

Inquisitorial Inquiries



Brief Lives of Secret Jews
and Other Heretics

Second Edition

Edited and Translated by

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Lives of a few lines or a few pages, nameless misfortunes and adventures gathered into a handful of words. Brief lives, encountered by chance in books and documents. *Exempla*, but unlike those collected by the sages in the course of their reading, they are examples that convey not so much lessons to ponder as brief effects whose force fades almost at once.

—MICHEL FOUCAULT, *Lives of Infamous Men*

Contents

<i>List of Maps</i>	<i>ix</i>
<i>Preface</i>	<i>xi</i>
Introduction	1
1 Renegade Jew: Luis de la Ysla	21
2 A Protestant Threat? Esteban Jamete	36
3 Sexuality and the Marriage Sacrament: Elena/Eleno de Céspedes	64
4 Miguel de Piedrola: The "Soldier-Prophet"	88
5 The Price of Conversion: Francisco de San Antonio and Mariana de los Reyes	116
6 A Captive's Tale: Diego Díaz	147
7 Keeping the Faith: Doña Blanca Méndez de Rivera	180
<i>Glossary</i>	217
<i>Index</i>	223

Sexuality and the Marriage Sacrament

Elena/Eleno de Céspedes

Elena de Céspedes was born a slave in Valencia. Her mother was Moorish and her father Christian, and she was raised as a Christian. Elena's master freed her from slavery when she was a child. At age sixteen, Elena married Cristóbal Lombardo. A few months later, while Elena was pregnant with their child, Cristóbal abandoned her because, Elena said, "she did not get along with him." Leaving her baby with friends, Elena moved from town to town throughout southern and central Spain. In the process, she changed careers several times, from tailor to hosier to soldier and finally to licensed surgeon. She also changed from female to male dress, had affairs with women, and began to call herself by the masculine version of her name, Eleno.

In 1586, at age forty, Elena, living as Eleno, married twenty-four-year-old María del Caño. They lived together as man and wife in a small town outside of Toledo for one year. Then in June of 1587, acting on a neighbor's accusation, the local royal official (*corregidor*) arrested Elena and her wife for committing "the nefarious crime of sodomy," a capital offense, in this case broadly defined as the crime of engaging in homosexual acts. Elena claimed she was innocent of these charges because she was, in fact, male. Shortly after the *corregidor* arrested Elena, the Spanish Inquisition's Tribunal of Toledo claimed jurisdiction over the case and charged Elena with sorcery

and "disrespect for the marriage sacrament." Elena argued before the tribunal that she was innocent of their charges because, in reality, she was a hermaphrodite whose two sets of sexual organs made both of her marriages licit and because as a hermaphrodite she could live alternately as a man and a woman without invoking the Devil's aid, as the sorcery charge implied.

Holy Office of the Inquisition, Tribunal of Toledo, Trial of Elena/o de Céspedes:

In the morning audience of the Tribunal of Toledo on 17 July 1587, Inquisitor don Lope de Mendoza presiding.¹ By his command a woman in men's garb was taken from her jail cell and brought before him. She swore an oath in the proper form, in which she promised to tell the truth in this audience as in all other audiences in which she may appear until her case may be resolved, and to keep secret [the contents of these proceedings].

She said, "My name is Elena de Céspedes. I was born in Alhama and I'm forty-one or two years old."² When asked for her genealogy, she made the following statement:

Father: "Pedro Hernández, born in Alhama. He's a farmer and owns a mill. My mother, Francisca de Medina, is deceased, but I believe my father is still alive. Francisca de Medina, my mother, was from Málaga, and she was dark [*morena*]."

Paternal Grandparents: "I never met my grandparents, paternal or maternal, and don't know any of their names."

Aunts and Uncles on Her Father's Side: "My father didn't have siblings that I know of."³

Aunts and Uncles on Her Mother's Side: "My mother didn't have any siblings, that I know of."

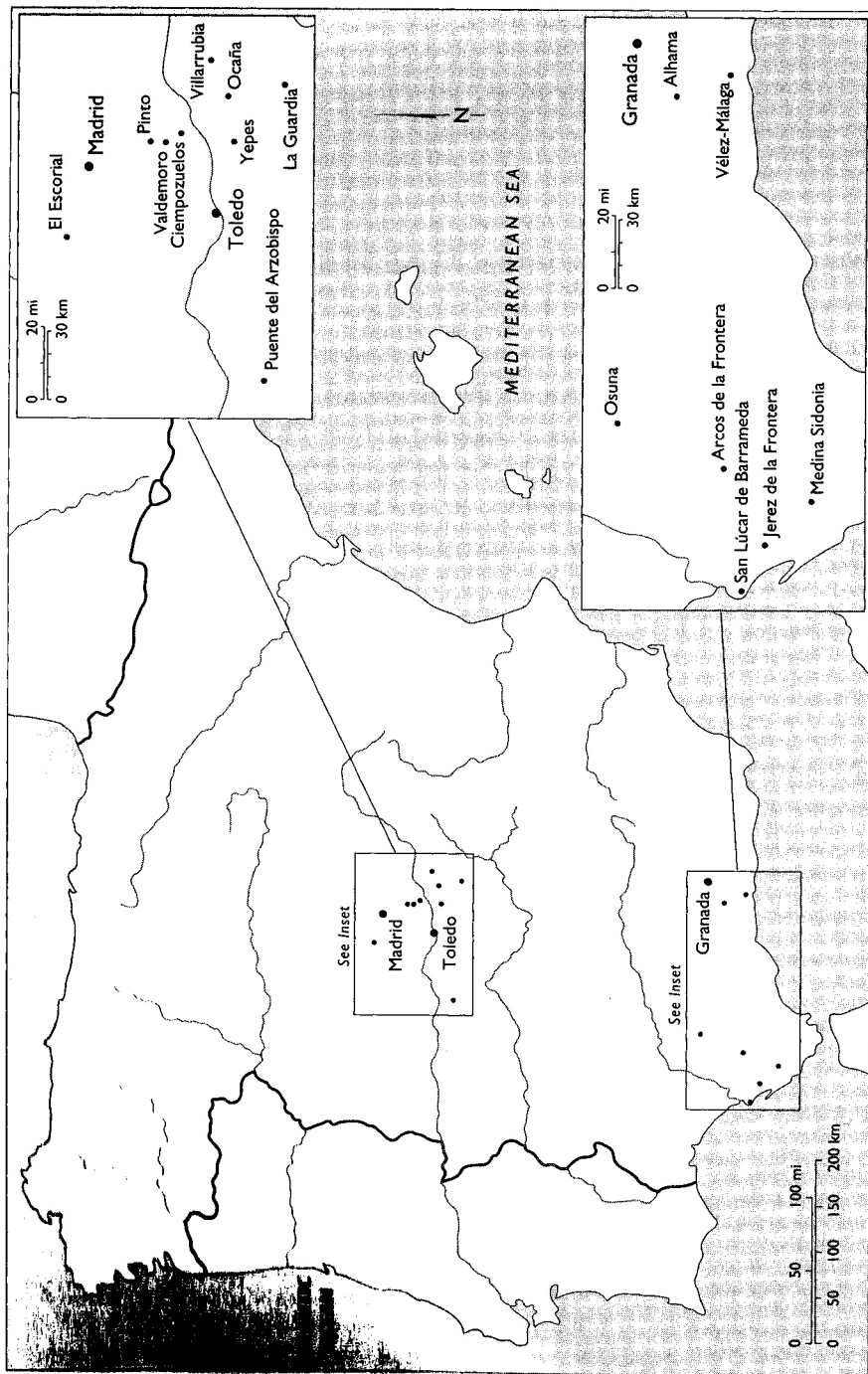
Brothers and Sisters of His:⁴ "Juan de Medina, who was my mother's son and also, I think, my father's. He lives in Granada and has lived in Vélez-Málaga and in Alhama."

1. Our transcription and translation are based upon the materials included in Archivo Histórico Nacional, Madrid, Sección de Inquisición, Tribunal de Toledo, leg. 234, exp. 24.

2. A town near Granada, in southern Spain.

3. The scribe has rendered this in the masculine, "that he knows of," possibly out of confusion caused by Elena's masculine appearance. The scribe writes the rest of Elena's genealogy mixing the masculine and feminine but shifts back definitively to the feminine when he arrives at the question of Elena's marital status.

4. I.e., Elena's.



4. Travels of Elena/Eleno de Céspedes

Asked if she was married or single and if she had children, she said, "When I was sixteen years old my parents married me in Alhama to Cristóbal Lombardo, a mason, who was a native of Jaén [marginalia: she married as a woman, which she was]. We married and celebrated our veiling in Alhama.⁵ We lived together as man and wife for about three months. I had a son with him, who's also named Cristóbal [inquisitorial marginalia: she bore a son]. I don't know if he's alive, since I left him in Seville at Mario Antonio's house. Mario Antonio is a foreigner who lives in La Laguna. He's well known in Seville and leases an oven. I think my son [was raised by?] Catalina, a maid on Losal Street. I haven't had any other children. I think Cristóbal Lombardo died in Baza a short time after he married me.

"About fifteen months ago I got married again, this time to María del Caño, daughter of Francisco del Caño from Ciempozuelos. We married and celebrated our veiling in Ciempozuelos. The priest there married us and the assistant priest of Yepes celebrated the veiling. My godparents were Augustín del Castillo and his wife María de Paz, both from Yepes. There were several upstanding people in attendance, whose names I didn't know."

When asked if she was an Old Christian, she said, "My parents and I, I believe, are Old Christians, although my mother was a slave and was black, and was probably a Gentile.⁶ None of us has ever been a prisoner of, or disciplined by, the Holy Office."

Asked if she had been baptized, she said, "I am a baptized and confirmed Christian. I was baptized in Alhama and confirmed there by the Archbishop of Granada, who [lived near?] in my master's house. I confess and attend Mass on Sundays and holidays, and I take communion as the holy mother Church commands. This past Easter I confessed in Villarrubia de Ocaña with Agustín Gómez, that town's assistant priest."⁷ She crossed herself and said the Our Father, the Hail Mary, the Credo, and the Salve Regina in Spanish, and said them well.⁸

Asked if she knew how to read and write, she said, "I know how to read and

5. Veiling is a ceremony required by the Council of Trent (1546–63) as a necessary component of a legitimate and valid marriage. The ceremony consists of a nuptial mass following the wedding ceremony, during which the priest covers the newlyweds with a veil.

6. Elena's mother was either a Muslim or a Muslim convert to Christianity, a fact that contradicts Elena's claim of being an Old Christian.

7. The Council of Trent required Catholics to take confession at least once a year, as a minimum. Elena refers here to Villarrubia de Santiago, a village to the east of Ocaña.

8. The Inquisition tested prisoners' knowledge of Catholic dogma by asking them to recite the basic prayers.

write. I haven't studied, but I own books on surgery and medicine in Spanish and Latin, which I bought all at once from a lawyer."

Asked for the story of her life, she said, "I was born in the city of Alhama, in the house of Benito de Medina, my mother's master. I was born a slave [inquisitorial marginalia: she was born a slave], but my master freed me. I was raised with my master until I was eight or ten, at which point Ana Daça, one of my master's daughters, got married to Martín Cueto in Vélez-Málaga, so I went to live with her. I served Ana for about two years and then returned to Alhama to see my master. Then I went to serve my master's wife, whose name was Elena de Céspedes. I decided to call myself Elena de Céspedes in her honor. But when I got [to the house] to serve my master's wife, she had already died. So I went instead to live with my mother in the house in Alhama. In my mother's house I learned to weave with a master named Castillo.

"I lived with my mother until I was fifteen or sixteen years old, at which time I married Cristóbal Lombardo, as I've said. But because I got along badly with him, he left, leaving me alone and pregnant. I stayed in Alhama, in Gaspar de Belmar's house, for about two years, more or less, at which time my mother died. From there I went to Granada and settled in the house of [illeg.] San Miguel. He later became the treasurer of the Royal Chapel of Granada. I was with him for about four or five months. While I was there I learned the trade of making hose and became a hosier. From there, I began to work as a weaver in Alonso Martínez's house on Gumeles Street. But after six months, I couldn't find anything to weave, so I began to work as a tailor and a hosier.

"I made my living this way in Granada for a year, more or less. From there I went to San Lúcar de Barrameda, and in San Lúcar I practiced the trades of tailor and hosier publicly.⁹ I found that I was earning a good living and I stayed in San Lúcar for about a year, more or less. From there, I went to Jerez de la Frontera, where I practiced the same trades of hosier and tailor. But there I got into a fight with a pimp¹⁰ called Heredia. I stabbed him and they arrested me. When I got out of jail, because of the threat this Heredia and his other pimp friends made against me, I decided to disguise myself in men's garb, so I left off wearing women's garb, which until then I'd always worn.

9. Although at this point the scribe is consistently referring to Elena with feminine pronouns, he has suddenly switched to identifying Elena's trades by their masculine forms (hosier, *calcetero* instead of *calcetera*; tailor, *sastre* instead of *sastrea*).

10. *Rufián*. This term in the late sixteenth century had the primary meaning of pimp and the secondary meaning of scoundrel. It is unclear which definition Elena/o employs here.

"In men's garb I went to Arcos [de la Frontera], where I found a job as a farmhand for Antón Marino, since he had lots of work. I called myself Céspedes, without saying Pedro, Eleno, or Juan. I worked for him for a month. He paid me thirty-six reales and bread, and nothing else. So I left his employ and went to work for Francisco the Gabber [*portaboca*], who was called that because he ran on at the mouth. For him, I worked as a shepherd for about fifteen days. But, suspecting I was a woman, the *corregidor* arrested me.

"By chance, Doctor Benesar, who's from Alhama, happened to be passing through. Because I sent word to him that I was from Alhama, he came to see me in jail. He recognized me and told the *corregidor* who I was. The *corregidor* released me and placed me in the house of Juan Núñez, a priest and a native of Arcos, who was the pastor of Santa María.¹¹ But because the *corregidor* knew I was a woman, he ordered me to put on women's garb. So I put on a skirt, like a woman [marginalia: returned to women's garb].

"I served the priest for about six or seven months, more or less. After that I left his employ because of a grievance I had with him.¹² Because at that time the uprising of the moriscos of Granada had begun, I decided to go to war.¹³ So I once again took off women's clothing and put on men's garb. Calling myself only Céspedes, I became a soldier in don Luis Ponce de León's company until the uprising was over. Then I went back to Arcos with his company.

"When the company disbanded, I began to practice the trade of tailor publicly, still in men's garb. I passed the [guild] exam for tailors in Jerez de la Frontera, but they made me put 'seamstress' on the sign [in front of my shop] since they knew I was a woman.¹⁴

"After that, a military recruiter came to Arcos. One of the town residents who had been drafted paid me well to go to the war in Granada in his place. So I went to war a second time [marginalia: soldier again]. I was with the Duke of Arcos's company until the war was over. All that must have lasted about three years, the same amount of time as the war. When it ended I went back to Arcos

11. It was common for secular (as opposed to inquisitorial or ecclesiastical) judges such as the *corregidor* to place female criminals in the homes of "respectable people," usually the town mayor or a priest. There the women would work as domiciled servants and, presumably, learn to imitate the moral behavior of their masters.

12. In all probability it was the priest who had a grievance with Elena since, as Elena (then in women's garb) later testifies, she had been having an affair with the sister of Francisco Núñez, a priest, and another woman, Catalina Núñez, also a resident of the town of Arcos.

13. Elena (who went to war dressed as man) refers here to the War of the Alpujarras (1568–70), in which Miguel de Piedrola (see chapter 3) also fought.

14. *Sastra* instead of *sastre*.

and to my trade as a tailor. I stayed there for just over a year. From there I went to Vélez-Málaga, where I stayed for just over a year working as a tailor. Then I got into a fight with a *regidor* called fulano Barra,¹⁵ so I left and went to Alhama. There I opened another tailor shop. I stayed there for a year and from there went to Medina Sidonia and Osuna, where I stayed for another year, working in my tailor shop, as I had in other towns.

"From there I went to the Court [Madrid] for about two years and set up shop as a tailor.¹⁶ At Court I became friends with a surgeon¹⁷ from Valencia who took me into his home for a while and began to teach me to cure [margin-
alia: surgeon]. Because I learned so quickly and in so little time to cure as well as he did, and since the trade proved advantageous to me, I left off the tailor's trade and took up that of surgeon.

"I practiced as a surgeon in the Hospital de la Corte for about three years, at the end of which I went to El Escorial¹⁸ to cure Obregón, who was one of His Majesty's servants. I began to cure publicly and traveled throughout the towns of the Serranía curing for more than two years. But then they accused me of curing without having been examined first, so I went to Court to take my exam and got two licenses, one for bleeding and purging, and the other for surgery. I stayed at Court for a long time, until they took me to [illeg.], where I cured for nine months. From there I went to La Guardia, where I set up shop and cured as a surgeon for about six years, frequently coming and going all this time to and from the Court.

"Due to a sorrow I suffered in La Guardia¹⁹ I went with a company [of soldiers] that was passing through there, curing those who were wounded in the company of don Antonio Pazos. With them, I went to Pinto, and from there to Valdemoro, where I stayed for about two years, though sometimes I traveled to Ciempozuelos, where I went to cure. By chance, I fell ill [while in Ciempozuelos] and was taken in

15. Elena apparently cannot recall the *regidor's* first name. She thus refers to him as *fulano*, the Spanish equivalent of "Mr. so-and-so."

16. King Philip II established Madrid as the seat of the Spanish royal court in 1561.

17. Surgeons (*cirujanos*) and physicians (*médicos*) had separate, though complementary, functions. Physicians were trained at university in the medical arts. Surgeons, in contrast, learned their trade by apprenticeship and were of lower status. Surgeons performed more rudimentary procedures such as bleeding, purging (through the administering of emetics), and tooth extraction.

18. The Hospital de la Corte was a charity hospital founded by Ferdinand and Isabella at the end of the fifteenth century. The Escorial Monastery, constructed (1563–84) for King Philip II in the mountains north of Madrid, was also a royal residence.

19. Elena never explains what happened in La Guardia, although she may be alluding to the end of an affair she had with a widow named Isabel Ortiz, who would later claim to the vicar of Madrid that Elena had promised to marry her.

as a guest in the home of Francisco del Caño, my [future] father-in-law. There, they were generous to me, and I became fond of María del Caño, daughter of Francisco del Caño, and María became fond of me, so I asked for her hand in marriage. María's parents said that if it was God's will, we could marry."

Because it was late, given the hour, the audience was ended and the prisoner commanded to return to jail.

Before me,
[signed] Iñigo Ordóñez

The afternoon audience of the Tribunal of Toledo, on the aforementioned day, month, and year, the aforementioned Lord Inquisitor don Lope de Mendoza presiding. By his command the aforementioned Elena de Céspedes was brought from jail and, as is customary, was asked if she remembered anything she could say in order to unburden her conscience. She was still under the oath she had taken in the morning audience, in which she promised to tell the truth in all matters. She said, "When I asked for María del Caño's hand in marriage, and it was given to me, I went to Madrid to ask the vicar for a license to marry and post banns.²⁰ The vicar, who saw that I was beardless and hairless, asked me if I was a capon. I told him I wasn't, and that he should look at me to see that I wasn't. To this end, they took me to a nearby house, where three or four men looked at me from the front, though I didn't let them look at me from the back, so they wouldn't be able to see my woman's parts.²¹ The men testified that they'd seen me and that I wasn't a capon. So the vicar gave me a license to post banns, and I took the license with me. The priest of Ciempozuelos published them, but upon their publication a widow named Isabel Ortiz, who lived in Madrid next to [the convent of] San Francisco and who has children [illeg.], came forward and claimed me as her husband, saying I'd promised to marry

20. Designed to publicize the forthcoming marriage and give those who wished a chance to raise canonical impediments to the union an opportunity to do so, the "posting of banns" consisted of announcements of the coming marriage made in the parish churches of the betrothed during one or more Sunday masses in the weeks preceding the wedding. Posting of banns was a necessary component of a legitimate and valid marriage.

21. This is the first mention of Elena's disappearing penis, which, as she claims at various points in her testimony, to possess or to have lost only recently. Her penis, readers should note, tends to disappear only before she is to be examined by secular or inquisitorial court-appointed physicians. While the editors recognize the possibility of medical hermaphroditism, we suspect that in Elena's case the "male member" was a fiction, endorsed by members of the Madrid and Toledo medical communities whom Elena had befriended or bribed, or both.

her.²² After talking to the widow, I went before the vicar of Madrid and separated from her.

"Later they set another impediment against me, saying that it was public knowledge and widely rumored that I was both male and female, so I went back to Madrid to see the vicar a second time. The vicar commanded that I be examined by Court doctors, who, in order to determine what was just, and in order to comply with the vicar's command, wanted to examine me. But because I was so well known in Madrid, I came here to Toledo and before the vicar they examined me here. My lawyer was Morales. They examined me in front of [Francisco Pantoja, the Secretary of the Inquisition], and, I think, the physician was Doctor Toro. Although they made many requests toward this end and made many other examinations, they sent me back again to Madrid. During that time I went to [illeg.] to Yepes to cure a man named Jiménez and some other people, for about two and a half months at the most. During this time I prepared certain remedies with wine and alcohol, and many other remedies and potions to see if I could close my woman's part.²³ Even though I couldn't close it completely, I could squeeze it shut to make it look closed.

"With all the remedies I prepared, my woman's part wrinkled up and got so narrow that nothing could be put inside it. When I was ready to be seen, I entered a petition and Juan Gutiérrez, a magistrate from Yepes, ordered the *alcalde*²⁴ to have surgeons and doctors and other people of good repute look at me to see if my form was a woman's or a man's. The *alcalde* ordered that surgeons and doctors and others from that town, ten men in all, examine me. They came to examine me in my home, during the day and by candle light as well. They felt me and looked at me from the front, though from behind they only felt me. With the artifices I'd devised, I was so tight that none of them could even put a finger inside me or see that I had a woman's part. Though it

22. Although verbal marriage promises were no longer binding after the Council of Trent, a promise of marriage previously given by a betrothed person to a third party would have posed a canonical impediment to the marriage between the affianced couple. The "separation" Elena received from the vicar dissolved the earlier marriage promise and released her from the limbo of being pledged to one woman and therefore unable to marry the other.

23. Several folk remedies were available to early modern Spanish women who wished to "close their women's parts," though commonly these remedies were used to convince husbands and lovers of the woman's virginity, not to convince a group of doctors of the woman's masculinity. The most extreme remedy, mentioned in Fernando de Rojas's play *La Celestina* and the Cervantes short story "La tía fingida," consisted of sewing the vaginal opening shut with a needle and thread.

24. The mayor of a town or village and head of the town council, who also discharged judicial functions. Unlike *corregidores* and *regidores*, who were appointed by the king, *alcaldes* were appointed by the municipalities in which they served. A municipality could have more than one *alcalde*.

was true that they felt a hard wrinkled spot which was the result of my remedies. When they asked me what it was, I told them it was a hemorrhoid I'd gotten, which I'd cauterized and which had left behind this hard knot. By this ruse, all ten men, including the physicians and the others who'd seen me, declared, said, and affirmed to the *alcalde* that I didn't have a woman's part and that I did have a male member. The *alcalde* made out his report accordingly and I presented it to the vicar, who demanded that I be examined again, according to his instructions.

"Once again I prepared and used all the remedies I'd used in Yepes, plus some other, stronger ones, in order to close myself. I wrinkled myself up to such a point that Doctor Mantilla and Doctor Francisco Díaz, physician and surgeon at Court, when they tried to put a probe inside me, and their fingers, could not do it. When they asked me what I had there, I replied as I had to the other doctors [that it was a hemorrhoid]. With that, they reported that I didn't have a woman's part. With this report, and the recognition [by the witnesses] that I was the same person the doctors had seen and examined, the vicar gave me license to marry.

"With this license I went to Ciempozuelos and got engaged to María del Caño. From there we went to Yepes, where we married and celebrated our veiling *in face ecclesia* in the parish of San Benito. The assistant priest performed our veiling. As I said, we stayed in Yepes for more than a year, living together as man and wife until around Christmas, when, since there was no surgeon in Ocaña, I went to live there. Then the *alcalde mayor*,²⁵ named Ortega, sent a letter to the governor [to inform him?] that when he was the *auditor del campo*²⁶ in the War of Granada, he'd known me and that it had been said by some that I was a woman and by others that I was male and female. Because of this letter the governor [*corregidor*], Abraumel, arrested me. From there I was brought as a prisoner to this Holy Office."

[When the *corregidor* of Ocaña arrested Elena, it was for the capital crime of sodomy. In the early modern lexicon, the term *sodomy* denoted a broad range of nonprocreative sexual activities, though it sometimes was used more specifically to signify same-sex relations, as was the case here. The governor also arrested Elena for the lesser crime of having deceived María del Caño and María's father. Elena responded to these charges by claiming that she was, in

25. The chief *alcalde* in a municipality.

26. A legal advocate, serving in a military encampment.

fact, a man, and that, as such, she had not deceived anyone nor had she committed sodomy. In the secular court interrogation, the governor questioned Elena about the charges against her: "Had she, being a woman, about eleven months ago, more or less, deceived María del Caño, daughter of Francisco del Caño, resident of Ciempozuelos, and led father and daughter to believe she was a man? And had she, with little fear of God, out of disrespect for the marriage sacrament and with disdain for the natural order, married and celebrated her veiling and [had carnal relations?] with the aforementioned María del Caño? The defendant responded that she was not a woman but a man. . . . When asked if aside from the aforementioned María del Caño, this defendant had committed the aforementioned unnatural crime of sodomy with other women while pretending to be a man, she replied that she had had relations with other women naturally, as a man, not unnaturally."²⁷

Asked how she, being a woman, could make physicians and witnesses think she was a man, even if she made herself wrinkled and narrow with the remedies and potions she prepared, she said, "In reality I am and was a hermaphrodite. I have and had two natures, one of a man and the other of a woman. What happened is that when I gave birth, I did so with such force in my [woman's] part, that a piece of skin broke out above my urethra and a head emerged about half the size of a thumb, like so, which resembled the swollen head of a male member, which, when I had natural passion and desire, came out, as I said. When I felt desire it got bigger. I gathered the member up and put it back in the place where it had come from so that the skin wouldn't break."²⁷

[Elena described her supposed hermaphroditic anatomy in greater detail in a letter to the Inquisition, which she submitted in her own defense shortly after this interrogation took place. The letter included the following text: "I have never pretended to be a man in order to marry a woman as some have impugned."²⁸ What has happened is that in this world we have often heard of people who are androgynous, or who, by another name, are also called hermaphrodites, who have two sexes (inquisitorial marginalia: Cicero, Pliny, and Augustine).²⁹ I am and have been a hermaphrodite, and at the time I married

27. Tales of sudden sex change and hermaphroditism were common in the popular and medical literature of the day. See, for example, Antonio de Torquemada's *Jardín de flores curiosas* (Lérida, 1573); and Juan Huarte de San Juan's *Examen de ingenios para las ciencias* (Madrid, 1569).

28. This letter is in the first person in the original Spanish.

29. The marginalia, added in a different hand, was probably referring to Pliny's *Naturalis Historia*, in which he describes "beings who possess both sexes, who were once called androgynes and were considered monsters but who are now considered instruments of pleasure." Pliny, *The Natural His-*

[María del Caño] the masculine sex prevailed in me. I was naturally a man and had all the necessary parts of a man in order to marry, as had been proven through examinations by doctors and surgeons licensed in their arts, who saw and touched me and swore legal oaths that I could marry as a man. . . . I have naturally been a man and a woman, and though this may be a prodigious and rare thing that is not often seen, hermaphrodites, as I am and have been, are not unnatural. . . . I married first as a woman to a man, then as a man to a woman, because when I married a man, the feminine sex heated up and prevailed in me. Then, when my husband died, the masculine sex heated up and I could marry a woman."²⁸

"When I was in San Lúcar working as a tailor, which is what I was doing at the time, I worked in the house of a linen merchant named Hernando de Toledo. One day I found myself alone with his wife, who was named Ana de Albánchez and who was very kind and pretty, and I felt the urge to kiss her. Without saying a word, I kissed her, but this frightened her. Then I told her I could have relations with her as if I were a man, which I said [with my face?] half hidden from shame, since I was afraid to tell this woman I had two natures. Ana de Albánchez took me to bed but, even though I was aroused and my head had emerged, as I've described, and I put myself on top of Ana, I couldn't do anything. Aside from this demonstration, I once tried to show myself to Ana de Albánchez, but then Ana's husband walked in, so I couldn't show myself to her at that time.

"Then I went to doctor Tapia, a surgeon in that city. He examined me in secret and told me I was a hermaphrodite. With a probe he put inside me, he made a cut above the piece of skin which had begun to come out. With this cut there emerged a male member, which was as large as a [illeg.] and as long as this line:

It came out bent in an arch, so the surgeon cut it a little bit. With that the member straightened out. He told me it was badly constructed and weak at the root, and he cured me of this. In fifteen days he made me well. I kept this ability to have relations with women and went back to Ana de Albánchez and had

tory, trans. H. Rackham (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), vol. 2, bk. VII, iii.33-34. Pliny also refers to females who change into males (iv.36). Elena (or Elena's defense lawyer) cited this reference from Pliny in the defense statement that Elena sent to the tribunal, making it clear that this model was useful for Elena and her contemporaries as a way to imagine her sexuality. For Augustine, see his *City of God*, trans. Henry Bettenson (London: Penguin, 1984), bk. XVI, chap. 8, p. 663.

relations and dealings with her as a man many times. I was in Ana's house without Ana's husband's knowledge for about four or five months. But at the end of that time, because the *corregidor* of that city was also fond of Ana de Albánchez, and since I'd slept with her, the *corregidor* became jealous and forced me out of the city. So I went to Jerez, as I said."

Asked if she had had relations with any other women as if she were a man, she said, "I've had carnal relations with many other women, especially with a sister of the priest I served in Arcos, whose name was Francisca Núñez, and with another married woman from the same place whose name was Catalina Núñez, and with lots of other women from throughout the places I've traveled. But, aside from Ana de Albánchez, none of the women I've known was aware that I had female organs, since I was always careful to cover them up.³⁰ At Court, I took as my friend Isabel Ortíz and had relations with her as a man. Isabel never knew I had a woman's nature. My wife María del Caño never knew I had a woman's nature. Even though it's true that many times María desired to put her hand on my shameful parts, I never let her do it, even though she wanted to very much, since she'd been told I had the natures of a man and a woman."

Asked if, as a woman, she had ever had relations with men, and with which men, she said, "I've never had relations with any man other than Cristóbal Lombardo, my husband."

Asked if, being principally a woman and having given birth, she married another woman, like herself, because she thought it was licit for two women to marry, or she thought that two women could marry each other, she said, "Since I found I had a man's member and could have relations with women as a man, and since I'd gone around with so many women, I wanted to leave off sin and marry, and not have relations with anyone but my wife. It was because of this that I married. I didn't think I'd erred, but rather that I'd married in God's service."

Asked if she got her monthlies as other women do, she said, "When I was

30. Elena's testimony is inconsistent. She testifies that the *corregidor* of Arcos discovered her to be a woman and ordered her to don women's garb and serve as a maid in the priest's house. When Elena returned to Arcos after having served in the army, she returned in men's garb but "everyone knew" she was a woman. Town authorities allow her to dress as a man but made her hang a sign in front of her tailor shop saying "seamstress." If, as Elena also testifies, she had affairs with the priest's sister and another woman in Arcos, these women must have known Elena was female. By claiming no one but Ana de Albánchez knew about her women's part, Elena may have been trying to protect these women, and her wife, from secular court charges of sodomy.

young I got them a few times and they were very light. They sometimes come now, but not regularly, every month. They come through my woman's nature, as with other women."

Asked if the male member that she said came out served her for anything other than this pleasure she said she had with women, she said, "I urinate through it as other men do, since it's my urethra."

Asked if at present she had the aforesaid male member and the woman's nature, she said, "At present I have only my woman's nature. The male member that emerged from me has just recently come off in jail, while I was a prisoner in Ocaña. It only now finished falling off, after more than fifteen days. What happened is that before last Christmas I suffered a flow of blood through my woman's parts and through my rear end, which caused me great pain in my kidneys. I'd hurt myself while riding horseback and the root of my member became weak. The member became spongy and I went cutting it bit by bit, so that I've come to be without it. It just finished falling off about fifteen days ago, or a little more, as I've said."

Asked if she retained the signs and scars from where she cut said member, she said, "Yes, I still have the wounds."

Asked what kinds of testicles she had, since the witnesses and physicians who examined her said that she had a male member and testicles like a man, she responded, "I have them in a particular form." She described them with her hands but was not able to be understood. She said that if she were to describe the form to a physician, he would understand her, and would see in what form and way she has them.³¹

Asked if the aforementioned María del Caño, when she married the defendant, knew she was marrying a woman, as this defendant is, she said, "María never found out nor did she suspect a thing, since before we got married I took María's virginity and had relations with her several times, so María del Caño could not have known she was marrying a woman, only that she was marrying a man, since this defendant had relations with her as one."³²

31. It is possible that the unintelligible explanation Elena gave of her testicles was that they were "internal." Early modern medical texts described female sexual anatomy as an inverted ("outside-in") version of male sexual anatomy. Thus the uterus was the female equivalent of the penis, and the ovaries were equivalent to testicles.

32. When doctors hired by the Inquisition examined Elena, they found no trace of a penis. When inquisitors asked how, then, Elena had managed sexual relations with other women, the doctors replied that she must have used a dildo (*baldrés*). In this context it is interesting to note that in their testimony to the Inquisition, neither Isabel Ortíz, one of Elena's former lovers, nor María del Caño, her

Asked if, when she had relations as a man with said María del Caño and with other women with whom she had confessed [to having had relations], she had from her arousal the pollution³³ that her husband had when he had relations with her, she said, "Yes, I had pollution and completed the act with them as my husband had completed the act with me. There was abundant pollution."

Asked how long it had been since last she had relations as a man with said María del Caño her wife, she said, "I haven't had relations with María del Caño since before Christmas when I fell ill and injured my testicles. To hide my injury during this past Easter, I told María that because it was Lent I couldn't have relations with her.³⁴ After Easter, for about two months, María del Caño came to Ciempozuelos from Ocaña. During this time María wanted me to have relations with her, so I did, but it caused me a great deal of pain. Since then I haven't touched María del Caño again. It was at this time that I began to cut [my member] bit by bit, as I've said."

She was told that what she said here regarding the male member was fiction and trickery, since she had never been anything but a woman, which was how she was born and was at present, and that what she would have to do in order for this tribunal to show her mercy was to tell the whole truth and tell how the trickery was accomplished, and the ways in which she fooled the witnesses who testified in her favor. She should tell if she gave or promised them anything, and how, being a woman, she married another woman, and whether said María del Caño knew this defendant was a woman when she married her. She replied, "What I've said here is the truth, in that which pertains to my member as in that which pertains to María del Caño and the reasons I married her. I didn't solicit false testimony or say anything against the truth."

Because it was late, given the hour, the audience was ended. Warned that she

"wife," ever admitted to having actually seen Elena's "member." Isabel testified that "shame" prevented her from either looking at or touching Elena's penis, although she admitted to having once felt it through her shirt and said that "it felt like flesh." María's "shame" also prevented her from either looking at or touching Elena's penis, although she admitted that it felt "smooth" whenever they copulated. Asked specifically by the inquisitors whether her husband had ever used a dildo or his hand during intercourse, she answered that he had occasionally touched her "nature" with his hand just after they finished "de juntar" (coupling).

33. Pollution (ejaculation) would have been proof of the procreative, therefore licit, nature of the sexual relations between Eleno and his wife.

34. Catholic doctrine prohibits sexual relations during Lent, the season on the liturgical calendar that precedes Easter.

should think about unburdening her conscience, the defendant was commanded to return to her cell.

This passed before me.
[signed] Iñigo Ordóñez

In the morning audience of the Inquisition of Toledo, 18 July 1587, Lord Inquisitor don Lope de Mendoza presiding. By his command, the aforementioned Elena de Céspedes was brought from jail. When she was present, she was asked what her conscience had remembered, and what she could say to unburden her conscience, according to the oath she had taken. She said, "I don't have anything to say, and I don't know anything more than what I've already said and confessed."

Asked, when she was ill and cutting her member bit by bit, who cured her, she said, "I cured myself with powders and ointments made from alum and spices and [illeg.], and an ointment made of lead and pink oil and other things."

Asked when she got well, she said, "I'm still unwell, and at present am ill in my woman's parts. I ask that a physician be allowed to examine me."

Asked if her purpose in putting these things and the strong powders on her woman's parts was to make scars so that she could pull off the trick that it was understood she employed here to make it thought that she had a male member, and if she intended to prove its existence by the scars from the wounds that she artificially inflicted upon herself with said powders, she said, "May God forgive me if I've done so, but I haven't at all."

Asked if she knew or suspected the reason why she was arrested by this Holy Office, she said, "As I've said and confessed here, it is for having married another woman, being a woman myself, as some said I was when I married. But even though I was a woman I was also a man. Since I had the nature of a man, I was fit to marry."

Asked how she knew that the aforementioned Cristóbal Lombardo, her husband, was dead, and what efforts she had made [to verify his death] before getting married a second time, this time to María del Caño, she said, "More than twenty years ago they brought some letters to me in Alhama saying that Cristóbal Lombardo had died in the hospital in Lara. I lost the two letters I had that stated this, since I didn't think they were valuable."

Asked if she testified [to the priest who performed the second marriage]

that she was single, and who her witnesses were, and if she promised or gave the witnesses anything so that they would say that she was single,³⁵ she said, "I neither gave nor promised anything to any witnesses so they'd testify to this. The witnesses present before the Vicar of Madrid, when I wanted to marry María del Caño, had known me for more than two years and believed me to be single, and a man."

She was told that out of reverence for God she should tell the whole truth, with a zeal that would be necessary for the unburdening of her conscience and so she could receive the mercy that this Holy Tribunal customarily showed to those who plainly confess their guilt, especially in the matters about which she has been questioned regarding the spirit and intention with which she married, being a woman. Asked whether she thought or believed that a woman could licitly marry another woman, or that marriage is not a sacrament, since, in opprobrium and derision [of the marriage sacrament], she married a woman and consummated the marriage *in face ecclesiae*, making a mockery of said sacrament, she said, "I married because I understood that I was a man, not a woman, and that I could, being a man, licitly marry a woman. I know well that two women can't marry, and I didn't do it out of derision or mockery of the sacrament. Rather, I did it to be in God's service."

[inquisitorial marginalia: first warning] She was told that this Holy Office was not accustomed to arresting people without having sufficient evidence that they had said, done, and committed, or seen others say, do, or commit, something that was or appeared to be against our holy mother Roman Catholic Church or against the right and free exercise of the Holy Office. Thus, she should believe that she has been imprisoned because of said evidence. Out of reverence for our Lord God and His glorious and blessed Mother, the prisoner is warned and charged to go back through her memory and say and confess the whole truth of that for which she feels guilty or that of which she knows others to be guilty, without shielding anyone or anything, or giving false testimony, but that she should do it for the unburdening of her conscience as a Catholic Christian, and to save her soul, and so that her trial might be carried out with all possible brevity and mercy. She said, "I've told the truth and I don't feel there's anything else I can say [illeg.]" She swore this to be the truth by the oath she has taken.

35. In an effort to prevent bigamous marriages, the Council of Trent required parish priests to make inquiries into the marital status of betrothed couples and required witnesses to ratify the couple's answers, before the priest could agree to perform the marriage.

She was asked if the governor and justices of the town of Ocaña took a confession from her, and if she said in that confession what she has said in the audiences before this Holy Office. She said, "Twice they took a confession from me in Ocaña. In some things I told the truth as I've done here, but in all that differed from the confession I've made here, I wasn't telling the truth, but I have told the truth here. I didn't tell the truth before because I feared that the secular justices would not treat me justly, and because I was ashamed."

Because it was late, the audience was ended. The [transcripts of the] audiences the aforementioned Elena de Céspedes had had in this Holy Office were read back to her. Having heard them and understood what was said, she said that these were her confessions and that she had spoken them as they were written. She affirmed this to be the truth and she signed and ratified and confirmed with her name. Warned, she was commanded to return to jail. Signed before me,

[signed] Iñigo Ordóñez

[signed] Elen—de Céspedes³⁶

[The inquisitors convicted Elena on charges of sorcery and disrespect for the marriage sacrament. They sentenced her to two hundred lashes, public shaming, appearance at an *auto de fe*, and to serve the poor as a surgeon in a charity hospital for ten years, without pay, and with the stipulation that she do so in women's garb.]



When the inquisitors pulled Elena's case from royal jurisdiction, they changed not only the venue but also the nature of the charges against her. Although the royal magistrates and the inquisitors generally agreed on which sexual acts were illicit, they often disagreed as to the reasons why. In Elena's case, the *corregidor* was especially concerned with whether she had committed sodomy, an "unnatural" (nonprocreative, same-sex) sexual act and one which, according to royal law, represented an insult to God. The *corregidor* sought to resolve this issue by means of a simple medical examination. If Elena proved to be a man, she would be innocent, for she would only have engaged in the natural sexual intercourse between a husband and his wife. If, however, Elena turned out to be a woman, she could be convicted of sodomy, a capital crime. In this case, the Inquisition stepped in and assumed

36. There is an ink blot over where the *a* (or the *o*) should have been.

jurisdiction over Elena shortly after the medical examination was completed. As it turned out, Elena was lucky. Had she remained in the grip of royal justice, she may well have wound up on the scaffold.

Although inquisitors in Aragon had the power to punish sodomites, their counterparts in Castile did not. Their particular interest in this case sprang from the possibility that Elena had knowingly violated the sacrament of marriage by selecting a woman as her mate. Bigamy was also at issue. At the time of her marriage to María, had Elena ascertained that her first spouse, Cristóbal, was dead? Sorcery was yet another concern. Had Elena employed black magic or invoked demons, possibly even the Devil, in order to trick people into believing that she was a man? None of these charges were major heresies, so even if found guilty of one of them, it was unlikely that Elena would be sentenced to death unless she stubbornly refused to confess.

Elena began her encounter with the Holy Office on the morning of 17 July 1587. Initially, she answered cautiously, disclosing as little information as possible. She also reversed the strategy she had used with the *corregidor*, which was to insist on her maleness despite the absence of a penis. When the inquisitors requested her life story, Elena identified herself as female and omitted any mention of sexual desire for other women. Elena explained that she had dressed as a man only in order to disguise herself and escape the revenge of a pimp with whom she had picked a fight. Elena did not explain why, years after the immediate danger had passed, she remained in men's garb. Nor did she try to explain how she had entered into what inquisitors saw clearly as a same-sex marriage. But Elena was a quick study. By the afternoon audience on that same day, she had figured out where the inquisitors' questions were leading and made a radical change to her defense strategy. Correctly guessing the Inquisition's charges against her, Elena developed a complex life story that justified cross-dressing, bigamy, same-sex marriage, and male identity. She narrated the story in the inquisitorial idiom of adherence to Catholic doctrine.

When the Tribunal of Toledo reconvened in the afternoon, after inquisitors had returned from lunch and, perhaps, a siesta, Elena launched into her new autobiography. Over the course of the afternoon's testimony, the physical body Elena described in her testimony mutated with dizzying speed: she "closed" her vagina, gained a penis and became a man, then regained her vagina and became a woman; next she was a hermaphrodite, with both male and female genitalia; and finally she lost her penis but argued that her nature was still hermaphroditic. And she defended her bigamous, same-sex marriage as being a legitimate use of the holy sacrament.

Elena was more than literate; she was learned and owned a small working library of about two dozen books, mostly on subjects related to her trade as a surgeon. They

included copies of treatises, some in Latin, by Aristotle, Galen, Vesalius, and Ambroise Paré, a French sixteenth-century surgeon who wrote, among other things, about hermaphrodites.³⁷ She was thus able to formulate the argument that hermaphrodites, by virtue of their two sets of sexual organs, could marry both a man and a woman. Apart from the fact that this argument meshed perfectly with the charges against her, given the existing conceptual bank of sexual orientations (on which, more below), Elena was also able to use her reading to express a version of her sexuality that she may have believed to be true. Yet Elena's elaborate justifications fell apart when inquisitors asked if she still possessed the penis she claimed to have had. For the inquisitors, maleness required a penis and testicles, facial hair, and so forth, all of which Elena lacked. Such attributes constituted proofs of sexual identity, inasmuch as postmodern notions of gender identity did not exist. Elena was forced to admit that at the moment she did not have a penis, although, she protested, she had only recently lost it.

Not surprisingly, the inquisitors did not find Elena's story altogether credible, but it at least served to convince them that she was not guilty of any major heresy. In the end they found her guilty of a series of lesser charges—allegations of bigamy (since she could not prove her husband Cristóbal was dead), fakery, perjury, and mockery of the sacrament of marriage. For these crimes she received the inquisitorial equivalent of a slap on the wrist: appearance in the *auto de fe* held on 18 December 1588, two hundred (probably lightly delivered) lashes, and the requirement that she serve for ten years in a public hospital. Following her appearance at the *auto*, Elena—dressed as a woman—began working as a surgeon attached to Toledo's Hospital del Rey, but within a matter of months she was the cause of such commotion that the hospital's director asked that she be transferred to another institution (see below). Elena was subsequently transferred to another, smaller hospital in Toledo and then, one month later, to one in Puente del Arzobispo—a small, somewhat isolated town located about eighty miles west of Toledo itself. There Elena de Céspedes disappeared from the historical record.

Elena's story is remarkable for more than its sexual anomalies, whether those were biological or discursive constructions. In addition to making the transitions from female to male and male to hermaphrodite, over the course of her lifetime Elena shifted from slave to free, New to Old Christian, and weaver to tailor, soldier to surgeon. These transitions reflect the mobility of so much of early modern artisanal

37. Ambroise Paré's *De Monstres* was first published in 1570. It is available in English as Ambroise Paré, *On Monsters and Marvels*, trans. Janis L. Pallister (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982). Hermaphrodites and androgynes are addressed in chapter 6 (pp. 26–31 in the English edition).

and mercantile life, thus contradicting stereotypes about the sedentary nature of premodern society. Elena's constant state of artisanal and geographical transition may have been fueled by her original status as an outsider, a mulatta and a former slave. An itinerant lifestyle may also have helped lower Elena's risk of being discovered as a woman. Itinerancy therefore may have been a necessity, a way of life, much as it was for Luis de la Ysla (see chapter 1). Elena's itinerant sexuality was more unusual than her other states of transition but not so anomalous as to be incomprehensible to her culture, although there was no universal agreement about how to define it.

What do Elena's stories reveal about the ways sexuality and the body were imagined in early modern Spain? Elena's stories, and the reactions of others to them, help us to locate the limits of tacitly permitted sexual transgression and reveal the elasticity possible in early modern imaginings of the body and its sexes. Elena's trial took place in an era when norms for sexual behavior were strictly prescribed in royal law, inquisitorial law, and canon law and by social custom. Each of these legal and social codes of conduct had a different set of rules for proper comportment varied, and the result was an inhibiting profusion of sexual do's and don't's. Some types of sexual peccadilloes, including Elena's affairs with women other than María del Caño, largely escaped judicial notice. Others, such as Elena's cross-dressing and marriage to a woman, went on for months or years before anyone reported them to authorities.

When, for example, Elena moved to the town of Arcos de la Frontera, the *corregidor* promptly arrested her for cross-dressing. But he released Elena almost immediately into the care of the town priest. Elena then had affairs with two women in Arcos, including the priest's sister, for which she suffered no legal consequences. A year or so later, when Elena, once again dressed as a man, returned to Arcos, the town council permitted her to continue wearing men's garb, though they had her hang a "seamstress" sign outside her tailor shop door. Some months after that, when military recruiters arrived in Arcos, a wealthy resident paid Elena to go to war in his place. If everyone in Arcos knew Elena was a woman, did the soldiers in the regiment Elena joined know as well? This seems likely, for Lorenzo Gómez, the man who denounced Elena to the secular justices after her marriage, did so because "he had known her as a soldier in the Wars of Granada, where it was said by some that she was a woman and by others that she was a man and a woman." Lorenzo did not find Elena's cross-dressing on the battlefield criminal enough to report to military authorities, but he did feel compelled to report her to secular justice once a same-sex marriage entered the picture. The early modern willingness to wink at sexual transgression, it seems, reached its limit at overt instances of homosexual activity.

A willingness to wink at mild to moderate sexual transgression, though, does not

explain the enthusiastic reception Elena received after her inquisitorial conviction. According to a letter written by the administrator of the charity hospital where Elena was serving her sentence, a great many Spaniards who were not bound by legal definitions of Elena's sexual acts perceived her as a kind of miracle worker and flocked to the hospital in droves to be cured by her. The arrival of these crowds annoyed the hospital's administrator, who registered the following complaint in a letter directed to Toledo's inquisitors:

I, Hernando de Aguilar, majordomo of the Hospital del Rey in this city, write that Your Mercies sent me a woman named Elena de Céspedes . . . so that she might come to this hospital to serve the poor. . . . This hospital has suffered in its ministry because it has been forced to attend to the many people who have been causing a great disturbance and tumult since the arrival of the aforementioned Elena de Céspedes. So many people have come to see her and be cured by her that this has caused our hospital great inconvenience. . . . I ask and I beg Your Mercies to please . . . take her out of this hospital and transfer her to another so that this hospital can once again function and serve with the tranquility it used to have.

It was Elena's ability to manipulate her own allegedly anomalous body that, rather than damning her in the eyes of her compatriots, had elevated her to celebrity status and added to her reputation as a surgeon.

The early modern period, in addition to being host to a profusion of sexual limitations, was also an era in which models of sex and gender were not strictly binary. Medical, popular, and juridical literature about sudden sex changes and the wonders of hermaphrodites sat side-by-side on bookshelves with conduct manuals dictating proper behavior for men and women and moralist tracts documenting the dangers of vanity and lust. Medical texts told early modern Spaniards that women and men possessed identical but inverted sexual organs, making it possible for women suddenly to turn into men, and vice versa.³⁸ Also possible, according to the medical texts of the day, was the existence of hermaphrodites. These were people with "two natures" (the same phrase Elena used) whose bodily humors contained male and female elements.³⁹ Hermaphrodites and instances of sudden sex change also made appearances in early modern popular literature on monsters and curiosities of nature. One popular text on curiosities of nature recounted the tale of a

38. See, for example, Juan Huarte de San Juan, *Examen de ingenios para las ciencias*, ed. Guillermo Serés (Madrid: Catédra, 1989), 608.

39. The definition of a hermaphrodite as someone who possesses both sets of sexual organs (as opposed to neither or half and half) is the same one given in Pliny (see note 29).

mistreated wife who ran away from home in men's clothing but was so virtuous that she was transformed into a man.⁴⁰ This book went on, however, to describe the darker side of sexual anomalies. Two hermaphrodites, the author wrote, each endowed with two sets of sexual organs, were forced to choose to live as one sex or the other. Several years after having chosen to live as women, both hermaphrodites were burned at the stake for "behaving secretly as a man."⁴¹ In this case flexible notions of the physical body had run up against rigid notions of sexual propriety and had decisively been defeated.

Canon lawyers of the period also addressed issues related to hermaphrodites, debating such questions as whether they could marry, how many spouses the hermaphrodite was allowed to have, and whether, if two hermaphrodites married each other, they could alternate taking the male and female roles in sexual intercourse without falling into sin.⁴² Majority opinion was that hermaphrodites should choose to live as a member of one sex or the other, forswear all future use of their genitalia that did not match the sex they had chosen, and then marry a member of the opposite sex. The seventeenth-century German jurist Jakob Müller argued that God does not approve of overindulgence of sexual appetites in anyone, including hermaphrodites and (echoing the Tribunal of Toledo) that if a hermaphrodite were to take a husband and a wife, this arrangement would leave all three spouses in an unholy state of polygamy.⁴³ In a dissenting opinion, the Valencian jurist Lorenzo Matheu y Sanz (1618–80) argued (as Elena had) that hermaphrodites should be allowed to take both a husband and a wife and that if God himself had equipped them to do so, it could not be sinful.⁴⁴

Certainly these texts, popular, medical, and juridical, discussed hermaphroditism and sudden sex change as rare, prodigious, even monstrous. Nevertheless, such concepts were part of a common imagining of the possibilities of the body and part of a common sexual vocabulary. Elena's case brings out tensions between the flexible notions of the sexed body and tacitly permissible sexual behavior, on one

40. Antonio de Torquemada, *Jardín de flores curiosas* (1573; ed. Giovanni Allegra, Madrid: Ediciones Castalia, 1982), 112.

41. *Ibid.*, 116, 187–88.

42. For a summary of the early modern debates in canon law regarding hermaphrodites and marriage, see Valerio Marchetti, "La discussione settecentesca sui diritti dei bisessuali," in *Studi politici in onore di Luigi Firpo*, vol. 2, ed. Silvia Rota Ghibaudi and Franco Barcia (Milan: Franco Angeli, 1990), 363–74.

43. J. Möllerus, *Discursus duo philologico-iuridici, prior de cornutis posterior de hermaphroditis eorumque iure* (1692), cited in *ibid.*, 469.

44. Lorenzo Matthaëus et Sanz, *Tractatus de re criminali* (1676), in Marchetti, "La discussione," 465.

hand, and the many legal limitations on sexual behavior that coexisted in early modern Spain, on the other. Elena's case also exposes a tremendous personal creativity and ingenuity. Just as remarkable as Elena's self-transformations from slave, wife, and mother to soldier, surgeon, and man were her discursive transformations from man to woman to man to hermaphrodite. With each successive defense strategy, Elena adjusted her autobiography to fit the charges against her and to justify her sexual acts and intentions in the eyes of the law that had deemed them criminal.

FURTHER READING

For more on transvestites in Spain, see the autobiographical account of Catalina de Erauso in *Lieutenant Nun: A Memoir of a Basque Transvestite in the New World: Catalina de Erauso*, trans. Michel Stepto and Gabriel Stepto (Boston: Beacon Press, 1996); and Sherry M. Velasco, *The Lieutenant Nun: Transgenderism, Lesbian Desire, and Catalina de Erauso* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2000). A history of "queer culture" in medieval and early modern Spain can be found in Josiah Blackmore and Gregory Hutcheson, eds., *Queer Iberia: Sexualities, Cultures, and Crossings from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999). Inquisitorial prosecution of the "crime" of sodomy is examined in E. William Monter, *Frontiers of Heresy: The Spanish Inquisition from the Basque Lands to Sicily* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

For female transvestism in early modern Europe, see Rudolf Dekker and Lotte Van de Pol, *The Tradition of Female Transvestism in Early Modern Europe* (Basingstoke, Eng.: Macmillan, 1997). The early modern notions of female sexual organs are central to Thomas Laqueur, *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990).

For comprehensive discussions of female homosexual acts and the law in early modern Europe, see Louis Crompton, "The Myth of Lesbian Impunity: Capital Laws from 1270–1791," *Journal of Homosexuality* 6 (1980–81): 11–25; and Lillian Faderman, *Surpassing the Love of Men: Romantic Friendship and Love between Women from the Renaissance to the Present* (New York: William Morrow, 1981).

As for Elena herself, she figures prominently in several recent essays by Israel Barshatin. They include "Written on the Body: Slave or Hermaphrodite in Sixteenth-Century Spain," in Blackmore and Hutcheson, *Queer Iberia*, 420–56; "Interrogating Hermaphroditism in Sixteenth-Century Spain," in *Hispanisms and Homosexualities*, ed. Sylvia Molloy and Robert Mckee Irwin (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1998), 3–18; and "Elena alias Eleno: Gender, Sexualities, and 'Race' in the Mirror of Natural History in Sixteen-Century Spain," in *Gender Reversals and Gender Cultures: Anthropological and Historical Perspectives*, ed. Sabrina Petra Ramet (London: Routledge, 1996), 105–22.