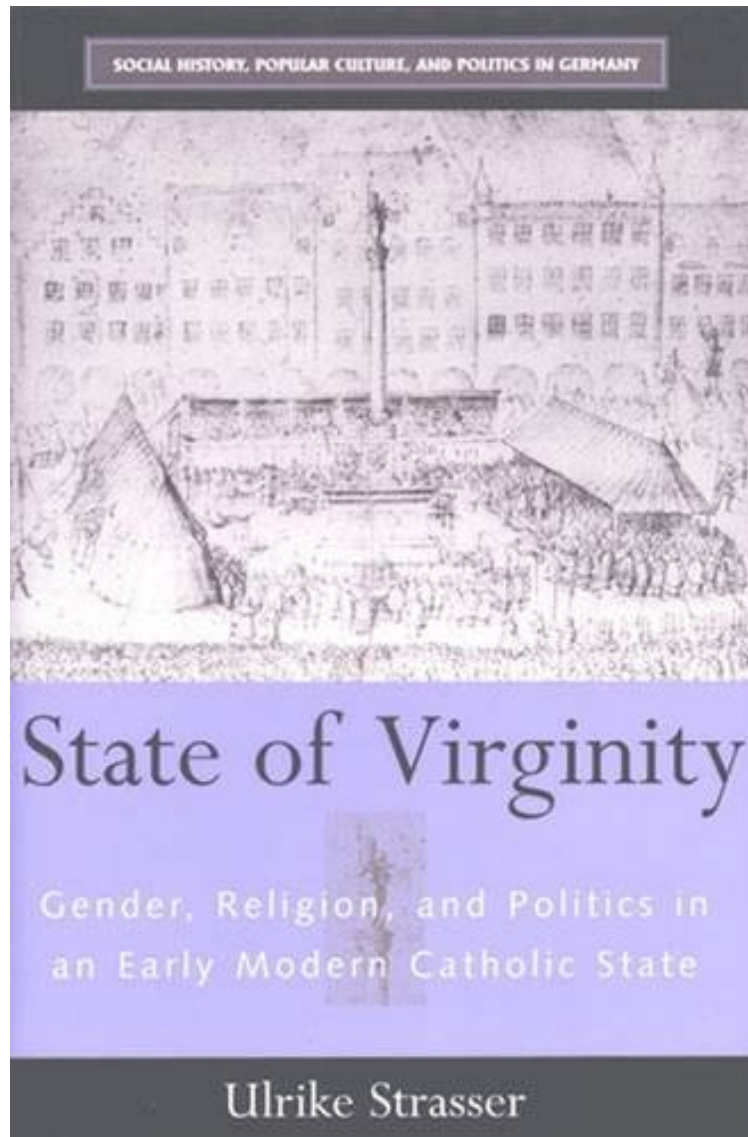


(Ebook pdf) State of Virginity: Gender, Religion, and Politics in an Early Modern Catholic State (Social History, Popular Culture, and Politics in Germany)

# State of Virginity: Gender, Religion, and Politics in an Early Modern Catholic State (Social History, Popular Culture, and Politics in Germany)

*Ulrike Strasser*

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**Ulrike Strasser : State of Virginity: Gender, Religion, and Politics in an Early Modern Catholic State (Social History, Popular Culture, and Politics in Germany)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised State of Virginity: Gender, Religion, and Politics in an Early Modern Catholic State

(Social History, Popular Culture, and Politics in Germany):

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. a nice look into medieval Germany By W Boudville Strasser delves into the complexity of the status of women in medieval Germany. The title is a cheeky pun. State refers both to the presence (or absence) of virginity, and to the German city states and provinces and their ideas on the roles of women. The text shows that these roles could often be encapsulated in how the male dominated societies regarded virginity in women. Unsurprisingly perhaps, the roles also reflect the class divisions of these societies. Strasser also relates this to the role of the Catholic Church in Bavaria in reinforcing the social mores. Readers familiar with more recent societies, like 19th century Britain, might see echoes of gender issues. Along the way, the book also has interesting tidbits or glimpses into these vanished societies that would otherwise be lost to dusty archives. While the tone of the book is scholarly, it is not closed off to non-specialists in history and feminism. Newcomers to these fields should be able to follow and enjoy the narrative.

In premodern Germany, both the emerging centralized government and the powerful Catholic Church redefined gender roles for their own ends. Ulrike Strasser's interdisciplinary study of Catholic state-building examines this history from the vantage point of the virginal female body. Focusing on Bavaria, Germany's first absolutist state, Strasser recounts how state authorities forced chastity upon lower-class women to demarcate legitimate forms of sexuality and maintain class hierarchies. At the same time, they cloistered groups of upper-class women to harness the spiritual authority associated with holy virgins to the political authority of the state. The state finally recruited upper-class virgins as teachers who could school girls in the gender-specific morals and type of citizenship favored by authorities. Challenging Weberian concepts that link modernization to Protestantism, Strasser's study illustrates the modernizing power of Catholicism through an examination of virginity's central role in politics, culture, and society. Weaving together the stories of marriage and convent, of lay as well as religious women, *State of Virginity* makes important contributions to the historical study of sexuality and the growing feminist literature on the state. It will be of particular interest to students and scholars of political and religious history, women's studies, and social history.