Throughout history, we have known of many conflicts within the Church and of the tendency of the parties involved in such conflicts to malign each other or brand each other as heretics during the course of the dispute.¹ This would often occur when one party would popularize stereotypes of the opposing party. Polemics in unstable times are nothing new in the history of the Church; polemical treatises have often been used in such times, in order to pointedly develop theological positions.² What insights have they yielded, however, with regard to the historical understanding of a certain period?

During and after the Reformation, for example, the Pope was often regarded as the Anti-Christ. Stories and caricatures of indecent secular and regular clergy were then and later on an element of an anti-clerical and anti-monastic tradition.³ In the nineteenth century Catholics protesting against the First Vatican Council (1869-1870) and against the new dogmas of the infallibility and juridical supremacy of the Pope battled it out, often with heavy verbal attacks, with those who supported these dogmas.

Both sides, at times, called each other “New Catholics”, in order to clarify that it was the other side that had introduced the innovations. The Old Catholics were bad-mouthed by the Roman Catholics as “Anal Catholics”, “Nay Catholics”, “Neo Pagans” or as “Neo Protestants”.

The polemic dispute between Old Catholics and Roman Catholics following the First Vatican Council has been depicted many times. This contribution will bring to

¹ With thanks to Prof. Dr. Jan Jacobs (Tilburg) for his critical commentary on earlier versions of this article and to Joanne Lyons for the translation, made possible with the generous support of the Royal Dutch Academy of Sciences (Koninklijke Nederlandse Akademie van Wetenschappen).
² See, for example, de Kruijff and Meijer Drees, Het lange leven van het pamflet; Bagchi, “Poets, Peasants, and Pamphlets”.
³ Cf. van de Sande, “Decadente monniken en nonnen”.
the role that the gender discourse, i.e. the attribution or denial of masculinity and femininity, played in the conflict. I will describe the construct of masculinity and femininity as a field in which disputes are battled out.

The following will firstly give a more detailed description of the historical context: the background to the emergence of the Old Catholic movement, its early development, and its relations to the ‘Church of Utrecht’. Particular focus will be given to the Old Catholic movement’s matters of reform, which also involved the question of celibacy. Secondly, I will give an overview of how a polemical gender discourse was woven into the conflict between the Old Catholics and Roman Catholics after the First Vatican Council. Feminization of the opposing party will be given primary focus here. I will then focus these more general observations on masculinity and the perception of priesthood, by concentrating on two texts that emerged in the 1870s from the ultramontane and Old Catholic camps. In both texts the issue of celibacy forms the focal point. Finally, I will summarize my observations and demonstrate how both sides claimed true masculinity for themselves.

THE OLD CATHOLIC MOVEMENT AND THE DISCUSSION ABOUT CLERICAL CELIBACY

In the months and years following 18 July 1870 – the day the new Vatican dogmas on the infallibility and juridical supremacy of the Pope were announced – a protest movement was formed in Germany and in other German-speaking countries. The movement named itself “Old Catholic” because the members wished to remain part of the Church as it had been before the First Vatican Council’s innovations and because they recognized in the historic Church of the first thousand years the guiding principles of their ecclesiastical essence.

Between 1871 and 1873, Old Catholic associations and congregations were formed and three congresses were held in Munich (1871), Cologne (1872) and Konstanz (1873). At these congresses strategic decisions were made, plans for church reform were formed, ‘ecumenical’ aims towards the reunion of churches were envisaged, and considerations were made for a church organization for excommunicated Catholics.

Not only German delegates attended the congresses, but also Old Catholics from Switzerland, the Habsburg Empire, and the Netherlands, guests from Anglican, Evangelical, and Orthodox Churches. Due to their widespread effects and especially their objectives, these congresses had a great impact on Old Catholicism as a whole.

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4 Three aspects play a role in the discussion of ‘gender’: historicity of gender, the construct of gender, and dominance. With regard to the latter, the concern is for Heide Wunder “wie ‘Geschlecht’ immer wieder neu definiert wird, um eine erste gesellschaftliche Ordnung durch eine jeweils neu zu verhandelnde Verbindung von Unter- und Überordnung, aber auch von Gleichheit, herstellen zu können.” Cited in Dinges, “Einleitung: Geschlechtergeschichte – mit Männern!”, 10.
5 Cf. for the following Berlis, Frauen im Prozeß, 319-370.
6 In 1874 and 1875 the so called ‘Bonn Union Conferences’ were held, organized and presided over by Ignaz von Döllinger, which were in line with decisions made by the Cologne congress to form a committee for contacts with Orthodox and Anglicans. See: Oeyen, Die Entstehung; Neuner, Döllinger.
In the following I will focus on Germany and will first summarize the key points of the developments there.

In 1873, the Old Catholic movement in Germany established its own bishopric, encompassing the entire German Empire: clergy and lay people elected a bishop, who was officially recognized in several German states as a ‘Catholic bishop’ and who was consecrated by a bishop of the venerable Church of Utrecht. The latter, also called the ‘Roman Catholic Church of the Episcopal Clergy’ (Rooms-Katholieke Kerk van de Bisschoppelijke Cleresie) and known today as the Old Catholic Church of the Netherlands, had emerged in the eighteenth century from a schism between Rome and Utrecht. In the nineteenth century this Church had endured a difficult internal crisis. In its dispute with Rome, the Church of Utrecht had always emphasized its continuity as Roman Catholic Church of the Netherlands and had ensured no changes were made to any aspect of its doctrine or practice. While this Church at the time was seeking, above all, to avoid any changes, it was now faced with the reform-bent, German-speaking Old Catholics, which was to lead to considerable tensions, especially with regard to the question of celibacy.

The German-speaking Old Catholics regarded themselves - even after becoming a Church - as a Catholic reform movement, which sought to do away with certain abuses that had gradually emerged in the fields of cult and church law. They also sought to emphasize the responsibility of lay people and their right to elect vicars and bishops, and later to introduce the use of the vernacular in the liturgy. From the start, the issue of clerical celibacy was disputed. Some Old Catholics considered the abolition of celibacy a part of the reform package, whilst others did not. The debate for and against intensified between 1872 and 1878 and became a standing item of the Synod, which convened annually from 1874 onwards. In this debate the spectrum of viewpoints within the German diocese became visible; though delegates agreed unanimously that compulsory celibacy was an ecclesiastical law and was the cause of many grievances, opinions on the opportunity and urgency of abolishing this church law varied greatly. In the end, in 1878, it did not come to the abolition of compulsory clerical celibacy, but to a general dispensation from rule. The decision of the fifth Synod (1878) was a compromise between the large majority in favour of the abolition of celibacy and the small, but substantial, minority against it (including, for example, Ignaz von Döllinger, the spiritus rector of the movement, and Franz Heinrich Reusch, the vicar general who resigned from office over this issue). The Synod’s decision enabled clergy who wished to marry to continue their work as married priests. Of

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7 See: Schoon, Van bisschoppelijke Cleresie tot Oud-Katholieke Kerk.
8 See for detail: Berlis, “Einde aan een kaste”. On the response of the Dutch bishops to the dispensation from celibacy in the German Old Catholic bishopric, see ibid., 55.
9 Ignaz von Döllinger (1799-1890) in 1823 became Professor of Church History and Church Law in Aschaffenburg, and in Munich in 1826-1890. Besides his activity as political commentator, Döllinger published many academic works and supported the cause for freedom of theological-historical study. From 1869 he was vocal – anonymously at the time – against the infallibility of the pope and became the spiritus rector of the (Old Catholic) opposition movement. He was excommunicated in 1871. Döllinger is included among the most significant church historians of the nineteenth century. On Döllinger, see: Bischof, Theologie und Geschichte. See also the review of this book by Huppertz, “Auf dem Weg”; Id., “Ignaz von Döllinger”.

the 56 clergy in office at the time of this Synod, 17 married. By 1886 half of the German Old Catholic clergy were married (27 of 54).\textsuperscript{10} 

A more detailed presentation of the arguments for and against compulsory clerical celibacy and of the debate’s development must be omitted here for lack of space.\textsuperscript{11} In order to place this debate within its historical context, it is good to note that the discussion of the celibacy issue within Old Catholicism forms part of the wider discussion of celibacy as it took place in the (Roman) Catholic Church, primarily in the early nineteenth century and prior to that. Since the second Lateran Synod under Pope Innocent II (1139) there has been an unaltered ecclesiastical law within the Western Church: the ordination of priests constitutes a distinct obstacle to marriage, i.e. priests cannot marry.\textsuperscript{12} This law has not remained unchallenged, however. The Reformation was certainly the most significant attack on this law - celibacy became a point of distinction between confessions. Nevertheless, the Reformation was not the only challenge to the law. During the course of church history, movements against celibacy have come and gone - not to mention the many forms of violations of the celibacy law that existed.\textsuperscript{13} With regard to the nineteenth century, on which this article focuses, the Roman Catholic priest Winfried Leinweber depicted in his thesis \textit{Der Streit um den Zölibat im 19. Jahrhundert} (“The fight for celibacy in the nineteenth century”) how there was extensive literature on celibacy towards the end of the eighteenth century, yet a “gradual depletion” (a \textit{langsane(n) Erschöpfung}) of the same from the mid-nineteenth century.\textsuperscript{14} According to Leinweber the question of celibacy “cascades over into the Old Catholic movement”; in it, many priests had found “eine praktische ‘Lösung’” (“a practical solution”).\textsuperscript{15} After Leinweber, celibacy remained unquestioned within the Roman Catholic Church at the end of the nineteenth century, and it was only again ‘contested’ in Reform Catholicism or in the modernist movement of the early twentieth century.\textsuperscript{16}

THE POLEMICAL GENDER DEBATE IN THE OLD CATHOLIC/ROMAN CATHOLIC CONFLICT

Up until 1870 various streams co-existed within Catholicism, i.e. more liberal Catholics alongside ultramontanes who became a stronger force within the Roman Catholic Church after the 1850s. One effect of the First Vatican Council was that a polarization emerged, which I have termed ‘internal confessionalization’ in my doctoral thesis

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{10} Cf. von Schulte, \textit{Der Altkatholizismus}, 649.
\item \textsuperscript{11} This will follow in a more extensive study.
\item \textsuperscript{12} Leinweber, \textit{Der Streit}, 3. For the text see Mirbt and Aland, \textit{Quellen}, nr. 573, 298: “... statuimus, quatenus episcopi, presbyteri, diaconi, subdiaconi, regulares canonici et monachi atque conversi professi, qui sanctum transgredientes propositum, uxor(es) sibi copulare praesumpserint, separentur. Huiusmodi namque copulationem, quam contra ecclesiasticam regulam constat esse contractam, matrimoniun non esse censemus.” Mansi, \textit{Sacrorum conciliorum}, 21, 526.
\item \textsuperscript{13} See, for example: Tacke, \textit{Wir wollen}; Flüchter, \textit{Der Zölibat}.
\item \textsuperscript{14} Leinweber, \textit{Der Streit}, 6.
\item \textsuperscript{15} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{16} Ibid., 7.
\end{itemize}
Frauen im Prozeß der Kirchwerdung (1998). I chose this term because both parties continued to regard themselves as ‘Catholics’:

The First Vatican Council signified a breach, but not a complete termination of the spiritual-religious sense of belonging that [Old Catholic] men and women had to the Catholic Church.  

In the initial phase, the Catholics of both trends differed only a little, due to their Catholic socialization and liturgical practice. The effect of their attitudes towards the Vatican dogma, however, could be likened to a sharp sword slicing through silk. Any divergent devotions and ritual practices (e.g. devotions to the Virgin Mary) gained greater importance in the light of the differing viewpoints on the new dogma. These divergent practices became visible distinctive traits, revealing how far removed the two parties were from each other.

In the Old Catholics’ view the supporters of the Vatican were blinded and loyal to the Pope to the point of utter dependence. A closer look reveals that the Old Catholics accused the ultramontane Catholics of rendering religion effeminate. The feminization of the ‘enemy’ is a common rhetorical strategy employed to weaken the other party. In the eyes of the Old Catholics, the ultramontanes had offered no ‘manly’ resistance to the new dogmas but had subjugated themselves to the dogmas in an unmanly and faceless way by sacrificing their intellect (sacrificium intellectus). In their religious practices, too, they were perceived to behave effeminately: they fostered sweet devotions to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, which would be unthinkable in Old Catholic circles. It is not surprising, then, that the Old Catholics did not only take a stand against the new Vatican dogmas, but were also vehemently against the dogma of the Immaculate Conception of Mary, which had already been pronounced by Pope Pius IX in 1854. They observed, in this dogma, a forestalling of the papal claim to power, which became formalized in 1870. While it is clear from the Old Catholics’ theological assertions that they rejected the Marian dogma for biblical, ecclesiological and tradition-related reasons, the Old Catholic press shows that their critique went well beyond the purely theological level and that, on top of everything, the dogma was regarded as the focal point of ultramontane devotion.

Marian apparitions, such as in Marpingen and elsewhere, added fuel to the fire for Old Catholic authors. In 1876, Mary appeared to three eight year-old girls in Mar-
pingen, a village in the Saarland region.21 The apparition strongly resembled the one in Lourdes (1858).22 Soon Marpingen was described as ‘the German Lourdes’. For a few years, masses of pilgrims travelled to the place. In his important study of this event, British historian David Blackbourn has indicated the Kulturkampf as a background to this. The Old Catholic press at the time (similarly to the Evangelical press) reacted sharply against it and simply dismissed such apparitions as superstition and Muttergottesschwindel [“Mother of God spin”].23

This type of Marian devotion with its stock of passive metaphors and its theological appeals for atonement was befitting of the societal roles attributed to women.

The Old Catholics disassociated themselves from ultramontane Catholicism in all its expressions.24 Women, thereby, at times became the personification of that from which male Old Catholics wished to distance themselves. This is clear from a closer study of the first three Old Catholic Congresses (1871-1873). Women were excluded from participating at these congresses.25 An analysis of the congress reports, however, reveals that, though women were physically absent, they were very much present in examples or metaphors.26 For many speakers at the congresses there was nothing worse than the ultramontane woman who, in the confessional, was entirely dependent on the priest, thereby relinquishing her entire family to ultramontanism. Women were regarded here as the instrument of the Roman Catholic clergy - this was an utterly prevalent image in liberal middle-class circles and was argued, for example, by the French writer Jules Michelet in his book Du prêtre, de la femme, de la famille, which was translated into several languages.27

However, attempts were also made in Roman Catholic polemics to devalue the Old Catholic movement by using women. Women were made the measure for the Old Catholics’ lack of piety (from an ultramontane perspective). At one point, for instance, it is pointed out that there were Old Catholic women who would rather read the illustrated family paper Die Gartenlaube28 (Garden Shed) than go to confession or

21 On Marpingen, see: Blackbourn, Marpingen.
22 See Harris, Lourdes.
24 This is demonstrated by the numerous Old Catholic publications on the theme, cf. for example Goetz, Der Ultramontanismus.
25 According to current law, women were not permitted to take part in meetings that were termed ‘political’. In 1871 the situation in Munich was very tense, as a result of which the preparation committee decided to exclude women from participating in the congress. This decision, incidentally, was not undisputed, as it was understood that it would eliminate the possibility to inform women of Old Catholic aims and interests. This precautionary measure served to pre-empt dissolution of the congress, which would certainly have been sought by the ultramontane side. After the Munich congress, lectures on the Old Catholic movement were held especially for women. Cf. Berlis, Frauen im Prozeß, 257-264; for the ultramontane reaction to this, see ibid., 356.
26 Ibid., 319-370.
27 Cf. Michelet, Du prêtre.
28 This weekly newspaper, which was founded by the radical liberal Ernst Keil in 1853, was intended for a middle-class readership and reflects the middle-class code of norms and values. In the era of the Kulturkampf, the paper supported the Prussian politics. Therefore it is not surprising that the Gartenlaube was reviewed as follows by the ultramontane press: “There can hardly be any other paper that combats Christianity so energetically and that has such intense hatred of the
take the sacraments: 29 according to Roman Catholic polemics, Old Catholic women presented themselves more as middle-class liberal rather than strict Catholic. 30

Closer study has shown that these images of each other were only a limited representation of reality - reality, of course, revealed a much wider spectrum of religious practices. For example, in 1874 the first Old Catholic Synod had prepared a commentary on auricular confession, aimed against abuse of this practice. The ultramontane press immediately regarded this as an abolition of the sacrament of penance. 31 However, many Old Catholic women in the Rhineland continued, as evidenced, to go to confession just as they had previously done (the case was different in the liberal Grand Duchy of Baden). Such statements, especially those with a polemical background, must be seen as belonging to the discourse of disassociation and of masculinity which aided the shaping and founding of one’s own identity. 32

This short exposition shows that Roman Catholic and Old Catholic men were in agreement on one point: both groups were of the assumption that, on a religious level, women were able to influence their husbands and other family members. On both sides, however, women were exploited. On the one hand, a woman was regarded less as an independent agent, and more as an ‘instrument’ being used by a third party. On the other hand, each group would involve and include ‘good’ women in parallel to the women of the other side who were thus defamed as ‘bad’, and they would thereby domesticate these women (by binding them to their own group’s code of conduct). The distinction between ‘good’ and ‘bad’ is thus accompanied by a code of behaviour against which not only ‘bad women’ are held to account, but also ‘good women’. The conflict between Old Catholics and Roman Catholics following the First Vatican Council took place amidst the period of the_Kulturkampf_. A few years ago

Catholic Church” [Original: “Es gibt kaum ein zweites Blatt, welches das Christenthum so energisch bekämpft, die katholische Kirche so intensiv haßt.”]. Deutsche Reichs-Zeitung, 7 (31 March 1878), nr. 89. The editor of the Gartenlaube published, in return, a few reports on critiques from ecclesial (not only ultramontane, but also orthodox-Protestant) circles of the Gartenlaube. In the eyes of its critics the content of the Gartenlaube was a ‘fine poison’ (feines Gift), which was “not suitable for a Christian housewife”. See Gartenlaube, (1873), 738.

29 See Berlis, Frauen im Prozeß, 355. The Gartenlaube of 1874 includes poems and images that take up the theme of “Women and confession”. See Gartenlaube, (1874), 150-151 (“Am Beichtstuhl”) and ibid., 398-399 (“Gang zur Beichte”). It appears that ultramontane authors also read the Gartenlaube, as they knew about church critique (of the Roman Catholic Church) that was found within. Old Catholics such as Döllinger (see above, note 9) or Loyson (see below, note 42), however, had good press coverage in the Gartenlaube. Cf. Gartenlaube, (1870), 144 (Döllinger) and (1869), 715-716; (1872), 668 (Loyson).

30 The German word for ‘strict Catholic’ is strengkirchlich, which indicates an ultramontane ecclesiastical viewpoint.

31 Cf. Beschlüsse, 50-53. The Synod strictly maintained the sacrament of penance, but at the same time named the abortive developments in the practice of auricular confession, such as renewed confession of sins at a repeated confession (the so-called devotion confession) and the practice of questioning by the father confessor. The Synod, instead, maintained that believers should be led “nach ihrem eigenen Gewissen zu handeln” [“to act according to their own conscience”] (ibid., 51). The Synod explicitly emphasized the importance of accounting for the various individual needs and situations (ibid., 53). See also Berlis, Frauen im Prozeß, 337-342.

32 See the contribution by Stobbe who, however, disregards the aspect of the masculinity debate: “Konflikte um Identität”.
Michael Gross identified the centrality of gender in the *Kulturkampf*. He pointed out that leading liberal politicians regarded the Roman Catholic Church as female and the State as male. Gross claims that a huge fear of women and of the women’s movement plays a role in the background of the *Kulturkampf*, especially the fear of their presence in the public realm or in public debate. However, in his interesting book Gross has overlooked the fact that there was a discussion not only between (political) liberals and the Roman Catholic Church, but also within Catholicism itself. It was not Catholicism itself that was regarded as feminized, rather Roman, ultramontane Catholicism. Old Catholics and liberals agreed on this interpretation (many male Old Catholics, incidentally, were members of the national-liberal party). The gendered rhetoric, which according to Gross was typical of *Kulturkampf* rhetoric, is also partly found in the conflict between Old and Roman Catholics. One can conclude that the gender discourse serves the mutual differentiation of various groups from each other, also of groups within Catholicism.

Masculinity is defined, or distinguished, in relation to women. The construct of masculinity helps to express, accentuate and structurally anchor the distinctions between the genders. The following will take a further look at the distinctions and disassociations within a gender by discussing the masculinity discourse and perception of the priesthood as reflected in two popular texts with polemical undertones. These texts, both originating from the 1870s, do not focus on the theological perspective of the priesthood; rather they reflect the people’s perception and expectations of Catholic priests. The one text is written from a Roman Catholic, the other from an Old Catholic perspective.

**THE MASCULINITY DISCOURSE AND PERCEPTION OF THE PRIESTHOOD**

In 1873 the narrative *Priesterthum oder Hochzeit?* (Priesthood or marriage?) by A. Franke was published as the first in a series entitled “Der Zeitgeist: beleuchtet für das katholische Volk” (“The spirit of the age: clarified for the Catholic people”). No further details could be found on the author, who was presumably resident in Bavaria. His narrative was addressed to “the Catholic people”, for whom this “contribution to an understanding of several contemporary questions” (as it was subtitled) was written. The story takes place in a public house in a small, rural town, where various

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33 Cf. Gross, *The War Against Catholicism*. Gross refers here to the professor of Roman law and representative of the German Protestant Union, Johann Kaspar Bluntschli (1808-1881). Bluntschli pointed out that in modern European languages, the Church is grammatically feminine whereas the State is grammatically masculine (cf. ibid., 201).

34 See Planert, *Antifeminismus*.

35 This signifies the concept of hegemonic masculinity. See Connell, *Masculinities*. Cf. the seminal discussion by Dinges, “Hegemoniale Männlichkeit”.

36 Franke, *Priesterthum oder Hochzeit?*

37 He did write a further text in the above series: Franke, *Nicht nach Canossa!*

38 The other narratives in this series also deal with current issues or events in the time of the *Kulturkampf*, e.g. von Schaching, *Ein gefangener Bischof*; Frei, *Clara*. Twelve issues were found in the library catalogue (*Karlsruher Virtueller Katalog*).
gentlemen fall into discussion at the table, whilst an extensive Marian procession passes by in the street outside. The little town is a place of pilgrimage in Bavaria and it is the eve of the festival of Mary’s birth (8 September). The gentlemen exchange the hopes they had initially placed in the Old Catholic movement and its most important leaders. Those that are named are: Ignaz von Döllinger, Johann Friedrich, Friedrich Michelis, Père Hyacinthe Loyson and Alois Anton. A civil servant, who is a proponent of the ultramontane position and of the Roman Catholic people and who, in the course of the discussion, will persuade his fellow drinking partners of his conviction, brings his critique to the following point: the Old Catholics speak of infallibility but their concern thereby is actually about marriage. The civil servant tries to demonstrate that the Old Catholics are not only against the dogmas of 1870, but are also fighting against “the inner essence of Catholicism”. As ‘evidence’ he points to the Old Catholic critique of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception (1854) (for him this is apparently part of the essence of Catholicism!) and uses this critique against them. Whoever dares “to rip out a single jewel from the crown of God’s mother” will turn the people against him: “It is especially here that our people’s feelings are so heartfelt and true as they will always recognize a false belief with utmost certainty, if it dares to involve the Lord’s mother”. Criticism of Mary, criticism of papal infallibility – in this civil servant’s eyes the Old Catholics are teachers of false doctrine. His further criticism is directed against the Old Catholic clergy whom he regards as irresponsible, practically faithless priests. This is demonstrated by the Old Catholic clergy’s alleged “addiction to women” (Weibersucht): “They wanted to have women or they

39 The choice of names indicates a focus on the southern German (esp. Bavarian) and Austrian context of the text. Prominent personalities from Rhineland are not named. Friedrich Michelis, who is mentioned, is the only leader from the north, though he was known to be an itinerant preacher. The Frenchman Loyson often spent time in Munich in the early 1870s and had attended the Old Catholic congress at Constance in 1873.

40 Johann Friedrich (1836-1917) was professor of church history in Munich from 1872 and later professor in Bern, Berlis, Frauen im Prozeß, 111. At the Cologne congress in 1872 Friedrich had spoken out against adopting the abolition of celibacy into the resolutions. He remained unmarried and an opponent of marriage for priests until his death.

41 Friedrich Michelis (1815-1886), professor of philosophy in Braunsberg, Old Catholic vicar in Freiburg: Ibid., 103.

42 Charles (Hyacinthe) Loyson (1827-1912), former Carmelite, Old Catholic vicar in Geneva, founder of the Église catholique gallicane in France: Ibid., 204. In 1872, he married Emilie James, daughter of Mr. Amory Butterfield, widow of Edwin Ruthwen Meriman.


44 Franke, Priesterthum oder Hochzeit?, 10, 11 ff.

45 Franke, Priesterthum oder Hochzeit?, 14: “das innere Wesen des Katholizismus”.

46 Ibid., 17. “Ich bin der Ueberzeugung, daß wir beim katholischen Volke sehr schief ankommen, wenn wir es wagen, einen einzigen Edelstein aus der Krone der Gottesmutter herauszureißen. Gerade darin fühlt unser Volk so tief innig und wahr, daß es eine Irrlehre am sichersten immer dann erkennt, wenn sie an die Mutter des Herrn sich wagt.”


48 The German Weib has more derogative connotations than ‘woman’.
wished to cover up their earlier wrongdoings in the new apostolate.”

In short, “Old Catholicism is and remains skirt hunting of the dirtiest kind”; it is concerned more with petticoats than with theology.

Even the Munich church historian and spiritus rector of the Old Catholic movement, Ignaz von Döllinger, does not escape criticism. Döllinger was a known opponent of the abolition of celibacy and the civil servant cannot claim that he would have violated the vow of celibacy. Nevertheless, Döllinger becomes - probably because of his important role within Old Catholicism - a target too. Döllinger is placed in the proximity of women, who are always termed pejoratively as Weiber in the narrative: He is depicted as a “woman’s theologian” (Weibertheolog) and has developed “his theological opinions in the presence of wenches”.

Döllinger’s conversational partners are no longer men such as Johann Adam Möhler, Joseph Görres or Ernst von Lasaulx (famous Catholics of the time, all deceased by then), but crazy women in private conventicles (Privatzirkeln). Döllinger in fact is not only placed here in the proximity of women, but is also transferred from the public sphere into the private sphere.

These feminized Old Catholic priests, who do not even appear priestly in their behaviour or their clothing, are contrasted in the narrative with the men of the gentlemen’s circle, especially the civil servant, who are true men, full of “manly convictions and manly deeds”.

At the end all gentlemen return to Roman Catholicism, the last one while standing before a statue of Mary at the entrance to his home. It is clear to readers of this narrative that it is, in the end, Mary who calls the men home from their ‘false’ Old Catholic ways. The claim is clearly made that the thousands of pilgrims outside must be considered “our people’s response to the Old Catholic movement”. Finally, the civil servant, despite his attraction to the daughter of one of the gentlemen, chooses the path of priesthood.

In summary: the construction of masculinity within a gender group occurs likewise by disassociation from other men who do not belong to the same group. With regard to priests, this differentiation is made visible in their relationship to women (sexual or not). In short: a “be-womaned priest” (beweibter Priester) can no longer be a real priest.

49 Ibid., 22. “Weiber wollten sie haben oder ihr früheres schlechtes Leben durch das neue Apostolat decken.”
50 Ibid. Der “Altkatholizismus ist und bleibt eine Weibergeschichte der schmutzigsten Art”.
51 On Döllinger’s attitude see: Berlis, “See lensorge”.
53 All who are mentioned belonged to the famous Görreskreis in Munich, the circle around the historian and political commentator, Joseph Görres (1776-1848), an important representative of German political Catholicism.
54 See note 52.
55 Ibid., 27. “Mannesueberzeugung und Mannesthat”.
56 Ibid., 12.
The second example, which I would like to expand on here, comes from an Old Catholic author. It is the Denkschrift des Propstes von Mogilno (Memoir of the Provost of Mogilno) by Josaphat Sylvester Suszczynski (* 1827), which appeared in 1876 at the height of the Old Catholic debate on celibacy. In this Memoir the author presents the reasons for his marriage. Suszczynski’s change of direction towards the Old Catholic bishopric caused a great sensation due to his high ecclesial position. He had already married Anna Rosalie von Gajewska in 1875.

In contrast to Franke’s narrative, this concerns personal, autobiographical reflections of the former provost, in justification of his move. Suszczynski goes on the assumption that “in general, the clergy will only become independent of the hierarchy, when the clergyman becomes a complete man.” The man has a right to marry. For Suszczynski, the virtues of the husband are conceivable for a clerical husband: “the sacrificial dedication to one’s kin, the faithful practice of domestic duties, the mutual loyalty, honour and love”. True heroism “of selfless devotion to the church” is not only demonstrated in the renunciation of marriage. Suszczynski claims it is also found in “confronting immoral prejudice with all one’s strength and by combating the superstitious belief of the masses in the semi-magical character of the priesthood with regard to celibacy.” Suszczynski also makes a plea for achieving “male freedom” in the area of overcoming clerical celibacy. The realization also became accepted among the people that “a righteous priest’s marriage is better than such a Holy Joe cleric’s life!” Suszczynski regarded a Holy Joe cleric (in German: Pfaffe) as a “shepherd of souls, concerned only with himself”, while in his eyes a priest was a shepherd “who devotes himself to the good of souls.”

Suszczynski is concerned that priests should learn to “regard themselves as free, complete men, who voluntarily enforce the gravity of their duties towards the church community by taking on the great responsibility of family duties.” The opposite is the alleged freedom of the Roman Catholic priest with his “artificially cold flame of a monk’s zeal”, the “blind allegiance to church laws and church hierarchy”. In contrast, the Old Catholic priest presided over the church community “not only in the

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57 Suszczynski, Denkschrift.
58 The church marriage was consecrated by the Old Catholic parish priest Johannes Matthias Watterich on 19 September 1875 in Basel (Switzerland). Cf. Katholische Blätter, 3 (1875), 40, 318.
59 Suszczynski, Denkschrift, 6: “Selbstständig aber wird der Clerus gegenüber der Hierarchie im Allgemeinen nur, wenn der Geistliche ein voller Mann wird.”
60 Suszczynski, Denkschrift, 6: “die opfervolle Hingabe für die Seinen, die treue Uebung der häusli- chen Pflichten, die gegenseitige Treue, Ehre und Liebe”.
61 Ibid., 33: “einem unsittlichen Vorurtheil mit aller Kraft entgegentritt und den Aberglauben der Menge an den halb magischen Charakter des Priesterthums in Bezug auf Ehelosigkeit bekämpft.”
62 Ibid., 35: “besser eine rechtschaffene Priesterehe als solch ein Pfaffenleben!”
63 Ibid., 5, note: A Holy Joe Cleric is “der auf sich allein bedachte Seelenhirte”, a priest is “der für das Wohl der Seelen sich hingebende” shepherd.
64 Ibid., 38: “als freie, volle Männer betrachten [zu] lernen, die sich den Ernst ihrer Berufspflichten gegen die Gemeinde freiwillig noch durch die so schwer verantwortliche Uebernahme von Familienpflichten verstärken.”
65 Ibid., 38: “Er unterhält im besten Falle in sich das künstlich kalte Feuer der Mönchsbegeisterung, ... die ihm den blinden Gehorsam gegen die Kirchengesetze und Kirchenoberen als das Ideal der christlichen Vollkommenheit erscheinen läßt”.

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spirit of a true father”, but also committed himself “in a special covenant of loyalty to wife and child” and faithfully fulfilled “the full duties of a man as any other in the community”.66 The relationship between priest and community also differs: whereas in Roman Catholicism the bishop’s favour on the priest counts for more than the favour of the congregation, and the church members are regarded as sheep, in Old Catholicism the “marriage between pastor and congregation” is shaped by the equality of lay and clergy.

As the historian Martina Kessel has demonstrated, Germany of the nineteenth century is permeated by this longing for the ‘complete man’.67 The integration of sensitivity, passion, a sense of community and an ability to love are requested of such a ‘complete’ man, i.e. a combination of ‘female’ and ‘male’ aptitudes, in the private and public realm. Sexuality was also part of a ‘real’ man.68 As we saw with Suszczynski, the ‘Holy Joe cleric’ is regarded as an egocentric shepherd of souls, while the priest is the shepherd who cares for others, has fatherly traits and proves himself a ‘complete man’ in all aspects of life - in his relationships with the church community, with the bishop and in family life. With respect to this characterization the priest or Holy Joe cleric is not only characterized in terms of pastoral care, but also in terms of manhood.

The sharp distinction between ‘priest’ and ‘Holy Joe cleric’ (Pfaffe) is also found in texts of other Old Catholics, for example in one of the most influential texts during the Old Catholic debate on celibacy, published by the Old Catholic lay leader Johann Friedrich von Schulte in the same year as Suszczynski’s Denkschrift.69

To further clarify the polemical distinction between Pfaffe and ‘priest’ the following observation by Róisín Healy may be of assistance. She recently drew attention to the fact that the polemic against certain Orders, in particular against the Jesuits (a polemic which as it happens was also commonly found in German Old Catholicism), was not least connected to the fact that the Jesuits were regarded as androgynous.70 On the one hand, a Jesuit was a man of deeds, feared by others; on the other hand, a Jesuit

66 Ibid., 38-39: “Der junge altkatholische Priester vielmehr gewöhne sich vor Allem an die Idee, dass er einst nicht blos der Gemeinde im Geiste eines wahren Vaters vorstehen, sondern sich auch noch durch ein specielles Band der Treue an Weib und Kind binden und die die vollsten Pflichten des Mannes wie jeder andere in der Gemeinde treu erfüllen wolle”.
67 Kessel, “The ‘Whole’ Man”. She speaks about the “ganzer Mann (the whole, well-rounded, but also ‘real’ or ‘proper’ man)”, ibid., 2.
68 Ibid., 8-11.
69 See von Schulte, Der Cölibatszwang, 96. Schulte’s text is a treatise concerning church law and history, in which the masculinity discourse is raised in a far less direct way than in, for example, Suszczynski. Schulte’s view on the relationship of priest and pastor completes Suszczynski’s account. Schulte expressed his hope that “nicht das Priesterthum, wohl hoffentlich aber das Pfaffenthum” [“not priesthood as such, but hopefully Holy Joe clericalism”] would stand and fall with celibacy (ibid.). With this he meant that clergy were accustomed to “als eine höhere, zum Herrschen bestimmte Menschenklasse zu betrachten” [“regard themselves as a higher class of people who were meant to rule”] who considered the foundation of the family, church community and the state as an annoyance to be suffered (ibid.). For real church reform, the priest should “wieder als Mensch, Bürger, Patriot fühle[n]” [“once again feel himself to be a human, citizen, patriot”] (ibid.). For Schulte’s position in the discussion of celibacy see: Berlis, “Johann Friedrich von Schultes Stellung”.
70 Cf. Healy, “Anti-Jesuitism in Imperial Germany”; Id., The Jesuit Specter in Imperial Germany.
was also perceived to be a slave subjugated to papal authority: “it was the Jesuit’s ambiguous sexual identity that made him seem particularly threatening”.  

In reference to the views of ‘Holy Joe cleric’ and ‘priest’ it should then be noted that the Holy Joe cleric is not a real man (he is more androgynous, which was perceived negatively in the nineteenth century), whereas the priest who practices his job in all freedom and with care is a real man. If he is able, in addition, to practice care privately, he is even more of a real man.  

What can be concluded from these two texts by Franke and Suszczynski with regard to the gendering, the feminization, of the opposing party? In the ultramontane discourse mentioned above, the non-celibate priest is associated with the female world and is, thereby, infected by the feminine (feminized). In the Old Catholic discourse mentioned above the non-celibate priest becomes the symbol of real manhood, with all male virtues (including freedom, loyalty and courage, as well as care for the weak, etc.).

**SIX THESES AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

1. British historian Hugh McLeod speaks of the feminization of religion as a result of men abandoning the church. Catholic laymen had rejected other (clerical) men’s claims to have authority over them. It is perhaps the legally-rooted responsibility of Old Catholic laypersons at all levels of church leadership, from parish to diocese, that offers an explanation and that provided a safeguard against a potential exodus of men from the Old Catholic church.

The strong presence of men in the public debate around the First Vatican Council shows that they very much felt responsible for religion and religious questions and apparently saw it as a ‘male’ duty to lead the religious-theological battle against ultramontanism. One of the weapons used on both sides was feminization and defamation of the opponent and the masculinization of the own side to prove its superiority.

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71 Id., “Anti-Jesuitism in Imperial Germany”, 163.

72 The theory of the feminization of religion was first put forward by American Barbara Welter and has, in recent years, been adapted critically for European Christianity as well. Cf. for example Schneider, “Feminisierung der Religion”. Schneider points out, among other things, that there is a need for more precision of what is meant: feminization of church staff, feminization of believers (and of voluntary work), feminization of piety, discursive feminization. Cf. also the recently published overview by Van Osselaer and Buerman, “Feminization Thesis”.

73 McLeod, “Weibliche Frömmigkeit”.

74 In fact, laymen, since women were only given the active and passive right to vote in the German Old Catholic Church from 1920.

75 After the end of the Kulturkampf, from the 1880s onwards a “familiarization” of Old Catholic parishes took place (cf. Berlis, *Frauen im Prozeß*, 631-634). Women created their own space in which they contributed to parish life (women’s associations). As they remained within contemporary gender roles, these actions did not bring about any role conflicts and therefore did not question the leading public role of men (cf. ibid., 633). It was only at the start of the twentieth century that this changed to a greater extent as women began to demand more co-responsibility on a parish level and eventually from 1920 made their entrance into parish leadership (from the mid-1960s into leadership on a diocesan level). Cf. Berlis, “Der Bund”.

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In the conflict between Old Catholics and Roman Catholics a number of differing notions and expectations of the office bearer were at stake. The central significance of the priest is not surprising, since the Catholic understanding is that a congregation can only be regarded as Catholic in the fullest sense if it has a priest (who is under a bishop) to preside at the Eucharist. Besides this more theological view, a discussion took place, more or less explicitly, about what constitutes real masculinity and manhood and in what way the priest is a real man. The discussion of celibacy can therefore be regarded as an expression of a masculinity discourse. This contribution has shown that each party itself made claim to this masculinity, though with differing arguments and by differentiating itself from the opposing party. The ultramontane party defined Old Catholic priests as “addicted to women”; it can thus be concluded that they reasoned the masculinity of the celibate priest on the basis of his distance from women (including his male sacrificial readiness etc.). The Old Catholics, on the other hand, perceived the ultramontane celibate priests as ‘feminized’ due to their dependence on Rome, whereas they considered resistance against Rome to be manly. At the same time the Old Catholics had the task of integrating new aspects – the priest’s position as husband and father – as consistent with priesthood, into the traditional Catholic perception of the priest.

The discussion of celibacy became part of the discussion of the perception of priesthood – this incidentally not only pertained to the Old Catholic debate, but also to the entire nineteenth century. The Old Catholic notion of priesthood reflects an ideal that simultaneously contains a contrasting image, from which the Old Catholics differentiated themselves: the priest was attributed a role in educating the people (against superstition) and was to be the “doctor of the soul”, not “someone who scouts out family relations, or a political schemer”. The Old Catholic image of the priest, as is described at Synods and Congresses, and in the publications of laypersons and clergy, also includes the contemporary prevalent values and world views of men and manhood, partly inherited from the Enlightenment, partly bourgeois-liberal.

That the discussion of celibacy took place amidst the polemical atmosphere of the post-Vatican council’s ecclesiastical debates and during the Kulturkampf may
explan the severity of the confrontations. The reason why such significance was apportioned to this church disciplinary (and therefore resolvable according to simple canon law) issue only becomes clear, however, when it is understood that the discussion took place at an historical interface where differing opinions of the priest’s relationship to ecclesial and state authority, differing perspectives on the role of modern science and the relationship to modernity collided. The gendering of the opposing party was an effective method of putting the opponent in his place, dismissing his views and even propagating varyingly gendered Catholicisms.

5. To start with we examined the historical insights gained from polemical texts and those gained from applying the gender perspective. The results can be divided on several levels.

In terms of methodology, the involvement of the gender perspective implies extending the perspectives with a new approach to the question. This has shown how fruitful it is to take a closer look at the use of ‘feminization’ or ‘masculinization’ as a tool for differentiation or even defamation, especially in situations of polemical debate. The question must always be asked as to who assigns whom which position, with which aim in the gender debate, and which contemporary connotations of masculinity and femininity play a role in this.

In terms of content, a new understanding of historical circumstances and interpretations of values are gained. Reviewing polemical statements and applying the gender perspective lead to an approach that, in any polarization, takes its starting point from the interrelation of the ‘adversaries’, rather than from their separation. On the one hand this means that Old Catholicism and Roman Catholicism are still perceived in their centrifugal and centripetal force fields, in which so-called attraction and repulsion can be explained as two sides of the same coin. These, then, no longer remain stuck on the expressions “We have no pope, no Mary, no celibacy...”, which are so frequently heard on the Old Catholic side. Instead they allow us to recognize temporary models of response and behaviour that are today - within our different historical context - historically outdated. Placing a reform within its historical context and reviewing the polemical aspects of history can lead to a new awareness of a reform’s essence whereby any polemic or disassociation loses emphasis. In the interdenominational discourse a historical contextualization of this kind could lead to a new valuation of certain issues that have, since long ago, been highly explosive. It could be a contribution to the purification or reconciliation of memory.

6. It is striking, that in a purely theological argument for and against clerical celibacy a gender discourse as the one discussed above is much more difficult to trace and to determine. How can we explain this? It should be assumed that the gender discourse also plays a part in theological discourse on clerical celibacy, though in a more subtle way. It is probably the situation of conflict, the altercation that promotes gender discourse and uncovers it even in its caricatured expressions.

The inclusion of Roman Catholic and Old Catholic sources, historical interpretations, and perspectives in the study of Catholicism can, through comparative studies at least, shed great light on the importance of the gender discourse for the historical and contemporary character of religious traditions.

\(^{80}\) See my inaugural lecture: Berlis, Vergelijking, 24.
Devotional image of Our Lady and Jesus, imported from Italy, c. 1900.
[Louvain, KADOC-KU Leuven]