-wing *fin-de-siècle* homonationalism in Germany. After World War I, Blüher's theories participated in a mainstream tendency of "German nationalist discourse to renew the German nation's masculine nature and reinstate its male-defined political order" (Bruns 2018: 96). Concerning contemporary "sexularism" (Scott 2009), we have to be aware that not every homonationalism is a kind of "gay racism" (Puar 2013: 337). In the Netherlands, for example, homonationalist ideas have not only been connected to Pim Fortuyn and Geert Wilders, but also to social-democratic and liberal national parties and cultural discourse (see Mepschen 2019). However, some of the general discursive strategies of homonationalism, as the feminization of homosexuals and the racialization as well as orientalization of religious and cultural difference in national political discourse, remain relevant in contemporary Europe especially with its "Muslim Question".

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