

## **Towards a Religious History of Gender. Sacerdotal Masculinity and the Historicization of Hegemony**

In 2015, Matthieu Bréjon de Lavergnée and Magali della Sudda argued that ‘gender as an analytical tool for religious history, as well as religion as a functioning category for the history of gender, seem despite undeniable connections, insufficiently taken into account’<sup>1</sup>. In 2013, Joanna de Groot and Sue Morgan first formulated a similar view regarding the state of English-speaking historiography in a noted issue of *Gender and History* on *Sex Gender and the Sacred*<sup>2</sup>. Whether these statements remain valid in 2020 is a matter for debate. The number of studies that turn to gender to provide new insight on religion, both past and present, has steadily grown in the past decade. Yet, one could argue that gender does not have the same status in religious history it has in social history, for instance : many studies still implicitly dismiss gender as a necessary tool of religious studies, if only by sketching gendered issues as if they weren't. This may be particularly true of studies about the clergy. Furthermore, while gender has become much more familiar to scholars of religion, it remains debatable whether religion has truly become familiar to scholars of gender studies. If early 2010s’ statements about insufficient acknowledgment of gender in religious studies may no longer hold as much as they used to, it remains clear that we are still far from a true intersectional approach to both religion and gender;

This certainly has to do first and foremost with the sociology and politics of each disciplinary field. Scholars of religion, and this is particularly true of historians, are often – though no longer predominantly – committed to particular religious traditions. Several prominent historians of religion have also contributed to the recent anti-gender campaigns in Europe. It is also clear that the rather more secular profile of historians and social scientists dealing with gender has certainly contributed to either avoidance or even at times dismissal of the specific agency of religion in the making of gender<sup>3</sup>. The mostly secular profile of scholars in gender studies has also somewhat distanced them from both religion and religious studies. In the 2005 *Handbook of Studies on Men and Masculinities*<sup>4</sup>, there was only one paper dealing with ‘religious’ masculinities : that of Shahin Gerami on ‘Islamist masculinity and Muslim masculinities’. It came under the category of ‘Politics’ and actually dealt much more with masculinities in the contemporary Muslim worlds than with the religious dynamics that affected them. The significant number of gay men, and particularly of catholic gay men, in the field of history of Christianity (a reality that mirrors and certainly has connection to the overrepresentation of gay men among contemporary catholic clergy) could certainly bring

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<sup>1</sup> Matthieu Bréjon de Lavergnée, Magali Della Sudda, ‘Une histoire religieuse sans genre est-elle (encore) possible ?’, in id., *Genre et christianisme. Plaidoyers pour une histoire croisée* (Paris: Beauchesne, 2015), 9-28.

<sup>2</sup> Joanna de Groot and Sue Morgan, ‘Beyond the ‘Religious Turn’? Past, Present and Future Perspectives in Gender History’ in *Gender and History*, 25/3 (2013), 395-422.

<sup>3</sup> See for instance Roman Kuhar and David Paternotte, *Anti-Gender Campaigns in Europe. Mobilizing Against Equality* (London: Rowman & Littlefield Int., 2017).

<sup>4</sup> Michael S. Kimmel, Jeff Hearn, Raewyn Connell, *Handbook of Studies on Men And Masculinities* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, 2005).

some complexity to this assessment, and may prove both the medium and cause of more intersection between these fields.

Yet, this cannot be accounted for purely in terms of sociology of scholarship. Part of the problem here may come from the fact that we tend to elaborate gender as a category and religion as field or subfield of study. As Josephine Hoegaerts has noted in her 2015 paper on soldiers and saints<sup>5</sup>, it is because of such discrepant elaborations that we tend to practice the history of religious masculinities as merely the application of pre-elaborated categories and methodologies, thereby casting gender as almost impervious to religion as such. She argues for the same type of intersectionality between religion and gender as has proved so productive regarding the connection between race, age and gender. ‘History of masculinity – she writes – requires the contribution of research that explore other forms of development of identity’. This, she argues, would have significant consequences not only for the history of masculinity but for the ‘very definition of masculinity as an analytical category’. To put it even more bluntly, the question is that of religion not merely as an object, but rather as a point of view on the social and as a category of social analysis.

This collection of essays comes at a time when the study of religious masculinities is certainly gaining pace (while at the same time, in the particular field of religious history, history of the clergy may prove a somewhat declining field at a time when religious history seems less preoccupied than it was in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century with quantitative outputs as well as with what Dupront and Certeau respectively characterized as history of the sacred as well as history of belief). So it is, to a certain extent, for the study of sacerdotal masculinities. No recent work on religious masculinities in Christianity has ignored the question of the relationship between sacerdotal masculinity and other Christian masculinities (be it that of different categories of laymen, of monks, as well as ideological elaborations of religious masculinity). From a methodological point of view, such studies have turned to common efforts at theorization in masculinity studies. Many works have some connection to Connell’s model. When studying sacerdotal masculinities from an historical point of view, one can no longer ignore the questions of categorization, hierarchization or relationship to hegemony. If one turns to Raewyn Connell’s model for analyzing masculinities, sacerdotal masculinity may appear as a somewhat straightforward (so to speak) case of complicit masculinity<sup>6</sup>: one that never performs nor challenges the tenets of hegemonic masculinity, but rather supports them; one that is also never truly marginal or subordinate. In Catholicism, the mere existence of the clergy introduces a distance between ‘cultural ideals’ and ‘institutional power’ both within the Church and within Society. This has actually been even more manifest for churches in secular environments. Sacerdotal masculinity can hardly be hegemonic. Even in churches where celibacy is not a rule, the distinctiveness of the clergy also entails a difference of performance of masculinity. Yet, there is little doubt that clerical masculinity can never be truly subordinate. The very status of the clergy protects priests and other clerics – at least collectively – from the type of exclusion that characterizes subordinate masculinities. It may even protect individual clerics from the very type of exclusion that their

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<sup>5</sup> Josephine Hoegaerts, ‘Soldats dévots et saints combattifs. Regards sur l’historiographie anglophone et germanophone des masculinités religieuses (XIXe-XXe siècle)’, in *Genre et christianisme, op. cit.*, 73-94.

<sup>6</sup> See Josselin Tricou’s introduction to the present volume.

performance of masculinity would subject them too, were they not clerics. There is also little doubt that clerical masculinity can never actually be marginal in a society that values the clergy. Clerical masculinities are always authorized and authorized proportionately to the value ascribed to the clerical status. Therefore – or so it seems – along Connell lines for analyzing specific masculinities, clerical masculinity would always escape both subordination (as opposed to hegemony) and marginalization (as opposed to authorization). It is for these reasons that it appears to fall under the category of what Connell calls ‘complicity’. In her 2014 paper Caroline Muller argued that catholic masculinity may be characterized as such<sup>7</sup>. The argument she makes – regarding self-control and sexuality – certainly seems all the more relevant for the clergy. There is also little doubt that as long as the clergy remained socially prominent in European societies, sacerdotal masculinity was – to speak in Connell’s terms for defining complicity – ‘constructed in ways that realize the patriarchal dividend, without the tensions or risks of being the frontline troops of patriarchy’. In the case of the early modern clergy, the dividends of patriarchy for clerics are many: they are social, symbolic, but also of course economic.

Connell’s model certainly offers a vocabulary as well as guidelines for a possible historiographical agenda for the study of clerical masculinities. One that would have the advantage of keeping in touch with the social sciences. One of the investigatory possibilities for historians in this regard would therefore be to historicize the hierarchization of masculinities or the religious impossibility of too strong a hierarchization of Christian masculinities. Besides, if clerical masculinity has some structural affinity with complicity, the category also appears just as rich in terms of historical agendas, encouraging investigation of its modalities and their variations. Studying the priest’s role in the production, implementation and acculturation of norms would certainly be essential here. Exploring the relationship between priesthood and education in this regard may prove and has already proven a significant contribution to our endeavour here. The same goes for the emergence of gender-specific pastoral care (see for example Tine Van Osselaer’s analysis of differences in clerical attitudes in male and female confessions<sup>8</sup>). Connell’s model certainly calls for such a historical analysis, particularly when she insists on gender relations as both historical products and producers of the history of gender itself. The relationships of priests, as individuals as well as a group, is certainly of utmost importance here since it pertains to the evolutions of both the sacred and the institutional. For instance, the category of complicity seems highly relevant for the analysis of the greater distance existing between sacerdotal and lay masculinities at the time of the Catholic Reformation. It can help better characterize what some historians have seen as a step back from strictly patriarchal logics on the part of clergymen that encouraged the new religious agency of socially prominent women in the early modern era<sup>9</sup>. The category of hegemony certainly also turns the eye of the historian towards the issue of those men who – for one reason or another – could not perform

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<sup>7</sup> Caroline Muller, ‘Le catholicisme au masculin ? Antoine Manilève, un jeune homme catholique au tournant du siècle », *Genre et christianisme, op. cit.*, pp. 233-256.

<sup>8</sup> Tine Van Osselaer, *The Pious Sex. Catholic Constructions of Masculinity and Femininity in Belgium, c. 1800-1940* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2013).

<sup>9</sup> Barbara Diefendorf, *From Penitence to Charity. Pious Women and the Catholic Reformation in Paris* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

hegemonic masculinity at a particular time in history. Historical enquiries on the clergy have conspicuously side-stepped the issue of sexual orientation, for instance. Finally, Connell's model also calls for a history of the interactions between institutions and gender. For her, the contradiction between the inequality that is inherent in the patriarchal structure on the one hand, and the universalizing aspirations of the modern state on the other, proves a powerful historical catalyst: the crisis it generates reconfigures men's response to feminism. Here, indeed, Connell's model can easily converse with historical studies, such as those that have shown how the Gregorian reform wrought a crisis of clerical masculinities or how clerics who adopted secular ideals of manliness after the same Gregorian reform faced tough challenges<sup>10</sup>. With her own approach to Connell, Michelle Armstrong-Partida has clearly shown how parish priests in Catalunya adopted hegemonic patterns of masculinity, patterns that functioned better for them in the parochial setting than did conformity to canon laws of celibacy<sup>11</sup>. She has thereby provided a remarkable case study in the exploration of the complex relations between gender and institution, but also between institution and gender. She challenges scholarly accounts that make celibacy a normative trait of priestly masculinity by pointing out that widespread clerical concubinage cannot be interpreted as merely being the result of the difficult implementation of religious ideals but also that social as well as institutional logics worked towards greater acceptance of clerical concubinage before the critical time of the Reformation.

Michelle Armstrong-Partida's work clearly reminds us that a central issue for the historical analysis of sacerdotal masculinities is that of the relationship between lay and clerical masculinities, particularly sacerdotal masculinity. It also reminds us of the extent to which Connell's categorization enlightens that very issue. The many dynamics of a Christian religious system do not allow for that much divergence between different types – hegemonic and non-hegemonic – of masculinities. This may be less true for Catholicism than for other types of Christianity, where the boundaries of the clerical and the lay are either less clear, less profound, or less embedded in a sacral economy. Yet this has changed considerably over time, with no linear trend of evolution. These changes involved transformations of both wider conceptions and performances of masculinity, as well as of clerical and sacerdotal identities. One might see the clerical crisis of identity of the 20<sup>th</sup> century as a time when the tenets of hegemonic masculinity tended to influence priestly performances of masculinity more strongly<sup>12</sup>. Yet at the same time this crisis may have led to growth in the proportion of gay men in the clergy. The discrepancy in departures from the clergy in the 1970s along the lines of sexual orientation, coupled with the still strong dismissal of homosexuality among Catholic families, making the priesthood a religiously and socially more viable option for Catholic gay

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<sup>10</sup> Maureen Miller, 'Masculinity, Reform and Clerical Culture: Narratives of Episcopal Holiness in the Gregorian Era', *Church History*, 72 (2003), 25-52 ; Jacqueline Murray, 'Masculinizing Religious Life: Sexual Prowess, the Battle for Chastity and Monastic Identity', in *Holiness and Masculinity in the Middle Ages*, ed. by P. H. Cullum and Katherine J. Lewis (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2004), 24-42; Katherine J. Lewis, 'Male Saints and Devotional Masculinity in late Medieval England', *Gender and History*, 24/1 (2012), 112-133; Jennifer D. Thibodeaux, *Negotiating Clerical Identities. Priests, Monks and Masculinity in the Middle Ages* (New York: Palgrave McMillan, 2010).

<sup>11</sup> Michelle Armstrong-Partida, *Defiant Priests. Domestic Unions, Violence and Clerical Masculinity in Fourteenth Century Catalunya* (Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press, 2017).

<sup>12</sup> Yann Raizon du Cleuziou, 'Devenir homme parmi les hommes. Révolution ascétique et redéfinition de la virilité sacerdotale au milieu<sup>[1]</sup> du XX<sup>e</sup> siècle' in *Genre et christianisme, op. cit.*, 257-285.

youth, certainly contributed to increased numbers of gay men in the clergy<sup>13</sup>. It certainly challenged the greater pervasiveness between sacerdotal and hegemonic masculinity that the 1970s crisis of Catholicism also brought about, as can be seen in the case of workers priests, or missionaries. More recently, one might well argue that it is the contemporary publicity of sexual orientation itself and the inevitability of the category of sexual orientation (even for the lay public on clerical activities) that is prompting individual and collective strategies of distancing from suspicions of homosexuality among the Catholic clergy. This may be one of the reasons for recent masculinist claims in contemporary Catholicism. The relationship of contemporary sacerdotal masculinities to hegemonic masculinity is not only complex, it is contradictory and that contradiction has to do with the priesthood itself and its place in the Church both as a community and as an institution. Mita Choudhury has shown that in early modern times the very same adversaries of Jesuits could paint them as both effeminate and also sexual predators<sup>14</sup>. At the time of the Reformation, protestant polemics specifically targeted this very issue of effeminacy in the Catholic clergy, thereby putting pressure on Catholic priests and Catholic authorities to foster greater conformity between lay and clerical masculinities. Yet the newfound religious agency of women, the emergence of a new public of women for a specialized apostolate for some priests, as well as the greater insistence on the sacrality of the priesthood and the implementation of disciplinary norms, has certainly contributed to a greater distance between sacerdotal and lay, particularly lay and popular, masculinities. The same type of contradiction already played itself out in the confessional era, but for very different reasons.

While theorizing masculinities can certainly help us change previously established narratives in religious history, historical analysis, and particularly one that deals with such a central object for religious history as the priesthood, can also help refine our categories for analyzing masculinities themselves, as well as the intersection between gender and religion.

The first issue here is that of chronology or rather that of duration. Complicit Catholic masculinity, and particularly that of post-Tridentine clergymen, has been sketched out by historians of Early Modern times as one of self-control, particularly one of sexual self-control. This type of complicit masculinity both echoes and supports the emergence of a model of royal and aristocratic masculinity. It fits into the growing polarization of masculinities along social lines quite well at a time when clerics became more socially distinct from their flock than they used to be, because of the implementation of new cultural norms and because of their role in the mechanics of *Sozialdisziplinierung*. Complicity here certainly has to do with the relationship between Church and State in the confessionalization process, yet in that way it may also appear as a specifically modern categorization of patriarchy.

*Longue durée* here is of great help. It is no surprise that medievalists have taken the lead in the study of sacerdotal masculinities, as Michelle Armstrong-Partida's work bears witness to. The 2010 volume edited by Jennifer Thibodeaux<sup>15</sup>, certainly proved how much more attentive

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<sup>13</sup> Josselin Tricou, 'Refaire des « taupes » : gouverner le silence des prêtres homosexuels à l'heure du mariage gay', *Sociologie* 9/2 (2018), 131-150.

<sup>14</sup> Mita Choudhury, *The Wanton Jesuit and the Wayward Saint. A Tale of Sex, Religion and Politics in Eighteenth Century France* (University Park PA : Pennsylvania State University Press, 2015).

<sup>15</sup> Jennifer Thibodeaux (ed.) *Negotiating Clerical Identities*, *op. cit.*

historians of the Middle Ages have been to the intersection of the sacred and gender, and to how clerical identities were essential to the exploration of that intersection. This collection of essays points to the strength of the divergence between different ideals of masculinity both within the Church as well as within the world of men. Of particular relevance in this volume are both Jennifer Thibodeaux's introduction to the collection of essays as well as Derek Neal's paper<sup>16</sup>. Neal follows in the footsteps of John Tosh's famous 1994 essay arguing for the historical consideration of the multivalence of masculine identity<sup>17</sup>. Yet he also challenges Tosh's perspective from the point of view of the medievalist. He shows how Tosh's line of analysis actually strongly depends on a very modern construction of gender. He sketches the discrepancies between premodern (ie medieval and early modern) and modern conceptions of gender and sets out to describe the emergence of a dividing line between 1500 and 1700, one that modern conceptions of gender tend to ignore, and that of course also has much to do with the divergence in the social and political configurations of religion in premodern and modern Europe.

What is surprising is the relative impermeability of modern studies of religious masculinities to the framing of the issue by medievalists and to the very type of challenge that the study of premodern times brings about. This is particularly true of French speaking historiography despite its long tradition of attention to the *longue durée*, particularly when it comes to religious history. The 2015 volume *Genre et christianisme. Plaidoyers pour une histoire croisée* brings together papers assembled on the occasion of one of the annual conferences of the French Association for the History of Modern Religion, and is therefore quite unsurprisingly focused on the contemporary. Yet in all these papers, with the exception of non-French authors, one would be hard pressed to find more than a passing reference to medieval or early modern studies. There is certainly no acknowledgment whatsoever of the type of questions that Derek Neal brings to the discussion. In 2016, the issue that the *Mélanges de l'Ecole Française de Rome* (a key publication for French-speaking religious history) dedicated to gender as a still new approach in religious history included papers covering every historical period but did not raise the issue of how chronology challenges theorizations of gender<sup>18</sup>. Was it because – as the authors noted and regretted – the volume included no paper on masculinity or rather because it remained stuck in the casting of gender as a category and of religion as a field.

One could argue that exploring religious masculinities in the *longue durée* – and this might be particularly true of sacerdotal masculinity with its connection to both the sacred and the institutional – compels, if not challenging, us to at least question the notion of “hegemony” as a specifically modern characterization, as belonging to an intrinsically modern and western regime of masculinities. The connected notions of hegemony and subordination (one not coming without the other) may prove both fruitful and problematic for the study of medieval and early modern times. Indeed, while studies of medieval masculinities have documented

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<sup>16</sup> Derek Neal, ‘What Can Historians Do With Clerical Masculinity? Lessons from Medieval Europe’, in *Negotiating Clerical Identities*, *op. cit.*, p. 16-36.

<sup>17</sup> John Tosh, ‘What Should Historians Do with Masculinity? Reflections on Nineteenth-Century Britain’, *History Workshop Journal* 38 (1994), 179–202.

<sup>18</sup> See Magali della Sudda, Xenia von Tippelskirch ‘Introduction’, in *Le genre une nouvelle approche du fait religieux*, *Mélanges de l'Ecole Française de Rome*, 2 (2016), <http://journals.openedition.org/mefrim/2690>.

tensions and contradictions between lay and clerical ideals of masculinities<sup>19</sup>, they have also shown that these tensions cannot be thought of absolutely in terms of hierarchization and subordination. While the partition between two male genders in the medieval – masculinity and ‘emascularity’<sup>20</sup> – hardly seems to stand the historical test there is yet no denying that the idea of subordination of clerical masculinities to lay masculinities cannot effectively account for the reality of premodern societies, particularly when one takes issues of social status, and particularly that of authority, into account. The religious hegemony of priests renders the relationship of sacerdotal masculinity to a lay ‘hegemonic’ masculinity immediately complex and necessarily heterologous. It seems, for instance, quite difficult to characterize some models of early medieval monastic masculinities and their relationship to lay masculinities in terms of hegemony and subordination.

Indeed, it does not mean that the categories of hierarchy and hegemony do not yield historical results. As Michelle Armstrong-Partida has shown in the case of the late medieval Catalan clergy, it is the very competition for status and authority that led clergymen to incorporate violence into their gender identities. Yet, if one accepts, that hegemony may be a very contemporary characterization, one that is connected to modern regimes of both gender and religion, it also means that we ought to be wary of the use of Connell’s model without attention to chronology, and to the capacity of its categories to account for particular chronological sequences. The question thus becomes *at the same time* one of chronology, geography and sociography of gender. The expanding patriarchy of the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> century, the frontiers of the extra-European world, and the rural parishes of medieval and early modern Europe may prove more adequate grounds for a characterization in terms of hierarchy and subordination than other times, other areas, or other social environments in the premodern world. Indeed, too direct a translation of Connell’s category into historical terms may to some extent result in a form of a colonization of the past by the present. Conversely, an insufficient awareness of the very contemporariness of Connell’s model – a by-product of either mischaracterization of or inattention to historiography – may have strong theoretical and analytical consequences.

The issue seems all the more important as it also has strong connections to the question of ‘secularization’. One might think that the characterization of religious masculinities, and particularly sacerdotal masculinities, in terms of complicity and subordination, has something to do with the growing disconnection between the religious and the social and with the chronology of this disconnection. Yet, as Michelle Armstrong-Partida’s research has shown, such categories may prove highly efficient for characterizing the evolution of religious masculinities in times and places that can hardly be regarded as ‘secular’. To put the question in excessively simple and blunt terms: how is Connell’s model tied to a specifically modern and ‘secular’ regime of masculinities ? How can it be historicized and what are the means of such a historicization, should it prove necessary ?

This may be one of the reasons why it is important, along with studies of other religious masculinities, to specifically promote studies of sacerdotal masculinities, and to do so from a

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<sup>19</sup> Dawn M. Hadley, *Masculinity in Medieval Europe* (London: Longman, 1999).

<sup>20</sup> Robert N. Swanson, ‘Angel incarnate. Clergy and masculinity from Gregorian reform to Reformation’, in *Masculinity in medieval Europe*, *op. cit.*, 160-177.

historical perspective. While past sacerdotal masculinities may prove more resistant to a categorization in Connell's terms, this very resistance should also be connected in relationship to her model. Dismissal of the characterization of religious masculinities in terms of complicity or hegemony also comes with strong apologetic overtones and may appear as an attempt to preserve an a-historical separatedness of the priesthood, as proposals to characterize clerical masculinities as "neutral" or "alternative" bear witness to<sup>21</sup>. Dismissal of hegemony helps make the study of masculinity less threatening in religious terms both by nuancing the connection between the Church and patriarchy, as well as by smoothing the question of the difficult insertion of contemporary clerics into the world of men. It for instance allows us to avoid the contemporary, obvious and now explicit, issue of the overrepresentation of men who are incapable of performing hegemonic masculinity within the clergy. The question that such a characterization avoids is that of the tensions that are at work between clerical masculinity, other religious masculinities, and non-religious masculinities in a 'secular' world, i.e. the very question that the Catholic Church, as an institution, finds harder and harder to avoid.

How can one both acknowledge the need to truly historicize hegemony and subordination while avoiding such apologetic pitfalls? Again, attention to chronology, geography and sociography, are certainly strong safeguards. Yet, they do not provide the tools for such a historicization. It is certainly here that we need to come back to the many calls for exploring the intersection between the study of religion and gender. The historical study of clerical masculinities offers an ideal point of view for implementing such an agenda of analytical intersection, considering the centrality of the clergy in medieval Christianity and in early modern and modern Catholicisms and Protestantisms, both in institutional and religious terms.

This also means that to do so we need to seriously account for the specific agency of religious dynamics. In his 2015 paper<sup>22</sup>, Yann Raison du Cleuziou argues that the evolution from an extra-worldly towards an intra-worldly spirituality greatly influenced the evolution of the masculine ideals of Catholic priests. To him, it may help explain the number of priests who chose to leave the priesthood and marry in the 1970s. One could argue that the issue of masculinity is actually somewhat superfluous in this line of reasoning since the shift in spirituality itself suffices to explain departures from the priesthood, of which, for heterosexual priests, marriage is as much a consequence as it is a cause. Yet, what Raison du Cleuziou rightly points to is how a change in spirituality, and particularly in the spirituality of the priesthood, may have influenced gender practices and conceptions. In early modern Catholicism changes in doctrine, spirituality and gender relations appear as strongly connected. The growing misogyny of the Reformation era, as well as the anxieties over masculinity in early modern catholic Europe have very specific religious overtones. They do not appear merely as a reaction to the newfound agency of socially prominent women, they also appear as a reaction to their religious agency. The activation – for instance in polemical discourse – of a certain type of hegemonic rhetoric about gender, and specifically masculinity,

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<sup>21</sup> Paul Airiau, 'Le prêtre catholique. Une virilité problématique et incertaine (1775-1914)' in *Histoire de la virilité*, ed. by Alain Corbin et Georges Vigarello (Paris: Le Seuil, 2011), pp. 241-254.

<sup>22</sup> Yann **Raison** du Cleuziou, art. cit.

may have much to do with how the new social and gender norms of the confessional era challenge earlier ecclesiologies.

The question here is not only that of whether and how Connell's model truly allows for historical investigation of the intersection of gender and religion, but also that of the very methodology for exploring this intersection. In many ways, the question raised so convincingly by Josephine Hoegarts of gender as an analytical category and of religion as a field, is also one of model as well as of vocabulary. One could argue that in order to have a better understanding of the intersection of religion and gender, we need to focus on what actually connects gender and religion. An example here would be the study of the connected dynamics of performance and intermittence<sup>23</sup>, both as affirmation and negation of fiction and reality, can offer insight on the connections between gender and religion and help us analyse both situations of co-construction as well of conflict between the two. In this regard, our choice to focus on the highly performative figure of the priest, a man whose performance of his religious belief and status may both conflict with as well as reinforce performances of masculinity may be particularly welcome. The study of this very issue of the priesthood as both a religious and male performance may help us move towards a more religious history of gender, one we may need as much as we do a more gendered history of religion.

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<sup>23</sup> Albert Piette, *Le fait religieux. Une théorie de la religion ordinaire* (Paris: Economica, 2003).