"I Am Happier, Healthier, and More Efficient!": A Germanic Queer* Typology of the 1860s

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Michel Foucault, in volume 1 of his *History of Sexuality*, positioned the homosexual as a new "species"—the product of a discursive shift mediated by psychiatry that had its "birth certificate" in a landmark psychiatric paper published by Carl Westphal in 1869.[1] While the specifics of Foucault's proposal have been called into question, the broader theme of the psychiatric and sexological colonization of the domain of sexuality in late nineteenth-century Europe has been and still is a fruitful line of enquiry. In the decades since, historians have mapped the complex interplay between the psychiatric labeling impulse and the emerging homosexual identity in Imperial Germany and Austro-Hungary.[2]

I am thankful to Rolf Thalmann for transcribing the letters and to Michael Lombardi-Nash for checking my translations. The use of an asterisk with the words "queer*" and "trans*" in this article denotes that the words are being used ahistorically to express concepts that had no contemporary terminological equivalent—"queer*" in particular is used here as an inclusive term for same-sex sexuality before, during, and after terminological innovation.

[1] Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, vol. 1, *An Introduction*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Vantage Books, 1990), 43, 108; Didier Eribon, *Insult and the Making of the Gay Self*, trans. Michael Lucy (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004), 279.

[2] For a general history of psychiatric engagement with the homosexual from the late nineteenth to the early twentieth century, see Philippe Weber, *Der Trieb zum Erzählen, Sexualpathologie und Homosexualität, 1852–1914* (Bielefeld: transcript, 2008). On sexual autobiography and the psychiatrist Richard von Krafft-Ebing in the 1880s and 1890s, see Klaus Müller, *Aber in meinem Herzen sprach eine Stimme so laut: Homosexuelle Autobiographien und medizinische Pathographien im neunzehnten Jahrhundert* (Berlin: Rosa Winkel, 1991); and Harry Oosterhuis, *Stepchildren of Nature: Krafft-Ebing, Psychiatry, and the Making of Sexual Identity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000). On the interplay between psychiatric definitions and criminal justice, see Jörg Hutter, *Die gesellschaftliche Kontrolle des homosexuellen Begehrens: Medizinische Definitionen und juristische Sanktionen im 19. Jahrhundert* (Frankfurt: Campus, 1992); and Florian Mildenberger, *. . . in der Richtung der Homosexualität verdorben: Psychiater, Kriminalpsychologen und Gerichtsmediziner über männliche Homosexualität 1850–1970* (Berlin: MannerschwarmSkript, 2002). For homosexual, lesbian, and trans* engagement with psychoanalysis and sexology, see Katie Sutton, *Sex between Body and Mind: Psychoanalysis and Sexology in the German-Speaking World,*

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However, in the decade before scientific colonization, an understanding of same-sex sexual orientation and life writing flourished without any psychiatric mediation. In the 1860s, before psychiatry took any interest, a new terminology was proposed by Karl Heinrich Ulrichs. Ulrichs (1825–95) was a lawyer from the Kingdom of Hanover who wrote and published twelve pamphlets between 1864 and 1879 calling for the human rights of men he called *Urning*s, his neologism for men who were sexually attracted to their own sex. He used *Dioning* for men attracted to the opposite sex.[3] His readers took the urning terminology on as a personal identity and wrote to Ulrichs. In many cases, Ulrichs republished their letters in full or fragmentary form. This was a case of same-sex-attracted men writing and theorizing for themselves and on their own terms. This unique decade in the German-speaking world offers the historian a window onto a period of substantial vocalized sexual subjectivity. Importantly, the men making these ontological declarations in letters to Ulrichs did not owe the parameters of their sexual identities to psychiatry, forensic science, sexology, or any other external scientific discourse. These men also described their life situations, their social circumstances, and their understandings of the social types that populated their worlds. Through an analysis of these sources from the 1860s, this article seeks to understand what same-sex-attracted social characters inhabited the fringes of Germanic society. The nine character types described in this article are intended to help readers and historians understand the social configuration of same-sex-attracted male society in 1860s Germany. Although more mutable and socially contingent, the social characters described here exist at a more tangible reflection of lived experience than Ulrichs's own sexual categories or the psychiatric categories of later decades. Some of the same granular material for a social typology can also be gleaned from the autobiographic case studies in Richard von Krafft-Ebing's work, and Klaus Müller used those case studies to create his own five-character typology.[4]

Prior to psychiatrists taking an interest in human sexuality, a new sexual identity was already in play in the 1860s. This decade offered the optimal conditions of possibility, a remarkably fertile ground for a modern understanding of sexual orientation. The next section outlines all the facets of Germanic society in the 1860s that made it possible for a modern sensibility about sex and sexuality to emerge.

1890s–1930s (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2019); and Ina Linge, *Queer Livability: German Sexual Sciences and Life Writing* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2023).

[3] The words *Urning*, *Dioning*, *Mannling*, and *Weibling* are always capitalized in German. However, I use these words frequently throughout the text as if they were English words (much as other historians of this period do), so they are lowercased to conform to English usage.

[4] Müller, *Aber in meinem Herzen*, 231–53.

THE 1860S: CONDITIONS OF POSSIBILITY IN GERMANIC EUROPE

When the decade started, the country we now know as Germany did not yet exist and was instead a scattered patchwork of thirty-seven kingdoms, principalities, duchies, bishoprics, and free cities dominated by the two regional powers, Prussia and Austria. Following the revolution of 1848, these states, with the exception of Austria, had been held together in a loose confederation under a diet in Frankfurt. Each state in the confederation retained its own legal system, and some of these systems had been modernized. In 1813 Paul Anton Ritter von Feuerbach proposed a new legal code for Bavaria that removed all proscription of consensual same-sex sexual acts.[5] Inspired by Bavaria's lead, other states began to reform their legal codes along similar lines, including Württemberg (1839), Brunswick (1840), Hanover (1840), and Thuringia (1852).[6] Austria had reformed its legal code but chose a more authoritarian approach by strengthening its statutes to target both male and female same-sex behavior.[7] This made Austria the only jurisdiction where lesbians were under legal duress. Prussia had reformed but retained its antisodomy law.[8] Lawyers and forensic examiners called the crime *Päderastie* (pederasty) in the German-speaking world, and in 1853 this designation had been clarified in the highest courts to refer only to anal intercourse.[9] The unreformed legal codes in the smaller states, free cities, and bishoprics continued to use the archaic *Constitutio Criminalis Carolina* of the Holy Roman Empire, which ostensibly called for the death penalty for pederasty or sodomy, though in practice during the 1860s custodial sentences were generally used.[10] Arrests and convictions were relatively rare at the start of this period but increased with improvements in policing and the expansion of categories for prosecution, which in turn fed into a public sense that these crimes

[5] Isabel V. Hull, *Sexuality, State, and Civil Society in Germany, 1700–1815* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996), 349–59.

[6] Hull, 357.

[7] In Paragraph 129 of the *Strafgesetzbuch*, same-sex sexual activity was punished with imprisonment: "The following types of fornication are also punished as crimes: I. Fornication against nature, that is (*a*) with animals; (*b*) with persons of the same sex" (*Allgemeines Reichs-Gesetz- und Regierungsblatt für das Kaiserthum Österreich 1852*, my translation).

[8] Paragraph 143 of Prussia's *Allgemeine Landrecht* of 1794, revised in 1851, punished "unnatural fornication, whether between persons of the male sex or of humans with beasts," with between six months and four years' imprisonment. See Hull, *Sexuality*, 340–41.

[9] Jean-Claude Feray, Manfred Herzer, and Glen W. Peppel, "Homosexual Studies and Politics in the 19th Century," *Journal of Homosexuality* 19, no. 1 (1990): 33.

[10] For example, Ulrichs's friend Fritz Feldtmann received a one-year custodial sentence for a consensual sexual act in 1867 in Brunswick, a city-state that retained the *Constitutio Criminalis Carolina*. See Dieter Fricke, "Der Theater-Direktor Friedrich Feldmann und die mann-männliche Liebe: Ein Bremer Sittenskandal aus dem Jahr 1867," *Arbeiterbewegung und Sozialgeschichte: Zeitschrift für die Regionalgeschichte Bremens im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert* 21–22 (2008): 104; Douglas Pretsell, *Urning: Queer Identity in the German Nineteenth Century* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2024), 55.

were on the increase.[11] The fact remained that at the start of the 1860s and for most of the decade up to 1870, 'one's legal jeopardy for same-sex sexual acts depended on where one lived in the German-speaking world.

Society in the German states was in several regards quite distinct from that of its immediate European neighbors. While most of Western Europe spent the nineteenth century industrializing and urbanizing, the German states mostly did not.[12] Though Berlin and Vienna were substantial cities, the overwhelming majority of Germans lived rurally or in small towns. Although some steps toward industrialization had taken place in some regions, large-scale nation-building, urbanization, and industrialization did not proceed until the 1870s. Instead, in the early nineteenth century, while the rest of Europe was transforming into modern industrialized states, the German states invested in education and the foundation of multiple modern research universities.[13] The large increase in academic research institutions led in turn to an intellectual revolution as German academics began rejuvenating and transforming their fields of study. These developments were most marked in the medical sciences, and by the middle of the century, even the study of human sexuality would be addressed. In 1852 the Berlin forensic examiner, Johan Ludwig Casper, postulated that perverse sexuality was an innate property of some individuals.[14] By the mid-1860s, Wilhelm Griesinger and his deputy Karl Friedrich Otto Westphal would found the world's first brain-based psychiatric research laboratory at the Charité Hospital in Berlin.[15] It was in that clinical laboratory in 1869, as the decade drew to a close, that Westphal published the first psychiatric case studies of what he called *conträre Sexualempfindung* (contrary sexual feeling).[16] This is the paper that Foucault later miscredited as the "birth

[11] Silvania Galassi, *Kriminologie im Deutschen Kaiserreich: Geschichte einer gebrochenen Verwissenschaftlichung* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2004), 94.

[12] In 1862 only 4 percent of Germans in the confederation lived in towns with more than one hundred thousand inhabitants. A further 3.5 percent lived in towns with between twenty-five thousand and one hundred thousand residents. Ninety-two percent of Germans lived in small towns of fewer than twenty-five thousand people. See G. Fr. Kolb, *Grundriss der Statistik der Völkerzustands- und Staatenkunde* (Leipzig: Förstnersche Buchhandlung, 1862), 47–48.

[13] Johannes Conrad, *Das Universitätsstudium in Deutschland während der letzten 50 Jahre* (Jena: Gustav Fischer, 1884), 181.

[14] Casper published a series of "pederast" case studies in 1852 in which he speculated that some pederasts might have an innate disposition. A doctor living in exile sent a letter autobiography that deeply impressed Casper, who published the letter in full and declared that he now believed that most had an innate disposition. The text for this letter and Casper's observation are found in Johann Ludwig Casper, *Klinische Novellen zur gerichtlichen Medicin: Nach eigenen Erfahrungen* (Berlin: Hirschwald, 1863), 36–39.

[15] Edward Shorter, *A History of Psychiatry: From the Era of the Asylum to the Age of Prozac* (New York: Wiley, 1997), 74.

[16] Carl Friedrich Otto Westphal, "Die conträre Sexualempfindung: Symptom eines neuropathischen (psychopathischen) Zustandes," *Archiv für Psychiatrie und Nervenkrankheiten* 2 (1869): 73–108.

certificate" of homosexuality.[17] In the decades that followed, the emerging discourse of perverse sexuality was shaped both by scientific theorization and by autobiographical confessions.[18] However, direct reciprocal engagement between same-sex-attracted men and the psychiatric profession would not be a feature until after 1886, when Krafft-Ebing's *Psychopathia Sexualis* was published.[19] While Ulrichs had lobbied medical authorities by sending them his pamphlets, in the 1860s there was no evidence of any reciprocal engagement between same-sex-attracted men and psychiatry.[20] This means that the ontological turn in same-sex sexual orientation that emerged in that decade was largely unmediated by science.

The expansion of tertiary education meant that middle-class German men were the best educated in Europe and had become a new vocal class, the *Bildungsbürgertum* (educated bourgeoisie), which was intent on lifelong learning in pursuit of a psychologically balanced or whole inner *Bildung*.[21] The era was characterized by educated men intent on cultivating their inner selves. They established formal societies even in small towns to discuss literature, science, and the political issues of the day.[22] In 1860 Ulrichs was in Frankfurt and an active member of the Freies Deutsches Hochstift (Free German Academy), where he heard lectures by and discussed ideas with some of the leading scientific scholars of his day.

In the 1860s the liberal masculine self in the German-speaking world differed markedly from the formulations of masculinity found in more urbanized and industrialized states.[23] In an examination of etiquette books, diaries, and autobiographical accounts, Maria Kessel managed to tease out the different stages of evolution in masculinity over the German nineteenth century. She points to the 1860s as a decade of transition between older models of masculinity and newer bourgeois models; standards of masculinity in the preindustrial German states of the 1860s drew on older notions of the "whole man" and militaristic gentry libertine masculinities, both of

[17] Foucault, *History of Sexuality*, 1:43.

[18] Müller, *Aber in meinem Herzen*, 155–77.

[19] Müller, 25; Oosterhuis, *Stepchildren*, 152.

[20] Ulrichs's pamphleteering strategy may have been a pivotal motivator for Westphal to write his paper, since the paper includes a very extensive passage quoted from one of Ulrichs's pamphlets. See Westphal, "Die conträre Sexualempfindung," 92–94.

[21] In modern German the word *Bildung* means education and acquired knowledge, but in this nineteenth-century usage it was closer to the modern word *Herzenbilden* and implied an inner life, an inborn drive to balance, wholeness, and perfection that the individual had to cultivate over their lifetime. For a discussion of this crucial element of nineteenth-century Germanism and its roots in Pietism, see Peter Watson, *The German Genius: Europe's Third Renaissance, the Scientific Revolution and the Twentieth Century* (2010; New York: Harper Perennial, 2011), 45–49.

[22] Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, trans. Thomas Burger (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991), 72–73.

[23] Charles Upchurch, "Liberal Exclusions and Sex between Men in the Modern Era: Speculations on a Framework," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 19, no. 3 (2010): 426.

which coexisted with newer bourgeois models that had a clearer demarcation between the gender roles of the sexes.[24] The consequence was that no model of masculinity was hegemonic in this decade, and there was room for alternative models to emerge within the margins of multiple competing masculinities.[25] Boundaries between public and private were still porous, the age of marriage was late, and the liberal-nationalist political class favored a more egalitarian balance between the sexes.[26] Male femininity and close platonic friendship between men were not necessarily considered unacceptable.[27] All of this meant that German male society, uniquely for the period, was potentially less hostile to or less threatened by new ideas that stretched the definitions and categories of sexuality and gender.

While Germany in the 1860s offered substantial opportunities for educated men, women were excluded from every single facet of public life. It is likely that, as a result, activist-minded lesbians, who faced no legal consequences for their sexual choices in most states apart from Austria, subsumed their sexual rights in a wider feminist campaign against their exclusion as women. It is probably for this reason that although Ulrichs wrote about female same-sex sexuality, no parallel lesbian campaign emerged in the 1860s. Ulrichs did appeal for but apparently did not receive any letters from same-sex-attracted women. Later, in the 1880s and 1890s, when Krafft-Ebing published autobiographical case studies supplied by men and women, it is notable that while almost all of the men used Ulrichs's nomenclature, none of the women did.[28]

The unsatisfactory outcome of the 1848 revolution meant that most people expected some political or military crisis to propel the German states into ever closer union. Those of a more progressive persuasion preferred a *großdeutsch* outcome to this crisis with a large democratic federation, including Austria, while others favored a more autocratic *kleindeutsch* outcome with a smaller state dominated by Prussia. When the crisis came, with the Seven Weeks' War in 1866, it was Prussia that prevailed, consolidating its autocratic rule over all Northern Germany. By the end of the decade, Prussian rule and its antipederasty law, now renamed Paragraph 175, were extended to cover the southern German states.[29] In the years prior to

[24] Martina Kessel, "The 'Whole Man': The Longing for a Masculine World in Nineteenth-Century Germany," *Gender & History* 15, no. 1 (2003): 3, 4, 23.

[25] Kessel, 14.

[26] Brian Vick, "Liberalism, Nationalism, and Gender Dichotomy in Mid-Nineteenth-Century Germany: The Contested Case of German Civil Law," *Journal of Modern History* 82 (2010): 582.

[27] Robert Deam Tobin, *Warm Brothers: Queer Theory and the Age of Goethe* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), 23.

[28] Douglas Pretsell, *Queer Voices in the Works of Richard von Krafft-Ebing, 1883–1901* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2023), 20.

[29] Hubert Kennedy, *Karl Heinrich Ulrichs: Pioneer of the Modern Gay Movement*, 2nd ed. (Concord, CA: Peremptory Books, 2005), 191.

the above events, the expected galvanic geopolitical realignment and the nation building that would inevitably follow were seen as an opportunity to make utopian progressive plans. In the dreams of more reform-oriented individuals, the ideal new German state could be a modern beacon of progress at the heart of Europe. The early 1860s saw the emergence of activists and activism: the decade would see the foundation of the Social Democratic Party (Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands) in 1863; the first trade union, the General German Cigar Workers Society (Allgemeine Deutsche Cigarrenarbeiter-Verein), established in Leipzig in 1865; and the first national grassroots feminist organization, the General German Women's Association (Allgemeine Deutsche Frauenverein), founded at a women-only conference in Leipzig in 1865. It was also the decade that saw the first polemical attempts to challenge judicial and societal proscription of same-sex sexuality. The next section describes the activists who wrote these polemical works and what they achieved in the 1860s.

A Decade of Sexual Activism

In 1864 Karl Heinrich Ulrichs published his first two pamphlets, *Vindex* and *Inclusa*, in which he proposed his urning/dioning terminology. Ulrichs dealt with the question of the nature of the urning throughout his works and explained it as an innate, constitutional disposition.[30] He backed his new terminology with a scientific explanation drawn from embryological, comparative anatomical and teratological literature that had been supplied by an unnamed medicoscientific advisor.[31] Ulrichs's theories rooted the urning in nature as a third sex individual with the body of a man but the love drive, or soul, of a woman. This concept of the transposition of a female soul into a man's body was not an entirely new idea when Ulrichs articulated it. More than twenty years before, in 1841, the Swiss folk poet Jakob Stutz (1801–77) wrote a poem addressed to God in his diary, closing with the line: "But it is incomprehensible to me how you put a woman's soul into a man's body and how he must be excluded from the most beautiful pleasures of this life as a result."[32] In this conception, the urning was a biological anomaly and not a moral failing.[33] Ulrichs later encapsulated the feminine nature of the urning in a Latin aphorism: "anima muliebris virili corpore inclusa" (a female psyche confined in a

[30] Müller, *Aber in meinem Herzen*, 63.

[31] Ross Brooks, "Transforming Sexuality: The Medical Sources of Karl Heinrich Ulrichs (1825–95) and the Origins of the Theory of Bisexuality," *Journal of the History of Medicine* 67, no. 2 (April 2012): 183–84.

[32] Entry for 8 September 1841; Jakob Stutz, *Sieben mal sieben Jahre aus meinem Leben: Als Beitrag zu näherer Kenntnis des Volkes* (Zürich: Pfäffikon, 1853), 35, my translation. I am grateful to Rolf Thalmann for this insight in an email of 25 April 2024.

[33] Edward Ross Dickinson, *Sex, Freedom, and Power in Imperial Germany, 1880–1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 153.

male body).[34] This will be referred to as the "anima thesis" for the rest of the article.[35] Several of Ulrichs's correspondents disputed the universality of effeminacy among urnings, and so in his fourth pamphlet, *Formatrix*, he articulated the gendered presentation of urnings as a continuum from the deeply effeminate *Weibling* through the "intermediate urning" to the masculine *Mannling*.[36]

One of Ulrichs's earliest correspondents was the Austro-Hungarian journalist Karl Maria Kertbeny (1824–82). Kertbeny was initially a close supporter of Ulrichs but was less enamored with the way Ulrichs had described the urning identity. He wrote to Ulrichs in 1868 with his concerns.[37] Kertbeny had a more fluid approach to sexuality: he contested the notion of a fixed identity and instead believed that it was "a more masculine argument of total free will" to see sexual orientation purely as a matter of taste.[38] Kertbeny believed it was more profitable to fight for a universal right for every single man to choose a consensual sexual partner, irrespective of sex or sexual act, without the state interfering. Although he proposed "homosexual" as an alternative neologism in a letter to Ulrichs, he later wrote that he was a "principled opponent of all symptomatological categorizations, which are too reminiscent of the witch trials."[39] Ultimately, in the 1860s it was Ulrichs's and not Kertbeny's terminologies and ideas that prevailed. The weakness of liberalism as a political ideology in Germany in the 1860s might explain why Ulrichs relied on a natural or biological explanation and also why his ideas were better received, though Kertbeny's perspective was shared by at least some urban masculine same-sex-attracted men.

For the same-sex-attracted men who encountered them, Ulrichs's writings on sexuality and the urning identity could have had a transformational effect. In 1885 Krafft-Ebing published a letter he had received from a middle-aged same-sex-attracted man. Krafft-Ebing's correspondent was looking back to the time in his life in the 1860s when he first came to terms with his own sexual being:

[34] This Latin expression first appeared as one of several subtitles on the cover page of Ulrichs's seventh pamphlet, *Memnon*.

[35] This is also the shorthand term Klaus Müller used in German (*Aber in meinem Herzen*, 129).

[36] Karl Heinrich Ulrichs, *Formatrix* (Leipzig: H. Matthes 1865), § 116, 60, translation from Karl Heinrich Ulrichs, *The Riddle of "Man-Manly" Love*, trans. Michael Lombardi-Nash (Buffalo, NY: Prometheus Books, 1994), 1:175.

[37] Karl Maria Kertbeny to Karl Heinrich Ulrichs, 5 May 1868, draft, in *The Correspondence of Karl Heinrich Ulrichs, 1846–1894*, by Douglas Pretsell (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020), 199–205.

[38] Pretsell, 204.

[39] Gustav Jäger [Karl Maria Kertbeny], "Ein bisher ungedrucktes Kapitel über Homosexualität aus der 'Entdeckung der Seele,'" *Jahrbuch für sexuelle Zwischenstufen* 2 (1900): 118, my translation.

> It was only when I was about thirty years old that I came across the writings of Numa [Ulrichs] and I cannot describe what a relief it was for me to learn that there were many other men who were just as sexually inclined as I was and that what I felt sexually was not an aberration but a special sexual disposition inherent in me by nature. For the first time I experienced the pleasure of finding sexual satisfaction through direct contact with a man's body. I no longer tried in vain to fight against a deeply implanted disposition, and since I let my urning nature run free, I am happier, healthier, and more efficient![40]

This man located his self-actualization at a moment when he became aware that there were others who shared his sexual tastes and that these tastes were natural and nothing to be ashamed of. He positioned his sexual enlightenment as a direct consequence of reading Ulrichs's pamphlets. This urning correspondent is just one of a great number of men who read Ulrichs's works and started calling themselves urnings in the closing decades of the nineteenth century.

Ulrichs's pamphlets generated an unprecedented response, with readers writing to him from all corners of the German-speaking world. Ulrichs published many of the letters he received, and these letters, fragments of letters, and Ulrichs's paraphrasing and reporting of news he had received in other letters give the reader a unique perspective into the lived experience of urning life in the 1860s. The same-sex-attracted men who read his books and responded to his ideas were real men with personalities, class profiles, careers, relationships, and sociopolitical outlooks. Ulrichs quoted liberally from the correspondence of his readers and included news sections in his books that drew on reports of criminal trials, blackmail attempts, and other events sent to him by his readers. This article draws on these urning letters and portraits of urning life by Ulrichs and other writers with firsthand accounts of urning life to chart a typology of significant characters in the urning world. This typology can be used as a guide to illustrate the characters populating urning and wider queer* society in the 1860s, before psychiatric intervention.

The Archive of Sources

Ulrichs's pamphlets contain 154 letter quotations, of which 82 were from sixty-six urnings. Letters were classified as from urnings only when Ulrichs introduced them as such or when the content unequivocally identified the author as an urning. The other seventy-two letters came from sixty-three dionings. The contents of the urning letters were, in many cases, presented as short passages or fragments devoid of their original epistolary context. Ulrichs presented a handful of letters in what may have been near

[40] Richard von Krafft-Ebing, "Die conträre Sexualempfindung vor dem Forum," *Jahrbücher für Psychiatrie* 6 (1885): 46, my translation.

to complete form; he introduced the first letter by saying that the author had given Ulrichs explicit permission to publish. Although several of the urning letters were anonymous, some of his readers did not disguise their identity. Since Ulrichs received more letters than he reproduced, he was clearly using certain criteria in selecting some of them for publication. In most cases, he used the letters he included in his pamphlets as examples to demonstrate certain elements of his theories or to illustrate his news sections. The writer of the first letter quoted gave explicit permission for publication; readers who later wrote to Ulrichs may then have known that he might publish their letters. In a similar way to the life writing that was later a feature of the reciprocal engagement with psychiatry, some of these letters functioned as a kind of confession, in which each potentially relevant feature of the correspondent's sexual/social history was proffered to Ulrichs for approval.[41] Ulrichs identified only a few of his correspondents in his pamphlets as mannlings, so it is probable that he received comparatively few letters from this section of urning society. It is also possible that a proportion of mannlings felt no need to write to Ulrichs, as they found it relatively easy to conform to social expectations. There was even the possibility that Ulrichs considered the letters unworthy of publication. As we shall see in the ambivalent libertine section below, this constituency did not warm to Ulrichs's theory.

Ulrichs usually did not reveal the identities of his urning correspondents when he published the letters; instead, he sometimes included, when available, the age and location of the writer, as well as the date of the letter. Of the thirteen letters for which Ulrichs stated the age of the correspondent, eight were in their twenties, three were in their thirties, one was forty, and only one was older "middle-aged." Fifty-nine letters indicated the location of the writer, with most sent from individuals living in the German and Austrian states: there was a strong representation from large population centers of Berlin (seven letters) and Vienna (six). In the 1860s only Berlin and Vienna were large enough to be considered proper cities, and no other German city or town was larger than two hundred thousand. Most of Ulrichs's correspondents came from these smaller cities or towns, including Frankfurt (two), Baden (one), Dresden (one), Leipzig (two), Hanover (two), Bremen (two), Würzburg (two), Munich (one), and Potsdam (1); regions such as Mittelrhein (two), Kurhessen (one), Central Germany (one), Northern Germany (two), Bavaria (one), and Saxony (one); and then rural locations by the Main River (one) and Oder River (two). From outside Germany or Austria, there were letters from London (six), Paris (three), Moscow (three), St. Petersburg (three), Switzerland (three), Bohemia (one), Hungary (one), and the Adriatic Coast (one). Ulrichs quoted some correspondents on more than one occasion from letters sent on different dates, suggesting a reciprocal correspondence that persisted

[41] Linge, *Queer Livability*, 31–32.

over time. Other correspondence also indicated that the writer was responding to a letter from Ulrichs. Once he was in exile in Bavaria and then in Württemberg in the 1870s, Ulrichs did socialize with other urnings, but there was no indication that Ulrichs met any of these individuals in person in the 1860s. The relationships he had with them were mostly epistolary. The letters that Ulrichs published are the primary archive used in this article. The majority of these were sent to Ulrichs in the 1860s prior to the emergence of a categorizing psychiatric discourse on same-sex sexuality.

The article also uses a number of corroborating first-person items of life writing by same-sex-attracted or gender-nonconforming individuals where appropriate. These items include a number of surviving letters from named individuals such as Kertbeny and the writer Carl Robert Egells, a pamphlet by H. Marx published in 1875, and the observations on the Berlin scene in the 1860s written by Hugo Friedlander.

A QUEER* CHARACTER TYPOLOGY OF THE 1860S

By analyzing all the aggregated materials, it is possible to discern nine character types that populated the fringes of 1860s society in the German states: the ordinary urning, the discreet professional, the isolated urning, the married man, the consummate weibling, the cross-dresser, the ambivalent libertine, the soldier, and the blackmailer. As a rubric to understand and navigate the world of urnings and other same-sex-attracted individuals in the 1860s, these characters have some utility. The typology also serves a descriptive purpose in populating queer* society in the years before psychiatric intervention.

The article subdivides this list into four sections. The first four types comprise the individuals who responded to Ulrichs's call and were most committed to the urning identity. These were the men who called themselves urnings. The consummate weibling was indistinct when Ulrichs started writing but was beginning to take shape in the years that followed. Cross-dressers and ambivalent libertines were urban individuals who had found their own identities prior to and independent of the urning and did not necessarily warm to Ulrichs's ideas. Finally, the last two groups, soldiers and blackmailers, are distally related to the former categories of urning as persons who either transacted sex with or preyed on same-sex-attracted men as a source of income.

THE URNING FOLLOWERS

During the 1860s, Ulrichs's concept of identity, articulated in print, became manifested in a new personage in German society.[42] Ulrichs wrote of

[42] Manfred Herzer, "Zastrow-Ulrichs-Kertbeny: Erfundene Identitäten im 19. Jahrhundert," in *Männerliebe im alten Deutschland: Sozialgeschichtliche Studien*, ed. Rüdiger Lautmann and Angela Taeger (Berlin: Rosa Winkel, 1992), 78.

the "great amount of satisfaction" he found "in intellectual discourse with a wide group of respectful friends of my kind, who, since 1864 and the publication of my first books, have joined me in a small circle and whose number increases almost week by week."[43] He added that there was hardly a professional or social class that was not represented in this circle and that they were widely distributed throughout Germany as well as in other parts of mainland Europe.

Ulrichs wrote in his third book, "My bookseller has sent me several letters, some of them signed, expressing their approval of both publications. Some were from urnings, some from Dionings from Germany and abroad."[44] Ulrichs's readers could respond quickly to his publications because railway expansion had dramatically affected the speed and efficiency of the postal service.[45] Large-scale industrialization and urban growth came late to Germany, but the German states had started expanding the railway network in the 1830s. By 1850 there were already six thousand miles of track connecting all the main German towns and cities.[46] Each correspondent would have first established contact by writing to Ulrichs's publisher, H. Matthes, who would then forward the letters to Ulrichs.

Ulrichs was so pleasantly surprised to receive letters from his readers that he referred to them, quoted them, and used them to illustrate his points in subsequent books. He also paraphrased community intelligence he had received from other correspondents and wrote of court cases, blackmail, and his own observations on the social and sexual tastes of his readers. Ulrichs's correspondence was probably far more extensive than the letters he used in his works. In 1867 he was arrested for political agitation, and the authorities confiscated material from his apartment, including a quantity of correspondence. Ulrichs noted then that the letters from Berlin alone had come from around 150 individuals.[47] Given this, it would be reasonable to assume that in 1864 and 1865 he received correspondence from at least several hundred individuals from all regions of the German states. The authorities confiscated all the letters Ulrichs received before his arrest and never returned them. He petitioned the government for the next two decades to recover his papers but never received a reply. However, each petition generated internal communications in the relevant ministry, and some of these make clear that the letters were retained for

[43] Karl Heinrich Ulrichs, *Prometheus* (Leipzig: A. Serbe's Verlag, 1870), § 64b, 71, translation from Ulrichs, *The Riddle*, 2:592.

[44] Karl Heinrich Ulrichs, *Vindicta* (Leipzig: H. Matthes, 1865), xxii, translation from Ulrichs, *The Riddle*, 2:107.

[45] Jürgen Osterhammel, *The Transformation of the World: A Global History of the Nineteenth Century*, trans. Patrick Camiller (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2014), 74.

[46] Watson, *German Genius*, 370.

[47] Karl Heinrich Ulrichs, *Argonauticus* (Leipzig: A. Serbe's Verlag, 1869), § 5, 12, translation from Ulrichs, *The Riddle*, 1:477.

intelligence purposes.[48] The letters he received in the years following his arrest have also not survived. He might have disposed of some himself when he walked over the Brenner Pass into Italian exile in 1880; the remainder were probably destroyed in a fire at his apartment in Aquila on 27 April 1893.[49] The quoted letters that appeared from the third book, *Vindicta*, onward are all that remains of that correspondence. The content of all the letters from 1864 to 1870 reveal four types of men who were happy to call themselves urnings.

The Ordinary Urning

The defining feature of the ordinary urning is less his character than his uncomplicated response to Ulrichs's books. He was the reader most likely to embrace the urning identity and was more likely to live outside the major cities. He was probably an unmarried, relatively young man who did not have a high-profile position that could introduce greater risk through exposure. There were ordinary urnings with a variety of gender presentations, but he was more likely to be an intermediate urning in the midpoint between weibling and mannling. Ulrichs did not describe them as such, but ordinary urnings were the group he was probably closest to.

The very first letter Ulrichs quoted from in his pamphlets at very great length was an anonymous letter from an urning sent on 23 May 1864.[50] The urning reported an early crush on a schoolmate, a failed attempt to court a woman, and then several fleeting affairs with younger dionings. He was familiar with the urban risk of blackmailers but was probably not a participant in an identifiable urban subculture. Like several of Ulrichs's correspondents, this man was not overtly feminine or masculine, was unmarried, and had managed to negotiate discreet sexual and romantic affairs. This man was the first "ordinary urning" to write to Ulrichs, and he is the epitome of an Everyman character defined principally by his positive response to Ulrichs's message.

More than any of the other types, ordinary urnings were the individuals most likely to support Ulrichs's activism or, in one or two cases, participate in their own campaigns. When Ulrichs petitioned the Commission for the Deliberation of the Outline of a Penal Code Book for the North German Confederation, he was joined by others.[51] One letter signed "Einer für

[48] Privy Counsellor Wagener to Lord Camphausen, Vice President of the State Ministry, 14 April 1874, fols. 67–69, HA Geh. Rat., Rep. 90A, no. 3773, Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz I, Berlin.

[49] Kennedy, *Ulrichs*, 231.

[50] Anonymous urning to Ulrichs, 23 May 1864, in Ulrichs, *Vindicta*, §§ 32–41, 14–18, translation from Ulrichs, *The Riddle*, 1:117–19.

[51] Petition from Ulrichs to the Commission for the Deliberation of the Outline of a Penal Code Book for the North German Confederation, 30 September 1868, 42–43, R 1401/625, Bundesarchiv des Deutschen Reiches, Berlin, my translation.

Viele" (One for Many) was sent on 28 September 1869 from Leipzig.[52] Another undated, almost literary work entitled "Blätter aus dem Tagebuch eines Unglücklichen" (Pages from the diary of an unfortunate man) was sent in two versions by Paul Freimuth (almost certainly a pseudonym).[53] Others supplied small amounts of cash to support Ulrichs in his writing.

While the ordinary urnings were the most committed to urning campaigning, there was also a wider group of individuals who had embraced the urning identity but whose various life situations made them less able to commit to overt support.

The Discreet Professional

When Ulrichs presented a protest motion at the Congress of German Jurists at the Odeon Theater in Munich on 29 August 1867, one of the lawyers approached him: "Then I made the unexpected discovery that there was actually an urning among the members whom I had addressed. He is an official at the royal Bavarian Court. (There are countless urnings with official positions in all branches of government in Austria, Prussia, etc., this is only natural.)"[54] A subset of Ulrichs's close followers comprised discreet professionals who were older and in positions of importance. No less supportive of Ulrichs's cause, their contribution to the effort was necessarily of a different kind. Ulrichs wrote that he had several correspondents who were important men: "Prussian and Bavarian judges in active service to the state . . . businesspeople, factory owners . . . and the aristocracy."[55] Ulrichs did not identify the letters from discreet professionals by mentioning the authors' professions even if he quoted from their letters. Senior professionals had a lot more to lose than ordinary urnings and consequently had to take far greater precautions. They were major targets for blackmailers, and if they were unlucky enough to face arrest, it could turn into a career-destroying media sensation.

In 1867 the Prussians arrested Ulrichs and imprisoned him at Minden for agitating in the Hanoverian cause. At that time, the authorities confiscated and never returned to him his correspondence, including lists of names he may have been compiling for an urning association. The Prussians used the lists for their own purposes and noted that "these extend over the widest circles and in some cases have resulted in further steps being

[52] "Einer für Viele," petition to the Commission for the Deliberation of the Outline of a Penal Code Book for the North German Confederation sent on 28 September 1869 from Leipzig, 45–47, R 1401/637, Bundesarchiv des Deutschen Reiches, Berlin.

[53] Paul Freimuth, "Blätter aus dem Tagebuch eines Unglücklichen" [Pages from the diary of an unfortunate man], petition to the Commission for the Deliberation of the Outline of a Penal Code Book for the North German Confederation, 125–64, 169–208, R 1401/625, Bundesarchiv des Deutschen Reiches, Berlin.

[54] Karl Heinrich Ulrichs, *Gladius Furens* (Kassel: G. Württenberger, 1868), 11, translation from Ulrichs, *The Riddle*, 1:268.

[55] Ulrichs, *Prometheus*, § 64b, 71–72, translation from Ulrichs, *The Riddle*, 2:592–93.

taken against persons."[56] They also had a special liking for the more senior government names in the lists, because the threat of exposure could be used for political leverage. Bismarck himself had reviewed Ulrichs's lists and had found the names of several prominent members of the opposition Welf party (an opposition conservative and federalist Hanoverian political party) who could be blackmailed into supporting the government.[57] Some of the senior professionals were able to do a lot of good for the world of urnings, but their need to be discreet meant that sometimes it was too dangerous to associate with Ulrichs and his followers. Nevertheless, some did continue to do so, even after Ulrichs's arrest.

Several named medical doctors corresponded with Ulrichs, though their interests were primarily scientific. One of these, the young psychiatrist Dr. Julius Hoffman, who had worked for a while in Jacksonville, Illinois, and whom Ulrichs got to know in Würzburg, may or may not have been an urning. Ulrichs included Hoffman's name in a handwritten list of otherwise pseudonymous urnings as potential subscribers for a magazine he had planned to title *Uranus*. Ulrichs had planned this magazine for some time and even wrote the very first issue. In the end, there were too few committed subscribers to make the magazine economically viable for the publisher, so the first and only issue was published in 1870 as the pamphlet *Prometheus*. This list also included a "Dr. in the East" and "Governmental Counsellor Callistratus."[58] There were likewise several named lawyers among Ulrichs's correspondents, and since he was much more networked into legal circles, there would probably have been some unnamed lawyers who were also urnings.

The Isolated Urning

Those who were isolated were perhaps the individuals most in need of Ulrichs's urning writings. These were men of all ages who opted to stay chaste and unmarried and who suppressed their inner lives out of fear of humiliation or prosecution. This was, of course, not a lived experience unique to the 1860s. These men lived in an age when most men married late, and those who did not have family pressure could remain unmarried without too many problems. Although they predominated in regions outside the main cities, it is probable that some lived in more urbanized environments too. These isolated men were not able to mix with other urnings and may not have known of other possibilities until they read Ulrichs's books.

[56] Wagener to Lord Camphausen, fols. 42–43, my translation.

[57] Bernhard Ernst von Bülow, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, to Lord Camphausen, Vice President of State Ministry, 17 June 1874, fol. 47, HA Geh. Rat., Rep. 90A, no. 3773, Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz, I, Berlin.

[58] Volkmar Sigusch, "Unbekanntes aus dem Nachlaß von Karl Heinrich Ulrichs," *Zeitschrift für Sexualforschung* 12, no. 3 (1999): 276.

Ulrichs's works were incredibly important for the isolated urnings who did not know another urning or had never had sexual contact with a man. For them, the books offered a tantalizing vision of possibilities and served an educative purpose. For these urnings, the world revealed to them through Ulrichs's writings may have allowed them to flourish and see new possibilities. They were the group that benefited most from and experienced Ulrichs's pamphlets as powerful transformative documents. For that reason, they wrote letters of deep appreciation to Ulrichs commending his campaign as lifesaving. A thirty-two-year-old Hungarian of German origin who had never come into contact with any other urnings wrote to Ulrichs from Ödenburg County in the Kingdom of Hungary in March 1868: "Your writings have returned my peace of mind to me."[59] An upper-class Czech who was twenty-six years old wrote to Ulrichs over many years and confessed on 29 November 1867: "What a consolation it is to me, my dear, loyal friend, to be able to talk to you, my sole confidant, about my secrets."[60] Ulrichs's advocacy greatly helped these men, and it is probable that when the time was right, some of them may have thrown off their isolation and found a way to express their urning natures as part of wider urning society.

The Married Man

Some urning men came under concerted social and familial pressure to marry. A few of these men were what Ulrichs called *Uranodionings* (bisexuals) who could reconcile their sexuality with marriage. However, there were also urnings who had succumbed to overwhelming familial pressure and had married despite having no sexual inclination for women. Ulrichs noted that "many unfortunate urnings of our century . . . living in isolation, are pressured into marriage with a woman by persuasion and by so-called 'standards.' (There are hundreds of such marriages in Germany!)"[61] Sometimes the pressure came from family, but not always. Some married urnings did find ways to maintain sexual relations with their wives. An anonymous urning who was probably in the Austrian military wrote from Leipzig on 3 January 1865 that his wife was "the complete ideal of human worth" and that the "deepest spiritual sympathy and respect attracted me to her."[62] Nevertheless, he had struggled to find her sexually attractive and had to fantasize about male images to achieve coitus.

[59] Hungarian of German origin to Ulrichs, 24 March 1868, in *Memnon, Abtheilung II*, by Karl Heinrich Ulrichs (Schleiz: C. Hübscher'sche Buchhandlung, 1868), § 102, 86, translation from Ulrichs, *The Riddle*, 2:399.

[60] Upper-class Czech to Ulrichs, 29 November 1867, in Ulrichs, *Memnon II*, § 105, 89, translation from Ulrichs, *The Riddle*, 2:402.

[61] Karl Heinrich Ulrichs, *Memnon, Abtheilung I* (Schleiz: C. Hübscher'sche Buchhandlung, 1868), § 38, 24, 24n24, translation from Ulrichs, *The Riddle*, 1:316, 316n108.

[62] Anonymous Austrian soldier to Ulrichs, 3 January 1865, in *Ara Spei*, by Karl Heinrich Ulrichs (Leipzig: H. Matthes, 1865), xxi, translation from Ulrichs, *The Riddle*, 1:192.

In Ulrichs's works, there is no mention of the women in these relationships. They presumably entered the marriages in good faith, but their husbands were not the men they were pretending to be. The tragedy was double: a woman deceived and a man traumatized in the pursuit of unachievable normative masculinity. In Germany, though the rights of women within marriages were limited, it was at least easier for a woman to sue for divorce than in other countries.[63] The outlook for the men, unless released through bereavement or divorce, was probably bleak. Men who were sexually active with men would have had to have done so adulterously, making them vulnerable to blackmailers.

AN EMERGING TRANS* CONSTRUCTION
The Consummate Weibling

Ulrichs's initial postulation that the urning was a female soul in a male body (the anima thesis) meant that his message had a special resonance with those who were effeminate weiblings. For some of these, the sense of their inner female nature went a lot further than mere effeminacy and may have approximated what would later be described *seelischer Transsexualismus* (mental transsexualism).[64] In his second book, *Inclusa*, Ulrichs alluded to the "dissatisfaction of the feminine soul within the male body" that was characteristic of some weiblings.[65] To illustrate this, he described two cases, one from antiquity and one from contemporary medical literature. First, he quoted and paraphrased from historical sources on the Roman emperor Antoninus Heliogabalus, who dressed as a woman, adopted a woman's name, and requested that his doctors operate on him to remove his male genitals and create "an incision in the front of his body."[66] Ulrichs found the contemporary case in a paper written by the court physician in Dessau about Susskind/Friederike Blank.[67] Blank "set his hair in curls, destroyed his beard, stuffed his chest and his hips and used every opportunity to mask himself as a woman."[68] He went on to make a formal application to the authorities to be recognized as a woman, which was refused. One day, under the name Friederike Blank, he announced his engagement to

[63] Lynn Abrams, "Crime against Marriage? Wife-Beating, Divorce and the Law in Nineteenth-Century Hamburg," in *Gender and Crime in Modern Europe*, ed. Meg Arnot and Cornelie Usborne (London: Taylor & Francis, 1999), 120.

[64] Magnus Hirschfeld, "Die intersexuelle Konstitution," *Jahrbuch für sexuelle Zwischenstufen* 23 (1923): 14.

[65] Karl Heinrich Ulrichs, *Inclusa* (Leipzig: H. Matthes, 1865), § 105, 65, translation from Ulrichs, *The Riddle*, 1:92.

[66] Ulrichs, *Inclusa*, §§ 110–14, 70–71, translation from Ulrichs, *The Riddle*, 1:94.

[67] Hieronymus Fränkel, "Homo Mollis," *Medicinische Zeitung von dem Vereine für Heilkunde in Preußen* 22 (June 1853): 102–3.

[68] Ulrichs, *Inclusa*, § 18, 16, translation from Ulrichs, *The Riddle*, 1:60.

a foreign craftsman.[69] Blank was repeatedly arrested and ended up throwing himself to his death from the bridge at Jonitz, a village near Dessau.[70]

Ulrichs's forthright and inclusive deployment of these trans* examples means that he can be seen as an early trans* ally. To any individuals among his readers with a strong inner female sensibility, this must have been a great comfort, even when they maintained their inner female nature in private. For example, a twenty-seven-year-old on the Baltic Coast wrote in December 1869: "I am a complete weibling. I especially enjoy occupying myself with women's handiwork. If it were possible, I would also dress as a woman."[71]

Although there was no unequivocal evidence of this in Ulrichs's 1860s correspondence, it wasn't long before there were accounts of the sense of inner turmoil in these individuals that resembled more modern trans* narratives. A contemporary of Ulrichs, H. Marx, published a polemic pamphlet entitled *Urningsliebe* in 1875 that extended the Ulrichian discourse onto a much more gender-nonconforming footing.[72] The writer, who used a pseudonym, deployed Ulrichs's terminology but used it to describe a category ordered primarily by gender that seemed to reject active urning sexuality: "It is not the urning's fault that the Creator created him with an organ that defiles his body and is completely useless for the urning. If an urning wanted to use such a body part that desecrates him in order to enjoy love as a man, he would simply be a man and a depraved, unnatural creature at that."[73] Marx may have been a consummate urning themselves and the existence of this polemic text demonstrates that there were trans* individuals reading and taking inspiration from Ulrichs's pamphlets.

As tantalizing as these glimpses of early self-conceptions of gender variance might be, some caution is nevertheless necessary. The gender-nonconforming category was still indistinct in the late nineteenth century and would not be differentiated systematically from the urning until well into the twentieth century when Magnus Hirschfeld described *seelischen Transsexualismus* (mental transsexualism) as an entirely separate category from the homosexual.[74]

Urban Subcultural Identities

Both Berlin and Vienna grew in the decades prior to the 1860s. Berlin grew rapidly, from a population of about 400,000 in the 1840s to 865,000

[69] Ulrichs, *Inclusa*, § 18, 16, translation from Ulrichs, *The Riddle*, 1:60.

[70] Fränkel, "Homo Mollis," 102.

[71] Ulrichs, *Prometheus*, § 13, 14, translation from Ulrichs, *The Riddle*, 2:550.

[72] H. Marx, *Urningsliebe: Die sittliche Hebung des Urningthums und die Streichung des § 175 des deutschen Strafgesetzbuches* (Leipzig: H. Marx Selbstverlag, 1875).

[73] Marx, 8.

[74] Magnus Hirschfeld, "Die intersexuelle Konstitution," *Jahrbuch für sexuelle Zwischenstufen* 23 (1923): 14.

by 1871.[75] The cosmopolitan and anonymous nature of the big city allowed queer* subcultures to emerge.

Berlin also had the beginnings of a scene catering for same-sex-attracted men with dedicated venues touting their business in the 1860s: "At that time, Berlin was not yet a cosmopolitan city; small-town, cozy conditions prevailed, which did not remain without influence on the intercourse among the homosexuals. It was very cozy in the homosexual pubs, since almost all the people knew each other. At the balls, the most cheerful merriment prevailed. It was like being at a big family ball."[76] In the next three decades, as Germany urbanized, urning/homosexual infrastructures emerged in other places too.[77]

Vienna had seen a similar growth rate to Berlin, and, like that of Berlin, this growth provoked the emergence of a same-sex-attracted demimonde. The Spittelberg quarter was a center for the sex trade by the mid-nineteenth century and included establishments catering to same-sex-attracted men.[78] The Prater, Rathauspark, and Volksgarten had sections that were used as cruising areas.[79] The amusement arcade Eldorado, on Petersplatz, and the Universum pleasure garden were both known as romping grounds for the same-sex-attracted demimonde.[80] Finally, in the 1860s the ancient but fashionably rebuilt Brünnlbad became a renowned meeting place.[81]

Mathias Foit recently deployed Scott Herring's concept of "metronormativity" to explain the political split between urban and nonurban queer* ideation in the Weimar Republic.[82] This split was already apparent as the urning came into being in the 1860s. The German and Austrian states were still largely nonurban, but already the cities of Berlin and Vienna had growing subcultures that regarded themselves as more advanced and liberated. While Ulrichs's correspondents from nonurban settings were enthusiastic for the cause, this was less true of those who wrote from the cities; their urban perspective meant these subcultures were possibly less responsive to Ulrichs's ideas, which themselves emanated from nonurban settings. The two groups of urban urning correspondents that this article profiles were the cross-dressers and the ambivalent libertines.

[75] Robert Beachy, *Gay Berlin: Birthplace of a Modern Gay Identity* (New York: Vintage Books, 2014), 48.

[76] F. Hugländer [Hugo Friedlander], "Aus dem homosexuellen Leben Alt-Berlins," *Jahrbuch für sexuelle Zwischenstufen* 14 (1914): 47, my translation.

[77] Otto de Joux, *Die Enterbten des Liebesglückes, oder das dritte Geschlecht* (Leipzig: Spohr, 1893), 99.

[78] Andreas Brunner and Hannes Sulzenbacher, "Donauwalzer-Herrenwahl: Schwule Geschichte der Donaumetropole vom Mittelalter bis zur Gegenwart," in *Schwules Wien: Reiseführer durch die Donaumetropole*, ed. Andreas Brunner and Hannes Sulzenbacher (Vienna: Promedia, 1998), 39.

[79] Brunner and Sulzenbacher, 40.

[80] Brunner and Sulzenbacher, 39.

[81] Brunner and Sulzenbacher, 39.

[82] Mathias Foit, *Queer Urbanisms in Wilhelmine and Weimar Germany: Of Towns and Villages* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2024), 24–33, 317–29.

The Cross-Dressers

In the 1860s cross-dressing was a function of the big city environment. Cross-dressers were a subset of city-dwelling, effeminate men who adopted female attire as part of a subcultural practice of female impersonation. Though it is possible there was a little overlap between the two, these individuals were mostly distinct from the consummate weiblings in that their love for dressing in women's fashions was rooted in social hedonism and not indicative of an inner desire to be a woman.[83] Their adoption of women's clothes was a mostly periodic and temporary performance rather than a lived experience.[84] Though Ulrichs called these individuals weiblings, there is no evidence they used this word or even "urning" to describe themselves. Cross-dressing young men for the most part occupied the hedonistic niche that large cities afforded in an analogous fashion to the "scene queens" of contemporary large cities in Europe and North America.

Although cross-dressing would become a major feature in Berlin in the decades that followed, Ulrichs received comparatively few accounts of cross-dressing in public in the German states themselves, even from Berlin, in the 1860s. One exception came when one of his regular correspondents from Berlin wrote on 23 February 1868: "A few days ago, I was told by the countess that a rich Polish count (an urning) present here eight days ago held an urning costume ball in a restaurant. Attending were ten well-chosen handsome soldiers, dionings; of the urnings, six appeared in women's clothing."[85] If this phenomenon was new to Berlin when Ulrichs received his first reports from there, it would probably have been due to the town's rapid urban growth in the second half of the nineteenth century, with the population more than doubling between 1850 and 1870.[86]

As the German states were not as urbanized in the 1860s, most of the accounts of cross-dressing that Ulrichs received came from other countries. The most rapturous letters Ulrichs received came from urnings witnessing these female impersonators in London, Moscow, and Vienna.[87] These were cities with apparently well-developed cross-dressing subcultures.

[83] It is of course possible that some of the braver consummate weiblings may have participated in public cross-dressing, though there is no direct evidence for this in the sources.

[84] Linge, *Queer Livability*, 23.

[85] A Weibling in Berlin to Ulrichs, 23 February 1868, in Ulrichs, *Memnon II*, § 98, 77–78, 78n60, translation from Ulrichs, *The Riddle*, 2:394, 394n21.

[86] Beachy, *Gay Berlin*, 48.

[87] The Viennese correspondent participated in extensive cross-dressing escapades, which are recounted in two letters included in Ulrichs, *Memnon II*, §§ 99–100, 78–83, translation from Ulrichs, *The Riddle*, 2:394–97. The London correspondent witnessed cross-dressing escapades that are described in four letters included in Ulrichs, § 97, 74–77, translation from Ulrichs, *The Riddle*, 2:391–92. The Knägina (princess) in Moscow is written about in a letter from St. Petersburg included in Ulrichs, *Prometheus*, § 62, 67, translation from Ulrichs, *The Riddle*, 2:588–89.

The London letters were sent by a German-speaking intermediate urning perhaps connected with grand opera. He was not a cross-dresser himself, but he described a spectacular ball where two urnings got "married by a priest" and the escapades of several cross-dressing friends who had carved out a semipublic presence in London's West End. The only correspondent of Ulrichs who himself cross-dressed was an upper-class Viennese man who recounted his outrageous public outings to a pleasure garden in women's clothes and then to a cabman's ball in the suburbs dressed as a washerwoman.

Given the prevalence of reports about cross-dressing in Ulrichs's pamphlets, it is surprising that Ulrichs felt that this group was not engaged with or supportive of his efforts. In his tenth pamphlet, *Prometheus*, published in 1870, Ulrichs reflected on this: "The greater masses of urnings, particularly in such cities as Vienna, Berlin, Moscow, Paris, and London, unfortunately show little sense for the struggle that is directed toward winning freedom, justice, and a place for Uranism in human society and, at the same time, toward improving its spiritual situation. It is more important to them to be taken for women at masked balls and to be courted by unsuspecting dionings."[88] Ulrichs described this group scathingly as the "boneheaded herd" who were "hardly worthy of freedom."[89] Although the cross-dressers were not directly hostile to Ulrichs's ideas, they did not depend on them to understand their sexual and gendered selves. Their self-conceptions were drawn from older traditions of urban cross-dressing, and they operated entirely within their own bubble, where the excitement of successful female impersonation and the hedonistic enjoyment of the urban milieu were the preoccupations to the exclusion of anything else. Ulrichs's reaction against them needs to be seen in that context. He was not repudiating cross-dressing per se but lamenting the lack of support he received from that quarter.

The Ambivalent Libertines

Karl Maria Kertbeny was an archetypal ambivalent libertine and is the only one whose letters to Ulrichs have survived. He had been one of the first to engage with Ulrichs but was also one of the first to break with him. In the draft of a letter composed for an unnamed newspaper editor in 1869, Kertbeny indicated his hostility to the urning terminology and to the people who called themselves urnings, and he described the inventor of the term, Ulrichs, as "one of the most obscure heads from their ranks."[90] He also rejected Ulrichs's concept of the female soul in the male body for a more masculine concept of sexuality. This was something he

[88] Ulrichs, *Prometheus*, § 64, 71, translation from Ulrichs, *The Riddle*, 2:592.

[89] Ulrichs, § 64, 71, translation from Ulrichs, *The Riddle*, 2:592.

[90] Kertbeny to an unknown editor, July 1869, draft, sheets 440–43, Oct.Germ.297, National Széchenyi Library, Budapest, my translation.

alleged that others agreed with, since "most of them feel most unhappy about the game of nature, to be condemned as *anima muliebris in corpore masculino* [*sic*], as their main defender called them, calling them *urnings*—about their hermaphroditic position on the ranks of nature, about their abnormality, which they have to conceal like a murder."[91] Kertbeny was not married and never wrote about his own sexuality, always claiming to be a "normalsexual," but his coded Hungarian diaries reveal what he apparently could not articulate for public consumption: that he was sexually active and had a taste for younger men.[92] Having trained as a bookseller, he indulged in literary bohemianism, was a soldier for a short time, and was at one point a spy for the Austrians.[93] By the time he was engaging with Ulrichs, he had become a literary journalist with a penchant for inserting multiple deceptively inaccurate autobiographical passages in his works.[94]

Like the cross-dresser, the ambivalent libertine was part of an older tradition. One of the models of masculinity of the urban scene in the 1860s was a militaristic gentry identity that stemmed from older forms of aristocratic libertine masculinity.[95] This model of masculinity flourished among the men who had served in the military forces of the German states in the period after the revolution of 1848. In this context, the older forms of gentry masculinity may have characterized certain sections of the bourgeoisie.[96] A class of masculine bourgeois libertines emerged in the urban environment in the nineteenth century. These were men who did not marry and whose sexual practices did not define or undermine their masculinity.

The hypermasculine sexual deviancy of the ambivalent libertine had more in common with older tropes of libertinage in Enlightenment Europe. Hiding in plain sight, the military libertine could present a masculine face to the world and avoid marriage without arousing suspicion while, at the same time, carving out a discreet existence where he could be sexually active. Sexuality for these individuals was a property, a taste, a facet but never the defining feature of their core identities. Ulrichs's assertion of a third sex urning identity and his anima thesis disrupted and challenged the conforming masculinity of the military libertine and his

[91] Jäger [Kertbeny], "Ein bisher," 72, my translation. The correct Latin phrase is "anima muliebris virili corpore inclusa" (a female psyche confined in a male body).

[92] Judit Takács, "The Double Life of Kertbeny," in *Past and Present of Radical Sexual Politics*, ed. Gert Hekma (Amsterdam: Mosse Foundation, 2004), 33.

[93] Manfred Herzer, *Karl Maria Kertbeny: Schriften zur Homosexualitätsforschung* (Berlin: Verlag Rosa Winkel, 2000), 14–17; Ágnes Deák, "Translator, Editor, Publisher, Spy: The Informative Career of Károly Kertbeny (1824–1882)," *Hungarian Quarterly* 39, no. 149 (1998): 28.

[94] Ralph Leck, *Vita Sexualis: Karl Ulrichs and the Origins of Sexual Science* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2016), 48.

[95] Vick, "Liberalism," 584.

[96] R. W. Connell, *Masculinities* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 192.

social invisibility. Consequently, it was the men whose identities approximated the military libertine who had the greatest problems with Ulrichs's campaign. A small group of these masculine individuals showed themselves resistant to the urning label and were inclined to criticize Ulrichs from the sidelines. Ulrichs called these men mannlings, though it is unlikely this was a name they used for themselves.

Kertbeny did not keep his criticisms to himself and appeared to have gathered around him a group of other individuals who felt the same. In a letter to Ulrichs of 1868, he deployed his arguments against the fixed, innate identity that Ulrichs was proposing. Part of his argument was strategic; he did not think it was realistic to say that tastes were innate, since there were "people who are innately bloodthirsty, pyromaniacs, with all sorts of perverse desires," and nobody would question the need to detain them to keep society safe.[97] Legislators, he argued, "do not give a fig for the innate nature of a drive; they only care about the harm it does to the individual or society at large."[98] And even if Ulrichs was correct that urnings were biologically constituted, it would only make society see them as "special, peculiar, abnormal unfortunates of capricious creation, hermaphrodites, imperfectly formed unlike other people, lopsided and lame, eliciting cries of compassionate horror from dionings."[99] Kertbeny instead believed it was "a more masculine argument of total free will" to see sexual orientation purely as a matter of taste.[100] He believed it was more profitable to fight for a universal right for every single man to choose a consensual sexual partner, irrespective of sex or sexual act, without the state interfering.

Kertbeny and the other ambivalent libertines anticipated the masculinists who would later follow Hans Blüher in the early twentieth century in rejecting the effeminacy of the urning identity.[101] In a letter to Carl Robert Egells on 20/21 December 1873, Ulrichs described this group of libertine critics.[102] Ulrichs wrote in another letter to Egells on 31 December 1873 that he counted Kertbeny as one of these but added: "I am on a friendly

[97] Karl Maria Kertbeny to Karl Heinrich Ulrichs, 6 May 1868, in Pretsell, *Correspondence*, 203.

[98] Pretsell, 203.

[99] Pretsell, 204.

[100] Pretsell, 204.

[101] Robert Deam Tobin, *Peripheral Desires: The German Discovery of Sex* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015), 104–7.

[102] Ulrichs used the terms *Partei des Mops* and *Mopspartie*, which literally mean "party of pug dogs." It is likely that this was a reference to an old saying: "Was kümmert es den Mond wenn der Mops ihn anbellt" (Does the moon really care if a pug barks at it?). It means that one disregards the grumbling, complaining, and criticism of a person as equal to a (small-minded) dog's barking at the moon. Ulrichs saw the *Mopspartei* in that way, always "barking" about something or other. See Ulrichs to Carl Robert Egells, 20/21 December 1873, quoted in full in "Carl Heinrich Ulrichs," by Ferdinand Karsch-Haack, *Die Freundschaft*, 20 May 1922, 2. See also Pretsell, *Correspondence*, 236.

footing with him. He also pays me an annual Numa penny."[103] It seems that although he may have been reluctant to embrace Ulrichs's third sex urning approach, he nevertheless recognized that they had common cause. The libertines may have also maintained an ambivalent position on the edges of and engaged with urning society.

Distal Transactors

In an analysis of prostitution in Berlin, the man who was to become Berlin's chief of police only two years later, Wilhelm Stieber, wrote anonymously in 1846: "There are formal areas of the city which form the gathering places of such atrocities (in particular, the chestnut grove behind the new guardhouse and the carp pond in the Tiergarten are to be emphasized in this respect), and not a few people, especially common soldiers, who make a trade out of it, are sought out here."[104] Soldier prostitution did not occur only in Berlin, it was a feature of any town that had a garrison in a region where standing armies were assembled anticipating the coming crisis. And everywhere the sex trade occurred, it was soon to be followed by a legion of blackmailers seeking to make money out of shame. These two final character types were individuals who did not write to Ulrichs, but they were classes of individuals he and others wrote about extensively. Although these individuals may have seen same-sex-attracted men as a source of income, many of them would also have been same-sex-attracted themselves.

The Soldier

Ulrichs and many of his followers shared a sexual preference for soldiers. *Soldatenliebe* (love of soldiers) was widespread in late nineteenth-century Germany.[105] The appeal of soldiers to urnings was that they had youth, strong physiques, fitness and health, and alluring uniforms.[106] In the 1860s soldiers wore tight-fitting uniforms in bright, alluring colors quite different from the drab khaki of the twentieth century, which greatly enhanced their visual appeal. The reason for this was that in a period when cannon smoke was a feature of battle, soldiers had to be able to easily discern friend from enemy. With the advent of smokeless munitions in the early twentieth century, bright clothing became a liability and was abandoned.[107]

[103] Numa was the pseudonym Ulrichs had used in his first books, so this was a reference to those who supported him financially with small contributions. Ulrichs to Carl Robert Egells, 31 January / 1 February 1874, quoted in full in Karsch-Haack, "Carl Heinrich Ulrichs," 2. See also Pretsell, *Correspondence*, 237.

[104] Wilhelm Stieber, *Die Prostitution in Berlin und ihre Opfer* (Berlin: A. Hofmann, 1846), 209, my translation.

[105] Ulrichs, *Ara Spei*, § 135, 71n60, translation from Ulrichs, *The Riddle*, 1:241.

[106] Jeffrey Schneider, *Uniform Fantasies: Soldiers, Sex, and Queer Emancipation in Imperial Germany* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2023), 5.

[107] Schneider, 5–7, 12.

The prevalence of this predilection in 1860s Germany owed a lot to the ubiquity of the soldier in every town across the German and Austrian states. With the instability following the revolution of 1848, most of these states had established large standing armies in anticipation of the wars that came toward the end of the 1860s.[108] Even in modest towns across Germany, an urning could find a transactional assignation with a soldier close to the barracks. In Berlin, where there was widespread male prostitution, there were certain advantages in consorting with soldiers instead. Compared with professional male prostitutes, soldiers who consorted with urnings rather than visiting brothels were less prone to venereal diseases, less likely to blackmail the urning, and more likely to form lasting relationships.[109]

The typical relationships urnings had with soldiers were not equal or companionate. For a start, the expectation was that the arrangement would be transactional. Even when the relationship contained genuine affection, it was never one of equals. There was usually a significant age difference between the young soldier and the older urning. Financially and intellectually, the urning was usually at a significant advantage. The assumption by Ulrichs and others was that the soldiers in these relationships were always dionings. Until disabused of the fact, Ulrichs had originally assumed that urnings could only have relationships with dionings. However, it would be wrong to assume that all the soldiers in these arrangements were not inclined toward their own sex. A letter to Ulrichs from an urning in Vienna in October 1867 noted that "uranism (uranization) is so well established in the Austrian military that the cadets and privates have already received severe reprimands because of it and are often confined to barracks."[110] Ulrichs labeled soldiers and other dionings who practiced same-sex acts because of the absence of available women "*Uraniasters.*"[111]

While it was almost certainly true that most soldiers who engaged with urnings were dionings themselves, the widespread conscription of a whole generation of young men in the 1860s must have meant there were some with a predisposition toward their own sex. Four of Ulrichs's quoted urning correspondents were serving or former soldiers. Other named individuals who had contact with Ulrichs were same-sex-attracted men who had themselves been soldiers when they were younger: Kertbeny had been a soldier in the Austrian army in the late 1840s, and Egells had been a soldier in the campaigns of the late 1860s and early 1870s.[112] There must have been quite a few soldiers who had either become sexually awakened

[108] Schneider, 5.

[109] Michael Bollé and Berlin Museum, *Eldorado: Homosexual Women and Men in Berlin 1850–1950: History, Everyday Life, and Culture*, trans. Michael Lombardi-Nash (Jacksonville: Urania Manuscripts, 1992), 87.

[110] Ulrichs, *Memnon I*, § 40, 26, translation from Ulrichs, *The Riddle*, 1:317–18.

[111] Ulrichs, *Inclusa*, § 79, 49, translation from Ulrichs, *The Riddle*, 1:80.

[112] Ferdinand Karsch-Haack, "Urnische Chronik, 23 Mai," *Die Freundschaft*, 20 May 1922, 2.

in all-male regimental company or dabbled in soldier prostitution and realized they had a taste for it.

The Blackmailer

Many of Ulrichs's correspondents either were victims of blackmail or knew of others who were. It is unlikely, though possible, that some of Ulrichs's readers were blackmailers themselves. Many blackmailers were dionings looking to make money, but there were certainly some who identified as urnings themselves.

The most prominent blackmail case reported in Ulrichs's pamphlets was the case in Bremen of theater director Friedrich Feldtmann, who was blackmailed in 1867 by a young attractive actor named Carl Wilhelm Otto Filsinger.[113] Filsinger used his sexual conquests with wealthy individuals as leverage to make demands for money. When Feldtmann refused to pay, Filsinger contacted the authorities, and Feldtmann was tried sensationally in Bremen in 1867, was found guilty, and ended up in prison for a year. Meanwhile, Filsinger vanished before cropping up again and again over the next couple of years doing similar things to fellow urnings in the cities of other German states. It does not appear that he was ever caught or punished for his crimes.

One can gauge the sheer scale of the problem with blackmail from a typology of blackmailers that Ulrichs extracted from the countless letters he had received on the subject.[114] Table 1 paraphrases Ulrichs's original list. The increasing proliferation of blackmailers from the 1860s onward in Germany was arguably an artifact of the greater openness of the modern urning in the face of legal prohibition from the 1860s to the end of the century. In the 1860s the blackmailer inserted himself between the law and the urning knowing full well that the urning would not go to the police. The prevalence of blackmail in turn increased the fear of exposure. Men faced ruination, and many resorted to suicide in despair. Sometimes the extent of the blackmail could be considerable.

Reports of blackmail pepper the pages of Ulrichs's books. It was the single biggest complaint of urnings in the German states and in Austria in the 1860s and 1870s and would continue to be a problem in the decades that followed. Ulrichs tried to think of practical solutions. In 1869, upon hearing that the Berlin police were maintaining lists of three thousand urnings, Ulrichs suggested that urnings start sending the details of blackmailers to them.[115] They could do so anonymously to avoid making themselves the object of police enquiries. There is no evidence that any of his correspondents started doing this, and it is possible that Ulrichs was a little too trusting in the goodwill of the police.

[113] Fricke, "Der Theater-Direktor," 103; Pretsell, *Urning*, 52–53.
[114] Ulrichs, *Critische Pfeile*, §§ 75–85, 50–61, translation from Ulrichs, *The Riddle*, 2:658–66.
[115] Ulrichs, *Argonauticus*, § 64(b), 116–17, translation from Ulrichs, *The Riddle*, 2:523.

TABLE 1. Paraphrased list of blackmailer types described by Ulrichs in his final pamphlet, written in 1879

TYPE OF BLACKMAILER	DESCRIPTION
Simple blackmailer	A former or current conquest who pleads poverty and asks for help, introducing threats only if refused.
Refined blackmailer	An attractive man who half encourages flirtation but when a certain pass is made expresses outrage and threatens to go to the police unless a payment is made.
Refined blackmailer with accomplice	The attractive accomplice propositions an urning, and, when compromised, the blackmailer "discovers" them and threatens to take them to the police unless a payment is made.
Address blackmailer	The blackmailer seduces one urning to gain their address book and then uses it to blackmail multiple other urnings.
Specialized local blackmailer	The blackmailer frequents the Tiergarten or other compromising locations looking for foreigners. He then pretends to be a policeman to extract payment as a fine.
Direct plunderer	The blackmailer has sex with an urning for pay, follows him, and discovers the location of his apartment. He then appears with sturdy fellows who quickly strip the apartment of valuables while the blackmailer remonstrates with threats.
Blackmail gangs	In the larger towns and cities, where urnings are plentiful, whole gangs prey on multiple urnings repeatedly and live comfortably from the urning's misery.

Source: Karl Heinrich Ulrichs, *Critische Pfeile* (Leipzig: Otto und Kadler, 1880), §§ 75–85, 50–61.

CONCLUSION

The queer* typology outlined in this article gives an idea of the parameters and human color of the world of urnings and other same-sex-attracted men in the 1860s before the mediation of science, which was to be a feature of later decades. But it is not an exhaustive list of character types. Since the types are all derived from an examination of a finite cache of letters, they provide an impression rather than the whole picture of the emerging society of same-sex-attracted men. All the letter writers classified

in this model had unique life circumstances and personal qualities that made them very much more complex than their typological groupings. The character classifications are also not intended to be discrete identities, and there are some very significant overlaps between them: the ordinary urning is an Everyman character defined by his response to Ulrichs's theories and campaign and thus overlaps with almost all the character types. Some of the mannlings had been soldiers; some of the isolated urnings would also, in time, join wider urning society. A number of individuals of each type would also be victims or perpetrators of blackmail.

The typology is probably most reliable for the first four urning character types: these individuals were the most enthusiastic of Ulrichs's correspondents. Although Ulrichs's writings anticipated the consummate weibling, the contours of this class were yet to be articulated fully. The two urban character types were less evident but nevertheless distinct in the correspondence. Mannlings did not write to Ulrichs in great numbers, and, other than Kertbeny, they were remarked on but never quoted. Similarly, most of the letters about cross-dressing came from urnings observing cross-dressers rather than from the cross-dressers themselves. Ulrichs's advocacy may have had diminished appeal for sophisticated city dwellers who had already negotiated a space for themselves. His most enthusiastic followers, as evidenced by the correspondence, were individuals who, like the vast majority of Germans and Austrians at this time, did not live in big cities such as Berlin and Vienna.

The final categories, soldiers and blackmailers, are defined in relation to their clients and victims, but their presence as two corollaries to the gradually emerging urning society is well attested. The nine character types do still give an impression of the lives and society of same-sex-attracted men in the closing decades of the nineteenth century. As a rubric through which to regard the lives of the urnings who corresponded with Ulrichs or whose lives have been documented elsewhere, this typology has utility. I provide these categories as a framework to understand the emerging social life of same-sex-attracted men in this early period.

About the Author

Douglas Pretsell is a historian at La Trobe University in Melbourne, Australia. He is the author of *Urning: Queer Identity in the German Nineteenth Century* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2024). The source materials used in *Urning* have also been published in two critical editions: *The Correspondence of Karl Heinrich Ulrichs, 1846–1894* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020) and *Queer Voices in the Works of Richard von Krafft-Ebing, 1883–1901* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2023). Originally from Scotland, Pretsell holds doctorates in history and neuroscience.