



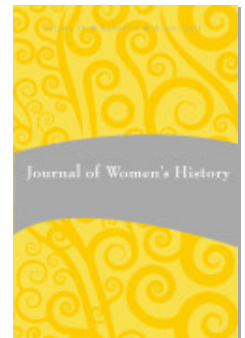
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A WOMAN LIKE ANY OTHER:

Female Sodomy, Hermaphroditism, and Witchcraft in Seventeenth-Century Bruges

Jonas Roelens

This article discusses the official and popular responses to a particular sodomy trial held at Bruges in 1618 during which two women, Mayken and Magdaleene, were accused of several sexual and moral transgressions. The interrogation records of the accused female sodomites illustrate the remarkable self-consciousness of early modern women with same-sex desires. Their attitudes collided, however, with popular mentalities towards female sodomy, which local testimonies explained away as a physical abnormality or an act of diabolical witchcraft. This article offers an in-depth analysis of these discourses in order to gain a fuller understanding of the perception of female sodomy in early modern urban society.

Introduction

At the end of the sixteenth century, early modern Europe became more and more preoccupied with female same-sex acts.¹ Authorities previously somewhat disregarded this crime—sodomy—due to the prevailing attitudes towards sexuality, which defined it in terms of actual penetration.² Law and society consequently considered sodomy a masculine form of transgression and female sodomy attracted little attention in early modern writings.³ Around 1600 however, medical treatises increasingly commented upon female homoeroticism. The recent “rediscovery” of the clitoris caused an upsurge in spectacular stories about sudden sex changes and medical studies that linked female sodomites to hermaphroditism. In the context of the seventeenth-century witch craze, (female) sodomy was also mentioned in the writings of several demonologists, who wondered if the devil might have a hand in these unnatural desires.

Despite the increase in descriptions and representations of female sodomites during this period, it remains extremely difficult to uncover traces of actual women talking about their own same-sex experiences. A remarkable exception to this rule is the case of Mayken and Magdaleene, who were arrested in Bruges during 1618 because they had engaged in a sexual relationship while wandering through the Low Countries for over a year.⁴ During their trial, both women were intensely interrogated by the

aldermen of Bruges, who elicited many statements from Mayken and Magdaleene on their homoerotic feelings. Although early modern legal records are notoriously challenging to work with and scholars should handle them with caution, the testimonies of these women enable us to move the discussion on early modern female sodomy beyond the framework of literary representations.⁵

During the trial, Mayken and Magdaleene displayed an exceptional self-awareness regarding their sexual preferences. This attitude towards their sexual desires may cast a new light on the debate between the so-called "essentialists" and "constructionists" on the history of sexuality, in which the first claim that homosexuality is a biological rather than a historical phenomenon while the latter state that homosexuality is a socially constructed category subject to change through history.⁶ While I do not want to portray Mayken and Magdaleene as "premodern lesbians," I do want to highlight that there have always been individuals who preferred same-sex relations over "heterosexual" ones and were very much aware of this long before the "homosexual as a species," to use the theorist Michel Foucault's resonant phrase, came into existence.⁷

The self-conscious attitude of Mayken and Magdaleene sharply contrasts with that of the witnesses who testified during the trial. They were deeply puzzled by the women's accounts of female-female sexuality; some of them even described Magdaleene as a hermaphrodite or a sorceress possessed by the devil. The questions and doubts raised by both bystanders and authorities demonstrate the omnipresence of a phallogocentric sexual discourse and the difficulties early modern society had in perceiving sex between women without resorting to images of monstrous bodies and demonic witchcraft. After drawing up a chronology of the trial, I focus on the divergent responses towards female same-sex acts that were expressed during the interrogations. A close reading of the trial records shows how medical, theological, and demonological discourses on female sodomy entered the social world of early modern judges and city dwellers alike, albeit with different outcomes. Particularly striking is the fact that the same-sex acts these women committed were not necessarily recognized as such by many of the people involved in the 1618 sodomy trial. Although Magdaleene provides an exceptional insight into the self-consciousness of early modern women attracted to women, the civic community made sense of her transgressions by portraying her as a hermaphrodite or a creature that was both man and woman due to the devil. The case of Mayken and Magdaleene thus shows that to fully understand the perception of female same-sex desire in early modern Europe, historians should not only pay attention to scholarly and literary representations of female sodomy, but should also scrutinize public responses to those representations.

The Remarkable Romance of Mayken and Magdaleene

On August 18, 1618, a routine investigation of a horse theft took an unexpected turn when Maerten van Ghewelde accused his wife of having a relationship with a hermaphrodite. When Maerten confessed his trafficking in stolen horses, the authorities sentenced him to the gallows.⁸ Caught in a hopeless situation, Maerten apparently decided to report his wife, Mayken de Brauwere, and told the aldermen that she abandoned him over a year ago after a woman named Magdaleene, who community members said was a hermaphrodite (“*wesende hermaphrodite*”), seduced her.⁹

Determined to retrieve his missing wife, Maerten even turned to sorcery. A man called Pieter Duivele had performed a ritual in which he drew a square on the floor while beseeching the four corners of the world to trace Maerten’s wife. Duivele assured Maerten that he would find Mayken in a certain tavern in Oudenaarde, yet by the time he got there Mayken and Magdaleene had already fled. According to the cuckolded husband, Magdaleene was not a first-time offender since she had deceived several housewives before, a crime for which she was allegedly banned from Tielt, a small town between Ghent and Bruges.¹⁰

On August 25, *immediate ante executionem* (“right before his execution”), the aldermen asked Maerten if he wanted to add anything else to his statement so that he could relieve his conscience. Facing death, Maerten appeared determined to drag Mayken down with him in his fall, as he revealed a detailed account of the misdeeds committed by the two women. One day in May 1617, Maerten heard loud panting in the attic of the estate where both he and his wife worked as day laborers. Wanting to know what caused this noise, he took a quick peek, only to find his wife lying with Magdaleene, who later explained what he saw by arguing that they were merely jesting by tickling each other. Maerten, suspicious of this explanation, gave his wife a reprimand and warned her to stay away from “that whore who was banned from Tielt for similar filthy offenses.” Maerten’s warning obviously did not leave a lasting impression as, shortly afterwards, several day laborers saw Mayken and Magdaleene running around naked through the manor and bathing together in the ditch surrounding the estate. A few days later both disappeared without a trace. Maerten, lastly, mentioned that Magdaleene gave his wife several potions, and he suspected that these concoctions had induced a miscarriage in Mayken.¹¹ In the end, Maerten van Ghewelde was executed for his thefts, yet he left his interrogators with a compelling confession. Not only did he accuse his wife of sodomy, he also claimed that Magdaleene was both a hermaphrodite and a poisoning witch. These were serious allegations, leaving the authorities no option but to respond. The aldermen clearly took the matter seriously: they started gathering testimonies about the two women on the day of Maerten’s execution.

One of these witnesses was parish priest Tobias de Mey, who was sent to a farm in Pittem—a small village in Bruges' hinterland—six years earlier because “strange things were happening there.” He discovered Magdaleene and a certain spinster “lying in bed and playing.” Shortly afterwards, Passchyne, wife of Pieter Hoornaert, came to him and confessed that she and Magdaleene had “carnal conversation” on several occasions. During these moments, Magdaleene “had shown great affection and lust.”¹² Passchyne spoke in great detail about her encounters with Magdaleene, who she accused of having a so-called “rod, as sharp as a needle and with such an abundance of semen as if it was derived from four male persons, and that this semen was cold on one occasion.”¹³ Although Passchyne showed great remorse and attended Mass on a daily basis, she became ill and feeble-minded shortly after her confession. Thobias de Mey called in the help of a specialized priest who initiated an exorcism, yet it was to no avail; Passchyne died a few days later.

The spectacular charges against Magdaleene now piled up rapidly. Not only was she said to be a sodomite, a hermaphrodite, and an abortionist, according to Tobias de Mey, she was none other than the devil in person. In the early modern period, many people believed that coitus with the devil was very painful and that his semen was extremely cold to the touch.¹⁴ In this stage of the trial, we can see how, for the first time, people came up with divergent explanations to make sense of female same-sex desire. Whereas Maerten attributed Magdaleene's sexual misconduct to a physical cause by calling her a hermaphrodite, the local priest used a diabolical discourse to condemn the whole matter.

Whether or not the authorities believed that Magdaleene was possessed by “the Evil One” (“*den boosen*”), they started a feverish search for Mayken and Magdaleene, who were arrested on September 19, one month after their case first came to light. The aldermen began the interrogations by drawing up a profile of their main suspect. Magdaleene, widow and mother to an adult son, had different cover names and was constantly on the move because of her lingering bad reputation, the scope of which would gradually become clearer during her hearing. The aldermen confronted her with several testimonies claiming that she had “acted dishonestly” with numerous women and young girls. These statements made little impression however, as Magdaleene denied everything.¹⁵

The interrogators then turned to Mayken, who claimed that she left her husband because she was tired of him accusing her of living from the proceeds of his thefts, and he threatened to kill her. Mayken maintained that she was not familiar with the “evil reputation” of Magdaleene when they left together. At the time of their departure, however, she did know that her companion was a “dishonest woman” (“*eene oneerlicke vrouwe*”) who

had committed adultery with Mayken's own husband; a fact that Maerten conveniently concealed when he was libeling his wife to the aldermen. The women had nevertheless left the estate where they both worked and set out on a journey across the Low Countries. When they arrived in the province of Zeeland, their relationship reached a low-point: encouraged by a man who accused Magdaleene of being a "sorceress" ("*een tooveresse*"), Mayken decided to move on separately. Their breakup was short lived however, as they met again in a tavern in Vlissingen and travelled together to Dunkirk, where they were presumably caught.¹⁶

When asked about Mayken's pregnancy, Magdaleene refuted the assertion that she helped Mayken commit an abortion, claiming that because Mayken had never been with child she could not have miscarried. Magdaleene admitted that she gave a potion to Mayken, but this was merely to relieve a fever. Mayken confirmed this story, claiming that she had only been pregnant once in her life but that her child had unfortunately died when it was five or six weeks old.¹⁷ After this confession, the Bruges' aldermen decided to focus on the other transgressions committed by both women.

A week later, they questioned Mayken about her relationship with Magdaleene. She mentioned on-going rumors about Magdaleene being a sorceress "who was both man and woman due to the devil" ("*duer den duivel man ende vrouwe beede*"). Moreover, some villagers said that Magdaleene had "bewitched" the wife of Pieter Hoornaert.¹⁸ The rumor that she was a hermaphrodite had apparently widely circulated. Yet many people interpreted Magdaleene's purported physical aberration in a religious way by claiming that the devil had something to do with it. In spite of these stories, Mayken claimed that she never noticed anything peculiar about her co-defendant, who she considered a "woman like any other."¹⁹ The image of Magdaleene as an ordinary woman took a severe blow, however, when Mayken started to describe her sexual preferences: Magdaleene allegedly claimed that "she would rather do such things than to have carnal conversation with seven men, and that other women were begging her for it."²⁰ When Mayken sometimes expressed her astonishment about this distinctive desire, Magdaleene replied that "she found contentment in it and that there were more similar women" who experienced the same feelings.²¹

Mayken claimed that these other women were often "more willing" than she was and that Magdaleene "desired to use her daily which she often did not consent to."²² At one point, "Magdaleene even pitied herself because she had not left with another woman named Lyve, who was more willing than Mayken." Despite her reticence, Mayken told her questioners quite a few details about her love life: on several occasions Magdaleene had "lain on her and had carnal conversation with her as if she was a man." Magdaleene used Mayken as a woman "doing her duty with great force."²³ Mayken's

questioners must have asked her more about the manly characteristics of the "hermaphrodite" Magdaleene because she later "denied ever having felt something that would have been male. She had indeed occasionally felt some wetness, although not in large quantities. When this arrived Magdaleene stopped lying on her." She could not answer "whether this wetness coming from Magdaleene was cold or hot."²⁴

This last remark clearly indicates that the Bruges' aldermen still considered evil forces at work in Magdaleene's deviant sexual behavior, as early modern society popularly believed that the devil had cold semen. Rumors of witchcraft echoed throughout the interrogation, but it seems that at this point, not only the local witnesses, but also the judicial authorities suspected Magdaleene of consorting with the "Evil One."²⁵ They started asking pointed and insinuating questions during the interrogation on October 11. They wanted to know more details about her "dishonest conversation" with Mayken, Passchyne, and "many more women and daughters," the superstitions she would have used against some people, and her alleged threats that she would play tricks on people. Although Magdaleene claimed "she did not know anything about sorcery, let alone that she would have practiced it," the aldermen were convinced that she owned several suspicious books. Magdaleene also had to answer for some oranges she allegedly poisoned and distributed, and that she had claimed she could cure cattle. Others also reported that she threatened a whole series of people and predicted their forthcoming death.²⁶

At the same time, however, it is notable that the questioners were open to other interpretations of her crimes; they even tried to gain more insight into the origins of Magdaleene's same-sex sexual desires. She revealed that she was only nine when she had first encountered female same-sex acts, when she saw several girls having intercourse in a brewery.²⁷ Confronted with Mayken, Magdaleene—who had up until now denied every charge—finally admitted that she had carnal conversation with Mayken on several occasions. When she was drunk, she "shed her nature on Mayken's body, but not in her folds as men would communicate with women."²⁸ The interrogators also demanded to know whether Magdaleene had used any instruments to have sex with other women and they inquired about the positions in which they had intercourse. These rather technical questions indicate that the aldermen not only considered the idea of witchcraft but also focused on more earthly motivations behind the sexual "excesses" of Mayken and Magdaleene.

In order to remove any remaining doubts, however, the aldermen transferred Magdaleene to the torture-chamber on November 28. Subjected to the screws and the rack, she admitted to having slept with Passchyne three times in the absence of Passchyne's husband. She "tasted" her on those

occasions, but she could not go any further due to Passchyne's illness. She also confessed that she had taken another woman—who asked her whether she was male or female—to a field and had carnal conversation twice, after this the woman was convinced that Magdaleene was indeed female. After an hour of torture, Magdaleene acknowledged her same-sex sexual activities but persisted in denying the accusations of witchcraft.²⁹

Her determination must have convinced the aldermen, who concluded the interrogation after this torture session. On December 14, 1618, the aldermen ordered Mayken to pray to God and Justice for forgiveness behind closed doors. Afterwards she was banned from the city of Bruges for ten years under penalty of torture. Magdaleene remained in jail until May 12, 1620. The official sentence accused Magdaleene of several crimes. First of all, she injured and left her husband. She, secondly, "wandered around the country, seducing several women by pulling them away from their husbands. She had taught these women, including some young daughters, nothing but dishonor by committing various libidinous acts, which lasted many long years." And, finally, "several indications of witchcraft were imputed to her, yet admittedly she continued to deny these indications even under torture on the rack." Therefore, the aldermen condemned her by banning her for life from the county of Flanders. She had to leave the territory within three days under penalty of the gallows.³⁰ Almost two years after the Bruges' aldermen became aware of the "dishonest actions" of Mayken and Magdaleene, the remarkable trial against these deviant women came to an end.

Female Sodomy in Seventeenth-Century Europe

The trial of Mayken and Magdaleene is one of the few early modern examples that does not merely come with a sentence, but also offers the rare opportunity to investigate the mechanisms behind the persecution of (female) sodomy.³¹ The difficulties encountered by the city council in dealing with this case deserve particular attention, especially since the Southern Netherlands took the lead in persecuting female sodomy during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries; nearly one out of ten convicted sodomites at the time was a woman. This situation was unparalleled in early modern Europe, where only scattered evidence of isolated trials against female sodomites survives. Female sodomites in the Southern Netherlands also tended to receive the same harsh punishment as their male counterparts (generally death by fire), whereas courts punished female sodomites in other parts of Europe more leniently because they considered these crimes less harmful than male sodomy. The high prosecution rate was partly the result of the broad yet well-defined understanding of female sodomy in the region.³²

As the number of female convictions in the region fell sharply at the end of the sixteenth century, it looks like communities in the Southern Netherlands gradually lost this knowledge of sexual possibilities between women. It is noteworthy, for example, that the term "sodomy" was never explicitly mentioned during the procedure. This was not unusual in similar cases elsewhere in Europe, since most officials feared that openly naming female sodomy would encourage more women to commit what they saw as a crime against nature. Between 1400 and 1550, however, urban authorities in the Southern Netherlands saw no problem in publicly labeling female same-sex acts as sodomy. Yet it seems that by 1618, Bruges' aldermen were incapable of imagining what exactly had been going on between the two women. What reasons account for this are not clear, yet it reminds us that, even within a specific region, attitudes towards deviant sexuality were subject to changes through time.

These seventeenth-century aldermen were not the only people in early modern society who found female sodomy a puzzling concept. Authors of both theological and legal writings gave female-female sexuality far less attention than male sodomy because they considered actual penetration an essential element of sexuality. As a result of this omnipresent phallogocentric vision of sexuality, contemporary commentators could not imagine that two women were able to please each other without relying on such artificial accessories as dildos.³³ Phallus-shaped objects therefore played an important role in many of the recorded cases against early modern female sodomites: like the German Catharina Linck (1721), who made a dildo of leather complete with two stuffed testicles, which she could make stiff or limp.³⁴ Early modern judges probably attached so much importance to the potential use of dildos because it allowed them to situate deviant sexual practices among women against the comprehensible background of heterosexual activities, which involved penetration.³⁵ Yet by using artificial devices, female sodomites were considered even more debauched, as they challenged traditional gender hierarchies in which women were supposed to submit passively to an active male penetrator.³⁶ In the same respect, female sodomites who dressed as men to deceive their objects of affection were considered threatening to the social order.³⁷

During the trial of 1618, however, Magdaleene denied ever having used an instrument to practice her "uselessness." Furthermore, nothing suggested that she ever disguised herself as a man to seduce women, nor did she at any point during the trial express the desire to be a man. Yet the court records repeatedly draw attention to her masculine character; she is portrayed as a strong personality with a high libido, who actively initiated carnal conversation with women on a daily basis "as if she was a man," using "great force" while doing so.³⁸ Mayken, by contrast, is described

as submissive and somewhat naïve. This dichotomy between the strong, independent, and sexually active woman and her passive counterpart is a recurring theme in early modern descriptions of female sodomy. On the one hand, officials cast female homoeroticism in male terms as a way of dealing with the matter. On the other hand, many accused “passive” women applied this discursive strategy to receive a reduced sentence.³⁹

Whether or not Mayken consciously defended herself like this remains to be seen. She did recall her unhappy marriage and her earlier miscarriage to the aldermen, through which she highlighted her ability to engage in heterosexual activities. She furthermore limited her part in the crime as she, in her own words, merely “endured” Magdaleene’s requests for sex and often did not consent while other women were far more eager to sleep with Magdaleene. Yet Mayken also categorically denied ever sensing anything manly about her companion and claimed that she was a woman like any other. If this had not been the case, Mayken might have gotten away with mere adultery. Unlike many contemporary women claiming they were tricked into marriage without being aware of the actual sex of their partner, she never presented herself as a victim, which, consequently, made her an accomplice.

Female Sodomy and Hermaphrodites

Although Mayken herself never doubted that she was dealing with an actual woman, the authorities and witnesses were less convinced about Magdaleene’s anatomy; some of them even suspected her of being a hermaphrodite, or “both man and woman at the same time.” The fact that the sexual identity of female sodomites was often disputed in the early modern period once again illustrates the prevailing uncertainties surrounding female-female sexuality. Given the fact that most Europeans at the time considered satisfying intercourse between women impossible, it should come as no surprise that women who engaged in same-sexual activities were often suspected of not being full-fledged women at all. Following the sixteenth-century “rediscovery” of the clitoris for instance, female sodomites were often called “tribades,” or women with enlarged genitals that enabled them to have penetrative intercourse with other women.⁴⁰ The figure of the “tribade” or “fricatrice” gradually started to show more and more similarities with another subject widely discussed in early modern medical, literary, and erotic contexts, namely that of the hermaphrodite.⁴¹ Andreas Vesalius (1514–1564), the Southern Netherlandish physician and acclaimed founder of modern human anatomy, even described the clitoris as a malformation only present in female hermaphrodites.⁴² Like sodomites, hermaphrodites embodied social disorder and gender inversion.⁴³ Because

of this alignment between two concepts of sexual deviance, "women who desired women could be explained away as that half-mythical anomaly, a hermaphrodite."⁴⁴

Physical examinations were therefore becoming a standard element in sodomy trials involving women. Distinguished physicians described some of these examinations in detail. This included Nicolaes Tulp, the Amsterdam physician and mayor immortalized by Rembrandt, who called Hendrikje van der Schuur a tribade.⁴⁵ This was also the case with Marie/Marin le Marcis, who Jacques Duval, a well-educated surgeon working in Rouen and Paris, examined in 1601. Several medical commissions had already examined le Marcis and declared her a woman; she was therefore guilty of sodomy by the time Duval subjected her to a more thorough investigation. After inserting a finger into her vagina, Duval allegedly discovered a hidden penis and concluded that Marie/Marin had substantial masculine features, which saved le Marcis from the stake.⁴⁶ This experience inspired Duval to write his famous *Traité des Hermaphrodits* (1612).⁴⁷

Although hermaphrodites could count on a lot of medical and literary interest from the sixteenth century onwards, there was no consensus whatsoever regarding their biological origins.⁴⁸ Some authors favored the Galenic teaching, which claimed that female genitals were nothing but inverted male genitals and that the sex of a fetus depended on the dominant position taken during intercourse by either the male or the female semen.⁴⁹ A number of combinations could consequently occur, ranging from perfect men and women to effeminate men and masculine women. In the unlikely event that the male and female seed were in balance, even hermaphrodites could arise, subdivided into predominantly male or female and perfect hermaphrodites.⁵⁰ This theory was endorsed by the influential French court physician Ambroise Paré, whose collected works—including the treatise *Des monstres et prodiges* (1573) discussing hermaphrodites—were published in Dutch shortly after his death.⁵¹

Not everyone acknowledged the Galenic one-sex model and its hermaphroditic consequences, however.⁵² Followers of Aristotelian thought did not present male and female as points on a spectrum, but rather as "polar opposites admitting no meaningful mediation."⁵³ They believed that hermaphrodites originated in the excess of matter produced by a woman during intercourse, which normally lead to twins, yet, in some cases, resulted in a hermaphrodite.⁵⁴ Aristotelians therefore did not believe in the existence of a so-called "perfect hermaphrodite" with two working sets of genitals, but rather looked upon them as monsters with a redundant set of genitals resembling a tumor.⁵⁵ Jean Riolan (1539–1605), a professor at Sorbonne's medical faculty, even described hermaphrodites as lustful women that

could be healed “par l’amputation des parties superflues” (“by amputating the superfluous parts”).⁵⁶ This early modern tendency to equalize female sodomites (or tribades) with hermaphrodites is yet another demonstration of the phallogocentric view on sexuality and the instability of gender identities prevalent at the time.

Sodomy and Witchcraft

In spite of the multitude of opinions on the origins of hermaphroditism, physicians rarely considered witchcraft a potential cause. Even Caspar Bauhin, a Swiss professor of anatomy and botany who addressed such issues as demonic causes of monstrous births at length in his treatise *De Hermaphroditorum* (1600), acknowledged that hermaphrodites were an unusual yet natural phenomenon.⁵⁷ But while the possibility of demonic intervention was out of the question for most physicians discussing hermaphroditism, the public was strongly convinced that the devil had the power to change the gender of an individual. Marvelous stories about sudden sex changes flourished during this period, including in the Southern Netherlands where an anonymous seventeenth-century jurist from Arras produced a whole litany of examples “fabuleuse mais veritable” (“fabulous but true”) from abroad.⁵⁸ Since Europeans popularly believed that if sex changes could occur spontaneously, it was a small step for the devil to interfere with this natural process. According to the historian François Soyer, a great deal of urban society was “prepared to believe that an individual could make a pact with the Devil in order to alter his or her gender.”⁵⁹

A number of early modern hermaphrodites were consequently accused of witchcraft. The Spanish Inquisition, for instance, condemned Elena de Céspedes in 1588. Several physical examinations notwithstanding, the doctors could not come to a consensus regarding Elena’s actual sex. As a result, the inquisitors accused her of using witchcraft to create confusion about her genitals, for which the community ridiculed her during a public auto-da-fé while receiving two hundred lashes.⁶⁰ In 1741, the Portuguese Inquisition arrested novice Maria Duran. Authorities suspected her of having made a pact with the devil that granted her a secret penis she used to have sexual relations with several nuns. Some critical inquisitors wanted to absolve Maria because they believed that the devil was not able to grant a penis to a woman. In the end, however, Maria Duran was sentenced to a public flogging and an auto-da-fé in the streets of Lisbon.⁶¹ The accusation of hermaphroditism, apparently, regularly coincided with that of witchcraft on the Iberian Peninsula.⁶² In Northern Europe, however, the story of Magdaleene seems unique.

The exceptionality of Magdaleene's case lies in the fact that the trial united some contradictory contemporary notions. According to some witnesses, Magdaleene altered her gender with the help of a demonic benefactor. Others even suggested that she was the devil in disguise. Yet ultimately, she was convicted for a crime that was said to be disgusted by the very same devil. The question of whether the devil actually stimulated same-sex activities was indeed much-debated among early modern demonologists. Italian philosopher Gianfrancesco Pico della Mirandola argued in his treatise *Strix* (1523) that the devil engaged in sodomy with humans to bring about the destruction of mankind.⁶³ His theory was supported by Pierre de Lancre—a French magistrate under Henry IV—who published a tract, *Tableau de l'inconstance des mauvais anges et démons* (1612), in which he provided one of the most encompassing portrayals of the witches' Sabbath during the seventeenth century. Describing the devil's sexual preferences, de Lancre stated, "One should not doubt that he takes more pleasure in receiving sexual relations from the back than from the front . . . he also takes more pleasure in sodomy than in most regulated and the most natural voluptuousness."⁶⁴ In this way, certain demonologists used sodomy as a "medieval catch-all" to describe many forms of deviant sexual acts that took place during the witches' Sabbath.⁶⁵ Yet others assumed that demons, although known for their unrestrained lust, were disgusted by same-sex acts.⁶⁶ Heinrich Kramer—author of the most influential early modern treatise on the persecution of witches, the *Malleus Malleficarum* (1486)—wrote that all demons of any rank considered sodomy shameful.⁶⁷ While people in the seventeenth-century popularly believed that the offspring of a witch and the devil would automatically be a sodomite, many also thought that the devil would flee his own child abhorrently.⁶⁸ The idea that sodomy horrified the devil was visually supported throughout early modern Europe by images of demons cruelly punishing sodomites for their sins against nature.⁶⁹

People in the Low Countries also believed that all forms of sodomy repelled the devil. Fourteenth-century surgeon Jan de Weert (from Ypres) remarked that the devil was ashamed by the *peccatum contra naturam* (sin against nature) and did not want to see it.⁷⁰ Dirc van Delf, a fourteenth-century Dominican, wrote that no devil wanted to tempt men to commit this sin because of the great unnaturalness of it.⁷¹ In his catechism *Den Catholycken pedagoge* (1685), Petrus Vanden Bossche—prior of the Dominicans in Mechelen—reaffirmed this opinion by telling the story of a woman who got an unexpected visit from the devil while she was masturbating. The devil told her that he was despised by such filth and that "she soon would have to pay the price for her foolish lust."⁷² A century before, the famous physician and demonologist Johann Weyer discussed the link between female sodomy and diabolic devotion. In his *De praestigiis daemonum* (1583), he

mentions tribades who altered their voices to pretend they were the devil and gain sexual access to women. These deceived women were under the impression that they obeyed this demon by sleeping with him, yet they were actually having same-sex relations; a practice the devil had nothing to do with, according to Weyer.⁷³ Remarkably enough, Martin Delrio—the most influential demonologist from the Southern Netherlands—took an intermediate position on the subject in his extremely popular *Disquisitionum Magicarum Libri Sex* (1599–1600).⁷⁴ On the one hand, he recounted the anecdote about a “Belgian” man who the devil instigated to commit bestiality with a cow.⁷⁵ On the other hand, Delrio did not explicitly mention same-sex acts. He indeed emphasized the heterosexual aspect of demonic intercourse by demonstrating that offspring could be born from such sexual contacts.⁷⁶ These learned views were sometimes opposed in popular culture. A seventeenth-century songbook from Antwerp, for instance, endorses the idea that the devil stimulated sodomy. The songbook contains a text in which the devil supposedly sums up his many crimes, among them his instigation of the inhabitants of Sodom to commit the sin against nature.⁷⁷

Despite these conflicting views, witchcraft played a role in several early modern sodomy trials.⁷⁸ Courts accused some women of using sorcery to seduce other women.⁷⁹ Other indicted sodomites claimed to be cursed, which made them commit sodomy against their free will. This was the case in 1530 when Hans Fritschi and Hans Räs were brought to court in Switzerland. Fritschi declared he had received a magical pair of pants from Räs, through which Räs held power over him and persuaded him to participate in such depraved behavior. Agatha Dietschi, who was tried in Freiburg in 1547 for marrying a woman while posing as a man, claimed that another woman had put a spell on her. As a consequence, she could no longer live as a woman or love a man.⁸⁰ In 1596, Franciscus Rouiere defended himself by saying that he was possessed by the “Evil Enemy” who urged him to act against nature.⁸¹ The link between sexual and spiritual deviance is also clearly present in the story of Benedetta Carlini, one of the most well-known early modern female sodomites. Benedetta was a seventeenth-century Italian nun who claimed to have mystical visions upon which she was elected abbess of her convent. As her authority grew rapidly within the community of Pescia, an ecclesiastical tribunal was summoned in 1619 to verify whether Benedetta spoke the truth. This interrogation revealed that Benedetta pretended to be possessed by an angelic spirit named Splenditello, who supposedly used her body to have sexual relations with Bartolomea Crivelli, a younger nun. As a result, Benedetta Carlini was condemned to life imprisonment.⁸²

In the Southern Netherlands too, witchcraft and sodomy coincided. Recent estimations show that urban authorities tried at least 2,800 and maybe even 3,900 witches throughout the region—including 140 in Bru-

ges—between 1450 and 1685.⁸³ A great many of these witches were accused of demonic intercourse.⁸⁴ While only some of them explicitly claimed to be sodomized by the devil, the majority confirmed that having sex with the devil was painful due to his deformed penis and cold sperm. Yet except for the unfortunate Passchyne Hoornaert, none of them ever claimed that the devil came to them as a hermaphrodite, complete with a needle-sharp “virgula.”

As we have already seen, witchcraft played an important role in the trial against Mayken and Magdaleene from the very beginning. Yet it is notable how the witnesses mentioned Magdaleene’s dealings with the devil early in the hearings, while the authorities did not find it necessary to call Magdaleene to account about this in the initial stage of their investigation. The 1618 case thus illustrates how accusations of witchcraft were not simply imposed from above, but in many instances stemmed from a concerned community.⁸⁵ This does not mean that the authorities did not suspect Magdaleene of any witchcraft whatsoever. One of the first questions she had to answer concerned Mayken’s self-induced miscarriage. Abortion is a rare phenomenon in early modern judicial sources because most women only admitted cases in the sacred space of the confessional.⁸⁶ The crime was nevertheless widely discussed among jurists as well as theologians, who were particularly concerned with the timing of the so-called animation of the unborn fetus.⁸⁷ Following the “*Constitutio Criminalis Carolina*” or Imperial Law Code proclaimed by Charles V in 1532, the official punishment for abortion was the same throughout the Habsburg territories, including the Southern Netherlands. Women who caused abortion with potions were put to death if the child was viable and banned if the child was not. Early modern society linked abortion to poison, witchcraft, and magic, yet the interrogators did not give the matter of Magdaleene’s abortive potions much thought as they quickly moved on to her sexual activities. Only at the end of the interrogations did the aldermen return to the issue of witchcraft by confronting Magdaleene with accusations of poisoned oranges, suspicious books, and fortune telling; charges that were dropped when even torture could not make her confess.

At the same time, the authorities did record the assertion that Magdaleene released as much sperm as four men, and wanted to know if Mayken could confirm this claim. Although early modern Europeans widely believed that women released seed during sexual intercourse, they saw the effusion of body fluids as an assertive male act.⁸⁸ Given the relative importance that the aldermen attached to this aspect of Magdaleene’s corporeality, it appears that they did consider the possibility that Magdaleene was an actual hermaphrodite. Although a surgeon probably scrutinized Magdaleene’s anatomy while she was laid naked on the rack, no record mentions a physi-

cal examination, which was a standard practice when hermaphrodites appeared in court.⁸⁹ Moreover, the cuckolded Maerten was the only person to mention the medical term “hermaphrodite” during the hearings. Since other witnesses endorsed his claim without using this specific word, instead using a religious discourse, we must assume that the word “hermaphrodite” did not come out of the pen of a scribe and that Maerten indeed was familiar with it. It would be fascinating to find out how a simple horse thief was the only one in his neighborhood to become acquainted with such terminology. Although we have no information about the literature Maerten might have read—or indeed if he could read at all—it seems that the term “hermaphrodite” was also known outside the world of scholarly debate. For instance, the word “hermaphrodit” is mentioned in a popular seventeenth-century tune from Brussels that describes a topsy-turvy marriage in which a woman aggressively gains the upper hand and is called a “hermaphrodite.”⁹⁰ Scholarly discussions about hermaphrodites apparently gradually infiltrated the world of the general public, although this process took place at different speeds.

Even Bruges’ civic authorities, which included many protagonists of the humanistic movement in the Southern Netherlands, were in doubt about Magdaleene’s case.⁹¹ Mayken was asked about any masculine features present in Magdaleene, yet Magdaleene herself never had to answer specific questions about her genitalia. By contrast, questions about the use of a dildo were explicitly raised. If the authorities genuinely believed Magdaleene was a hermaphrodite with a full-grown penis, they would not suspect her of using an artificial substitute. So it seems that the presumption of Magdaleene being a hermaphrodite was mainly accepted among the heard witnesses, without ever really catching on among the city council who indeed saw her, at least physically, as a woman like any other. While there may not have been a “gulf in attitudes” between the elite and the populace over their response to deviant sexuality and ambiguous gender, each party concerned eventually came to a different conclusion about the nature of Mayken and Magaleene’s crimes.⁹²

Conclusion

The questions raised during the trial of 1618 reveal much about the attitudes towards female sodomy in seventeenth-century society. At the time, sodomy was perceived as a predominantly male concept. Since penetration was a *sine qua non* in early modern definitions of sexuality, satisfactory sex between women seemed impossible to most lawmakers and theologians. Women were therefore hardly ever tried for same-sex acts. While the Southern Netherlands were among Europe’s core regions when it came to the

repression of female sodomy during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the trial against Mayken and Magdaleene is—for now—the sole surviving seventeenth-century case from this region. When the Bruges' aldermen were confronted with Mayken and Magdaleene, it took them some time to fully grasp the meaning of their confessions.

This was even more the case for the bystanders involved. Shortly after the arrest of Mayken and Magdaleene, allegations of sorcery followed. In the stratified social world of early modern priests and horse thieves, day laborers and pub-goers, female same-sex acts only made sense when embedded within diabolic discourses. According to several witnesses, Magdaleene was both man and woman. Women who engaged in sexual relationships with each other were often perceived as an anomaly that could only be explained through a corporeal deviation. In the case of Magdaleene, the pact she supposedly made with the devil gave meaning to her alleged abnormal physical state; others even alluded that she was the devil in person, disguised as a woman.

The origin of these ideas remains uncertain. Although many physicians disagreed about the causes of hermaphroditism, they did not regard witchcraft as a valid option. It is not entirely clear why the interrogated witnesses assumed that the devil deceived women by posing as a woman or incited women to commit sins against nature. Many early modern demonologists stressed how demons loathed same-sex acts as much as everyone else. This scholarly vision was not mirrored in daily practices, however. The reasoning apparent in the interrogation records clearly shows that the much-studied early modern demonological texts did not necessarily infiltrate the hearts and minds of urban society. It was possible for the witnesses in the 1618 trial to accordingly come up with an explanation of their own for the inconceivable conduct of Mayken and Magdaleene. While sexuality and corporeality was a much-discussed topic among early modern scholars, historians must take a closer look at the urban discourse to fully comprehend the ways in which early modern Europeans construed deviant sexuality and deviating bodies.

Yet what makes the case of Mayken and Magdaleene truly exceptional is the fact that it can also teach us a great deal about how early modern women attracted to other women regarded themselves. Although caution is required when working with early modern trial records, the confessions of Mayken and Magdaleene contain much information about their feelings towards each other. Magdaleene was particularly conscious of her sexual preference for women. Although she had once been married, she now deliberately engaged in sexual relations with other women, as she preferred sex with women to men. Moreover, she was aware of the existence of other women with similar feelings. While the evidence provided by Magdaleene's

statements is insufficient to settle the debate about the social construction of (homo)sexuality, her testimony indicates that certain individuals were aware of their sexual preferences before the modern construction of such mental frameworks. The surprising self-awareness of both convicted female sodomites makes them anything but women like any other.

NOTES

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¹Susan Lanser, *The Sexuality of History: Modernity and the Sapphic, 1565–1830* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2014), 39.

²Judith Brown, "Lesbian Sexuality in Medieval and Early Modern Europe," in *Hidden from History: Reclaiming the Gay and Lesbian Past*, ed. Martin Duberman, Martha Vicinus, and George Chauncey (New York: New American Library, 1989), 67–76, 67; Edit Benkov, "The Erased Lesbian: Sodomy and the Legal Tradition in Medieval Europe," in *Same Sex Love and Desire Among Women in the Middle Ages*, ed. Francesca Sautman and Pamela Sheingorn (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 101–22, 102.

³Valerie Traub, "The (In)Significance of 'Lesbian' Desire in Early Modern England," in *Queering the Renaissance*, ed. Jonathan Goldberg (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1994), 62–83, 79.

⁴The trial was previously mentioned, albeit fragmentarily, in several studies focusing on local history: Germain Vandepitte, "Van Heksen en de Boze Vijand. Sappho in 1618: Mayken de Brauwere en Magdaleene van Steene," *Rond de poldertorens* 23, no. 4 (1982): 127–37; George Debeuckelaere, "Mayken en Leene. Een lesbische geschiedenis in Brugge uit 1618," *De Homokrante* 9, no. 5 (1983): 3–5; Heidi Deneweth, "Hekserij of travestie? Nee, homofilie!," *Spiegel Historiae* 21, no. 12 (1986): 533–7.

⁵On the methodological difficulties of legal documents as a source for researching the history of sexuality, see: Stephen Robertson, "What's Law Got to Do with It? Legal Records and Sexual Histories," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 14, no. 1–2 (2005): 161–85, 162.

⁶For a nuanced critique of this debate: David Halperin, *How to do the History of Homosexuality* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2002).

⁷Michel Foucault, *Histoire de la Sexualité. La Volonté de Savoir* (Paris: Gallimard, 1976), 59. See also: Emma Donoghue, *Passions Between Women: British Lesbian Culture 1668–1801* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1996).

⁸Brussels, National Archives of Belgium (hereafter NAB), Chambers of Account, no. 13790, non-foliated; Bruges, City Archive (hereafter CAB), Series 192, no. 3 (Verluydboek 1611–1676), fol. 51r-v.

⁹Bruges, State Archives in Bruges (hereafter SAB), TBO 119 (Collections of the City of Bruges), no. 622 (Book of Criminal Examinations 1617–1626), fol. 18r.

¹⁰“Zeght dat de voorschreven hermaphrodite verleet heeft zyn huysvrauwe zoo zy ghedaen heeft diversche andere, zynde ter dier oirsaecke te Thielt vuyt ghezeyt,” Bruges, SAB, no. 622, fols. 18r–19v.

¹¹Bruges, SAB, no. 622, fol. 20r-v.

¹²“Hoe dat sy tot diversche stonden met de voornoemde vrouwe ghebouleert ende vleeschelic geconverseert hadde, ende dat met groote affectie ende begeerte van de voornoemde Magdaleene,” Bruges, SAB, TBO 119, no. 664 (Register of Criminal Information of the City of Bruges, 1617–1626), fols. 27v-28r.

¹³“Weesende haerer virgula scherp als een spelle, ende met sulcke overvloedigen van saede al haddet van vier manspersoonen geweest, dan tselve ontfangen hebbende was teenenmael coudt,” Bruges, SAB, 664, fols. 27v-28r.

¹⁴Walter Stephens, *Demon Lovers: Witchcraft, Sex, and the Crisis of Belief* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2002), 19; Sigrid Brauner, *Fearless Wives and Frightened Shrews: The Construction of the Witch in Early Modern Germany* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2001), 9.

¹⁵“Ontkendt met eenighe jonghe meyskens ghebouleert thebben,” Bruges, SAB, no. 622, fol. 21r-v.

¹⁶Bruges, SAB, no. 622, fol. 21r-v.

¹⁷Bruges, SAB, no. 622, fol. 22v.

¹⁸“Kent ghehoort thebben te Pittem [...] dat Magdaleene duer den duivel man ende vrouwe beede was, ende Pieter Hoornaerts vrouwe daerdeure betoovert heeft,” Bruges, SAB, no. 622, fol. 23r.

¹⁹“Dat sy es een vrouwe gelyc een ander,” Bruges, SAB, no. 622, fol. 23r.

²⁰“Segt dat sy seide sulx liever te doen dan met seven mans te converseren, ende dat andere haer daerom waren bidende,” Bruges, SAB, no. 622, fol. 24r.

²¹“Zecht haer somwylen ghezeyt thebben dat zy verwondert was dat zy Magdaleene haer met zulcx moijde ende dat zy daer up antwoorde dat zy daerinne haer contentement hadde ende datter noch meer dierghelycke waeren,” Bruges, SAB, no. 622, fol. 25r.

²²“Sulx sy daegelicx an haer begeerde, hoe wel sy deposante tselve an haer telckerwars niet en heeft gheconsenteert,” Bruges, SAB, no. 622, fol. 24r.

²³“Willende up haer liggen ende converseren als een man [...] Seght dat Magdaleene up haer liggende haer devoir dede, met fortse vanden lichaeme,” Bruges, SAB, no. 622, fol. 23r-v.

²⁴“Ontkent yet an Magdaleene gevoelt thebben dat mannelic soude wesen, ofte yet daervan gewaere gheworden thebben, seght somwylen wel wat natticheit

gevoelt thebben, maer niet in eenige abundantie, ende dat sy Magdeleene dan uphielt, liggende somwylen up haer tot dat sy nat weesende. Seght niet te connen weten of seggen of de natticheit die van haer quam cout ofte eet was," Bruges, SAB, no. 662, fol. 23v.

²⁵On the importance of gossip during witch trials: Elizabeth Horodowich, "Witchcraft and Rumour in Renaissance Venice," in *Fama and her Sisters: Gossip and Rumour in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Heather Kerr and Claire Walker (Turnhout: Brepols, 2015), 65–83.

²⁶Bruges, SAB, no. 662, fol. 26r-v.

²⁷Bruges, SAB, no. 662, fol. 25v.

²⁸"Daermede kendt dat zy haer nature mach gestort hebben op het lichaem van het zelve Mayken, dan niet inder voughen zo den man de zyne communicuert aenden vrouwe," Bruges, SAB, no. 662, fol. 25v.

²⁹Bruges, SAB, no. 662, fol. 29r.

³⁰Bruges, CAB, Series 192, no. 3, fol. 62v.

³¹On the exceptionality of such cases, see Theo van der Meer, "Tribades on Trial: Female Same-Sex Offenders in Late Eighteenth-Century Amsterdam," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 1, no. 3 (1990): 424–45, 430.

³²Jonas Roelens, "Visible Women: Female Sodomy in the Late Medieval and Early Modern Southern Netherlands (1400–1550)," *BMGN/Low Countries Historical Review* 130, no. 3 (2015): 3–24, 9.

³³Patricia Simons, "The Cultural History of 'Seigneur Dildoe,'" in *Sex Acts in Early Modern Italy: Practice, Performance, Perversion, Punishment*, ed. Allison Levy (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), 77–91, 84; Marianne Legault, *Female Intimacies in Seventeenth-Century French Literature* (London: Routledge, 2016), 118.

³⁴Brigitte Eriksson, "A Lesbian Execution in Germany, 1721: The Trial Records," *Journal of Homosexuality* 6, no. 1 (1980): 27–40, 31.

³⁵Leila Rupp, *Sapphistries: A Global History of Love Between Women* (New York: New York University Press, 2011), 73.

³⁶Laura Gowing, *Common Bodies: Women, Touch and Power in Seventeenth-Century England* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003), 85; Ruth Mazo Karras, *Sexuality in Medieval Europe: Doing unto Others* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 110; Kim Philips and Barry Reay, *Sex Before Sexuality: A Premodern History* (Cambridge: Polity, 2011), 93.

³⁷Rudolf Dekker and Lotte van de Pol, *The Tradition of Female Transvestism in Early Modern Europe* (London: Macmillan, 1989); Patricia Crawford and Sara Mendelson, "Sexual Identities in Early Modern England: The Marriage of Two Women in 1680," *Gender & History* 7, no. 3 (1995): 362–77; Judith Bennett and Shannon McSheffrey, "Early, Erotic and Alien: Women Dressed as Men in Late Medieval London," *History Workshop Journal* 77 (Spring 2014): 1–25, 8.

³⁸Although sexual insatiability was traditionally attributed to women, it became gradually seen as a typically masculine characteristic. Allison Coudert, "From the Clitoris to the Breast: The Eclipse of Female Libido in Early Modern Art, Literature, and Philosophy," in *Sexuality in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Times: New Approaches to a Fundamental Cultural-Historical and Literary-Anthropological Theme*, ed. Albrecht Classen (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter GmbH & Co, 2008), 837–78.

³⁹Helmut Puff, "Female Sodomy: The Trial of Katharina Hetzeldorfer (1477)," *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 30, no. 1 (2000): 41–61, 43.

⁴⁰Katharine Park, "The Rediscovery of the Clitoris: French Medicine and the Tribade, 1570–1620," in *The Body in Parts: Fantasies of Corporeality in Early Modern Europe*, ed. David Hillman and Carla Mazzio (New York: Routledge, 1997), 170–93, 178; Valerie Traub, "The Psychomorphology of the Clitoris, or, the Reemergence of the Tribade in English Culture," in *Generation and Degeneration: Tropes of Reproduction in Literature and History from Antiquity to Early Modern Europe*, ed. Valeria Finucci and Kevin Brownlee (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001), 153–86.

⁴¹Lorraine Daston and Katharine Park, "Hermaphrodites in Renaissance France," *Critical Matrix* 1, no. 1 (1985): 1–19, 9; Ann Rosalind Jones and Peter Stallybrass, "Fetishizing Gender: Constructing the Hermaphrodite in Renaissance Europe," in *Body Guards: The Cultural Politics of Gender Ambiguity*, ed. Julia Epstein and Kristina Straub (New York: Routledge, 1991), 80–111, 90; Joan Cadden, *The Meanings of Sex Difference in the Middle Ages: Medicine, Science, and Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 212. In the Middle Ages, in contrast, few people made the link between sodomites and hermaphrodites. Christof Rolker, "Der Hermaphrodit und seine Frau. Körper, Sexualität und Geschlecht im Spätmittelalter," *Historische Zeitschrift* 297, no. 3 (2013): 593–620, 604.

⁴²Andreas Vesalius, *Onderzoek van de anatomische "observaties" van Gabriel Fallopius* (Brussels: Koninklijke Academie voor Geneeskunde van België, 1994), 26.

⁴³Catharine Randall Coats, "A Surplus of Significance: Hermaphrodites in Early Modern France," *French Forum* 19, no. 1 (1994): 17–34, 32.

⁴⁴Emma Donoghue, "Imagined More Ahan Women: Lesbians as Hermaphrodites, 1671–1766," *Women's History Review* 2, no. 2 (1993): 199–216, 200.

⁴⁵Dirk-Jan Noordam, *Riskante relaties. Vijfeeuwen homoseksualiteit in Nederland, 1233–1733* (Hilversum: Verloren, 1995), 59.

⁴⁶Kathleen Long, *Hermaphrodites in Renaissance Europe* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), 77–108; and Patrick Graille, *Le troisième sexe. Être hermaphrodite aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles* (Paris: Les éditions arkhê, 2011), 109–12.

⁴⁷Jacques Duval, *Des hermaphrodites* (Rouen: David Geuffroy, 1612).

⁴⁸Jenny Mann, "How to Look at a Hermaphrodite in Early Modern England," *Studies in English Literature, 1500–1900* 46, no. 1 (2006): 67–91; Gary Ferguson, *Queer (Re)Readings in the French Renaissance: Homosexuality, Gender, Culture* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), 245–91; Courtney Thompson, "Questions of Genre: Picturing the Hermaphrodite in Eighteenth-Century France and England," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 49, no. 3 (2016): 391–413.

⁴⁹Thomas Laqueur, *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990), 26; and Cary Nederman and Jacqui True, "The Third Sex: The Idea of the Hermaphrodite in Twelfth-Century Europe," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 6, no. 4 (1996): 497–38, 503.

⁵⁰Ruth Gilbert, *Early Modern Hermaphrodites: Sex and Other Stories* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 39.

⁵¹Ambroise Paré, *De chirurgie, ende alle de opera, ofte werken van Mr. Ambrosius Paré* (Dordrecht: Jan Canin, 1592), 949–50.

⁵²Helen King, *The One-Sex Body on Trial: The Classical and Early Modern Evidence* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2013).

⁵³Lorraine Daston and Katharine Park, "The Hermaphrodite and the Orders of Nature. Sexual Ambiguity in Early Modern France," *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 1, no. 4 (1993): 419–38, 421.

⁵⁴Alice Dreger, *Hermaphrodites and the Medical Invention of Sex* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009), 32.

⁵⁵Gilbert, *Early Modern Hermaphrodites*, 40.

⁵⁶Jean Riolan, *Discours sur les hermaphrodits* (Paris: Pierre Ramier, 1614), 83. For medieval comments on the amputation of hermaphroditic genitals: Leah DeVun, "Erecting Sex: Hermaphrodites and the Medieval Science of Surgery," *Osiris* 30, no. 1 (2015): 17–37, 25–28.

⁵⁷Long, *Hermaphrodites*, 59–63.

⁵⁸Patricia Simons, *The Sex of Men in Premodern Europe: A Cultural History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 26; Richard Cleminson and Francisco Vázquez Garcíá, *Sex, Identity and Hermaphrodites in Iberia, 1500–1800* (London: Routledge, 2016), 12; and Lille, Médiathèque Municipale Jean Lévy, ms. 380 ("Matières Criminelles"), 286–90.

⁵⁹François Soyer, *Ambiguous Gender in Early Modern Spain and Portugal: Inquisitors, Doctors and the Transgression of Gender Norms* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 293. On the devil's pact in the Low Countries: Marcel Gielis, "The Netherlandic Theologian's Views of Witchcraft and the Devil's Pact," in *Witchcraft in the Netherlands from the Fourteenth to the Twentieth Century*, ed. Willem Frijhoff, Marijke Gijswijt-Hofstra and Rachel van der Wilden-Fall (Rotterdam: Universitaire Pers Rotterdam, 1991), 37–52.

⁶⁰Israel Burshatin, "Written on the Body: Slave or Hermaphrodite in Sixteenth-Century Spain," in *Queer Iberia: Sexualities, Cultures, and Crossings from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance*, ed. Josiah Blackmore and Gregory Hutcheson (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999), 420–55.

⁶¹François Soyer, "The Inquisitorial Reaction of a Cross-Dressing Lesbian: Reactions and Responses to Female Homosexuality in 18th-Century Portugal," *Journal of Homosexuality* 61, no. 11 (2014): 1529–57.

⁶²In the Spanish colonies then again, demonic intercourse was considered more natural compared to contemporary European attitudes. Jacqueline Holler, "The Devil or Nature Itself? Desire, Doubt, and Diabolical Sex among Colonial Mexican Women," in *Sexuality and the Unnatural in Colonial Latin America*, ed. Zeb Tortorici (Oakland: University of California Press, 2016), 73.

⁶³Tamar Herzig, "The Demons's Reaction to Sodomy: Witchcraft and Homosexuality in Gianfrancesco Pico della mirandola's 'Strix,'" *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 34, no. 1 (2003): 53–72, 61–62.

⁶⁴Brian Levack, *The Witch-Hunt in Early Modern Europe* (London: Routledge, 2013), 52–53.

⁶⁵Lyndal Roper, *Oedipus and the Devil: Witchcraft, Religion and Sexuality in Early Modern Europe* (London: Routledge, 1994), 25.

⁶⁶Dyan Elliott, *Fallen Bodies: Pollution, Sexuality, and Demonology in the Middle Ages* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), 151–3; Stuart Clark, *Thinking with Demons: The Idea of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1997), 112.

⁶⁷Christopher Mackay, *The Hammer of Witches: A Complete Translating of the Malleus Maleficarum* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 148.

⁶⁸Gilbert, *Early Modern Hermaphrodites*, 89.

⁶⁹Robert Mills, *Seeing Sodomy in the Middle Ages* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2015), 286–8; Tom Linkinen, *Same-Sex Sexuality in Later Medieval English Culture* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2015), 193–5.

⁷⁰Jan de Weert, *Nieuwe doctrinael of spiegel van sonden* (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1915), 237. This vision is mirrored in an anonymous fifteenth-century confessional manual commissioned by Philip the Bold. Anonymous, *Des conincx summe* (Leiden: A.W. Slijthoff, 1907), 280.

⁷¹Dirc van Delf, *Tafel van den kersten ghelove. Deel 2: Winterstuc* (Antwerp: Neerlandia, 1937–38), 225.

⁷²Petrus Vanden Bossche, *Den catholyken pedagoge, ofte Christelyken onderwyzer in den catechismus, verdeyld in vyf deelen* (Antwerp: Petrus Rymers, 1770), 335. The story is derived from the thirteenth-century book *Bonum universal de apibus* by Thomas of Cantimpré, who was a famous theologian in the Southern Netherlands: C. M. Stutvoet-Joanknecht, *Der Byen Boeck. De Middelnederlandse vertalingen van Bonum universal de apibus van Thomas van Cantimpré en hun achtergrond* (Amsterdam: VU Uitgeverij, 1990), 138.

⁷³George Mora, ed., *Witches, Devils, and Doctors in the Renaissance: Johann Weyer, De praestigiis daemonum* (Tempe: Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies, 1998), 248–9.

⁷⁴On Delrio: Jan Machielsen, *Martin Delrio: Demonology and Scholarship in the Counter-Reformation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

⁷⁵Delrio's story would inspire many other early modern publications: Nicolas Roudet and Peter Andersen, "Généalogie d'un monstre (à propos d'un curieux passage du Tertius Interveniens de Kepler)," *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance* 76, no. 2 (2014): 301–8.

⁷⁶P.G. Maxwell-Stuart, ed., *Martin Del Rio: Investigations into Magic* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), 88–89.

⁷⁷"Ick hebbe de kindern int' lant van Sodoma doen leven tegen de nature in sonden ha ha ha," Antwerp, Erfgoedbibliotheek Henri Conscience, Ms. 636783 ("het Mengelmoes"), 136. On this songbook: Ingeborg de Cooman, Hubert Meeus, and Maartje De Wilde, *Tot vermaeck van alle sang-lievende lieden. Het zeventiende-eeuwse Nederlandse lied in handschrift en druk* (Antwerp: Universiteit Antwerpen, 2004), 35–36.

⁷⁸Laura Stokes, *Demons of Urban Reform: Early European Witch Trials and Criminal Justice, 1430–1530* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 154–73.

⁷⁹Carol Lansing, "Donna con Donna? A 1295 Inquest into Female Sodomy," in *Sexuality and Culture in Medieval and Renaissance Europe*, ed. Philip Serge (New York: AMS Press, 2005), 109–22, 110; Sherry Velasco, *Lesbians in Early Modern Spain* (Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press, 2011), 650–3.

⁸⁰Helmut Puff, "The Sodomite's Clothes: Gift-Giving and Sexual Excess in Early Modern Germany and Switzerland," in *The Material Culture of Sex, Procreation and Marriage in Pre-Modern Europe*, ed. Karen Encarnacion and Anne McClanan (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 251–73, 251–3.

⁸¹Stefanie Krings, "Sodomie am Bodensee. Vom gesellschaftlichen Umgang mit sexueller Abartigkeit in spätern Mittelalter und frühen Neuzeit auf St. Galler Quellengrundlage," *Schriften des Vereins für Geschichte des Bodensees und seiner Umgebung* 113, no. 1 (1995): 1–45, 22.

⁸²Judith Brown, *Immodest Acts: The Life of a Lesbian Nun in Renaissance Italy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986).

⁸³Patricia Simons, *The Sex of Men in Premodern Europe: A Cultural History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 26; Richard Cleminson and Francisco Vázquez Garcíá, *Sex, Identity and Hermaphrodites in Iberia, 1500–1800* (London: Routledge, 2016), 12; and Dries Vanysacker, *Hekserij in Brugge. De magische leefwereld van een stadsbevolking, 16de-17de eeuw* (Bruges: Van de Wiele, 1988), 69–70.

⁸⁴Fernand Vanhemelryck, *Het gevecht met de duivel. Heksen in Vlaanderen* (Leuven: Davidsfonds, 2000), 213. On the interrogation methods used to make women confess such crimes: Virginia Krause, *Witchcraft, Demonology, and Confession in Early Modern France* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

⁸⁵Robin Briggs, *Witches & Neighbours: The Social and Cultural Context of European Witchcraft* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2002), 292.

⁸⁶John Christopoulos, "Abortion and the Confessional in Counter-Reformation Italy," *Renaissance Quarterly* 65, no. 2 (2012): 443–84, 447.

⁸⁷John Riddle, *Eve's Herbs: A History of Contraception and Abortion in the West* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 29–30.

⁸⁸Valeria Finucci, *The Prince's Body: Vincenzo Gonzaga and Renaissance Medicine* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015), 54; Patricia Simons, "Manliness and the Visual Semiotics of Bodily Fluids in Early Modern Culture," *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 39, no. 2 (2009): 331–73, 340–1; and Cathy McClive, "Masculinity on Trial: Penises, Hermaphrodites and the Uncertain Male Body in Early Modern France," *History Workshop Journal* 68 (Autumn 2009): 45–68, 54–55.

⁸⁹Of course, it is equally possible that such an investigation was indeed conducted but that the report was not preserved.

⁹⁰Maartje de Wilde, *Ik ben getrouwd met een kwaai Griet. Lief en leed in Brusselse liederen uit de 17de eeuw* (Leuven: Davidsfonds, 2011), 19.

⁹¹Dries Vanysacker, "The Impact of Humanists on Witchcraft Prosecutions in 16th and 17th-Century Bruges," *Humanistica Lovaniensia* 50, no. 1 (2001): 393–434.

⁹²François Soyer, "Androgyny and the Fear of Demonic Intervention in the Early Modern Iberian Peninsula: Ecclesiastical and Popular Responses," in *Ordering Emotions in Europe, 1100–1800*, ed. Susan Broomhall (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 245–62.
