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»However, the problem of how one should deal with a consecrated delinquent has remained. A historical examination of clerical behavior in the areas of sexuality over a long period can help us to understand the massive changes that priestly lifestyles have experienced in various cultures and contexts. Certainly, it offers a necessary historical background for the crisis of abuse of the twentieth century, which led many stunned Catholics to lose their trust in their ›shepherds« (259).

Ulrich Lehner ends this study of sexual abuse by priests, primarily Jesuits, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, with this paragraph, at the end of a short chapter entitled »Outlook on the Present« (»Ausblick in die Gegenwart«). But of course the sexual abuse scandal that engulfed the Catholic Church in the late twentieth century is a constant, if mostly unspoken, presence in this study. Some elements of what occurred in the early modern period echo across the centuries. Church leaders in the 1600s and 1700s feared above all else bad publicity. This was particularly true of the Jesuits, since the Society of Jesus anchored itself on a reputation for unreproachable morality and, at the same time, always faced enemies within and outside the Church. As a result, they protected abusers and hid scandals from the wider public.

Furthermore, like their twentieth century successors, Jesuit leaders and bishops moved abusive priests from parish to parish and from school to school, even across the world from Mexico to Germany, and were reluctant to dismiss even the most terrible serial abusers from the priesthood. Lehner demonstrates how the Church's disciplinary system failed almost completely. Priests and teachers accused of abuse were also often adept at shamelessly denying accusations, stalling, and blaming their victims. And always, church authorities at all levels feared rumors and public accusations and fought to protect the reputation of the Church in general and the Society in particular.

The legal and culture context around sexual abuse in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries made it even harder to identify and punish abusers. Legally, the victims of sexual abuse were considered accomplices in sexual crimes, even if they were clearly passive victims. This was even more the case if they were considered to have participated willingly in sexual activity. Sodomy



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or any sexual penetration, oral sex, or masturbation were crimes, punishable, in theory at least, with death. This legal framework meant that victims and their families were reluctant to report abuse, unless if it could be framed as an assault on a defenceless person, which was hard to prove. Even in cases of less severe abuse, families feared their sons would suffer an irreparable loss of honor.

The victims of sexual abuse discussed in *Inszenierte Keuschheit* were all boys and young men, most often teenagers (and younger children) who were students in Jesuit schools. The dynamics involved are not surprising. Teachers, often charismatic and popular ones, used their power and influence to groom students to become sexual partners. Most of the abusers were serial perpetrators, moving from student to student, until they were caught. One must assume that many were never caught. And since Lehner's study draws on evidence about Jesuit teachers and preachers, sexual assaults and abuse by Jesuit priests of women rarely appear here.

The source base opens a challenging problem for Lehner, since they lead him almost exclusively to examples of male-on-male sexual activity. The sources indicate that such activity took place in Jesuit colleges, among the students as well as between teachers and students. The Jesuit philosophy professor Adam Herler, accused in the 1650s of seducing his students, mostly young nobles, defended himself by stating »that his accusers were homosexuals and had sex with each other or masturbated, and were not seduced by him« (139). Not surprisingly the Jesuits were sensitive to the accusation that their colleges were hotbeds of homosexual activity and clearly Herler knew how to use that fear to his benefit. The extent to which the sexual abuse of male subordinates indicates some kind of homosexual identity is, of course, hard to judge through these sources.

As mentioned above, punishment for sexual assault or any kind of sexual activity with a man or boy could be draconian. Lehner extensively discusses the range of punishments that priests actually suffered. Some priests were imprisoned, or confined in monasteries or other church institutions. In the eighteenth century, one priest was imprisoned on bread and water for a long period of time. Yet at the same time, most accused abusers were not dismissed from the Society and some continued their careers successfully. Here again, the Church was reluctant to face the negative publicity that might come with the dismissal of priests. Some of the abusive priests did resign from the Society or leave the priesthood, but Lehner says this was rare.

Much of the book consists of detailed recounting of the stories of priests who sexually abused boys and young men. There are good reasons for this structure. As with contemporary revelations of sexual abuse by priests, there is an element of bearing witness for the victims, who almost never received justice in their lifetimes. Lehner has another purpose behind the relentless discussion



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of sexual crimes. He wants to make it clear that the sources are available to study sexual abuse in the Church. While he concedes that this was an area where there were many hidden crimes, he also demonstrates clearly that if historians want to learn about sexual abuse by the clergy, they can.

The availability of sources underpins the central historiographical argument of this study. Lehner points insistently to the failure of earlier generations of scholars to believe the stories about Jesuit abusers. It is perhaps not surprising that Jesuit scholars argued that most reports of sexual abuse in Jesuit colleges were the product of an anti-Jesuit sentiment in and outside the Church, particularly in the eighteenth century. In the case of Germany, the confessionalized character of the historical profession further served to limit discussion of sexual abuse in the Church. Catholic scholars did not want to discuss these issues and non-Catholic scholars would have found difficulties accessing the necessary archives. Lehner's point is well taken and historians should never hesitate to engage with uncomfortable and difficult topics. I would suggest that Lehner overstates his case when he takes contemporary scholars to task for neglecting the student of sexual abuse by the clergy in the past. As this study demonstrates, attitudes, methods, and perspectives have changed, although perhaps historians needed the push from current events to look more carefully into the past history of sexual abuse.

The title of Lehner's book opens up a key aspect of the story of sexual abuse in the Society of Jesus. It was the Jesuits themselves who put celibacy at the center of their claim to moral authority, in the Church and in the world. Jesuit celibacy was, as the title says, »staged«, made public, put on display. That dynamic meant that Jesuits who failed the test of celibacy could not be punished, could not be dismissed from the order, could not in fact be put into any sort of public space. The stage was set for the gruesome abuse of teenagers and boys, a grim story that continues to be told in our times.



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