How to Look at Monsters: Staging Female Bodies from the Periphery of the Seventeenth-Century Spanish World in Baroque Portraiture and Hapsburg Collections

Risa A. Puleo
CUNY Hunter College

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How to Look at Monsters: Staging Female Bodies from the Periphery of the Seventeenth-Century Spanish World in Baroque Portraiture and Hapsburg Collections

by

Risa Puleo

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Thesis Sponsors:

December 21, 2015
Date
Nebahat Avcioğlu
First Reader

December 21, 2015
Date
Amanda Wunder
Second Reader

December 21, 2015
Date
Ellen Prokop
Third Reader
# Table of Contents

Acknowledgments ......................................................................................................................... i

List of Figures ................................................................................................................................... iv

Introduction  
Genealogies of Monstrosity or, Defining the Perimeter of the Early Modern Monster ................. 1

Chapter I  
Pet Monsters and Human Dogs: Lavinia Fontana’s Portrait of Antonietta Gonzalez, c. 1595 .... 26

Chapter II  
“Taking the Habit of a Man:” Nuns, Soldiers and Juan Van Der Hamen’s Portrait of Catalina de Erauso, 1626 ........................................................................................................................................ 54

Chapter III  
Man, Woman, Jew: Jusepe de Ribera’s Portrait of Magdalena Ventura, 1631 .............................. 82

Chapter IV  
King Kristina’s Hermaphroditic Image, 1648-1653 .................................................................. 116

Conclusion  
The Monster Years ....................................................................................................................... 147

Bibliography ..................................................................................................................................... 151

Appendices ....................................................................................................................................... 170

Illustrations ...................................................................................................................................... 174
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List of Illustrations

Figure 1. “Two figures, one of a furry girl, and the other of a child that was black because of the imagination of their parents,” woodcut illustration from Ambroise Paré’s Des Monstres et Prodiges (On Monsters and Marvels), Paris, 1573

Figure 2. Lavinia Fontana, Holy Family with St. Catherine of Alexandria, 1581, oil on canvas, 51 x 44 x 4 in., Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Gift of The Ahmanson Foundation

Figure 3. Venus de Medici, 1st century B.C., Roman marble copy of a Greek bronze original, Uffizi Gallery, Florence

Figure 4. Masaccio Expulsion of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden, 1425, fresco, Brancacci Chapel, Santa Maria del Carmine, Florence

Figure 5. Petrus Comestor, “The Expulsion of Adam and Even from the Garden of Eden,” 1173, Historica Scholastica, illuminated manuscript, Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. Lat. 5697, fol. 20v.

Figure 6. Barbara Urselin, broadsheets advertising

Figure 7. Taxidermied body of the two-headed calf known as the Monk-Calf, born in Saxony Germany in 1522.

Figure 8. Lucas Cranach, illustration for the pamphlet Interpretation of Two Horrible Figures the Papal Ass in Rome and the Monk Calf found in Freiberg in Meissen, 1523.


Figure 10. “Infans Aetheops and Virgo Villosa,” woodcut illustration from Ulisse Aldrovandi’s Monstrorum historia cum Paralipomenis historiae omnium animalium (The history of monsters chronicled with the history of animals), published in Bologna in 1642


Figure 12. Woodcut illustration from Pierre Boaistaua’s Histoires Prodigieuses (Prodigious Stories) originally published in Paris, 1566.

Figure 13. Christoph Weiditz, illustration of Mexicans performing for the court of Hapsburg ruler and Spanish King Charles V from Trachtenbuch, 1530
Figure 14. Valerio Cioli, *La Fontana del Bacchino*, 1560, Marble, Palazzo Pitti, Florence

Figure 15. Giorgio Vasari, *Pope Clement VII Marrying Catherine de Medici and King Henry II of Orleans*, 28 October 1533, 1556-62, Fresco, Sala di Clemente VII, Palazzo Vecchio, Florence

Figure 16. *The Giant Bartima Bon with the Dwarf Thomele*, 3rd quarter of the 16th century, oil on panel, Ambras Castle, Innsbruck

Figure 17. *Portrait of a Disabled Man*, c. 1650, Ambras Castle, Innsbruck, Vienna

Figure 18. *Vlad the Impaler*, c. 1650, Ambras Castle, Innsbruck, Vienna

Figure 19. *Gregor Baci*, c. 1650 Ambras Castle, Innsbruck

Figure 20. Rodrigo de Villandrando, King with Dwarf, 1620, oil on canvas, Museo del Prado, Madrid

Figure 21. Sleeping Chamber of Queen Catherine de Medici, Château Royal de Blois, France

Figure 22. Lavinia Fontana, *Portrait of Antonietta Gonzalez*, c. 1595, oil on canvas, 22.45 x 18 inches, Musée du Château de Blois, France

Figure 23. Jean Bourdichon, *Wild Folk, Nobility, Poverty and Labor from The Four Conditions of Society*, c. 1505-10, illuminated manuscript, Ecole des Beaux-Arts, Paris

Figure 24. Unknown artist, *Portrait of Petrus Gonzalez*, c. 1580s, oil on canvas, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Ambras Castle, Innsbruck

Figure 25. Unknown artist, *Portrait of Catherine Gonzalez*, c. 1580s, oil on canvas, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Ambras Castle, Innsbruck

Figure 26. Unknown artist, *Portrait of Maddalena Gonzalez*, 1580s, oil on canvas, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Ambras Castle, Innsbruck

Figure 27. Unknown artist, *Portrait of Enrico Gonzalez*, c. 1580s, oil on canvas, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Ambras Castle, Innsbruck

Figure 28. Joris Hoefnagel, illustrations of Pedro, Catherine Gonzalez, Maddalena and Enrico Gonzalez from *Elementa depicta*, 1580s, National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C

Figure 29. Unknown artist, engraving of “Woman of the Cinnaminian race,” 1642, from Ulisse Aldrovandi’s *Monstrum historia*, Memorial Library, University of Wisconsin-Madison

Figure 30. Unknown Artist, *Antonietta Gonzalez*, c. 1590s, tempera on paper from Ulisse Aldrovandi’s personal collection, Biblioteca Universitaria di Bologna
Figure 31. Unknown artist, possibly Coliolani, woodcut of one of the Gonzalez sisters (Antonietta), illustration in Ulisse Aldrovandi’s *Monstrorum historia*, p. 18, Memorial Library, University of Wisconsin-Madison

Figure 32. Unknown artist, possibly Coliolani, woodcut of a Gonzalez sisters (Maddelena or Francesca), illustration in Ulisse Aldrovandi’s *Monstrorum historia*, 1642, p. 17, Memorial Library, University of Wisconsin-Madison

Figure 33. “Hairy female daughter age eight,” copperplate from Gaspar Schott's *Physica Curiosa*, 1622

Figure 34. Unknown artist, woodcut of Petrus and Enrico Gonzalez, illustration in Ulisse Aldrovandi’s *Monstrorum historia*, 1642, p. 16, Memorial Library, University of Wisconsin-Madison

Figure 35. Lavinia Fontana, *Portrait of Antonietta Gonzalez* or *Portrait of a Gonzalez Sister*, 1594-95, red and black pencil, brown ink on paper, 94 x 76 mm, The Pierpont Morgan Library and Museum, New York, IV, 158h

Figure 36. Stefano della Bella, *Orazio Gonzales*, c. 1630, engraving, Yale University Art Gallery, University Purchase, Edward B. Greene Fund, 1964-9.62

Figure 37. Annibale Carracci, *Hairy Harry, Mad Peter and Tiny Amon*, 1595, oil on canvas, 101 x 133 cm, National Museum of Capodimonte, Naples

Figure 38. Annibale Carracci, *Hercules Resting*, 1595-7, ceiling fresco, Camerino, Palazzo Farnese

Figure 39. Lavinia Fontana, *Portrait of a Girl*, 1580-3, oil on metal, private collection

Figure 40. Albrecht Dürer, *Madonna with the Siskin*, 1506, oil on poplar panel, 91 x 76 cm, Lindenau-Museum, Altenburg, Germany

Figure 41. Lavinia Fontana, *Portrait of a Noblewoman*, c. 1584, oil on canvas; 133 x 88 cm, National museum of Women in the Arts, Washington, D.C.

Figure 42. Lavinia Fontana, *The Gozzadini Family*, 1584, oil on canvas; 253 x 191 cm, Pinacoteca Nazionale, Bologna

Figure 43. Juan Van der Hamen y León, *Portrait of Catalina de Erauso*, c. 1626, oil on canvas, 56 x 43 cm, Patrimonio Ártistico Kuxta, Caja Gipzúkoa, San Sebastian

Figure 44. Juan van der Hamen y León (workshop), *Still Life with Fruit, Sweetmeats and Monkeys*, 1626, oil on canvas, 54.5 x 121.5 cm, Private collection
Figure 45. Juan Van der Hamen y León, *Lorenzo Van der Hamen y León*, c 1620, oil on canvas, 55 x 43 cm, Instituto Valencia de Don Juan

Figure 46. Juan van der Hamen y León, *Portrait of a Dwarf*, 1625-30, oil on canvas, 122 x 87 cm, Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid

Figure 47. Diego Velázquez, *The Conde-Duque de Olivares*, c 1625, oil on canvas, 216 x 129.5 cm, The Hispanic Society of America, New York

Figure 48. Juan van der Hamen y León, *Jean de Cröy, II Comte de Solre*, 1626, oil on canvas, 206 x 120 cm, private collection, courtesy of Euremio Díez-Monsalve, Anticuario

Figure 49. Ambroise Paré, “Portrayt d’un hermafrodite homme & femme” (“portrait of a hermaphrodite, man and woman”), woodcut illustration from Ambroise Paré’s *Des Monstres et Prodiges* (*On Monsters and Marvels*), Paris, 1573

Figure 50. Diego Velázquez, *Madre Jeronima de la Fuente*, 1620, oil on linen, 160 x 110 cm, Museo del Prado, Madrid

Figure 51. Jusepe de Ribera, *Magdelena Ventura and with Her Husband and Son*, 1631, oil on canvas, 77 1/8 x 50 inches, Palacio Lerma, Foundation Casa Ducal de Medinaceli, Toledo

Figure 52. Jusepe de Ribera, *Democritus* (traditionally called *Archimedes*), 1630, oil on canvas, 49 ¼ x 31 7/8 inches, Museo del Prado; inv. no. 1121

Figure 53. Juan Sánchez Cotán, Brigida del Río, *La Barbuda de Peñaranda*, c. 1590, oil on canvas, 10 1/8 x 24 ½ inches, Museo del Prado, Madrid

Figure 54. Woodcut illustration for “Emblema 64,” from Sebastián de Covarrubias, *Emblemas morales*, 1610

Figure 55. Unknown artist, Cuzco School, Peru, *Saint Joseph and the Christ Child*, late 17th C Brooklyn Museum

Figure 56. Leonardo da Vinci, *Madonna Litta*, 1490, tempera on canvas, The Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg

Figure 57. Bartoleme Esteban Murillo, *Virgin and Child*, 1670-72, The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Figure 58. Caravaggio, *The Seven Works of Mercy*, 1607, Pio Monte della Misericordia, Naples

Figure 59. *Mary of Egypt*, Missal and Book of Hours, c. 1385, Lombardy

Figure 60. Tilman Riemenschneider, *The Assumption of Mary Magdalene*, 1490, Limewood, Munich
Figure 61. Titian, *Penitent Magdalene*, 1533, commissioned by the Duke of Urbino

Figure 62. Titian, *Penitent Magdalene*, 1563

Figure 63. Jusepe de Ribera, *The Assumption of the Magdalene*, 1636

Figure 64. Ludovico Carracci, *Romulus and Remus Suckled by the She-Wolf*, 1588-9, fresco, Palazzo Magnani, Bologna

Figure 65. Master of *Tucher*, *Circumcision*, 1450, Alterpiece, Aachen

Figure 66. *Ecclesia and Synogoga*, marble, Strasbourg Cathedral

Figure 67. *Der Juden Erbarkeit*, 1571

Figure 68. “On the Hyena,” *Aberdeen Bestiary*, 1542, illustrated manuscript, with detail and copy

Figure 69. Sébastien Bourdon, *Christina on Horseback*, 1653, oil on canvas, Prado Museum, Madrid

Figure 70. Unknown artist, *The Princess Christina*, 1632, oil on canvas, Nationalmuseum, Stockholm

Figure 71. Unknown artist, *Queen Maria Eleonora of Brandenburg*, 1619, oil on canvas, Nationalmuseum, Stockholm

Figure 72. Jakob Elbfas, *Queen Christina*, 1634, oil on canvas, Swedish National Portrait Gallery, Gripsholm Castle, Stockholm

Figure 73. Unknown Artist, *The Armada Portrait*, c. 1588, oil on panel, National Portrait Gallery, London

Figure 74. William Scrots, *Lady Elizabeth*, 1546, oil on oak panel, Royal Collection, Windsor Castle

Figure 75. Peter Paul Rubens, *Marie de Medici as Minerva*, 1622, Louvre, Paris

Figure 76. Jeremias Falck after David Beck, *Kristina of Sweden as Minerva*, 1649, engraving Graphische Sammlung, Düsseldorf Kunstmuseum

Figure 77. Sebastian Dattler, *Christina of Sweden as Minerva Pacifera*, c. 1649, copper coin Stadtmuseum Munster, Germany
Figure 78. David Beck, *Portrait of Queen Christina of Sweden*, c. 1650, oil on canvas, copy of lost original from 1648, National Museum of Sweden, Gripsholm Castle

Figure 79. Anthony van Dyke, *Lady Frances Cranfield, Lady Buckhurst, later Countess of Dorset*, circa 1637, oil on canvas, 75 5/8 x 52 1/8 in), Knole Museum, Kent

Figure 80. Anthony van Dyke, *Catherine Howard, The Duchesse d'Aubign*, 1638, oil on canvas, National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C.

Figure 81. Anthony van Dyke, *Portrait of Lady Anne Carey, Viscountess Clandeboye and later Countess of Clanbrassil*, 1635-6, oil on canvas, The Frick Collection, New York

Figure 82. David Beck, *Kristina, Queen of Sweden*, c. 1650, oil on copper, 9 x 7 inches, The Royal Armory, Stockholm

Figure 83. David Beck, *Kristina, Queen of Sweden*, c. 1650, Oil on copper, 9 x 7 inches, The Royal Armory, Stockholm

Figure 84. Jeremias Falck after Sébastien Bourdon, *Christina receives the Herculean Arms from Gustav II Adolf, as Fame Records Swedish Victory in Germany*, 1653, engraving, 17.8 x 28 cm

Figure 85. Sébastien Bourdon, *Queen Christina* (with sparse hair), 1652, oil on canvas, Nationalmuseum, Stockholm

Figure 86. Sébastien Bourdon, *Queen Christina*, 1652, oil on canvas

Figure 87. Sébastien Bourdon, *Queen Christina with Curly Hair*, 1653, oil on canvas

Figure 88. Sébastien Bourdon, *Portrait of a Man*, 1657-8, Art Institute of Chicago

Figure 89. Sébastien Bourdon, *Portrait of a Man Holding a Bust of Caracalla*, no date, oil on canvas, Louvre, Paris.

Figure 90. Sébastien Bourdan, *Ebba Sparre*, c. 1653, oil on canvas

Figure 91. Peter Paul Rubens, *Philip IV of Spain on Horseback*, 1628, oil on canvas, 337 x 262 cm, Uffizi Gallery, Florence

Figure 92. Diego Velázquez, *Equestrian Portrait of Elizabeth of France*, c. 1635, oil on canvas, 119 x 124 in., Museo del Prado, Madrid

Figure 93. Diego Velázquez, *Equestrian Portrait of Philip IV*, 1635-6, oil on canvas, 119 x 124 in., Museo del Prado, Madrid

Figure 94. Unknown artist with additions by Gian Lorenzo Bernini, *Sleeping Hermaphroditus*, restored 1620, Roman marble sculpture with Baroque marble pillow and mattress, Louvre, Paris
Figure 95. Alchemical hermaphrodite, *Aurora consurgens*, Zurich, Zen-tralbibliothek, MS Rhenoviensis 172 (early fifteenth century), inside frontispiece.

Figure 96. Ambroise Paré, *Des Monstres et Prodigies*, 1573

Figure 97. Jean Riolan, *Discours sur les hermaphrodites, ou il est demonstre contre l’opinion commune, qu’il n’y a point de vray hermaphoditis*, Paris 1614

Figure 98. Artus Thomas, *Description de L’Isle des Hermaphrodites*, 1605, Paris

Figure 99. Giuseppe Testana, *Christina of Sweden enters Rome*, Engraving, Bibliotheque Nationale, Paris, France / Archives Charmet / The Bridgeman Art Library

Figure 100. Agnolo Bronzino, *Nano Morgante*, 1551, oil on double sided panel, Uffizi Gallery, Florence

Figure 101. Juan Carreño de Miranda, *La Monstrua* (nude), 1680, oil on canvas, Prado Museum of Art

Figure 102. Juan Carreño de Miranda, *La Monstrua* (clothed), 1680, oil on canvas, Prado Museum of Art

Figure 103. Juan Carreño de Miranda, Portrait of Charles II, 1685, oil on canvas, 145 x 105” Kunsthistorisches Museum

Figure 104. “Furry Girl and the Black Child,” Frontispiece to *Aristotle’s Masterpiece or The Secrets of Generation Displayed in all the parts thereof*, 1704.
Introduction

Genealogies of Early Modern Monstrosity or, Defining the Perimeter of the Monstrous Body

“Monsters,” a term used to describe those whose bodies challenged socially-constructed categorical binaries by deviating from the social norm through differences of race, gender, physical or mental capacity, were the subject of discussion across all realms of life in the early modern world. But, as much as the monster is discussed in sixteenth and seventeenth century medicine, science, religion, politics, theater, literature and aesthetic theory across Europe, its actual appearance, like the monster itself, was rare. Monsters most often appeared as images on printed materials reproduced and distributed across Europe and in paintings made for royal courts from the beginning of the sixteenth century through the end of seventeenth. The monster was documented crossing the Atlantic on colonial ships and performing in royal courts, being dissected on the physician’s table and preserved in the naturalist’s cabinet. The monster’s image was painted for royal Wunderkammers, included in the pages of Wunderwercks, reproduced for gynecological manuals, printed on political pamphlets and used on advertising broadsheets. For those willing to pay, living monsters could occasionally be seen displayed in marketplaces and city centers. Looking, in some cases amplified to the level of sensationalized spectacle and in other cases focused on the minute details of the monster’s body, characterized the phenomenon of the monster as evidenced by the proliferation of the its image.

In this thesis, I argue that images preserve, display and reproduce the monstrous body. Furthermore, the burgeoning discipline of reproductive medicine and gynecology set within the cultural context of colonialism and the religious and aesthetic climate of the Counter-Reformation, created the conditions for Hapsburg royals across Europe to collect people as objects of study and amusement. My inquiry looks at portraits of monstrous women: Antonietta
Gonzalez (birth and death dates unknown), Catalina de Erauso (1592–1650), Magdalena Ventura (birth and death dates unknown), Queen Kristina of Sweden (1626–1689), and “La Monstrua,” Eugenia Martínez Vallejo, were all born human and female in the first half of the seventeenth century. Their appearances, however, strayed beyond the bounds of social expectations of human and female bodies. Each lived on the periphery of King Philip’s Spain rather than in his court, yet was affected by Spain’s international activities. I look to their portraits from the perspective of these disciplines and point to what is not seen when looking at images of monsters.

I begin by examining an illustration that appeared in many books in the last half of the sixteenth century to identify the ideological parentage and cultural circumstances that bore the monster of the seventeenth. The printed illustration shows two figures, side-by-side, who float decontextualized on the page. A caption describes the two figures as “a furry girl and … a child that was black because of the imagination of their parents” (Fig. 1). This image predates Ambroise Paré’s Des Monstres et Prodiges, published in Paris in 1573, and is one text among many that the image was reproduced in its own moment and over time.¹

On Monsters and Marvels is an example of a Wunderwerck, a genre of writing popular in the sixteenth century that compiled knowledge from across time and place about the wonders of nature. Included under the broad category of “wonder” was a catalogue of varied and unusual phenomena: anomalous weather conditions like meteorites, land formations such as volcanoes and geysers, manmade structures like the Great Pyramids of Egypt, and rare or imaginary creatures like unicorns. Because Paré was a barber-surgeon, he was specifically concerned with anomalies in human and animal form—monsters—such as conjoined twins and

“hermaphrodites.” This focus makes Paré’s project comparable to early modern medical manuals in its time and important to the development of gynecological and obstetric practices after. Within this realm, Paré’s book is unique for its abundance of illustrations and interest in the causes of monstrosity. Thus, each variation of monster is accompanied by an image and explanation for its deviant form. Of the thirteen causes for monstrosity, half are attributed to the mother, including poor posture, a womb too narrow, or legs crossed too tightly. Other, non-maternal, causes included “too much or too little seed,” the interference of demons, and the glory or wrath of God. The image of the Black Child and the Furry Girl is included in a chapter describing “monsters that are created through the imagination.”

The Black Child on the left is presented as a silhouette: the woodcut print emphasizes shape, color and scale. The blackness of the ink becomes a corollary for the blackness of his skin. Its outline is that of an adult’s, but he is scaled to a miniature size, shown through juxtaposition with the larger, and thus presumably older, Furry Girl. This part of the image illustrates a paragraph in Paré’s text where he cites Hippocrates. The ancient forefather of Western medicine defended a white princess from accusations of adultery after she gave birth to a “child as black as a Moor.” According to Hippocrates, a portrait of a Moor hanging near the princess’s conjugal bed, looked upon by the mother at the moment of conception, caused the aberration. Citing the seventh-century monk Damascene, Paré explained that the Furry Girl was

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2 I keep the seventeenth-century term “hermaphrodite” instead of using the contemporary “intersexed” to describe those born with ambiguous genitalia to acknowledge that the two words are not synonyms. While “hermaphrodite” encompasses intersexed bodies, the term was also used metaphorically in the seventeenth century to describe co-existing states of union and discord in religious, political and scientific realms. The overlap between the metaphorical “hermaphrodite” and the intersexed body will be drawn out in this thesis.


4 Ibid., 38.

5 Ibid., 39. Paré also cited another example from Heliodorus, in which a dark-skinned Ethiopian couple birthed an albino daughter after the mother had looked at “the pale Andromeda,” “for she had a painting of her before her eyes during the embraces from which she became pregnant.” In contemporary terms, a black child born to a white mother would have been understood as a case of reverse albinism.
produced by a mother who “looked too intensely at the image of St. John the Baptist dressed in skins, along with his own body hair and beard.”6 The Furry Girl’s hair is depicted in various lengths across her body: long hair drapes from her head, a collar of shorter hair encircles her neck, and patches of hair run down the length of her chest and legs in “v”-shaped lines. Shading and crosshatching imply hair in places along her body where it is not directly indicated. Despite the hair covering her body from head-to-toe, the girl is depicted shielding herself with her hands: her left arm is extended over her right breast, her right hand is directed towards her pubis in a posture expressing awareness of, if not shame about, her genitalia.

Paré’s text conveys the power bestowed upon images and paintings. Images could impregnate themselves in a mother’s imagination, collapsing ideas of artistic creation with procreativity, reproductive conception with mental conceptualization. Pictures of beautiful, well-formed children were thought to inspire beautiful, well-formed children, and pictures of anything else could spawn a range of other possibilities. This belief prompted a market in sixteenth-century Europe for small devotional paintings on copper depicting happy families and ideal children that functioned as visualization tools around the conjugal bed.7 Most often the ideal child depicted was the Christ Child surrounded by the Holy Family and other saints, as seen in Holy Family with St. Catherine of Alexandria, 1581, a devotional painting on copper by the Bolognese painter Lavinia Fontana (Fig. 2).

The illustration of “the Furry Girl and Black Child,” however, conveys something different from Paré’s text. In a book whose primary function was to display human anomalies, this illustration is exceptionally odd for the figures’ unwillingness to present themselves to the

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6 Ibid., 38.
reader. The Furry Girl hides herself, and the Black Boy is virtually unseeable. But, from whom is the Furry Girl hiding? The reader of the book? The men who examined her and transmitted her story across centuries? The artist who drew her? Like the examples that he cited from ancient texts, Paré’s illustrations were also compiled from other sources. This particular set of images and texts comes from another Wunderwerck: Pierre Boaistuau’s Histoires Prodigieuses (Prodigious Stories) was published in Paris in 1560, two decades before Paré’s. Boaistuau’s text was similarly culled from others, primarily the sixteenth century Alsatian humanist Conrad Lycosthenes’ Prodigiorum ac ostentorum chronicon (Chronicle of wonders and portents outside the order of nature from the upper and lower regions of the world from the beginning of the world come to pass down to our day), published only three years before Boaistuau’s in 1557. Boaistuau and Lycosthenes, like Paré, both cited their sixteenth-century contemporaries and copied ancient sources, including Aristotle, Plato and Pliny and Saints Paul, Augustine and Isidore of Seville.

The Furry Girl’s self-concealing pose is the key to understanding the image. Her posture strongly resembles that of the Venus Pudica, a traditional model for depicting standing nude women in Western sculpture and painting since Ancient Greece and Rome (Fig. 3). The Venus Pudica pose is meant to express modesty about her nudity, if not shame, given that the etymology of “pudica” derives from "pudendus" from the Latin for both “shame” and “genitalia.” The Venus Pudica served as a model for Eve, who hides her nudity with arms crossing her body in Masaccio’s Expulsion of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden, 1425 (Fig. 4). In fact, the Furry Girl’s image is a reversal of Masaccio’s Eve, apparent in the direction of her hands. (The copyist's drawing would have been reserved in the printing process.) In the Biblical story, after Adam and Eve partook of the forbidden apple, “The eyes of both of them
were opened and they knew that they were naked” (Genesis 3:6). In Masaccio’s fresco, the
couple’s dawning awareness is expressed by Eve’s attempt to conceal her nudity with the Venus
Pudica’s pose. The lesson of the Biblical parable is that nudity is inappropriate for socialized and
acculturated humans and associated with the innocence and unawareness of animals. An image
from Petrus Comestor’s Historica Scholastica, 1173, a twelfth century illustrated Bible, depicts
Adam and Eve in a stage in between innocence and self-awareness: both wear long coats made
of swirling hair as they exit Eden, showing how the animal’s fur morphed into human clothing
(Fig. 5). Paré may have been familiar with the Venus Pudica in the Medici’s collection and
Masaccio’s fresco in the Medici homestead in Florence, as Catherine de Medici was King Henry
II’s wife and Paré’s patron. Paré’s version of a Wunderwerck was a printed counterpart to the
Wunderkammer or cabinet of curiosity that Queen Catherine kept at the royal châteaux in Blois.

Returning to Paré’s image, I argue the Furry Girl’s awareness of her nudity is an
indication of her humanness, and it is this human awareness in combination with her animal-like
furry body, that makes her monstrous. According to one of Paré’s definitions, when monsters
were born “with a form that is half-animal and half-human” they were “produced by sodomites
and atheists who join together and break out of their bounds contrary to nature, with animals, and
from this are born several monsters that are hideous and very scandalous to look at or speak
about.”8 Barbara Vanbeck, like the Furry Girl, was born with a genetic condition that caused hair
to grow all over her body. She spent her life travelling to the major centers of Europe as Barbara
Urslerin, displaying her body and her talents at playing the harpsichord. A Danish doctor
diagnosed her as the product of a sexual union between a human mother and an ape, though her
adopted surname suggests a bear. Her image is found on numerous broadsides advertising her
spectacular body, and she was frequently depicted next to her instrument (Fig. 6). Engaging in an

8 Paré, On Monsters and Marvels, 8.
activity belonging to a genteel and mannered lady, the monster believed to be half-ape, half-woman challenged notions of wild beast and socialized human. Encounters with Urslerin are documented in various letters. These letters, all written by men, also confirm Urslerin’s sex, as the hair across her entire body was made available for inspection and tugging to test its veracity to those willing to pay extra.⁹

Paré’s definition also included “things that appear outside the course of Nature and are usually signs of some forthcoming misfortune, such as a child who is born with one arm, another who will have two heads and additional members over and above the ordinary.”¹⁰ This definition still carried the superstitious pall of some of his ancient sources.¹¹ In the fourth century, both Pliny and St. Augustine considered monstrous births “omens,” “portents” and “prodigies,” and those born with extraordinary bodies were believed to carry warnings of future misfortunes. The birth of the monster was the indicator of a future event, a testament to the moral wrongdoing of the parents, or a sign of God’s anger. The historian Livy wrote of laws regarding the disposal of monstrous children born in ancient Rome. Because their prophecies would affect an entire community, monstrous births were considered to be a matter of state.¹² St. Augustine defined the term “monster” in the fourth century: “A monstrum, from monstrare, to point to, means a marvel that points to some meaning.”¹³ Meaning was derived through a visual interpretation of the monster’s appearance and contextualized within the immediate circumstances surrounding its

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¹⁰ Paré, On Monsters and Marvels, 3.
¹¹ Luc Brisson, in his book Sexual Ambivalence: Androgyny and Hermaphroditism in Greco-Roman Antiquity (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), cites the story of Polycritus, as the original source of the idea that connects the birth of a hermaphrodite to an omen foretelling future disaster.
¹² Brisson, Sexual Ambivalence, 14.
¹³ Merry E. Wiesner-Hanks, The Marvelous Hairy Girls: The Gonzales Sisters and Their Worlds (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 17. See also Andrea Rossi-Reder, “Wonders of Beasts: Medieval Monsters and Xenophobes” which offers the following etymologies on page 25: “(from ostendere, to show) and portentum (from portendere or praeostendere, to show ahead of time) and prodigium (from porro dicere, to declare things a long way off) all mean a marvel that is a prediction of things to come.”
birth. For example, a two-headed calf born in Saxony in 1522 was interpreted by Catholics to be a sign of Martin Luther and the Protestant Reformation (Fig. 7). The Protestant leader Martin Luther reinterpreted the calf’s appearance and deemed it a sign of the Catholic Church’s degradation based on its visual affinity to a monk’s garments. Lucas Cranach the Elder’s illustration of the Monk-Calf, originally published in a polemical Protestant pamphlet from 1523 entitled *Interpretation of Two Horrible Figures the Papal Ass in Rome and the Monk Calf found in Freiberg in Meissen*. Paré reproduced a modified image of Cranach’s original drawing on the page following the image of the Furry Girl and Black Child (Fig. 8-9).

Today, we describe the anomalies that occur in gestation and result in a variety of different shapes of bodies under a rubric of birth defects. But in the sixteenth century, the monster occupied a liminal status between object of fear and medical diagnosis. The perception, reception and significance of the monster was in a period of flux as evidenced by the development of language to describe the phenomenon. Where a “monster’s” function was to communicate a message from a divine source, to show or demonstrate, the “marvel,” a word that enters the lexicon in fourteenth century France, was to be looked at, especially with wonder, amazement and awe. The marvel became a sign of the endless variety of nature and the diversity of the Creator’s imagination. A related term, “miracle,” from the Latin, “to wonder,” expressed the shifting relationship to both the monster and God after the Renaissance. The appropriate emotional-intellectual response to seeing a marvel gave the monster another name: “wonder” expressed the curiosity with which one should confront the monster. Such “curiosity”—another

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14 In the chapter “Protestant Reform and the Fashion Monster,” Crawford argues that the interpretation of the Monk-Calf was derived through fashion, in a logic that presumed that its monstrosity was a garment that could be removed, much like the way a monk without his habit is simply a man. Thus, the Protestant interpretation of the Monk-Calf carried a moral parable and critique of the Catholic Church beyond the obvious slight. Julie Crawford, *Marvelous Protestantism: Monstrous Births in Post-Reformation England* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005), 30-31.

15 Murphy, *Lavinia Fontana*, 164.
name for the monster—would give way to the urge to understand that characterizes the Enlightenment projects of the eighteenth century, but would later return in the fascinating horror of the nineteenth-century freak show.

Whereas Paré’s text is proto-medical, participating in the development of gynecology and reproductive medicine in the infancy of these disciplines, a text by the naturalist Ulisse Aldrovandi used the same image to develop a classification system in the early study of natural sciences. Writing at the same time as Paré, Aldrovandi was a naturalist at the University of Bologna. Today, as well as in his own time, he is considered the forefather of biology, botany and geology. Aldrovandi’s taxonomy was indebted to Aristotle’s Great Chain of Being, a hierarchical system of classification that ranked all living things and inanimate objects, including heavenly and demonic beings, plants and rocks according to a capacity for awareness. From Aldrovandi’s perspective, the monster presented a problem to the categorical system that he developed to organize all the variations of living being and inanimate things across the world according to similarities and differences. Like the Furry Girl, who appeared to be both human and animal, the monster existed between categories. The monster could also exist in all categories, similar to coral, which seemed to be plant, animal and mineral all at once. Thus, the monster was placed in a category with other category-defiers: the Monstrous.

Aldrovandi’s Monstrorum historia cum Paralipomenis historiae omnium animalium (The history of monsters chronicled with the history of animals), written throughout his life and published posthumously in Bologna in 1642, compiled of all those creatures that did not fit neatly into his other books on birds, insects, fish, serpents, cloven-hoofed quadrupeds, trees and metals, among other subjects. Aldrovandi included the image of the Furry Girl and the Black Child in the Monstrorum historia. The image was accompanied by a caption that read: “Infans
"Aetheops and Virgo Villosa," a translation of the phrases “furry girl and black child” into Latin and binomial nomenclature, the formal scientific name identifying living things by their genus and species (Fig. 10). The position of the Furry Girl and the Black Child has been reversed in Aldrovandi’s version so that the pair now faces left instead of right as in the Paré image. Again, a drawn copy of the Paré’s image would have been reversed in the process of making Aldrovandi’s reprint. In this next generation of the image, Aldrovandi situated the figures in the vague sketch of a landscape, placing the couple in nature. In this context, the Furry Girl’s back leg, which is crossed behind the front leg, can be read as a posture of walking that is closer to the source’s image, Masaccio’s Eve, who walks out of the Garden of Eden.

In a time of extreme polarity, the monster’s liminality became a metaphor for describing the problem of the irreconcilability of opposite positions. Paré and Aldrovandi’s world was defined by conflict between warring Protestants and Catholics, who disagreed about the role of religious leaders, including the Pope; core theological doctrines, such as the holiness of the Virgin Mary; and protocols of ritual, like the appropriate way to ingest the Eucharist. Religious wars dominated most of the European continent and the last half of the sixteenth and first half of the seventeenth century, the same period when monsters were most actively discussed in medical and scientific circles. During this time, numerous political satires including Francois Rabelais’ *Gargantua and Pantagruel*, 1532-1564, Miguel Cervantes’ *Don Quixote*, 1605, and Joseph Hall’s *Mundus Alter et Idem*, 1605, used monstrous figures of giants, man men (those split between realities), bearded women, and hermaphrodites to parody contemporary events and religious and political leaders. As the aforementioned example of the Monk-Calf illustrates, the births of monsters were opportunities to assign blame and point to the degradation of the

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16 Conflicts include the French Civil Wars of Religion (1562–1598), the Eighty Years War (1568–1648), which won the Protestant Netherlands independence from Catholic Spanish rulers, and the Thirty Years War (1618–1648) between the Holy Roman Empire, Spain and France against Protestant Sweden, Germanic and Dutch nations.
opposite side in intellectual battles that were increasingly polemical. In the context of the Catholic-Protestant schism, the monster was not only the problem, but also the solution, representing as it did an unnatural synthesis between two irreconcilable opponents.

During these religious conflicts, the monster challenged already-strained notions of the image. The Archbishop of Bologna, Gabriele Paleotti, made his inquiry into monstrosity in the realms of aesthetics and religious art. Paleotti’s treatise, *Discorso intorno alle imagine sacri et profane* (*Discourse on Sacred and Profane Images*, Bologna, 1582), set limits for art and representation according to the tenets of the Catholic Church. Protestant reformers saw the Catholic Church’s patronage of the arts as idolatrous and decadent; churches were vandalized and artworks were destroyed across newly Protestant nations in a series of iconoclastic outbreaks from 1523–1566. In response, Catholic leaders argued that images and artworks were imperative to educating Christians and inspiring devotion. The Council of Trent, a series of meetings held between 1545 and 1563, was organized to reform Catholic doctrine in response to these and other charges. The Council of Trent advised that artists could better communicate God’s message by tightening the relationship between doctrine and iconography:

…superstition shall be removed, all filthy lucre be abolished; finally, all lasciviousness be avoided; in such, wise that figures shall not be painted or adorned with a beauty exciting to lust; nor the celebration of the saints, and the visitation of relics be by any perverted into revellings and drunkenness; as if festivals are celebrated to the honor of the saints by luxury and wantonness.\(^{17}\)

Across Europe, religious leaders like Paleotti in Bologna and painters like Francisco Pacheco in Seville would elaborate on this short dictate and establish restrictions for image-making and proper iconography in religious and secular art in texts that are some of the earliest examples of modern art theory.

\(^{17}\) “On the Invocation, Veneration, and Relics of Saints, and on Sacred Images,” from The Twenty-Fifth Session of the Council of Trent (1573), https://history.hanover.edu/texts/trent/CT25IM.html.
When depicting the monster, Paleotti advised that artists should “represent the truth of how things were,” rather than how they were perceived or imagined.\(^\text{18}\) Thus Paleotti distinguished the realities of the monster and the monstrous from those of the grotesque—the aesthetic umbrella under which monsters have historically been considered. The grotesqueries that decorated ancient Roman grottoes, from which the term derives, and later medieval and Gothic churches, were often hybrid creatures created by cobbling together incompatible body parts, their “extremely licentious and absurd” forms expressed the “painter’s imagination,” as described by Vasari. Monsters, on the other hand, were fact, not flights of fancy. Following dictates like Paleotti’s call for “truth,” artists stressed accuracy of detail in their representation of monsters and avoided idealization and exaggeration. This interest in scientific accuracy was responsible in part for the rise of a naturalist style in the late sixteenth century, which contrasted with the classicizing idealization of the Renaissance and the distortions of Mannerism. Images were called upon to testify on behalf of reality and to represent it unadorned. In this way, the artist operated like the early modern scientist, poised to observe in efforts to understand the mechanisms and logic of God’s universe.

For Paleotti, monstrosity was a formal concern defined by measurement of quantity and quality. Quantity describes largeness and smallness—thus, giants, dwarfs and pygmies were in possession of too much or too little height. Quantity also described a “defect of number, like having two heads, three arms and four legs, or having one eye and one ear.” Paleotti continues:

As for quality, monstrosity may likewise be considered either in the figure or in the color. In the figure, either because it does not have the simple figure natural to its species, or because it represents a body part from another species, like the man with the mouth of a wild boar, the ears of a horse, the feet of a goat, or in color, making a man green, or man half black and half red, or in some other like manner. Turning to physical characteristics, monstrosity may occur through place or time or the use of the limbs: in place, if the eyes

are set in the middle of the forehead, the nose where the chin is supposed to be, or the arms behind the shoulders; in time, if a boy is born with fully developed set of teeth or a baby with a beard; in the use of limbs, like walking on one’s hands or having the legs attached to the shoulders. One could continue in this vein for a long time if necessary.  

By such measures, the Furry Girl qualifies as a monster on both counts: she has excess hair in places where hair does not belong like the forehead, nose, cheeks, back, chest, etc. This extra hair is also excessively long and not the peach fuzz covering that is more “natural” for human women. This particular physical characteristic is not normal to her species or to her sex and is closer to the fur of an animal or the hair of a man. As Paleotti’s matrix outlines, monstrosity is not only an attribute of the disabled or deformed body, but also applies to bodily differences in general. For Paleotti, any deviation in shape, color, size, outline, proportion, or any other aspect of form, such as surface texture in the case of the Furry Girl, earned one the title of monster.

With the perspective of four centuries, Michel Foucault posited that the monster was a mixture:

It is the mixture of two realms, the animal and the human: the man with the head of an ox, the man with a bird’s feet—monsters. It is the blending of two species: the pig with the sheep’s head is a monster. It is the mixture of two individuals: the person who has two heads and one body or two bodies and one head is a monster. It is the mixture of two sexes: the person who is both male and female is a monster. It is a mixture of life and death: the fetus born with a morphology that means it will not be able to live but that nonetheless survives for some minutes or days is a monster. Finally, it is a mixture of forms: the person who has neither arms nor legs, like a snake, is a monster. Consequently, the monster is the transgression of natural limits, the transgression of classification, of the table and of the law as table.

Continuing, Foucault argues that the monster posed a political-juridical breach to the religious and social order of Europe. In the sixteenth century, the outward appearance of the body governed the social and theological responses to the soul. In other words, would a child who did not look recognizably human warrant baptism? A burial? What about a child born covered in

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19 Ibid., 258-9.
21 Ibid., 63-64.
hair, who resembled a dog or a monkey as much as a human? Would a baby born with two heads attached to one body or one head on two bodies be given one or two names? Should a hermaphrodite be christened with a male or female name? Who would a hermaphrodite marry, a man or a woman? Which sex’s clothes would they wear? 

Such questions were posited in regards to monstrous births. But how is the Black Child in the image, possessing the normative shape, size and scale of a human child, an example of a monster? Aldrovandi would classify him as another species, and Paré would argue via Hippocrates and others for a case of reverse albinism. Paré’s image is a succinct example of two ancient ideas—monstrous births and monstrous races—coalescing into a general idea of the monster in the mid-sixteenth century. Whereas the Furry Girl represents the idea of monstrous births and reveals attitudes towards deformity and disability in the Baroque period, the Black Child represents the equally ancient idea of monstrous races and assumptions made about foreign people. The response to and governance of those born able-bodied and human, and yet appearing unusual, primitive and animal-like to Europeans in newly-encountered places across the globe was directed by the latter notion.

Herodotus described a variety of humanoid creatures believed to reside at the farthest corners of the earth in his *Naturalis Historia*, 5th century BCE. Included in his list are the dog-headed cynocephalus, the sciapod with its oversized feet, and the Blemmyes, whose faces were positioned on the chests of their headless bodies (Fig. 11). That the Blemmyes were an actual tribe of people living in the Sudan only promulgated notions of the imaginary, monstrous Blemmyes. Five hundred years later, Pliny would repopularize Herodotus’ ideas in his *Naturalis Historia*, 79 AD. Both described monsters that would be imaged in bestiaries and medieval

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22 The Archbishop of Bologna, Cardinal Ludovisi, asked this question in a pamphlet printed in Bologna around of the time of the Gonzalez family’s arrival. Murphy, *Lavinia Fontana*, 164.
maps, including imaginary creatures carried over from ancient mythology such as mermaids (half-woman, half-fish), centaurs (half-man, half-horse) and griffons (half-eagle, half-lion). Where Asians, Africans, and Europeans lived in territories called Asia, Africa and Europe respectively, the *Hereford Mundi Mappa*, 1260, includes a continent where monsters were believed to live. Colonial explorations and the opening of trade routes east and west meant Europeans more frequently encountered a great variety of people and cultures. The people of the “New World” were believed to be living examples of creatures described by Herodotus and Pliny. Thus, when conquistadors and explorers began colonizing the Americas at the beginning of the sixteenth century, they named “whole regions … for the monstrous races of women warriors (Amazonia), big-footed giants (Patagonia) and consumers of human flesh (the Caribbean).”\(^{23}\)

Like the monster born at home, the monster found abroad posed a set of questions that challenged the religious-political structure of European Catholic society. Could the indigenous people of the New World be converted? Such a question posited the possession of a soul, another qualifying factor in determining if one were human, animal or a monstrous mix of both. If indigenous peoples in the Americas had souls, they were human and their bodies could not be enslaved, like those of an animal’s could. Could one reproduce with an indigenous person? Would the result of such union produce a monster? The answers to these questions would be attempted in papal decrees, including *Dum diversas*, 1492, *Romanux Ponifex*, 1455, *Sublimus Dei*, 1527, and in colonial documents like the Spanish Requirement of 1513. These texts were used to justify the importation of Africans to the New World for use as slaves and the conversion of the indigenous people of the Americas to Catholicism. In the context of colonial conversion

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abroad and the expulsion of Jews and Muslims from the Iberian Peninsula, the case of the Black Child from Paré’s image, conceived by the Moor who infiltrated the womb via an image, posed a threat not only to paternity but also to an idea of race as defined by place, nation, religion and appearance.

Paré’s image shows the Black Child and Furry Girl floating dislocated on the page, an aesthetic choice that would become the standard for future scientific images as it allowed a viewer to examine a specimen’s form without distraction. In an earlier generation of the image, however, Boaistuau’s Histoires Prodigieuses, the unusual couple was placed in the context of a royal court being presented to King Charles IV of France (Fig. 12). In fact, Paré’s patron, King Henri II of France owned a hairy boy named Pedro González, who was brought to Paris from the Spanish-occupied Canary Islands in 1556, three years before Boaistuau’s book was printed. Indigenous people from Spanish colonies, like Gonzalez, were often brought to the Spanish court for the King’s amusement and education. Christoph Weiditz illustrated Aztecs performing for the court of Hapsburg ruler of Spain King Charles V in 1530 in his Trachtenbuch, a genre of illustrated books that compiled fashions from cultures around the world (Fig. 13). The text accompanying Weiditz’s images describes not only the costume, but also the appearance, actions and behavior of the visitors and described these people as “curious” and “marvelous,” the same terminology used to describe those born in Europe with anomalous bodies. Stephen Greenblatt goes one step further in his analysis of colonial travelogues and documents of proclamation to argue that “wonder,” as a descriptor and an emotional response, legitimated possession of newly encountered lands, essentially “capturing” these places and the people within them in text and images.24

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Collecting people as objects of curiosity and trophies representing the scope of one’s territory was a hobby of the earliest empires. But documenting one’s collection of people in paintings reached new heights in the late fifteenth century when the Medici family of Northern Italy married into the Hapsburg’s Holy Roman Empire. Significantly, these same families also represented the consolidated Catholic forces in the religious wars of the sixteenth century. Dwarves are in the eager audience of Andrea Mantegna’s ceiling fresco for the Camera degli Sposi in the Gonzaga family’s Palazzo Ducale. Sandro Botticelli also included a dwarf in his *Adoration of the Magi*, 1475, in which the three Medici brothers are cast as Christ’s visitors. Cosimo de Medici commissioned many pictorial and sculptural representations of the most beloved of the five dwarfs that lived at the Medici’s Palazzo Pitti, the obese jester Morgante (birth and death dates unknown), including a series of bronzes by Giambologna. Painted by Bronzino in a nude double portrait of 1552, Morgante is presented in frontal and dorsal views to enable a closer study of the dwarf’s anatomy. Morgante was also the subject of a fountain by Valerio Cioli in the Boboli Garden of the Palazzo Pitti, 1560 (Fig. 14). Cioli’s stone sculpture presented the dwarf straddling a turtle to emphasizes his width as an equal measure to his height and thickness. Morgante’s penis peaks out from beneath the overhang of his belly, echoing the emergence of the turtle’s head from beneath the arc of its shell. Like the Furry Girl, Morgante is depicted protecting his nakedness from onlookers with an outstretched hand. Another important example is Giorgio Vasari’s portrait commemorating Catherine de Medici’s marriage to King Henry II of France, which features the young Queen trailed by a female dwarf, 1533 (Fig. 15). cabinet of curiosity that Queen Catherine kept at the royal châteaux in Blois.

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In the sixteenth century, Hapsburg royals related to Catherine de Medici through marriage across the Holy Roman Empire came to the fore as collectors of anomalous and curious people and their images. Archduke Maximilian II of Austria; the Duke of Bavaria, Wilhelm V; the Holy Roman Emperor and King of Hungary and Croatia, Rudolph II, and the Holy Roman Emperor and King of Bohemia, Ferdinand II, all created miniature worlds in their *Wunderkammern*, positioning themselves as the God-like creators of room-sized dominions filled with objects that expressed their wealth and power to obtain rare specimens representing the scope of the territories under their control. Ferdinand II’s Ambras Castle in Innsbruck was home to a cabinet of curiosities that held pieces of coral and pearls reconfigured into alien landscape scenes; games from across the world carved in ivory, previous stone and gems; intricate automatons with elaborate moving parts, and a series of paintings Ferdinand commissioned of physically and psychologically anomalous people. His collection included a double portrait of the giant Bartima Bon with the dwarf Thomele the same dwarf who jumped out of Wilhelm of Bavaria’s wedding cake (Fig. 16). An unidentified man with atrophied arms and legs is presented nude lying on his belly and wearing a ruffled collar in another undated portrait (Fig. 17). Also included in the Archduke’s collections were portraits of Vlad the Impaler, c. 1560, also known as Dracula, and Joannes Zisska de Troznow, c. 1560, who both breached categories of human and animal with cruel behaviors incongruent with notions of humanity (Fig. 18). A portrait of Gregor Baci, c. 1550, illustrates how he monstrously transgressed life and death by surviving a jousting injury where a lance penetrated his cranium (Fig. 19). Portraits such as these in Ferdinand II’s *Wunderkammer* were artistic counterparts to those printed in Paré’s *Wunderwerck*. Both allowed their viewer to gaze upon the monster’s abnormality at length, preserving the form of its body long after the monster’s death.
In the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the Hapsburg kings of Spain came to the fore as collectors of people. The physically and developmentally disabled, obese, hairy and insane people who lived at the Spanish royal court were known as el gente de placer or “the people of pleasure.” The dozens of portraits of the gente de placer by court painters Diego Velázquez, Juan Sánchez Cotán, Alfonso Sánchez Coello, Antonio Moro, Juan van der Hamen, Gaspard de Crayer, Jusepe de Ribera and others, point to the number of spectacularly-bodied people living at King Philip II, III and IV’s courts. These portraits elevate the monster by representing them on the same terms as other court attendants. In addition to portraits that present the gente de placer on their own, dwarves were often included in portraits of the royal family, as seen most famously in Velázquez’s Las Meninas, 1656, in which two dwarves attend to the Infante Margarita. In Gaspar de Crayer’s undated portrait of King Philip IV, a dwarf serves the king by holding a helmet that is as tall as he is. An earlier portrait from 1620 by Rodrigo de Villandrando’s features the future King resting his hand upon a dwarf’s head (Fig. 20). In both pictures, the juxtaposition of the royal and monstrous bodies reinforced the scale of the king’s power through the differentiation between short and tall statures and abilities.

The following chapters consider four portraits of four “monsters” who circulated at the perimeter of the seventeenth-century Spanish empire. Antonietta Gonzalez, Catalina de Erauso, Magdalena Ventura and Kristina Vasa were all affected by Spain’s international activities. Cumulatively, these women’s movements across great swaths of territory speaks to the mobility of the monster and her image at this time. This inquiry traces their journeys across the Spanish-
occupied Canary Islands, Netherlands, Kingdom of Two Sicilies and the Viceroyalties of New Spain and Peru (present-day Mexico, Peru, Bolivia and Chile); the Hapsburg-controlled Holy Roman Empire (present-day Germany, Czech Republic, Hungary, Austria); Sweden; Aldrovandi and Paleotti’s Bologna; the Papal seat in Rome, and the royal courts of Spain.

Each of the four portraits considered here represents one of two types of monster that was especially prevalent in early seventeenth century: the hirsute woman and the hermaphrodite. Both of these types of monster made frequent appearances in medical texts, legal proceedings and the literary and pictorial records of seventeenth-century Spain, and both challenged the boundaries between human and animal, and male and female, respectively. To find each of these portraits, I went in search of “abnormal” or excessive amounts of hair. Gonzalez and Ventura were easy to identify as hair is the defining feature of their portraits. While not pictured in their portraits, textual descriptions of Erauso and Queen Kristina’s facial hair was one factor that made those inspecting their bodies question their sex. After further research, it became evident that hair was only a symptom of a diagnosis: monstrosity.

Antonietta Gonzalez, youngest daughter of Pedro Gonzalez, the man brought from the Spanish Canary Islands to the court of King Henry II of France, was born with the same genetic condition as her father. Her furry body and face troubled categories of animal and human. In the first chapter, I look at Gonzalez’s portrait as painted by Bolognese artist Lavinia Fontana c. 1595 as well as numerous other paintings and illustrations from Gonzalez’s journey to the Hapsburg courts of Europe to understand how she occupied the role of pet and how her portrait functioned as a document of ownership. In the second chapter, I look at Juan Van der Hamen’s portrait of Catalina de Erauso, who breached categories of man and woman. Erauso was a Basque nun who escaped her convent, joined the Spanish military as a man and travelled to the Viceroyalty of
Peru to aid Spain’s colonial endeavors there. I examine her portrait painted by Juan Van der Hamen in 1626 in conjunction with a written record of soldiers, nuns and manly women, all of whom are documented as transmuting genders in medical, legal and literary texts. In the third chapter, I examine Jusepe de Ribera’s portrait of Magdalena Ventura, 1631, a hirsute woman residing in Spanish-occupied Italy, who confounded all of these categories. She is presented as bearded and breastfeeding in her portrait, transgressing bestiality and masculinity. I examine Ventura’s portrait as a portrait that purposefully elides classification. Chapter Four focuses on court portraits commissioned by Queen Kristina of Sweden of herself in masculine and feminine attire between 1648, when she assumed the role of queen, and 1654, when she renounced the Swedish throne. I argue that each of these conversions, as well as her masculine behavior, contributed to rumors of Kristina’s hermaphroditism. In the conclusion, I look to a double portrait of “La Monstrua,” Eugenia Martínez Vallejo, 1670, by Juan Carreño de Miranda, an obese child who is presented both nude and clothed. Martínez Vallejo’s portrait is one of the last portraits of monsters painted for Hapsburg collections and brackets a period of time defined by the monster that parallels the Baroque period and the rise and fall of the Spanish Hapsburgs’ Empire.

Rarely are these portraits considered beyond a cursory description that sets the stage for an inquiry into gender studies, literature, the history of medicine, and general art appreciation. Each of these fields has sought out these portraits as a means of understanding the reception and consumption of difference during the early Baroque period, but more often the portraits are used to support contemporary rather than seventeenth-century ideas. Often what has

30 Bondeson, *The Two-Headed Boy and Other Medical Marvels*.
31 Manguel, *Reading Pictures*. 
been written continues the spectacular fascination that governed these women’s lives, or the portraits are used to illustrate texts rather than read as texts themselves. For example, historians tend to treat Gonzalez’s portrait briefly,\(^{32}\) describing it as a portrait of great dignity and crediting Fontana as portraying Gonzalez with a sensitivity and understanding that emphasize her position as a woman-artist and mother.\(^ {33}\) I am not convinced that Fontana had the tools for creating a portrait that conveys a twenty-first-century ideal of empathy given the climate of thought in her time. Indeed, a long-standing alternative title of Fontana’s painting is *Monkey-Child.* Historian Sherry Velasco, one of few to consider Magdalena Ventura’s portrait, writes: “While the representation displays non-traditional secondary sex characteristics, the visual impact of seeing a masculine figure with a full beard, receding hairline and a hairy chest, posed breastfeeding an infant and standing next to ‘his/her’ husband clearly participates in a homoerotic male maternity imagery.”\(^ {34}\) While homosexual paternity—though much more a concern of the twenty-first century than the seventeenth—is one of many possible readings of this painting, focusing solely on this aspect negates more nuanced interpretations derived from an analysis of the painting’s iconography. Sherry Velasco in *Lieutenant Nun: Transgenderism, Lesbian Desire and Catalina de Erauso* and Kjell Lekeby in *King Kristina: The Woman Who Wanted a Sex Change* look for contemporary signs of transgenderism in Kristina and Erauso’s biographies to establish a historical lineage for transgender theory and practice today. Both take early modern ideas of sex transmutation and hermaphroditism literally instead of considering how these ideas operate metaphorically within a complex belief system surrounding sex, gender, sexuality, bodies and

\(^{32}\) Murphy, *Lavinia Fontana*, 162-5.  

\(^ {33}\) Manguel, *Reading Pictures*, 91-116.  

\(^ {34}\) Velasco does not elaborate on this statement in an analysis of the painting itself. Rather, she uses it to further contextualize the main subject of her study, the seventeenth-century play about a pregnant man, *El Parte de Juan Rana.* Sherry Velasco, *Male Delivery: Reproduction, Effeminacy, and Pregnant Men in Early Modern Spain.* (Nashville [Tenn.]: Vanderbilt University Press, 2006), 101.
images in seventeenth-century European society. Such interpretations are ahistorical, positing a continuity of twenty-first century ideas backwards across centuries and often misconstruing the past to give legitimacy to the present.

Focusing closely on the portraits, my work seeks to understand them as images governed by questions of form, style, convention and iconography, and as objects set within a context of display, collection and patronage. I examine clothing, accessories and other details, seeking out sources in contemporary and ancient paintings and illustrations and contextualizing the portraits within their immediate historical circumstances. Instead of predetermining Erauso, Kristina and Ventura’s maleness based on the presentation of masculine appearance indicated through styling, I see fashion as an index and not as a one-to-one corollary of identity. I do not assume that masculinity is equivalent to maleness nor do I believe it is only expressed by male-sexed bodies. Instead, I opt to write about Erauso, Kristina and Ventura as women whose expression of gender challenged expectation of femaleness, femininity and womanhood in their day. These categories maintained a controlled social order in the early modern world. I keep the categories of woman, female and feminine and man, male and masculine as constructs that help outline the elaborate caste system of the early modern Spanish world. To deny these four figures their womanhood is to ignore the restrictions that seventeenth-century society imposed on their bodies and argue for a twenty-first century gender identity. I look at these portraits from a perspective that attempts to put aside both seventeenth-century fascination and curiosity, and present-day pathology, celebration and empathy in order to understand the ways that these monsters’ bodies were viewed by early modern doctors, scientists, royal collectors, colonizers and explorers, art theories and religious leaders.
By charting a genealogy of monstrosity, it is apparent that the monster was a central figure in the early modern period. And like all genealogies, this one proves that the monster has no origin. Instead, the monster, like the image of the Furry Girl and Black Child, was spontaneously conceived by the gaze of group of people looking at anomalous bodies from the intellectual perspectives of their respective disciplines. Each defined the monster according to its own needs. As the image of the Black Child shows, one can only trace the perimeter of the monstrous body, which is boundless, without a discreet form and resistant to definition. The monster exists in the void left by these disciplines. It is the unanswered question left by an inquiry and the surplus for which an equation cannot account. The monster is never a subject, and is only the object of a set of unstable gazes, a range of intellectual positions, emotional responses and shifting perceptions, that surround and attempt to make sense of the monstrous body. Rather than add to the litany of definitions that describe the monster as an external condition, I chose instead to write from the perimeter of the monster’s body outward to examine how monsters were looked at in the early modern period.

Chapter I
Pet Monsters and Human Dogs: Lavinia Fontana’s Portrait of Antonietta Gonzalez, c. 1595

The contemporary display of Antoinetta Gonzalez’s portrait demonstrates the conditions under which the portrait was made and the place it occupied in royal collections. Today, at the Château Royal de Blois, Gonzalez’s portrait doesn’t hang in the portrait hall. Instead, it sits on a pedestal in the corner of a Queen Catherine de Medici’s bedroom, at the entrance to the room in which the Queen kept her collections of curious objects gathered from across the world (Fig. 21).
Antonietta Gonzalez was the daughter of Pedro Gonzalez, a man from the Spanish-occupied Canary Islands who given as a gift to Catherine’s husband, King Henri II of France in the mid-sixteenth century. Like her father and five of her six siblings, Antonietta was born with hypertrichosis universalis congenita, a rare genetic condition that caused a fur-like coat of hair to grow over most of her body, including her face. Presented on a pedestal, instead of hanging on the wall, near the royal collection of curiosities rather than in the portrait hall, the presentation of Gonzalez’s portrait reinforces that she lived among the royal collection of curiosities. As a living member of a collection of objects, I argue that Antonietta Gonzalez was a pet to the King and Queen of France and other royals across Europe and that her portrait was a document of ownership and means of displaying her body long after her death.

The painter of Gonzalez’s portrait was as much an anomaly of her moment as her subject. Lavinia Fontana was a woman and an artist in a time when this was rare. She is the first known woman to earn a living through the sale of her work without the support of a convent or a royal court. She often commanded prices much higher than those of her male contemporaries, including the Carraccis. While much has been written on Fontana since art historians resuscitated her career after the feminist movement, very little has been written about her portrait of
Antonietta Gonzalez, ca. 1595 (Fig. 22).\(^1\) Scholars interested in the portrait often use it to reconstructing Gonzalez’s life given her and connect her image to folk myths of Wild Men and Women.\(^2\) While clearly related, Wild people are often the first and only sources those writing on the hairy turn. But this association speaks only to Gonzalez’s reception in France. I seek out additional iconographic reference points to understand how Gonzalez’s body would have been perceived in the places to which she traveled. Here, I read Fontana’s portrait of Gonzalez as an object produced under a set of iconographic conditions generated by a group of patrons across Europe for the purpose of being displayed within a collection of images, objects and people gathered through colonial pursuits.

I support this interpretation by comparing Gonzalez’s portrait to other portraits painted by Fontana of the noblewomen of Bologna with their dogs. By comparing Fontana’s painting to other representations of the Gonzalez family that were made as the family moved from France after King Henri’s death to the courts of Catherine de Medici’s Hapsburg relatives in Prague, Munich, Innsbruck and Parma, I chart a system of conventions for representing the Gonzalez family. By considering the place that portraits of the Gonzalez family occupied in royal, scientific and medical collections, I establish a conversation between iconography and patronage that evidences the inheritance of both the Gonzalez family and their portraits. Ambroise Paré,

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\(^1\) The portrait is also known by the variations of Antonietta Gonzalez’s name. Some use the diminutive “Tognina” and there is debate about the spelling of Gonzalez; Gonzales, or Gonsalvus are both spellings in use. I have also seen the painting called *Portrait of a Girl Covered in Hair*. There is also discrepancy with the date of the work, which ranges from 1583 to ca. 1595. We know that the Gonzalez family was in Munich in 1582 and Parma in the 1590s. Based on this information, I think 1582 is too early for the work and use the date ca. 1595. The Uffizi Gallery cites Fontana’s first work was a painting called Child of a Monkey from 1575, which is now lost. There is a possibility, given the discrepancies of the dates of this painting, that this work was also popularly known as *Monkey-Child* or *Child of a Monkey* in its time, or that there was another works all together. Other sources, like Fortunati, claim *Portrait of a Child* from 1575 was her work. For my purposes here, I make a claim that *Monkey-Child* is another name for the Portrait of Antonietta Gonzalez.

\(^2\) Caroline Murphy is the only art historian to consider the portrait in any depth. She does so in her monograph on Lavinia Fontana. Alberto Manguel explores the portrait as a representation in of empathy in and Merry Weisner-Hanks’s book-length inquiry thinks through images of the Gonzalez family in connection to the myth of the Wild Man.
Ulisse Aldrovandi and Gabriele Paleotti play a role in the discussion as Paré was court physician to King Henri II, and thus Pedro Gonzalez; Aldrovandi examined and included the Gonzalez family in his book *Monstrum Historum* and Paleotti wrote *Discourse on Sacred and Profane Images* in consultation with the Fontana’s father, Prospero. Lastly, I look to ancient texts that circulating with renewed interest in the Renaissance as well as papal decrees and colonial documents that attempt to define human, animal and slave. Contextualized within these discourses, I propose a definition for “pet” that reveals a complex system for accounting for difference in the Counter-Reformation.

The conventions that govern representations of Gonzalez in portraits by Fontana and other were established in the systems of display for Pedro Gonzalez’s body in King Henry II’s court. Pedro was born hairy in 1537 on Tenerife, one of the Canary Islands. He arrived in Henri’s Paris on March 31, 1547, at age ten, a gift to the soon-to-be crowned King after the death of his father and predecessor King Francis I.³ Though the gift was made anonymously, it was speculated by the court that the Holy Roman Emperor and King of Spain, Charles I was responsible because Pedro Gonzalez came from the Spanish-occupied Canary Islands.⁴ In Paris, Pedro Gonzalez was educated alongside the king’s children, which suggests that he occupied a quasi-human status amongst his royal companions, or was at least deemed capable of learning.⁵ Joris Hoefnagel, who created representations of the Gonzalez family, wrote of Pedro: “he unlearned his savage customs and learned fine arts and to speak Latin.”⁶

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⁴ Ibid., 17.
There was an agenda at play in educating the young Pedro: a Latin-speaking “wild man” was more of an oddity, and emphasized the contrast between savagery and acculturation, wild and tame in the collision of opposite categories that defined the monster. To amplify the spectacle around him, King Henry II constructed a cave on the grounds of one of his palaces that was meant to approximate an idea of Pedro’s homeland in the Canary Islands. Within the context of French folklore traditions, the incongruity of a learned beast living in a primitive cave environment resonates with myths of the Wildman, as pictured in Jean Bourdichon’s *The Four Conditions of Society*, 1505-10 (Fig. 23).

Folk myths of the Wild Man coincided with times of famine since hairiness is a symptom of starvation. While the myth of the wild folk is important to the discussion of hirsute women during the Baroque period, its Euro-centricity eclipses more immediate connections and ignores the international trade of people and goods—as well as the trade in ideas about international people and goods—made possible by Spain’s colonial project, the means by which the Pedro Gonzalez arrived in France. For instance, the Cynocephali, the race of dog-headed people described by Pliny and others, were believed to live on the Canary Islands. Both of these archetypes—the European Wildman and the Cynocephali—were projected upon Pedro Gonzalez’s body. Gonzalez reading Latin in a cave would have been one of many spectacles at King Henri’s court. Queen Catherine de Medici was attended by groups of dwarfs, who would

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7 Writing of the freak shows of the nineteenth and early twentieth century, born from the *Wunderkammern* and cabinets of curiosities of the sixteenth, Robert Bogdan makes an important distinction between the “two major patterns by which exhibits were presented to the public: the exotic, which cast the exhibit as a strange creature from a little-known part of the world; and the aggrandized, which endowed the freak with status-enhancing characteristics.” Jan Bondeson. *The two-headed boy, and other medical marvels*. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2000) 97.
8 Ibid. 61-2
10 Merry Weisner-Hanks investigates this route in detail in *The Marvelous Hairy Girls*. 
mirror their taller counterparts by performing in various amusements, such as dwarf-scaled jousting tournaments.

In his youth, Pedro was given a position as the King’s bread server, a position of great honor and opportunity.\textsuperscript{11} He rose to the ranks of courtier and the Queen arranged a marriage for him to a woman named Catherine, the daughter of a servant, with the intention of breeding more Wild men. Six of their seven children were hairy: Maddalena, Paulo (not hairy), Enrico, Francesca, Antonietta, Orazio and Ercole. The middle son, Enrico, whose name is the Spanish version of Henry, was most likely named for the Gonzalez family’s patron, King Henry, who dies in 1559. In the 1580s, representations of the Gonzalez family began appearing across Europe as the family traveled to various royal courts. According to some sources, the eldest Gonzalez daughter, Maddalena, was born in the Netherlands in 1568, four years after the Dutch-Protestant rebellion against Catholic Spain. By 1582, the Gonzalez family was at the Residenz Palace in Munich of the Wittlesbach Duke William V of Bavaria, who commissioned a series of portraits for himself and his uncle, the Holy Roman Emperor Rudolf II, for Hradčany Castle in Prague.\textsuperscript{12} After Munich, the Gonzalez family travelled to the Ambras castle of Archduke Ferdinand II in Innsbruck. Rudolf in Prague, William in Munich, and Ferdinand in Innsbruck were all renowned for their \textit{Wunderkammers}, where they displayed their collections of curious specimens from around the world. Each commissioned portraits of the Gonzalez family to be displayed amongst these collections of oddities, not in the portrait halls of their palaces. The family made a brief stop in Basel in 1583 to be examined by the physician Felix Platter. Later, they would be examined and documented in drawings by Androvandi in Bologna. By 1592,

\textsuperscript{11} Ibid., 97.
\textsuperscript{12} Murphy, \textit{Lavinia Fontana}, 162.
some members of the family had moved to Parma, near Bologna, which was where Lavinia Fontana met Antonietta Gonzalez.

William V commissioned four portraits of the Gonzalez family members Pedro, Catherine, the eldest daughter Maddalena and the eldest hairy son Enrico for his uncle Ferdinand II’s castle at Ambras (Fig. 24-27). Known colloquially as “The Ambras portraits,” these paintings also gave *hypertricosis* the more colloquial name, “Ambras syndrome.” William’s court painter at the time was Joris Hoefnagel, a Dutch painter who had fled the Netherlands during the country’s war of independence from Spain. Hoefnagel also occasionally painted for Ferdinand II in Innsbruck, and most likely painted both the Ambras portraits and William V’s versions (although the Ambras paintings remain unattributed and William’s paintings have been lost.) At the very least, Hoefnagel had access to the paintings: the watercolor portraits of the same four Gonzalez family members that illustrate his book *Elementa Depicta*, 1575-1582 are clearly related on the portraits at Ambras castle. The Gonzalez family are the only humans to be included in Hoefnagel’s book, which classifies flora and fauna according to the elemental categories of earth, wind, fire and water. The Gonzalez family is included in the section on fire alongside seventy-pages of insects, most likely following a logic of humor-based medicine, which attributed the production of hair to heat.13

In *Elementa Depicta*, Hoefnagel combines the Ambras portraits of Pedro and Catherine into one illustration and the portraits of Maddalena and Enrico into another (Fig. 28). In both the Ambras portraits and Hoefnagel’s illustrations, the details of a rocky outcropping suggest a vague cave setting and echo textual descriptions of the environment that King Henry II built for Pedro Gonzalez. Pedro wears scholarly robes to convey his education and status as the learned beast. His additional facial hair is groomed into a beard and mustache. The hair of his

13 See Juan Huarte de San Juan in the next chapter.
eyebrows, like the slicked-back hair on his head, is darker and longer than that on the rest of his face. Antonietta’s mother Catherine wears a hat and lace collar opened in a “V” at her neck in the French style of the times. Smooth-skinned, she faces left in three-quarter profile. She is alone in her painted portrait at Ambras Castle and faces Pedro in Hoefnagel’s composite. Her clothing, like her expression, is sober and restrained. Enrico is dressed as a miniature version of his father in scholar’s robes and also wears a cone-shaped scholar’s hat. In Hoefnagel’s double portrait with his sister Maddalena, his robes are bright pink as is Maddalena’s dress. Enrico’s small hand rests on a large rock to his right in both painting and watercolor. Beneath her fuchsia dress, Maddalena wears a lace collar and white sleeves. In both representations, she wears a crucifix around her neck and a crown of flowers encircling her head. The Ambras portraits, because of their larger size and more flexible medium, show more detail, but overall, the compositional strategy between these paintings and Hoefnagel’s illustrations is the same.

It is uncertain if the Ambras portraits are the earliest representations of the Gonzalez family as there is speculation about the dates of the various representations that appear between 1580 and 1595. Comparison, however, demonstrates a clear iconographical and stylistic program for depicting different members of the Gonzalez family. Each image shows a family member depicted as a subject-type rather than an individualized portrait, suggesting that Hoefnagel painted both the Ambras paintings and the *Elementa Dipicta* illustrations or that different artist encountered the family through representations in circulation rather than in person.

Ferdinand’s nephew the Holy Roman Emperor Rudolph II, also requested portraits of the Gonzalez family from his court painter, Dirck de Quade van Ravesteyn. Revesteyn’s miniature portrait of the Gonzalez family groups the four Ambras paintings into one composition. The four family members maintain the same postures and clothing, but the color palette has shifted again.
Catherine wears the same clothes, this time in pale blue. Her three-quarter profile gaze now rests on the young Enrico, and her hands clasp both his shoulders instead of Pedro’s as they did in Hoefnagel’s representation. Pedro holds his same relative position. The girl is younger, in a gown that is yellow rather than, but of the same fashion. She and her brother hold an owl between them, some suggest because the owl feathers mimics the way the hair lies on the Gonzalez children’s faces. The bird was also a symbol of superstition at the time, which adds ominous undertones to the darkened interior scene. The cave setting has been replaced by a series of columns demarcating the space.

The next representations of the Gonzalez family are from the early to mid-1590s, by which time they had moved to Parma and were under the care of the Farnese family. The nearby town of Bologna was home to a university, and the local naturalist Ulisse Aldrovandi took great interest in the Gonzalezes. Aldrovandi was writing a book about abnormality and monstrosity as part of his vast catalogue of species of animals and plants from around the world. This book, published after Aldrovandi’s death in 1642, was called *Montrorum Historia cum Paralipomenis historiae omnium animalium* and featured woodcuts prints of hairy people, real and imaginary, including Pedro, Enrico, Maddalena and Antonietta Gonzalez, an equally hairy “Cinnaminian” woman and “a girl with a face of a monkey” (Fig. 29). Aldrovandi also commissioned tempera drawings of the Gonzalez family for his personal collection of over 18,000 objects, specimens and drawings.

The drawing and engraving mark the first appearance of Antonietta (Fig. 30). Maddalena appears opposite her on the facing page in the *Monstrum Historium* wearing the same style dress as before and in the same pose, but this time without her crown of flowers (Fig. 31). Instead, flowers encircle Antonietta’s head in the engraving and drawing. They appear to be a generic
sign for flower—petals around a center—more than any specific type. Antonietta’s dress is also much more elaborately patterned than her sister’s, perhaps to reflect the style in Parma. In the engraving she holds a flag in her hands and what appears to be a scroll of paper, although it is difficult to discern detail against the flourish of floral fabric. In the engraving, she leans in a slight contraposto; in the tempera painting, she stands frontally, and appears more childlike and holds a letter held between her two hands. The version of the same image was printed in Gaspar Schott’s German counterpart to Aldrovandi’s project *Physica Curiosa*, published in Würzburg, 1662. Here, Antonietta appears without her flower crown facing the opposite direction, which is an indication that this is a copy made from a print (Fig. 32). In Androvandi’s text, Pedro and Enrico appear in a joint portrait engraving on the page before the sisters. Both wear ruffs and vests, much more formal and fashionable in dress than scholarly in dress. (Fig. 33). Compared to previous portraits, Aldrovandi’s portraits of the male Gonzalezes is an altogether different schema by an artist who does not feel obliged to follow the scholarly portrait-type that was often used to represent Pedro and Enrico.

Aldrovandi and Fontana knew one another, as the naturalist was friends with the artist’s father Prospero and they lived in the same district of Bologna. It is believed that he introduced her to Antonietta’s guardian, the Lady Isabella Pallavicina, the honorable Marchesa of Soragna and wife of Alessandro Farnese of Parma, who then commissioned a portrait of Antonietta from the painter.¹⁴ Fontana’s portrait of Antonietta Gonzalez is consistent with Aldrovandi’s drawing and engraving, but demonstrates a skill heretofore unseen. In the Ambras portraits and the portraits by the Hoefnagel’s, Maddalena appears stiff in posture and overly posed. Fontana depicts Antonietta at ease, sharing a small smile with her viewer. Here, as in other portraits of Maddalena, Antonietta is portrayed at about eight years of age wearing a crown of flowers on her

¹⁴ Murphy, *Lavinia*, 92.
head and a rich, brocaded garment. Some have speculated that this is a device so that viewers may compare the texture of her hair-covering to sumptuous fabrics. But, equally as likely, the quality of the cloth signifies the class of people in which Antonietta circulated. The sheaf of paper that she holds in her hand in Androvandi’s drawing is also featured in Fontana’s painting, raising a question about which representation came first: Aldrovandi’s or Fontana’s. The painted letter reads:

Don Pietro, a wild man discovered in the Canary Islands, was conveyed to his most serene highness Henry the King of France, and from there came to his Excellency the Duke of Parma. From whom [came] I, Antonietta, and now I can be found nearby at the court of the Lady Isabella Pallavicino, the honorable Marquesa of Soragna.

As the text accompanying Aldrovandi’s woodcut illustration in Monstrorum Historia describes, Antoinetta’s “face was entirely hairy on the front, except for the nostrils and her lips around the mouth. The hairs on her forehead were longer and rougher in comparison with those which covered her cheeks, although these are softer to touch than the rest of her body, and she was hairy on the foremost part of her back, and bristling with yellow hair up to the beginning of her loins.” Fontana’s portrait confirms the records of other examining physicians who state that Gonzalez’s hands were not hairy. Fontana depicts Antonietta’s hair pulled back from its low hairline, which begins below her eyebrow just above a hairless and heavy-lidded eye. The hair on her checks is brushed back and away from her face to highlight a rosy-tipped nose and pink-tinged lips. In a drawing believed to be an informal preparatory sketch for the painting (Fig. 34), Fontana depicts Gonzalez’s more casually wearing a ponytail. She demarcates a hairline at the top of the girl’s forehead by shortening the length of the hair on Gonzalez’s face, and leaving the

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15 Pedro was also known by the Latin “Petrus” and the Italian “Pietro.”
16 My translation.
hair on her head long. In the painting, this transition between head-hair and face-hair, which seem to be of the same relative length, is marked by a deep wave.

This hair styling and treatment differs from portraits of Antonietta’s father Pedro, with his groomed beard and mustache, and her brother Enrico. The same deep wave demarcates Enrico’s face-hair from his head hair in an engraving by Stefano de Bello (Fig. 35) and a painting by the Bolognese painter Agostino Carracci (Fig. 36). Like his father, Enrico’s facial hair is groomed into a pointed beard. The hair on his cheeks and forehead is smoothed and straightened until it reaches the periphery of his face, where it curls into a short cropped cut that encircles his face in a wild halo.

In Carracci’s allegorical portrait *Hairy Arrigo* (Italian for Enrico, or Henry), *Crazy Peter, the Dwarf Anon and Other Beasts*, 1599, Enrico appears with other residents of the Farnese palace in Rome, including a dwarf, a mad man, a monkey, a parrot and two dogs (Fig. 37). The dwarf struggles against the space of the picture to stand; his shorter legs give away his smaller stature. Mad Peter’s facial expression is contorted in confusion. Enrico is the only human portrayed at ease. He leans casually against a tree offering cherries to the monkey and parrot to his left. Both New World animals are preoccupied with the food. The attention of the two humans and one of the dogs is directed towards Enrico. The smaller brown dog on Enrico’s lap gazes back at the viewer. This dog and a monkey—the two animals most closely associated with the Gonzalez family at the time—cross paws on Enrico’s knee, suggesting that Enrico is the synthesis of these two animals in human form. Only his face is overly hairy. His well-formed chest and legs are bare and display a nominal amount of hair in blond wisps. He casually gestures to the dwarf with a hand position similar to Michelangelo’s God in *The Creation of*
Adam. Carracci establishes Enrico at the top in a hierarchy of figures, pictorially and conceptually by giving him Adam’s lazy comportment.

Weisner-Hanks offers an excellent reading of the sheepskin pelt that Enrico wears tied around his shoulders in both engraving and painting. She links the pelt to the traditional tamarco worn by the native men, or Guanche, of the Canary Islands before Spanish colonization. She also argues that the manner in which Carracci has modeled his pose and physique is representative of a number of classical heroes and gods represented in the Farnese collection of Greek statuary. The Farnese family was keen on highlighting their collection, especially the Farnese Hercules, which depicts the god leaning on a column draped with his lion-skin cape, as one their many prizes. The Bolognese Agostino Carracci most likely painted Enrico Gonzalez, who lived with Cardinal Orodardo Farnese in Rome, while visiting his brother Annibale during the years he was in Rome painting two grand fresco cycles for the ceilings of the Palazzo Farnese, including the The Loves of the Gods, 1597-1600. The second series of frescos, made for the Camerino, a small room that serves as the Cardinal’s study, depict the life of the Hercules across multiple panels. In Hercules Resting, 1595-7, the god is similarly seated and leaning back against the pelt of a lion on the right side of the canvas (Fig. 38). The sheep-skin pelt tied around Enrico Gonzalez’s shoulders in Carracci’s painting links him to the Farnese Hercules’s lion pelt. Following earlier presentations of Enrico and Pedro as hairy scholars, once again, a male member of the Gonzalez family is presented in both “exotic” and “aggrandizing” modes of display. He is simultaneously a native Canary Islander and a mythological hero.

Comparing Antonietta’s portrait to another by Fontana, her Portrait of a Little Girl (Fig. 39), suggest that the flower crown is a more generalized sign of the girl-child, more than the “hairy” girl-child. The flowers used by Lavinia Fontana in Gonzalez’s painted crown, however,
suggest a migration of symbols from the North along the same route by which Antonietta came to Bologna. Less a crown than a wildflower patch growing from atop Antonietta Gonzalez’s head, Fontana took great care in rendering the stem of lily-of-the-valley that peaks out from behind the hairy girl’s ear in her version of the flower crown which treats Antonietta’s head as a wildflower patch. ¹⁸ Lily-of-the-valley is a symbol of the innocence and purity of the Virgin and the Immaculate Conception more commonly seen in paintings of the Northern Renaissance, in areas where these flowers are native. ¹⁹ The flower was most famously used by Albrecht Dürer in his painting *Madonna with a Siskin*, 1506, (Fig. 40) in which a young John the Baptist hands a stem of lily-of-the-valley to the Virgin Mary as she holds the Christ child in her lap. ²⁰ According to Karel van Mader’s *Schilder-Boeck*, the same Rudolph II who commissioned portraits of the Gonzalez family for his Wunderkammers also owned the *Madonna with a Siskin*.

John the Baptist is a consistent reference point for explaining instances of hairiness. In her study of Lavinia Fontana’s portraits of children, Murphy describes attitudes towards “abnormal” births that took place during the Renaissance, where the fault in the creation of a child perceived as a less than perfect image of God was attributed to the mother. As previously mentioned, Ambroise Paré in *On Monsters and Marvels* explained that a mother’s preoccupation with images of John the Baptist “dressed in skins, along with his own body hair and beard,” produced a child equally hairy. ²¹ Paré would have known the Gonzalez family as the royal surgeon to King Henry. But the “Furry Girl” in Paré’s book was not Antonietta Gonzalez but an imagined rendering illustrating a story from Damascene of another child. Yet, the Gonzales

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¹⁸ Thank you to the curators at the Brooklyn Botanical Garden, who helped me identify the lily-of-the-valley as such. The pink and blue flowers atop her head are too faint and recessed into the picture plane to identify.
²⁰ Ibid., A footnote in Haig’s *Floral Symbols of Renaissance Masters* lead me to investigate Dürer’s *Madonna with a Siskin*, which is how I found out the connection to Rudolph II.
family’s presence at King Henry’s court would give Paré the incentive to understand the condition and a subject of research.

Others have noted the connection of “wild men” to John the Baptist and other hairy saints, like St. Onuphrius, St. Wilgelfortis and Mary Magdalene, in their research into the Gonzalez family, without connecting it to the *Madonna with a Siskin* and Rudolf’s collection of art and curiosities. Fontana painted a number of canvases of the young John the Baptist; art historians speculate because of her interest in depicting children and childhood she transformed devotional images into family scenes by included the Christ-child’s immediate family. But such a claim overemphasizes Fontana’s sex: in fact, portraits of the extended Holy Family gained popularity across Catholic countries at this time and were also painted by male artists. Outside of Dürer’s painting, the lily-of-the-valley does not appear to be an attribute of John the Baptist. No proof has been found that Lavinia Fontana was familiar with Dürer’s *Madonna with a Siskin* and no other portraits of John the Baptist or the Gonzalez family features a lily-of-the-valley. Perhaps it is only a coincidence that Fontana chose this particular flower for her portrait of Antonietta Gonzalez, but given the rarity of the lily-of-the-valley in Northern Italy, it seems more likely that Fontana acknowledges the patrons of the Gonzalez family and the lineage of their representations with this detail.

Lavinia Fontana, like most women artists of the Renaissance and Baroque periods, was born into the position of painter. Her father, the painter Prospero Fontana, having no sons, trained his only child, Lavinia, to take over his workshop. Prospero himself had trained under Innocenzo da Imola. Through his relationship to Michelangelo, worked in Rome under the patronage of Pope Julius III, in Florence with Giorgio Vasari, and in Genoa with Perin del Vaga. Returning to his native Bologna to continue his practice, he married, sired Lavinia, mentored
other students like Ludovico Carracci, and immersed himself in the intellectual and cultural life of the thriving university town. Incorporated into the papal territories, Bologna enjoyed great prosperity, especially under the Bolognese Pope Gregory XIII (1572-1585). The Fontanas, known for their congenial natures, knowledge of “the fables of sacred and profane history,” and skill benefited from the influx of artists, clerics, scientists and scholars traveling to and in residence in Bologna.\textsuperscript{22} This is not to say that Lavinia’s life was without challenge. Fontana married the rumored-to-be simple-minded Paolo Zappi, who was agreeable in letting the artist prioritize her career over their marriage and lived with the Fontana family instead of moving her to the Zappi estate. Together they had eleven children, of whom one was blind and another was developmentally disabled. Eight of her children died before she would in 1615. Fontana was also responsible for the care of her aging father, who was generous beyond his means, often offering paintings to friends without charge or care for the cost of production.\textsuperscript{23}

Fontana was not able to join the guild of artists and craftsman because she was a woman. Early in her career she made small devotional paintings on copper and painted religious subjects, most often genre scenes of the Holy Family. Prospero Fontana was a friend to Cardinal Gabriele Paleotti, the era’s strictest reformist, who elaborated upon the terms and restrictions for image-making set forth by the Council of Trent and created a system of representation in his \textit{Discorso intorno alle immagini sacre e profane} (\textit{Discourse on Sacred and Profane Images}) of 1582. This text outlines proper iconographic practice to best educate Christians and inspire devotion. Lavinia was one of Paleotti’s most adherent followers, “embody[ing] the female version of his

\textsuperscript{22} Oretti in Ragg, \textit{Women Artists of the Italian Renaissance and Baroque}, 195.
\textsuperscript{23} FOOTNOTE
‘Christian craftsman,’” 24 employing not only a God-given skill but also a true and devoted heart that inspired others.

Lavinia Fontana’s sex also prevented her from studying the nude human form. Thus, paintings requiring anatomical knowledge, such as a commission from Cardinal Ascoli of a painting depicting the stoning of St. Stephen for San Sabina in Rome, failed because of this gap in her education. Where she failed in figures, she excelled in facial expressions and costuming. The main staple of her very successful practice was the portrait, and this type of image was in high demand. She was patronized by businessmen, bankers and scholars who wanted representations of themselves and as the illustrious men of the past. Employing a persona of a gentlewoman who paints out of desire rather than need, she passed herself off as one of the noblewomen of Bologna, whom she courted as customers. 25 Fontana was well patronized by these women, who competed with each other for Fontana’s time and skill. She asked eleven of these noblewomen to be godmothers to her eleven children, thereby establishing personal and familial relationships with her clients. Marcello Oretti, who wrote biographies of Bolognese artists in the late eighteenth century, said of Fontana’s patrons, “they all wanted her to paint them and made a pet of her.” 26 To have one’s portrait painted by Fontana was a status symbol, and Fontana enjoyed a kind of celebrity in Bologna and later in Rome, when Popes Clement VII and Paul V Rome in 1603 invited her to live at their courts. Often Fontana would portray her subjects as goddesses and historical royalty as seen in her portraits of Isabella Ruini as a Venus and

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25 Caroline Murphy cites a letter from the Bolognese friar to the duchess Bianca Cappello, who writes: “Fontana does not work at art out of need, but out of inclination, as she is noble, rich and virtuous.” in Caroline Murphy, “Economics of the Woman Artist,” *Italian Women Artists from the Renaissance and Baroque* (Milan: Skira, 2007), 27.
Eleanora de Medici as the Queen of Sheba, demonstrate how these noblewomen constructed their identities and amplified their status through association to goddesses and historical royalty.

In the case of Antonietta Gonzalez, Lavinia would have followed the dictates outlined in Paleotti’s chapter “On Monstrous and Prodigious Pictures” in which the theologian-theorist differentiates between monsters of nature—those humans and animals whose bodies are “against the order of nature” – and those monsters produced by the imagination of writers and artists. Such a distinction shows a shift in thinking from the monster of the medieval period and the possible influence of naturalists like Aldrovandi working at Bologna’s university. Differentiating between birth defects and the elaborations of the imagination for dramatic or metaphoric purposes, Paleotti’s definition of monstrosity exhibits the influence of scholars like Aldrovandi in its move away from the superstitious towards proto-scientific reasoning. To paint “monsters of nature” like Antonietta Gonzalez, Paleotti advises first that one only do so when required. “On that basis, they will not count as deformity but will earn commendation for representing the truth of how things were.”

Though the audience of Fontana’s portrait would look upon it for aesthetic rather than scientific purposes, it functions in the same way that Aldrovandi’s drawings and illustrations do: as a testament of veracity, proof of Antonietta’s existence and an opportunity to continue to see Gonzalez’s difference.

Antonietta Gonzalez’s portrait and its preparatory drawing are singular in Fontana’s oeuvre. While Fontana painted no other portrait of a Gonzalez family member or any person who would otherwise be described as “monstrous,” she did specialize in painting another hairy creature: dogs. Carolyn Murphy describes the cane Bolognese as “an almost mandatory component of Lavinia Fontana’s portraits of the ladies of Bologna.”

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27 Paleotti, *Discourses on the Sacred and the Profane in Art*, 258-262.
28 Murphy, *Lavinia Fontana*, 96.
of noblewoman featured in Maria Teresa Cantaro’s catalogue raisonné of Lavinia Fontana’s work, ten feature dogs. Add to this number three portraits of children with dogs and two family portraits with dogs. With the exception of the dog featured in Eleanora de Medici’s portrait as The Queen on Sheba Visiting King Solomon, c. 1600, which appears to be a hunting dog, all the rest are cane Bolognese. This small, fluffy, lapdog, also known by the name Barbet and more recently, Bischon, were bred in Bologna in Lavinia Fontana’s time. The breed originated and was initially exported from Tenerife, in the Canary Islands, Pedro Gonzalez’s homeland, and are perhaps the reason why the Canary Islands were originally known as “The Islands of the Dogs.” The French Cardinal, Pierre d’Ailly, who was a missionary to the Canary Islands in the early fifteenth century, described the them as “abounding in dogs.” Brought to Italy by trade merchants from the Canary Islands, these dogs were imported to France during the time of Francis I, Henry II’s predecessor. By Henry III’s reign the dogs were the favorite pets of royals. In his day, Pedro was described as “not less hairy than a dog” by Aldrovandi, who also describes Antonietta as having a “face [that] resembles a monkey.”

Dogs operate in Fontana’s portraits in three ways: as a symbol of marital fidelity, as status symbols, and literally, in an inventory of assets. In the wedding portrait of an unnamed noblewoman, who also wears a flower crown, her cane jumps for her attention (Fig. 41). The woman offers an affectionate hand but otherwise maintains her poise and comportment. Murphy suggests that the dog in this portrait functions as a sign of the woman’s fidelity to her new husband. It looks at her with the same devotion she should give to her spouse. The cane

30 “Canary” is believed to be a mistranslation of some iteration of “canine”; the bird is named for the island, not the island for the bird. “History of the Frise,” on Official Website for the Bichon Frise Club of America, http://bichon.org/InfoHistory.htm.
Bolognese was the favorite pet among royals of this time, and so Bolognese noble ladies sought comparable accessories. Remember that Pedro Gonzalez, hailing from the same island as the cane Bolognese, was a kind of pet to King Henry II. The Marquesa of Soragna may have thought of Antonietta in a similar way, though the young Gonzalez may have been considered of higher status given her rarity in the world and familial associations to a king. Murphy also argues Fontana’s portraits of noblewomen functioned as inventories for prized possessions, a “visual inventario dei bene mobile.”

33 The casually strewn jewels, lavish furnishings, elaborate clothing, and the dogs are all attributes of wealth that function in the same way that the fur loincloth identifies John the Baptist or the stigmata identifies St. Francis. Fontana painted a number of other portraits with profane attributes, such as her portraits of scholars identified by their pens, inkpots and stacks of books.

Paleotti vehemently disapproved of dog in portraits, calling them “frivolous.”

34 We can take Paleotti’s assessment in two ways. The general idea of a pet was frivolous, because it requires the care of an animal that has no use value, and as such was a sign of decadence. But more so, the pets of the ladies of Bologna were dressed in elaborate ruffs and lace collars to match their owners: frivolity upon frivolity. The cane Bolognese in the center of Lavinia Fontana’s portrait of the Gozzadini Family wears silver hoops with red tassels from both of its ears (Fig. 42). That Fontana depicted the dogs in such a way suggests that she worked more in accordance with her patronesses’ requests than with post-Tridentine stricture, as previously thought. All of this excess points to the class of Bologna’s citizens, for what distinguishes Bologna from other Italian cities of the time is that it did not have a court. The nearest court was Duke Ranunccio Farnese’s in Parma, sixty miles northwest of Bologna. As Murphy argues,

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33 Murphy, Lavinia Fontana, 96.
34 Ibid..
noblewomen in Bologna “saw themselves as equal rank.” Perhaps it is not a stretch to take one additional step and suggest that the various portraits of the ladies displaying their wealth were intended to upset the rank and jockey for position over one another. The portraits then function as more than a visual inventory of goods and operate on a competitive level as well.

Antonietta’s dress is just as lavish as those worn by these ladies and their dogs; the question is to which group does she bear the greatest resemblance: the noblewomen or their dogs? Would she have been considered a daughter by the Marquesa? Remembering that Antonietta was gifted to the Marquesa by her brother-in-law, Duke Ranunccio Farnese, I think not. Instead, Antonietta is a miniature hairy version of her owner, wearing a lace collar and intricate dress much like the dogs whose ruffs and earrings match their donnas. Following Murphy’s argument that Fontana’s portraits function as visual inventories, the portrait of Antonietta holding a letter that describes her pedigree can be read as a document of ownership. Carracci’s painting can also be read as an inventory of the strange and unusual humans and animals in residence at Cardinal Farnese’s palace in Rome. Both the painting and Enrico Gonzales are listed on Cardinal Farnese’s inventory of possessions. This idea is further supported by the fact that the Gonzalez family circulated amongst various and related royal families over generations as one would circulate inherited property. In fact, looking at a family tree that connects King Henry II to Margaret of Parma and the Farnese brothers shows the ways in which the Gonzalez family and their images circulated amongst related royal families.35 (Appendix 1.)

Margaret of Parma had two husbands. The first, Allesandro de’ Medici, was the brother of Queen Catherine de Medici, the wife of King Henry II of France—the first custodian of Pedro Gonzalez. Henry’s direct relationship to Margaret was more contentious, as she was the

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35 Weisner-Hanks makes the connections between the various “patrons” of the Gonzalez families and their portraits, but since her task is not related to establishing a chronology of representations, she does not come to the assessments in laying out the relationships. Wiesner-Hanks, *The Marvelous Hairy Girls*, 70-2.
illegitimate daughter of Hapsburg Holy Roman Emperor Charles V, who imprisoned both Henry II and his father during Hapsburg-Valois War between 1551-1559. Peace was declared between the two families in 1559, the same year of Henry’s death. The Gonzalez family are next documented in the Netherlands, where Margaret of Parma was Governor until the Dutch Protestants rebelled against Spanish Catholic rule. At this time, she and the Gonzalez family left the Netherlands. The Gonzalezes are next reported in the court of William V of Bavaria. William, the Archduke of Tyrol, Ferdinand II and the Holy Roman Emperor Rudolph II were all Margaret’s cousins (See Appendix 2). This side of the family owned portraits of the Gonzalez family.

Margaret’s second husband was Ottavio Farnese, the eldest of the Farnese brothers and the Duke of Parma (See Appendix 3). Upon his death in 1586, his brother, Ranuccio, replaced him as Duke. The Farnese side of Margaret’s family acted as guardians of various Gonzalez family members. In 1593, Duke Ranuccio Farnese bought a house in Parma for a “Maddalena the hairy;” she is documented as marrying a man named Giovan Maria Avinato, the keeper of the Farnese’s hunting dogs. In 1595, Enrico Gonzalez’s arrival in Rome was reported as follows: “The Duke of Parma gave Cardinal Farnese an eighteen-year-old wild man as a present. This person is completely hairy in his face; he has long blond hair on his forehead.” Cardinal Farnese was Ranuccio’s brother Odoardo. According to the letter that she holds in her portrait painted by Fontana, Duke Ranuccio Farnese gifted Antonietta Gonzalez to Lady Isabella Pallavicino, the honorable Marquesa of Soragna and wife of Mario Farnese, the youngest of the Farnese brothers. In 1594, the Marchesa with Antonietta Gonzalez in tow, met the naturalist Aldovandi, a scholar at the University of Bologna, not far from Parma, who connected them to Lavinia Fontana.

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36 Murphy, Lavinia Fontana, 127.
In the various representations of the Gonzalez family, Pedro was elevated to the status of scholar through his clothing; Enrico was dressed down to the nearly nude to elevate him to the status of native-hero; and Antonietta’s elaborate dress, rather than giving her status equal to her noble caretakers, denigrated her to the status of pet dog. It is worth reiterating that Ranuccio Farnese arranged the marriage of Maddalena to the Farnese family’s dog trainer and Pedro Gonzalez’s marriage was arranged to breed more Wild people by Catherine de Medici. The biography of the Gonzalez family is full of such comparisons to animals—from their inclusion as the only humans in Joris Hoefnagel’s book of flora and fauna to the description of the various physicians who encountered them—that support the reading of Fontana’s portrait of Antonietta Gonzalez as a portrait of a pet. A variety of contemporary texts provide a spectrum from human to animal further support this idea.

Exploratory travelling, the rise in the study of nature, and the revival of classic texts all provided context for understanding the presence of the Gonzalez family and other people who challenged assumptions about how humans should look in the world. Colonial explorations and the opening of trade routes east and west meant more frequent encounters between Europeans and a greater variety of people and cultures. Some cultures encountered were believed to be living examples of creatures, such as the dog-headed Cynocephali, described in texts like Aristotle’s *Generation of Animals*, 350 B.C., Herodotus’ *Histories*, 440 B.C. and Pliny’s *Natural History*, 79 A.D. Each writer offered explanation for deviations from “normal” form. Aristotle provides multiple treatises for discerning between Animal and Human. In *De Anima*, Aristotle considered the soul relative to the body and mind as constituting life:

> It is manifest that the soul is also the final cause of its body. For Nature, like mind, always does whatever it does for the sake of something, which something is its end. To
that something corresponds in the case of animals the soul and in this it follows the order of nature; all natural bodies are organs of the soul. This is true of those that enter into the constitution of plants as well as those that enter into that of animals. Those show that the sake of which they are is soul. We must here recall the two senses of “that for the sake of which,” an end to achieve, which, and being in whose interest anything is or is done.\textsuperscript{38}

In his “Theory of Slavery,” from his \textit{Politics}, Aristotle investigated the same question from the position of the body, creating two subcategories: Slaves and Tame Animals, through a criterion which measures the relationship between body and soul on a spectrum from animal to human. He writes:

\begin{quote}
When then there is such a difference as that between soul and body, or between men and animals (as in the case of those whose business is to use their body, and who can do nothing better), the lower sort are by nature slaves, and it is better for them as for all inferiors that they should be under the rule of a master. For he who can be, and therefore is, another’s and he who participates in rational principle, is a slave by nature. Whereas the lower animal cannot even apprehend a principal, they obey their instincts. And indeed the use made of slaves and of tame animals is not very different, for both with their bodies minister to the needs of life. Nature would like to distinguish between the bodies of freemen and slaves, making the one strong for servile labor, the other upright, and although useless for such services, useful for political life in the arts both of war and peace. But the opposite often happens—that some have the souls and others have the bodies of freemen. And doubtless if men differed from one another in the mere forms of their bodies as much as the statutes of the Gods do from men, all would acknowledge that the inferior class should be slaves of the superior. And if this is true of the body, how much more just that a similar distinction should exist in the soul? But the beauty of the body is seen, whereas the beauty of the soul is not seen. It is clear, then, that some men are by nature free, and others slaves, and that for these latter slavery is both expedient and right.\textsuperscript{39}
\end{quote}

Aristotle defined the Slave ultimately as the human that is animal-like in that its body is explicitly used, and inexplicitly valued, over its mind. The Tame Animal, then, is the animal that is slave-like. As opposed to the wild animal, the Tame Animal is domesticated, capable of learning, or at the very least, capable of being directed by humans to be in service to humans. The primary purpose of the Tame Animal is also purely physical, and thus it is equivalent in use


value to slaves. Both are grey areas in a dichotomous, hierarchical system, and thus according to the terms of that hierarchy are subject to domination by humans, whose “task of raising, domesticating and disciplin[ing]”⁴⁰ was also supported by Biblical verse:

And God said, “Let the land produce living creatures according to their kinds: the livestock, the creatures that move along the ground, and the wild animals, each according to its kind.” And it was so.⁵ God made the wild animals according to their kinds, the livestock according to their kinds, and all the creatures that move along the ground according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good.⁶ Then God said, “Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground. (Genesis 1: 24-26)

At some point, one’s animal-likeness becomes equated with one’s paganism or non-Christianity. Felix Platter, the Swiss doctor who examined Antonietta for his Observationum, writes in his personal journals of a Jewish Christian-convert who fled the Spanish Inquisition and found refuge in France as a “Maran,” or “swine.”⁴¹ This ethnic derogation was especially pointed, as it also referred to Jewish abstinence from pork.⁴²

Aristotle’s sentiments are echoed in the theological justifications for conquest, colonization and conversion of the people in lands newly discovered by Europeans. The following passage comes from The Spanish Requirement of 1513 and was read to the native inhabitants of such places upon contact:

Wherefore, as best we can, we ask and require that you consider what we have said to you, and that you take the time that shall be necessary to understand and deliberate upon it, and that you acknowledge the Church as the ruler and superior of the whole world, but if you do not do this, and maliciously make delay in it, I certify to you that, with the help of God, we shall powerfully enter into your country, and shall make war against you in all ways and manners that we can, and shall subject you to the yoke and obedience of the Church and of their highnesses; we shall take you, and your wives, and your children, and shall make slaves of them, and as such shall sell and dispose of them as their highnesses may command; and we shall take away your goods, and shall do you all the mischief and

⁴²Ibid. Bestial stereotypes of Jews are considered further in Chapter III on Jusepe de Ribera’s portrait of Magdalena Ventura.
damage that we can, as to vassals who do not obey, and refuse to receive their lord, and resist and contradict him: and we protest that the deaths and losses which shall accrue from this are your fault, and not that of their highnesses, or ours, nor of these cavaliers who come with us.  

Such a statement was read to the native inhabitants of places being conquered by the Spanish. In 1537, following long discussions about the indigenous people of the New World, Pope Paul III declared via the *Sublimus Dei*, that they were indeed human, and not animals, as well as rational beings with souls and thus had a capacity for salvation through conversion to Catholicism. Pope Paul III also reversed a decree from Spanish King Charles I that the indigenous peoples of the New World could not be enslaved and used for physical labor. Africans would later be imported to fill this purpose.

These texts—ancient and colonial, scientific and religious—establish a set of ideas in circulation during the time in which Antonietta Gonzalez lived that help to further define an idea at this time. Aristotle adds the categories of Slave and Tame Animal to the spectrum between Animal, the instinctual beings whose bodies rule their minds, and Human, the rational beings whose minds rule their bodies. The unstated assumption of the Human category, as reveals by the Spanish Requirement and contemporaneous ethnic slurs, is that to be Human more specifically meant to be European and Catholic. By examining the nuance of these various texts, I would add three more categories: the Primitive-Pagan, the Convert, and the Pet. Unlike the slave whose soul is incontrovertible and unsalvageable, the Primitive-Pagan can transcend their animal-like status through the acceptance of Christ and Christian theology, as their likeness to animals is one of soul and mind and not body. According to doctrine, the soul mitigates on behalf of the mind and body in directing a pagan’s course towards salvation; which is what

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allows Humans to transcend corporeal form and exist as pure spirit in the kingdom of heaven. The Convert, is then the non-European (Transcendent Primitive) and/or non-Christian (Transcendent Pagan) whose soul has been liberated from slavery—both the potential for literal enslavement and enslavement to earthly form—through Christian conversion and salvation. The Convert is still highly suspect as shown by the Inquisition’s attempt to flush out crypto-Jews. If conversation is not successful, Humans, i.e. Christian, Europeans have god-granted permission to make Slaves of Primitives.

If the primary difference between wild and Tame Animal is that the Tame Animal’s body “ministers to the needs of life,” then the Pet is the Tame Animal that no service or labor value. It is the cat that no longer hunts for mice. It is a slave of another sort, who is dependent on its owner for food because domestication has removed its instinctual ability to care for itself. It is the Animal that is human-like, as it does not use its body for physical labor. Its value is in bringing pleasure or status to its owner instead. One could extended this logic to consider concubines and kept women as human equivalents of Pets. Such understanding gives new meaning to the moniker el gente de placer, the phrase meaning “people of pleasure” used to describe the people of different body shapes and scales living at King Philip IV’s Spanish court in the first half of the seventeenth century.

Lavinia Fontana’s Portrait of Antonietta Gonzalez is concurrent with the rise of animals as accessories and signifiers of social status in Bologna. While fur appears quite often in Fontana’s portraits of fur-draped nobleman, in the lap-perched dogs of noblewomen, and lastly in the animal-skin covering of the young John the Baptist—in her portrait of Gonzalez, Fontana contends with the categorical breach between human and animal that the Gonzalez family

Antonietta Gonzalez held the position not of slave, but that of pet, as status and not labor defines her relationship to the Marquesa de Sorogna.

The logic of this line of thought results in the taxonomies of bodies catalogued by Linnaeus and Darwin. But what if systems of classification extended not only to questions of form, the progression from animal to human towards a growing complexity of species, but also to questions of content? Of soul? If we read the idea of the soul through a spectrum of theological progression that takes us from animal to tame animal and slave, primitive-pagan to convert and ultimately to human, who through the acceptance of Christian doctrine is allowed to transcend earth bound form for eternal life, we see a taxonomy in place in the Renaissance for thinking about questions of humanity. More so, Antonietta and Maddalena carried the double-burden of being born both hairy and women in a time when the idea of women being human was in question at the University of Bologna.45 Antonietta Gonzalez’s portrait is a site of rupture where the assumptions about humanness at its intersection with gender, do not hold.

Fontana’s portrait elides categories of animal and human through the synthesis of these two terms in the category “pet.” Other hairy women and their images circulated within the Iberian and Italian peninsulas at the turn of the seventeenth century, such as Brigida del Rio, documented by Juan Sánchez Cotaán in his painting, La Barbuda de Peñaranda, 1590 on her visit to the court of King Philip III and Magdalena Ventura with Her Husband and Son, 1631, pained by Jusepe de Ribera in 1631 during her visit to the palace of the Spanish Viceroy in Naples. I do not think it is a coincidence that Maddalena Gonzalez and Magdalena Ventura share a variation of the name “Magdalene”—the saint who grew hair all over her body in penitence after Christ’s death. This connection will be explored in the third chapter of this thesis. But first I

will consider the case of Catelina de Erauso, the nun from San Sebastian who escaped the convent to travel to the Americas passing as a man, and the breach in gender categories she posed to the Spanish world.
Chapter II
“Taking the Habit of a Man:” Soldiers, Nuns and Juan van der Hamen y Gómez de León’s Portrait of Catalina de Erauso, 1626

¡O monja alférez de color de pedo!
¿Quién te matriculó con la quadrilla
De Góngora Satan, Bóreas Quevedo?
¡O injusto alférez desacertio, o gran lancilla,
Deuiedoles el Nuncio de Toledo
Ponerlos en la cárcel de la Villa!

Oh Lieutenant Nun, the color of a fart
Who enrolled you in the gang
of Satan Góngora and Bóreas Quevedo?
Unjust mistake, great stain
the Nuncio of Toledo should put them in jail!¹

This scathing criticism of Juan Van der Hamen’s portrait of Catalina de Erauso was written in an anonymous letter delivered to the artist’s studio in Madrid by a rock thrown into his window in 1626 (Fig. 43).² The phrase “monja alférez” identifies the subject of Van der Hamen’s portrait as occupying the seemingly incompatible gendered positions of soldier and nun. The description “the color of a fart” refers to the brown and umber tones of the portrait. Luis de Góngora and Francisco de Quevedo were rival poets in Juan and his brother, Lorenzo Van der Hamen’s circle of writers. Van der Hamen primarily painted portraits of these writers. Called ingenius or genius for their literary talent, these writers formed the Golden Age of

¹ William B. Jordan, Juan van der Hamen y León and the Court of Madrid (New Haven, Conn: Yale University Press. 2005), 155-156.
² The authorship of Catalina de Erauso’s portrait is currently under debate. The portrait has historically been attributed to Francisco Pacheco until 2005, when the Prado Museum in Madrid staged the exhibition Juan van der Hamen y León and the Court of Madrid. I agree with the exhibition’s curators William B. Jordan, Prado conservators and Juan Luis Blanco Mozo, who wrote a report on the portrait arguing for reattribution to Juan Van der Hamen because of the way Erauso’s shirt collar is painted and documents like the letter which place the painting in his studio. The date of the painting is also debated. The text banner at the top edge of the painting reads she was painted “at the age of 42 years, in the year 1630” (“Aetaitis Sui 42 Anno, Anno 1630”), and suggests that the artist painted her from life in the year she left Madrid to return to the New World. However, Jordan and others argue the portrait was painted in 1626 based on the date of the letter thrown through Van der Hamen’s studio window and Erauso’s fashion. Erauso left Madrid for Rome in 1626 and was at the height of her popularity. This evidence suggests this particular portrait was a copy of an original or perhaps was begun in 1626 and completed in 1630. There is no evidence that Erauso sat for van der Hamen’s portrait and there is no proof that she didn’t. An active participant in King Philip IV’s court, it is very likely that Van der Hamen was in her presence at some point during the many years of her visit to Madrid. The portrait was conserved by its current owner, the Kuxta Fundazioa in San Sebastian, Spain, in the summer of 2015. No further evidence was collected during this process to confirm the authorship or the date of the painting. See William B. Jordan, Juan van der Hamen y León and the Court of Madrid and Juan Luis Blanco Mozo, “El retrato de doña Catalina de Erauso la monja alférez obra de Juan van der Hamen (1596-1631)” Boletín del Museo e Instituto “Camón Aznar,” 1998, 25-51.
Spanish literature. It was speculated by Lope de Vega, another ingenio whose portrait Van der Hamen painted, that the letter was written by Fray Hortensio Paravicino as an expression of his jealousy that Erauso was included in Van der Hamen’s portrait series of writers for her popular autobiography while he was not. Describing Erauso as an “unjust mistake” and a “great stain,” Góngora as Satan and Quevedo as the mythological god of winter, the letter’s writer calls for their imprisonment, seeing all three as existing outside of the bounds of nature in a way that needed to be physically restrained. Punishment was a means of retraining their bodies by forcing them to exist within a boundary of normalcy.

Erauso gained celebrity in 1620 when she revealed her biological sex and reclaimed her status as a nun to the Augustine monk Fray Agustín de Carvajal in Guamanga, in the Viceroyalty of Peru (present day Chile) revealing that she was not the man she had been living as for the past twenty years. At the age of fifteen, in the year 1600, Erauso had escaped from a convent in her hometown, San Sebastian, in the Basque region of Spain, began dressing in men’s clothing and adopted the name Francisco de Loyola. Such presentation allowed her to travel to the Americas as a worker. There, she used the name Alonso Díaz Ramírez de Guzmán to joined the Spanish militia and earned the rank of Lieutenant, after leading a victory against the indigenous Mapuche people in the Arauco War. In addition to these acts of colonial heroics, she also committed various crimes including multiple murders and robberies. To escape punishment, she sought asylum in a convent, where she stayed for four years, awaiting a verdict. In this time, her story traveled back to Spain and, in 1624, she herself traveled to Madrid, ready to assume the celebrity

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3 Those who ascribe to the narrative that Catalina de Erauso is a transgender figure may disagree with my use of the “she” and “her” pronouns and the designation of “woman” and “female” to describe Erauso in this thesis. I have made this decision based on Erauso’s petition to King Philip, in which she declares herself a woman who dressed as a man. Prior to being attached to a transgender lineage, she was a symbol of lesbianism; both conceptions are ahistorical to the moment of her life. For a study of Catalina de Erauso’s changing reception as a symbol in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, see Sherry Velasco’s *The Lieutenant Nun*, Sherry M. Velasco, *The Lieutenant Nun: Transgenderism, Lesbian Desire & Catalina de Erauso* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2000).
that she had garnered from afar. In 1625, Erauso filed a petition to King Philip IV of Spain, successfully requesting a pension for her fifteen years of military service.\textsuperscript{4} The next year, Juan van der Hamen y Gómez de León painted her portrait, and she was the subject of a popular play written by another ingenio and Van der Hamen’s friend, Juan Pérez de Montalván. In 1626, she traveled to the Papal court of Pope Urban VIII in Rome and was granted a dispensation that allowed her to continue wearing men’s clothing and live as a man for the rest of her life.\textsuperscript{5} The dispensation was based on Erauso’s declaration of womanhood and virginity in conjunction with the believability of her performance of masculine gender as evidenced by non-biological, masculine-weighted attributes including behavior, clothes, and affect. She returned to the Americas in 1630 to live as a free man supported by the Spanish crown until her death in 1650.

As a cloistered nun, Erauso lived at a physical remove from everyday life in San Sebastian. As a Basque, she was an outsider to Spanish culture. As a soldier in the Spanish militia in colonial Latin America, she carried out Spain’s foreign policy at a distance. This chapter considers the conditions under which Catalina de Erauso’s portrait was made and its immediate reception, asking why Erauso gained celebrity, resulting in the painting of her portrait, when others who challenged a social order that operated through the strict enforcement of gender-sex alignment were sentenced to death or banishment. I argue that Erauso’s status as an outsider aided in the perception and acceptance of her monstrosity. Historians often look to Erauso’s autobiography—a document of dubious origin published in 1829, two centuries after she purportedly wrote it as a confession for her Inquisitors, in which Erauso narrates her life

\textsuperscript{5} In Rome, her portrait was painted by Francesco Crescenzi. The painting has since been lost.
story in the style of a picaresque novel⁶—to understand Erauso’s motivations and actions.⁷ Here, I look to Juan van der Hamen’s portrait of Catalina de Erauso for what it reveals about how sex and gender were conceptualized, represented and contextualized in seventeenth-century Spain. Erauso’s petition for a soldier’s pension was considered by King Philip’s court, where she found easy reception among the dwarves who attended to the King, mad men acting as jesters, eunuchs castrated to preserve their singing voices and “geniuses” who enjoyed an air of notoriety. Those accused of monstrously crossing the boundaries between male and female were often soldiers and nuns, two social groups that were isolated by sex. “The Lieutenant-Nun” belonged to both of these groups. In Erauso’s time, biological sex was an unstable category. An assortment of related concepts was used to explain masculinity housed within a female body: spontaneous transmutation of genitalia, an idea of homosexuality understood through sodomical impulses and actions, hermaphroditism, witchcraft, and fraud all fell under an umbrella of possible causes for discordance between gender and sex. In some cases, hermaphroditism and sex transmutation were used as defenses against these charges. That Erauso’s masculinity corresponded to the virile heterosexual male, an ideal at the top of a gender-based hierarchy in Spanish society, also saved her from some of the punishment imposed upon others who deviated from the social boundaries ascribed to their bodies. Additionally, Erauso’s national identity as a Basque, her time spent in the Americas, and the popularization of the character of the mujer varonil, or manly woman, in novels, plays and songs of the time, would also influence the ways in which her masculinity was interpreted.

⁶ Ibid. In the introduction to her text, The Lieutenant Nun, Velasco summarizes the publishing history and various permutations of this text. By the nineteenth century, Erauso’s portrait passed to a friend of Goya’s, a publisher named Joaquin de Ferrer, who fascinated by it, published her it as Historia de la Monja Alférez Doña Catalina de Erauso, escrita por ella misma, or “The Story of the Lieutenant Nun Doña Catalina de Erauso, written by herself” in 1829. I take the position that the autobiography, if indeed written by Erauso, is highly embellished for performative effect and organized in a narrative style popular at the time.
Van der Hamen depicted Erauso in soldier’s dress positioned at three-quarter profile from the chest up in a portrait bust presentation. This format was typical for early modern portraits, especially portraits of the illustrious men of letters popular during this era. In contrast, the aristocracy was often portrayed standing at full-length as befitting their superior status. In the case of Erauso’s portrait, this format offered the opportunity to display the subject’s breasts, or lack thereof, which are shielded behind her laced leather vest. Erauso’s breasts were the subjects of speculation when she arrived at the Papal Court in Rome in the summer of 1626, as they were physical markers of her womanhood that would have been discernable beneath women’s fashions. In other words, while Erauso’s genitalia was not available for inspection except to doctors who examined her, anyone in her presence could scrutinize her secondary sex characteristics, including breasts, facial hair, and timbre of voice. Van der Hamen’s portrait allowed for extended looking long after Erauso left Rome and Madrid to return to New Spain.

Erauso’s facial hair and breasts were often noted in descriptions that were written during her visits to Madrid and Rome. Nicolas de la Rentería recalled, “She was of strong build, somewhat stout, swarthy in complexion, with a few hairs on her chin.” Pietro della Valle, an Italian cleric and an attendant to Pope Urban VIII, used male and female pronouns to describe Erauso during her visit to Rome: “He acquired a reputation for being brave and because of the lack of beard they took him for and called him a eunuch.” In another portion of the letter, Valle used female pronouns:

Tall and powerfully built and with a masculine air, she has no more breasts than a girl. She told me that she had used some sort of remedy to make them disappear. I believe it was a poultice given her by an Italian—it hurt a great deal, but the effect was very much to her liking. Her face is not ugly, but very worn with years. Her

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8 Ibid., 29.
appearance is basically that of a eunuch, rather than a woman. She dresses as a man, in the Spanish style. She carries her sword as bravely as she does her life.\textsuperscript{10} Valle wrote of a “remedy” in the form of a “poultice,” a paste made from medicinal herbs applied to wounds, suggesting both the (al)chemical and magical removal of Erauso’s breasts. By describing her as a “eunuch,” Valle implied a surgical modification of sex.

The castrati, those men who were castrated in their youth to preserve their singing voices from the effects of deepening due to the hormonal changes of puberty, were active participants in courtly and ecclesiastical life across Catholic Europe in the seventeenth century. Touba Ghadessi Fleming connects castrati, men made monstrous through surgery, to those born monstrous like dwarves (perceived as deficient in height or transgressing notions of time as adults who appeared to occupy child-sized bodies) and hirsute women (who possessed facial hair considered more appropriate to the male sex). Additional side effects to the removal of one’s testes before puberty included “increased height, long limbs, disproportionately large thorax, accumulation and feminine distribution of fat, beardlessness, smooth skin and droopy eyes.”\textsuperscript{11} Though surgical de-masculinization resulted in physical feminization, the castrati still moved through the world as men. As such, they were both the subject of ridicule for possessing both female and male physical features as well as admiration for their angelic (read: inhuman, otherworldly) voices. By comparing Erauso to a eunuch, Valle emphasized the feminization of Erauso’s masculinity and maleness. Erauso was woman, but she was not feminine. As he wrote, she was of “large stature and bulky for a woman, although she did not appear to be a man.”\textsuperscript{12}

\textsuperscript{10} Jordan, Juan van der Hamen y León and the Court of Madrid, 153.
\textsuperscript{12} Mary Elizabeth Perry, Gender and Disorder in Early Modern Seville (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1990), 129.
Van der Hamen’s portrait shows how Erauso’s breasts would have been indiscernible without the aid of poultice or surgery. The seam of the faun-colored vest that she wears in her portrait reveals the thickness of her garments. Beneath this leather vest, a red leather shirt further adds to her bulk and erases contours from her frame, which seems small when the circumference of her neck is compared to the span of her shoulders. Atop the vest, a metal gorget encircles her neck and extends across her collarbone. Above this armature—symbolic of Erauso’s military affiliation—a wide, upturned white collar, called the *golilla* collar, flares in a half-circle under her face.\(^{13}\) Contributing to the masculine effect, she wears her hair in a page-boy, and a scowl on her beardless face. The furrowed brow, frowning mouth, and the deep fold in her cheek convey her temperament and also illustrate Valle’s phrase “worn with years.” Typical of this period, she faces left while looking right, so that she looks at the viewer head-on from her position. Her left pupil, however, strays to the furthest corner beneath her lid. This, in combination with the eye’s downturned gaze, gives her the appearance of being cock-eyed, which would have been perceived as a physical indicator of her internal incongruence.\(^{14}\) The dark brown background echoes to the tones of her leather clothing. Together, the cumulative effect of Erauso’s styling choices and Van der Hamen’s compositional choices contribute to the “masculine air” that Valle described.

The artist, Juan van der Hamen y Gómez de León, was the son of a Jehan van der Hamen, a Flemish soldier in King Philip’s II army who joined the ranks of the prestigious Guardia de los Archeros as the King’s bodyguard. His mother, Dorotea Whitman Gómez de León, was of

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\(^{13}\) For a brief history of how the *golilla* collar developed as an antidote to the large ruff and in response to the Walloon collar, a flat collar draping the shoulders using lace from the Netherlands, see Martin A. S. Hume, *The Court of Philip IV: Spain in Decadence* (New York: G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1907), 137-139.

\(^{14}\) Ruth Melicoff connects crossed eyes to wickedness in Rueland Frueauf’s paintings. Ruth Mellinkoff, *Outcasts: Signs of Otherness in Northern European Art of the Late Middle Ages* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 123.
Flemish as well as Spanish ancestry and held a noble title in Toledo. These familial connections to the Spanish crown meant that the junior Van der Hamen grew up in close proximity to King Philip III’s court, allowing him easy entrance into the service of Philip IV after the young king inherited the throne in 1621. As the youngest son of the family, Van der Hamen had more career options than his eldest brother Pedro, who followed in their father’s footsteps by joining the Guardia, or his second-oldest brother Lorenzo, who became a cleric and one of the most illustrious men of letters of his time. Juan may have studied with Vincente Carducci who was one of the leading members of Madrid’s resident Italian artists.\textsuperscript{15}

Until Diego Velázquez arrived in Madrid in 1622, Spanish collectors—who comprised a broad swath of social classes including the nobility, civil servants and merchants—preferred foreign painters to native ones and voraciously collected Italian Renaissance and contemporary masters as well as antiquities from ancient Greece and Rome.\textsuperscript{16} Artists from the Catholic Netherlands, the Papal States of Rome and Bologna, and Spanish-occupied Naples came to Spain’s capital city to vie for commissions for religious and historical scenes. Van der Hamen competed for these same commissions, but he was able to expand his workshop by specializing in still life and portraiture. The artist approached these genres as occasions for innovation when others had simply followed a template. For example, in \textit{Still Life with Fruit, Sweetmeats and Monkeys} of 1626, Van der Hamen applied the dynamic lighting and composition of Baroque allegorical and religious painting to showcase the wealth of the Spanish Empire, including New World monkeys, exotic fruits, objects crafted in silver and terracotta, and other materials obtained from the Americas, the Philippines, and beyond (Fig. 44). Considered to be “lesser” genres of painting, still lifes and portraits were emerging as valued genres during the early

\textsuperscript{15} Jordan, \textit{Juan van der Hamen y León and the Court of Madrid}, 40, 51.

\textsuperscript{16} Ibid., 26.
modern era. Within Van der Hamen’s lifetime, each theme would take on a new importance at the Spanish court, where Van der Hamen thrived as a master of his craft.

The surge in popularity of portraiture was concurrent with the rise of los ingenios, geniuses or illustrious persons, in courts across Europe. Renowned for their intellect, wit and eloquence exercised in the literary and dramatic arts, ingenio was a category of person that conceptually parallels the monstrous. Juan Harte de San Juan, Paré’s Spanish counter part, wrote about genius in his 1575 text, Examen de ingenious para las ciencias, which attempted to connect the physical appearance of the body to mental states and would be important to the future development of psychology. Harte de San Juan connected the proliferation of the mind with the fertility of the mind when he wrote of los ingenious, “he gets pregnant, gives birth, and has children and grandchildren…they are called geniuses for being fertile in producing and engendering concepts related to science and knowledge.’” Where Paré who connected the imagination of the mother with the resulting physical form of the child, Harte de San Juan wrote of the mind’s capacity to to form ideas through metaphors to reproduction. Harte de San Juan’s ingenio was, however, always male.18 Miguel Cervantes, the foremost ingenio of Philip III’s court and author of Don Quixote, described his contemporary Lope de Vega as a “prodigy of nature,” utilizing the same language (“prodigious” and “outside the limits of nature”) that was often used to describe monstrous bodies. This language reflects Paleotti’s definition, that is, that monsters possessed bodies considered excessive or deficient. Monsters had extra heads, limbs, or appendages, like tails or fingers or, conversely, monsters were missing heads, limbs or appendages. The Gonzalez family had excess hair, while a hermaphrodite was considered to

17 Velasco, Male Delivery, 28.
have a surplus of genitalia. Although not physically monstrous, the *ingenio* possessed excess intellect and an expansive talent that breached boundaries of what was considered normal at the time.

As a portraitist, Van der Hamen primarily painted the circle of *ingenios* surrounding his brother, Lorenzo. A number of written works by these authors laud the youngest Van der Hamen’s skill in return. The poet José de Valdivielso, for example, described his experience of looking at Van der Hamen’s painting of him as “I found myself alive when I was looking for myself painted” [“pues me hallé vivo y me busqué pintado”].¹⁹ This life-likeness was the result of Van der Hamen’s naturalistic style, which he applied equally to people and objects. In his portrait of his brother Lorenzo, Van der Hamen presented his subject, like Erauso, in a three-quarter bust-length profile (Fig. 45). Whereas brownish-umber tones predominate in Erauso’s portrait, grey-bluish tones prevail in Lorenzo van der Hamen’s portrait: the bluish hue of his skin is echoed in his clerical garments and in the background. Like Erauso, Lorenzo is positioned facing right, but his eyes glance/are focused to the left so that he appears to look at the viewer from the side of his eyes. In addition to painting portraits for commissions and his personal collection, Van der Hamen also collected his drawings of the men in his circle of *ingenios* in a portrait book that he referred to as *hombres illustros*. Similar to Pacheco’s *Libro de Retratos*, 1599–1644, Van der Hamen’s series of drawings in pen, ink, watercolor and chalk contained biographical notes that lyrically described the deeds that made each represented man so illustrious. Both Pacheco and Van der Hamen emulated popular Italian trend for portrait books. Over his lifetime, Van der Hamen would paint at least twenty of the literary *ingenios* of the day,

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¹⁹ Jordan, *Juan van der Hamen y León and the Court of Madrid*, 151.
including Juan Ruiz de Alarcón, Francisco de la Cueva y Silva, Francisco de Rioja, Jerónimo Gómez de la Huerta and Luis Pacheco de Narváes among the other writers already mentioned.20

Notably, each of the authors painted by Van der Hamen collectively participated in characterizing the mujer varonil (virile women), marimacho (“la mujer que tiene desembolturas de hombre”),21 hombruna or “manly woman,” in their writing. As Malveena McKendrick tallies at least one mujer varonil or character who transgressed the boundaries of their sex in action or appearance appeared in a dramatic work in every year between 1590, when the bearded woman Brígida del Río visited Philip III’s court, and 1660.22 Lope de Vega alone contributed 113 plays that include a mujer vestida de hombre character.23 Cervantes’ Don Quixote (1605) features three marimachos, including the object of the title character’s affection, La Dulcinea.24 Works by these writers often inverted the social order by including manly women characters and fey men in elaborate comedies of error with members of their own sex.

Erauso was the subject of the play Comedia famosa de la monja alférez, 1626, penned by Juan Pérez de Montalván, a friend in Van der Hamen’s literary circle whom the artist also painted. Montalván’s play, like Van der Hamen’s portrait, met with mixed reviews, which suggests that Erauso herself was criticized as well as celebrated for occupying a monstrous position that broke the social boundaries ascribed to female bodies. Though Montalván constructed Erauso’s character as heroic, critics of the play described the literary version of

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20 Ibid., 146-7.
23 Velasco, The Lieutenant Nun, 36.
Erauso as an “almost pathological abnormality” and in possession of “abnormal passions.”\textsuperscript{25} The play debuted the same year of Van der Hamen Erauso’s portrait and the year that her popularity peaked. Erauso’s character was performed by the actress Luisa Robles, who herself was the subject of much praise and criticism for outperforming her male co-actors in \textit{mujer vestida de hombre} roles.\textsuperscript{26}

Conceptualized within the space of the theatre, where women dressed as men to play female characters dressing as men, and within the space of the script, where women could engage with an alternate world as full participants unrestricted by the social limitations placed upon their bodies, gender transgression related to ideas of performance and costume. Moralists cited Deuteronomy 22:5 (“A woman must not wear men’s clothing, nor a man wear women’s clothing, for the \textsc{Lord} your God detests anyone who does this”) to support their claim that cross-dressing, on the stage and in life, led to lasciviousness in women and sodomy for men.\textsuperscript{27} Thus, men in Madrid’s homosexual circles who identified themselves to each other by wearing women’s fashions, as well as nobles whose grooming rituals became more elaborate as Spain became more prosperous through its imperial endeavors, were “feminized” by participating in activities that were weighted feminine by society. More so, the wearing of women’s clothing was understood as equivalent to being female, and vice versa, in a logic that conflated non-biological manifestations of gender in the form of fashion, behavior, and affect as inherently tied to biological sex. Defined as much by performance and performativity as it was by anatomy, gender could also be taken off like a costume, as was the case when Erauso claimed womanhood when

\textsuperscript{25} Velasco, \textit{The Lieutenant Nun}, 61.
\textsuperscript{26} Ibid., 41.
\textsuperscript{27} Perry, \textit{Gender and Disorder in Early Modern Seville}, 133.
threatened with death.\textsuperscript{28} Thus, the celebrity that Erauso garnered was generated in part by the believability of her presentation and performance as a male. In other words, her fame was predicated on her ability to present masculinity as a condition of maleness rather than as a perversion of femaleness.

In addition to painting portraits of the intellectually prodigious, Van der Hamen, following in the footsteps of court painters like Rodrigo de Villandrando and others who painted the dwarfs, jesters and buffoons of the Spanish court, also contributed portraits of the physically monstrous to Spanish collections.\textsuperscript{29} Van der Hamen depicted an unidentified dwarf dressed as a soldier in a painting from 1626 (Fig. 46). This person is speculated to be one of many dwarves in the Conde-Duque de Olivares, Gaspar de Guzmán’s entourage because his facial hair and outfit are similar to the styles worn by the Conde in Velázquez’s portrait from two years earlier.\textsuperscript{30} (Fig. 47) In addition to being a favorite or vallido of Philip IV, when he advised on domestic and foreign policy, the Conde was a collector of dwarf portraits, owning at least a dozen, which hung in his villa.\textsuperscript{31} Like Catalina de Erauso, the dwarf in Van der Hamen’s painting wears a stiff, wide and semi-circular golilla collar that encircles his neck and opens in the front. His suit of green velvet is slashed to reveal a red fabric backing. He is accessorized with a sword and a staff, signs that he is not only a soldier but also a commander. Otherwise, his soldier’s dress is meant to contrast the symbols of authority and power with the dwarf’s short stature.

\textsuperscript{28} Here, I am differentiating between the effects of behavior, costume, and affect cumulatively (performance) and performativity as declaration and utterance.

\textsuperscript{29} See Fernando Bouza and José Luis Betrán, \textit{Enanos, bufones, monstruos, brujos y hechiceros en la España moderna.}, (Barcelona: De Bolsillo, 2005), Manuela B. Mena Marqués, \textit{Monstruos, enanos y bufones en la corte de los Austrias}, (Madrid: Museo del Prado, 1986), and José Moreno Villa, \textit{Locos, enanos, negros y niños palaciegos; gente de placer que tuvieron los Austrias en la corte española desde 1563 a 1700.} (México: La Casa de España en México, Editorial Presencia, 1939).

\textsuperscript{30} Jordan, \textit{Juan van der Hamen y Léon & The Court at Madrid}, 198.

\textsuperscript{31} Ibid.
In Van der Hamen’s portrait of the Comte de Solre, Jean I de Croÿ, the Comte wears the same golilla collar in his portrait as Erauso and the unidentified dwarf\(^{32}\) (Fig. 48). The Comte descended from a long line of soldiers working in defense of the Hapsburg kings of Spain. Specifically, he was the captain of the Archeros, the same royal bodyguards to which Van der Hamen’s father and brother Pedro belonged.\(^{33}\) Like the unidentified dwarf, the Comte holds a commander’s staff in his left hand and a sword in his right. Whereas the dwarf’s pantaloons reach to his feet, the edge of the Comte’s pantaloons hit just above the knee, revealing muscular calves beneath golden stockings. The bright gold metal and golden brocades of his outfit indicated his position as a Knight of the Golden Fleece. Yet, compared to Erauso’s portrait, the Comte’s face is regal and expressionless, while hers highlights a surly temperament. The collar worn by the Comte, the unidentified dwarf and Erauso is possibly a key component of the “Spanish style” that Pietro della Valle described Erauso as wearing during her visit to the papal court.

As previously mentioned, charges of gender transgression were often made against soldiers and nuns.\(^{34}\) As Richard Cleminson and Francisco Vázquez García write in, “Life in a convent also meant that double or alternative sexual identities were possible as such an existence implied a withdrawal from the world and from conjugal exigencies. Something similar occurred

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\(^{32}\) It is this particular detail that has caused Jose Luis Blanco Mozo to attribute the portrait to Van der Hamen. Both the dwarf portrait and the Comte’s portrait were painted in 1626, the same year that Erauso’s portrait is speculated to be painted. Given the specificity of the fashion, introduced by a tailor in 1623 it makes sense that Erauso’s portrait with its upright circular collar it makes sense her portrait was also painted in 1626 based on fashion. Mozo, “El retrato de doña Catalina de Erauso la monja alférez obra de Juan van der Hamen (1596-1631)”, 25-51.

\(^{33}\) Jordan, Juan van der Hamen y Léon & The Court at Madrid, 170.

\(^{34}\) Cleminson and Vázquez-García note that “at least five of the twenty one cases” of hermaphroditism reported in Spain between 1500 and 1800 “correspond to woman who took religious vows.” Additionally, they count three of these five nuns, Catalina de Erauso, Elena de Céspedes and Estebanía de Valdaracete, as having” spent some time in the army or had something to do with the carrying of arms.” Cleminson and Vázquez-García, Sex, Identity and Hermaphrodites in Iberia, 41.
Mary Elizabeth Perry observes that many soldiers accused of sodomy often admitted that their first encounters occurred while in the military. As a site of sex-based isolation, the military was occupied by a particular brand of masculine men performing in warring and conquering roles. Since virility was a defining attribute of this kind of masculinity, one could conclude that when isolated these men would exercise their virility on each other. Thus, one reason why Erauso’s virginity—confirmed by a doctor, two midwives and a surgeon—was important was that it testified to the fact she had not been penetrated by her fellow soldiers, thus protecting the chastity of her female body and her status as a nun.

Her virginity didn’t prove, however, that she had not penetrated another body. Erauso described many non-penetrative sexual encounters with women in her autobiography. In keeping with the trope of the mujer varonil genre, the subjects of Erauso’s affection assumed that her anatomy was male, making the text read as a parallel to contemporaneous works of fiction in which women dressed as men seduce other women, for example, as in Cervantes’s La Gran Sultana Doña Catalina de Oviedo, 1615 and Pistraco by Quiñones de Benavente, 1640. Another genre of writing in the seventeenth century—correspondence written by nuns—also considered romantic and sexual liaisons between women. St. Teresa of Ávila and Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, the two most famous nuns in seventeenth-century Spain, approached the topic from very different perspectives. Sor Juana obliquely referred to her own “special friendship” with her patron, the Countess Maria Luisa de Parédes, in her writing. Teresa, however, advised against touching and embracing between nuns to prevent “special friendships” and more so, when

35 Ibid.
36 Perry, Gender and Disorder in Early Modern Spain, 124.
37 Cleminson and Vásquez-García describe Erauso’s virginity as “miraculously … conserved in the context of violent masculinity” as if to suggest that homosexual sex was a condition of military affiliation. Cleminson and Vásquez-García, Sex, Identity and Hermaphrodites in Iberia, 1500-1800, 59.
38 Ibid., 56.
discovered, she encouraged secrecy to avoid scandals and inciting “more passion and desire through suggestion.” Teresa thought that affection between nuns was “initiated by the devil so as to create factions within religious Orders,” and suggested the danger of “special friendships” was not a sin of sex among women but rather favoritism within a communal environment. In addition to actual instances of erotic or romantic liaisons occurring in convents, the perception of a life lived independently of men challenged notions of dependency and meekness that were thought to be inherent to the female sex, especially in light of popular ideas of recogimiento, propagating the belief that enclosing and cloistering women was necessity for their constitutional integrity.

Called “that utterly confused category” by Foucault, sodomy was a term that vaguely defined all erotic actions that would be perceived as “homosexual.” As Perry writes, sodomy “called for a lighter punishment when sexual activity between women did not involve an instrument of penetration, implying that the more serious crime was not sex between women, but impersonation of the male. This focus on the artificial phallus expresses a concern with bodily integrity and with the danger of venturing into forbidden passages by ‘unnatural’ means.” Similarly, Perry argues that in cases of sodomy amongst men, “the real crime was not in ejaculating non-procreatively, nor in the use of the anus, but in requiring a male to play the passive ‘female’ role and in violating the physical integrity of a male recipient's body.”

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40 Ibid., 97.
41 Tanya Tiffany quoting Nancy van Deusen, Between the Sacred and the Worldly: The Institutional and Cultural Practice in Colonial Lima in Diego Velázquez's Early Paintings and the Culture of Seventeenth-century Seville (University Park, Penn.: The Pennsylvania University Press, 2012), 70.
43 Perry writes, “Moreover, those convicted of this offense received the most severe punishment: they were burned alive. Seventy-one men convicted of sodomy suffered this fate in Seville between 1567 and 1616.” Mary Elizabeth Perry, Gender and Disorder in Early Modern Spain, 124-125.
transmutation, the subject of penetration was also considered “female” regardless of their sex or gender.

In 1624, the same year that Erauso arrived in Madrid, a Spanish “woman who had used a false penis with another woman was hanged … ‘for robberies, murders and audacity.’” Erauso claimed in her autobiography to have done all these activities except the penetrative sex. Why then was Erauso able to evade punishment for the same crimes and achieve some degree of fame, as her portrait attests? One reason was the location of Erauso’s crimes. In the “frontier mentality” of the New World, “authority encountered all kinds of obstacles. In this kind of ‘civilizing’ context, survival depended on physical strength and the ability to use arms. It was here that the ‘Monja-Alférez’ excelled; her murders were justified on the basis of the restoration of honor, and it is for this reason that she managed to fend off any condemnation for her acts triumphantly.”

On the home front, a new form of masculinity was being valorized. This highly mannered, courtly version of masculinity indulged in the wealth imported from the New World and reveled in the elaborate ceremony that was hinted at in Van der Hamen’s still lifes. As William Jordan’s research has shown, “The complex protocol [of the Hapsburg court] set forth in minutest detail how every function of daily life within the palace—from the opening of the door to the pouring of a glass of wine—was to be performed and by whom … As a result of this carefully choreographed design, the solemnity, grace and pageantry of court life stood in exquisite contrast to the often squalid conditions of urban life outside the palace.” More so, this elaborate pageantry heightened the contrast between civilized Spain and the “wild” frontiers of the Americas, which soldiers for the Spanish crown, such as Erauso, worked to tame through

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44 Ibid., 125.
45 Ibid.
46 Cleminson and Vásquez-García, Sex, Identity and Hermaphrodites in Iberia, 1500-1800, 53.
47 Jordan, Juan van der Hamen y León and the Court of Madrid, 40.
conquest and Spanish missionaries through conversion. Courtly etiquette, especially the elaborate grooming rituals and fashions of the nobility, was also interpreted by the public as a form of effeminacy. Finally, the number of men traveling to the far corners of the Spanish world in support of the Empire, which left women largely in control of “domestic” affairs of the Iberian Peninsula, also furthered the perception that Spain had become feminized and its women masculinized, a perception that could aid Erauso’s reception.

Comparing Erauso’s case to those of two others who were tried for the same charges offers additional explanation for Erauso’s celebrity and illustrate how race, religion and nationality influenced the perception of Erauso’s masculinity. Estebanía de Valdaracete and Elena de Céspedes were also born female in the late sixteenth century and, like Erauso, lived their lives not only as men, but also as soldiers. Reported to the Philip II’s court in 1580 for “very heroic deeds” (cosas tan heroicas), Valdaracete was brought to Granada for examination by midwives because local “authorities did not accept that a woman could perform such acts.” The examination proved inconclusive, and Estabanía “was commanded to choose the habit in which she wished to live and she chose that of a male” (“la mandaron que escogiese en el hábito que quería vivir e andar y eligió del de hombre”). Estabanía became Estaban, married a woman and opened a fencing school in Granada. Cleminson and Vázquez García argue that

48 Cleminson and Vázquez-García have located a set of texts by “arbitristas” (Gonzalez de Cellorigo, Quevedo, Pedro de Valencia, Sancho de Moncada, Pellicer de Tovar and Fernandez Navarrete), “moralists” (Fray José de Jesus Maria, Suarez de Figueroa, Francisco de León, Inigo de Camargo and Fray Antonio de Ezcaray) and “commentators on fashion and dress” (Fray Tomas de Trujillo, Fray Tomas Ramon, Alonso Carranza, Marques de Careaga, Jimenez Paton and Leon Pinelo) who “critiqued courtly (re)finery, seeing the cause of the effeminacy that was destroying the Spanish nobility.” Cleminson and Vázquez-García, Sex, Identity and Hermaphrodites in Iberia, 1500-1800, 53-54.
49 “They also reassured people concerned about the numbers of men who left Spain for the New World, allowing them to believe that the country had not ‘feminized’ and consequently gone to the dogs.” Perry, Gender and Disorder in Early Modern Spain, 134.
50 Cleminson and Vázquez-García, Sex, Identity and Hermaphrodites in Iberia, 1500-1800, 43.
51 Estabanía de Valdaracete’s case is perhaps the one noted by Foucault, which he uses as a universal example for hermaphrodites being able to choose their sex. As the cases of Elena de Céspedes and Catalina de Erauso reveal, the choice of one’s sex in cases of hermaphroditism is directly related to race, ethnicity and religion.
Estaban/iá’s acceptance by Spanish society was based on “displays of bravery, physical strength and her ability with weapons,” which was valued as part of a “warrior ethos” and “military masculinity” that coincided with the goals of Reconquista and the early stages of the Empire.52

Elena de Céspedes used her knowledge of anatomy and medicine from her practice as a doctor to argue that she was a “hidden hermaphrodite,” a contemporary medical theory that one’s true genitalia or sex would not present itself until puberty or some external circumstance caused it to be revealed. In Céspedes’s case, the cause that she cited was childbirth: she pushed out her hidden penis while pushing out her child.53 But where the defense of Valdaracete, a Spaniard, was successful, Céspedes, a morisca and a freed slave, was sentenced to ten years in exile during which she was required to service a hospital for the poor.54 Like Valdaracete, Céspedes was examined by a cadre of midwives and doctors who agreed she was not a “capon” or castrated man.55 These examiners were unable to reach a consensus about the presentation of her genitalia. Céspedes testified to “prepar[ing] remedies with wine and alcohol, and many other remedies and potions to see if [she] could close [her] woman’s parts.”56 Céspedes’ defense also emphasized her position as a soldier, especially how she had aided Spain in repressing the morisco uprising.

52 Cleminson and Vásquez-García do not consider Estabanía de Valdaracete as truly intersexed or take her hermaphroditism literally. Cleminson and Vásquez-García, Sex, Identity and Hermaphrodites in Iberia, 1500-1800, 44.
53 Céspedes testified that “what happened is that when I gave borth, 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 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.” For Céspedes’ full testimony, see Richard L. Kagan and Abigail Dyer, Inquisitorial Inquiries: Brief Lives of Secret Jews and Other Heretics (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004), 36-53. This logic is the basis an ancient idea of sex, what Thomas Laqueur calls “the one-sex model,” which considers the vagina as a penis turned inside out and vice versa. Thomas Lacquer, Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1990).
54 If Céspedes was not a religious or cultural Muslim, she was at least dark-skinned and the lower classes. Cleminson and Vásquez-García, Sex, Identity and Hermaphrodites in Iberia, 1500-1800, 46-51.
56 Ibid., 44.
Though she was Christian in the newly reincorporated Spanish nation, being of Moorish descent she was linked to bandits (monfi) and seen as a threat to the Spanish Empire. She was believed to come from “exotic lands populated by fantastic beasts and hermaphrodites located by the sea-faring naturalists of the period in India and Ethiopia.” Her knowledge of medicine and use of potions was proof of her involvement in witchcraft and since moriscos were already associated with sodomy, her evasive genitalia was further proof of her sin contra naturam. Her dark skin proved that she was not Castilian, while her uncategorizable genitalia was considered proof that she was not a man.

Erauso made a different argument for her defense: she admitted to her womanhood and solicited the examinations that would prove it. As a Basque, Erauso already occupied a liminal position in Spanish society. She was of the Iberian Peninsula but was also distinct from the Spanish in culture and language. Because she was both of and not of Spain, her gender-sex discordance could be attributed to her Basqueness, and her cosas tan heroicas to her Spanishness. As Eva Mendieta shows, Erauso traveled a path through the Americas established by Basque emigrants before her. That she arrived a stranger in multiple cities in the Basque territory in Spain and Spanish territory in Latin America and was warmly received and offered jobs in all instances can be attributed to the network of Basque people in all of these places. Her irascibility, her anti-authoritarian tendencies, and her inability, as well as lack of desire, to

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57 Cleminson and Vásquez-García, Sex, Identity and Hermaphrodites in Iberia, 1500-1800, 49.
58 Eva Mendieta gets close to this argument, but does not connect the liminality of the Basque to the liminality of the monstrous body in her book, In Search of Catalina de Erauso: The National and Sexual Identity of the Lieutenant Nun.” Instead, she casts contemporary transgender theory backwards in time as a means of contextualizing Erauso’s identity, overriding historical evidence for a different kind of gender conceptualization. I posit instead that gender liminality arises in times of extreme polarity. This idea will be discussed more in Chapter IV on Queen Christina of Sweden.
follow the rules, including those pertaining to sex and gender, were all considered evidence of her indefatigable Basque nature.\textsuperscript{60}

But Erauso was more than a soldier and a Basque. She was also a nun, an identity that she called upon to protect herself. In addition to reports of masculine women concealing their sex to become soldiers, and soldiers who were “feminized” by sodomical acts while participating in a hierarchy of masculinity within the Spanish military, some nuns were accused of physically transmuting into men in their isolation above and beyond their same-sex erotic lives. One such case, that of Magdalena Muñoz, was reported in 1617, a decade before Erauso’s portrait was painted.\textsuperscript{61} Muñoz was brought to the sisters of the Convento de la Coronada in Úbeda in 1605 by her father who feared that she, being a \textit{mujer varonil}, would never find a husband. Because of her masculinity, she was assigned male-gendered tasks involving strenuous labor. While carrying a heavy sack of grain, which she claimed to be over 7,000 kilos, Muñoz strained her groin. During recovery, “a man’s \textit{natura} had sprouted” from the place “women supposedly have their \textit{sexo}.” Just above this place, there “was a hole, the size of a pine nut.” Fearful of being discovered by her fellow nuns, she called Fray Agustín de Torres to examine her. The monk confirmed the growth of Muñoz’s penis. Soon after the revelation of her penis, Muñoz began to grow facial hair, and her voice deepened, suggesting that her sprained groin had hastened a second adolescence. Muñoz’s transmutation from \textit{mujer varonil} to male was celebrated. As Fray Torres wrote in a letter to the Abbot of San Salvador in Granada, Muñoz was “realized herself a

\textsuperscript{60} See the chapter “Hostility and Conflict between National Groups: The Basques against Everyone and Everyone against the Basques” in Eva Mendieta, \textit{In Search of Catalina de Erauso: The National and Sexual Identity of the Lieutenant Nun}, 119-128.


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manly woman, a naturalness that no other higher being than God could have produced.” Here, the “manly woman” is synonymous with an idea of intersexuality understood in terms of “hidden hermaphroditism” in the seventeenth century. What Ambroise Paré described as a variety of monstrous birth in 1550, Fray Torres wrote of as “natural,” taking the miraculous perspective that sees the monstrous body not as a sign of abnormality but of the wondrous imagination of God the Creator. On a more practical level, Muñoz’s maleness meant that her father had an heir to whom to bequeath his vast wealth. Muñoz left the convent, inherited these riches and lived the rest of his life as a man.

The pine-nut sized hole found underneath Muñoz’s new member was an identifying feature of the male hermaphrodite as set forth by the terms established by Ambroise Paré in *On Monsters and Marvels*. According to Paré, the “male hermaphrodite, which is the one that has the sex organs of a perfect man and can impregnate and has, at the perineum (which is the spot beneath the scrotum and the seat), a whole in the form of a vulva, which nonetheless does not penetrate to the inside of the body; and urine and seed do not issue from this hole.” This description was accompanied by an image, in which a figure with long hair and flat chest stands with legs parted to reveal two sets of genitalia. (Fig. 49) Paré also discussed women who instead of their monthly menstrual cycle were surprised by the growth of a penis. In the case of Maria Pacheca, this transmutation happened after traveling abroad in India, suggesting foreign influences as an unstated cause.

The belief that women could spontaneously transmute into men is well documented in early gynecological texts by Paré and Harte de San Juan. Genital transmutation was believed to occur in one of two ways: in the womb or after birth. Transformations were attributed to unstable

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63 Ibid., 26-27.
64 Ibid., 31.
conditions in the mother’s womb, such as a change in temperature, or a shift in humors.\textsuperscript{65} These in-utero changes would cause external genitalia to retreat into the body, only to manifest at a later date revealing a “female” person’s true identity. As Paré noted: “we never find that any man ever became a woman, because Nature tends always towards what is most perfect and not, on the contrary, to perform in such a way that what is perfect should become imperfect.”\textsuperscript{66} Juan Huarte de San Juan countered, writing “If Nature, having made the perfect male, wants to change him into a woman, it merely has to turn his reproductive organs back inside the body…Many times Nature has made a female and having been in the mother’s womb for one or two months, for some reason her genitals are overcome with heat and they come out and a male is created.”\textsuperscript{67} While both Cépedes and Muñoz reference texts like Paré’s, their cases were not included in subsequent printings, suggesting that while information was disseminated, it was not updated.

Muñoz’s story also has the quality of fairy tales and fables, especially the ending that neatly allows Muñoz to leave the convent and enjoy all of the benefits pertaining to a masculine gender and male sex. News of changes in sex and manly women were transmitted publicly in sensationalized pamphlets and broadsheets, called relaciónes. Such relaciónes emphasized and further exaggerated the extraordinariness of the story in the same manner that a contemporary tabloids do today. The prevalence of the literary figure of the mujer varonil was concurrent with these early gynecological case studies, suggesting the literary, the sensationalized and the medical co-produced each other. In other words, the appearance of the bearded Brígida del Rio at the court of King Henry III in 1590 inspired literary characterizations of the mujer varonil as well as sensationalized pamphlets; these characterizations would inflect the reception of manly women in Spanish medicine and society thereafter. The relationship between literary,

\begin{itemize}
\item\textsuperscript{65} Velasco, \textit{Male Delivery}, 94
\item\textsuperscript{66} Paré, \textit{On Monsters and Marvels}, 33.
\item\textsuperscript{67} Juan Huarte de San Juan as quoted in Velasco, \textit{The Lieutenant Nun}, 28.
\end{itemize}
sensationalized and medical descriptions of the manly woman suggests that the latter should be read as allegories as well. As an allegory, the convent that Muñoz describes as a prison is a metaphor for the prison of femininity and the body that restricted from her moving freely in the world.

It is worth noting that there are no images to accompany the stories of Magdalena Muñoz, Elena de Céspedes, and Estebanía de Valdaracete, despite the spectacularity of their stories, which depended on observation and visual confirmation. Instead, readers were left to conjure their own images of these women’s monstrous and exaggerated genitalia as well as their accompanying bodies and faces guided by textual description. In this context, Erauso’s portrait holds a special function because it attaches an image to two relaciones that distributed the story of Catalina de Erauso throughout the New World and Spain in 1625.

Where Montalván’s play emphasized Erauso’s heroism, these two relaciones emphasized her criminality. The first, “The Prodigious story of the great feats and brave deeds that a woman did in the forty years she served His Majesty in the Kingdom of Chile, Peru and New Spain as a Soldier and honorable military officer who carried arms until she was forcibly discovered” (Relación prodigiosa de las grandes hazañas, y valerosos hechos que vna muger hizo en quarenta años que sirvió a Su Majestad en el Reyno de Chile y otros del Perú, y Nueva España, en ávito de Soldado, y los honrosos oficios militares que tubo armas, sin que fuesse conocida por tal muger, hasta que le fue fuerza descubrirse) emphasized her violent nature, with examples of fighting amongst her childhood friends and in the convent as well as time spent in jail for petty crimes. Also published in 1625, the second pamphlet, “Second part of the story of the Lieutenant Nun and the admirable things and courageous deeds that made this woman a good example in the time of service to our Lord and King” (Segunda relación la mas copiosa y

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68 Velasco, The Lieutenant Nun, 51.
verdadera que ha salido y dizense en ella cosas admirables, y fidedignas de los valerosos hechos desta muger, de lobien que empleó el tiempo en servicio de nuestro Rey y Señor), focuses on the violent acts of her adult life, including killing her brother in a duel and other murders committed in various fights.69 In this context, Van der Hamen’s portrait of Erauso, with her surly scowl and furrowed brow, illustrates her criminality and impulsive nature. As previously mentioned, Van der Hamen’s portrait would accompany all future relaciones and textual descriptions of Erauso through the nineteenth century.

Comparing her expression to that of Madre Jerónima de la Fuente, a nun painted by Velázquez in a portrait that Tanya Tiffany calls “a paradigm of manly courage,” further contextualizes the masculine roles that nuns were asked to take up in pursuit of Spain’s religious and imperial cause (Fig. 50). Like Erauso, Madre Jerónima traveled to remote places to carry out the agenda of the Spanish crown. Velázquez painted Madre Jerónima’s portrait in 1620 upon her departure from Toledo for the Philippines, where she would establish the first convent in Spain’s easternmost territory. She was chosen because of her “strength and valor,”70 represented by Velázquez in her was represented clenched jaw and “tight-lipped expression.”71 More so, her clamped down mouth spoke to Jerónima’s practice of not speaking; she often filled her mouth with pebbles to keep her vows of silence and only used speech when necessary to carry out God’s will.72 Velázquez depicted all the wrinkles in her face and did not attempt to idealize her image. To do so would interfere with the power her image was thought to communicate as a direct representation of being. Viewing this portrait was considered an equivalent to standing in

69 Ibid., 52-3.
70 Tiffany, Diego Velázquez’s Early Paintings and the Culture of Seventeenth-century Seville, 54.
71 Ibid. citing Jonathan Brown, Ibid., 51.
72 Ibid., 69.
her presence.\textsuperscript{73} The nun, who occasionally suspended herself from in acts of penance in imitation of Christ, clutches a large crucifix in her right hand. She stares intensely at the viewer through eyes looking up from beneath a lowered brow, thought by Tiffany to be connected to the nun’s power to read hearts and minds.\textsuperscript{74} More specifically related to this inquiry, Tiffany argues that Jerónima’s intense, direct gaze communicates her status as a \textit{mujer varonil}. In this context, the phrase \textit{murer varonil} connotes a woman of fortitude or strength, rather than other “hidden hermaphrodite” or manly woman.\textsuperscript{75}

Female soldiers and nuns transmuting into men via changing genitalia or clothing, required a particular turn of phrase phrase, as evidenced by the literature. Estabania de Valdaracete “was commanded to choose the habit in which she wished to live and she chose that of a male” (\textit{lo mandaron que escogiese en el hábito que quería vivir e andar y eligió el dehombre}).\textsuperscript{76} Elena de Cépedes spoke of “taking the habit of a man.”\textsuperscript{77} A century and a half later, in 1792, the nun-turned-man Fernanda Fernández described her transition from a life in the convent to a life lived as a man as “I have taken the habit of a man.” For her part, Erauso “declar[ed] her state” and in the first of the two \textit{Relaciónes} from 1625, she is described as, “ábito de Soldado,” or “in the habit of a soldier.” Montalván scripted a line for Erauso’s character in his play: “As a man, I am in the habit.”\textsuperscript{78} Cleminson and Vázquez García make a case for defining “hábito” as a state of behaviors, akin to “habits.” More specifically, they define “escogiese en el...

\textsuperscript{73} Tiffany connects this idea to Francisco Pacheco’s idea of true likeness. See Marta Cacho Casal, “The ‘true likenesses’ in Francisco Pacheco’s Libro de retratos,” \textit{Renaissance Studies}, Vol 24. no. 3, 2010.
\textsuperscript{74} Tiffany, \textit{Diego Velázquez’s Early Paintings and the Culture of Seventeenth-century Seville}, 72.
\textsuperscript{75} Ibid., 74.
\textsuperscript{76} Cleminson and Vásquez-García connect “hábito” directing to choosing one’s sex. Cleminson and Vásquez-Garcia, \textit{Sex, Identity and Hermaphrodites in Iberia, 1500-1800}, 43.
\textsuperscript{77} Ibid., 6.
\textsuperscript{78} Velasco, \textit{The Lieutenant Nun}, 74.
“hábito” as equivalent to choosing or electing one’s sex. But given the strong link between nuns and sex transmutation, “habit” resonates with different meanings. In Sebastián de Covarrubias’ Tesoro de la lengua castellana o Española, 1611, the phrase mudar hábito is defined as trocar estado: changing one's habit means to change one's established category or status. Renunciar los hábitos refers more specifically to a cleric or friar wearing a monastic habit, changing his state presumably between ecclesiastical and secular statuses. In another section, Covarrubias aligns hábito with the proverb “The habit does not make the nun” (El hábito no hace al monja) in what Enrique García Santo-Tomás calls a common way to describe dress or costume. The word hábito, then, links clothing and fashion to status, gender, as a subcategory of status, and occupation together, in an elaborate caste system.

At a key moment in Montalván’s play, Erauso responds to a request from a fellow character to wear a dress to meet a royal official: “Am I by chance some monster never before seen or some wild beast seen in Poland that they invented but who is educated and can fight?” (Act 3, Scene 3), an acknowledgement of how she was the constructed subject of the public gaze. The liminality of her Basqueness and her refusal of the domestication forced upon her sex in addition to an overtly masculine nature within a female body were all evidence of her perceived monstrosity. Erauso would grow weary of the celebrity her spectacular narrative and performance generated in Madrid and would return to Nueva España in 1630 to live as a man using the name Antonio de Erauso. Despite the many facets of the concept of mujer varonil on

81 Velasco 24. The Polish wild beast may be the sea bishop described in Pare’s On Monsters and Marvels.
82 Ibid.,
view in the portrait by Juan van der Hamen—the virile nun, the hidden hermaphrodite or the manly woman—Catalina de Eraso, the monster, stares back.  

José Berruezo in his 1975 interpretation of the portrait writes, “This portrait that you have just seen, with its clearly mannish appearance, indifferent expression, aqualine eyes, big, sensual lips, insinuating an ironic grin...attire that is very military and not at all feminine, with an attitude between absent and introspective as if from the height of her popularity—fame well earned of course—she looked at us with pure condescension.”
Chapter III

Man, Woman, Jew: Jusepe de Ribera’s portrait of Magdalena Ventura and Her Husband and Son, 1630

Look, a great miracle of nature. Magdalena Ventura from the town of Accumulus in Samnium, commonly called Abruzzo in the Kingdom of Naples, fifty-two years old and what is unusual is when she was in her thirty-seventh year, she began to go through puberty and thus a full growth of beard appeared such that it seems more that of a bearded gentleman than a woman who had previously lost three sons borne to her husband, Felici de Amici, whom you see next to her. Jusepe de Ribera, a Spaniard, marked by the cross of Christ, a second Apelles of his own time, by order of Duke Ferdinand II of Alcalá, Viceroy at Naples, painted marvelously from life. 17th March 1631.

—Inscription from Jusepe de Ribera’s Portrait of Magdalena Ventura with Her Husband and Son, 1631

The title of Jusepe de Ribera’s painting, Magdalena Ventura with Her Husband and Son, 1631, indicates that the artist’s subject is female by the name and pronoun (Fig. 51). The lengthy inscription on the painting indicates that she is a woman. Aside from these words, Magdalena Ventura’s sex and gender, as determined by her appearance in the portrait, is indecipherable. Her aged masculine and bearded face juxtaposed with the great, round cycloptic teat that parts a swarthy patch of chest hair complicates our assumption of masculine and feminine physical characteristics as they designate the genders “man” and “woman” or the sexes “male” and “female.” In this chapter, I follow textual clues from the inscription and look at each part of the painted image—beard, breast, husband, child and costume—to demonstrate that sexual ambiguity is the key to understanding Jusepe de Ribera’s portrait of Magdalena Ventura.

1 The authors of Ribera’s two retrospective exhibition catalogues translate the inscription on the painting from Latin to “depicted in a marvelously lifelike way.” I have chosen to follow some of James Clifton’s translation of the last line as “painted marvelously from life.” Clifton also correctly translates the date of the painting, correcting Felton, Jordan and Pérez Sanchez’s translations from February to March. Thank you to Tina Chronopolous for verifying the translation. James Clifton, “Ad vivum mire depinxit’: Towards a Reconstruction of Ribera’s Art Theory” in Storia dell’Arte, No. 83 (1985): 112. See also Craig Felton and William B. Jordan, Jusepe De Ribera, Lo Spagnoletto, 1591-1652. (Fort Worth: Kimbell Art Museum, 1982) and Alfonso Pérez Sánchez, Nicola Spinosa and Andrea Bayer, Jusepe De Ribera, 1591-1652.

2 The painting also goes by the title La Mujer Barbuda, and The Bearded Woman, Magdalena Ventura and Her Husband. Alfonso Pérez Sánchez, Nicola Spinosa and Andrea Bayer, Jusepe De Ribera, 1591-1652, 93.
Like Ribera’s portraits of beggar-philosophers, Magdalena’s portrait is invested with a depth of pictorial references communicated with the most efficient expression. I look at the painting’s symbols to interpret Magdalena Ventura’s representation as a portrait of a man and a father, then as a woman and a mother, contextualized within the shifting iconography of divine parental models, the Virgin Mary and St. Joseph. Other figures prominent in the cultural imaginary of seventeenth-century Spain, including homosexuals and hermaphrodites, wolves and hyenas, prostitutes and penitent saints, and hairy women from the Bible, mythology and early modern Spanish life, are consulted as iconographic sources.

No confirmation of Magdalena Ventura’s sex will be found within the portrait because, as I argue, it was designed by Ribera to be an unstable field in which assumptions about what gender and biological sex look like are troubled by racial and religious ideologies: effeminate man, bestial woman, homosexual and hermaphrodite, and a shape-shifter who could mutate between all of these deviant forms are all equally possible readings of the portrait’s subject. These are all stereotypes of Jews and Jewishness, which was considered to be a gender category all its own from medieval times. Magdalena Ventura’s portrait is a colonial picture, relating both to the Spanish imperial project abroad—in this case, Naples, occupied by Spain from 1504—and to its concerns at home, namely the Inquisition and the ongoing expulsion of Jews, the “others” who infiltrated Spain’s own lands. But before reading the painting’s iconography, some context about the patronage of Ventura’s portrait, the artist who painted it, the terms by which it was made and its place within seventeenth-century Spanish painting is necessary.

The painting’s inscription indicates that the portrait was commissioned “by order of Duke Ferdinand II of Alcalá, Viceroy of Naples.” Alcalá was one of the most avid collectors in his generation, one of the wealthiest noblemen in Spain and a highly accomplished man of arts and
letters. Under Philip II of Spain (1554–1598), collecting art gained increased political importance as a measure of noble intellect, taste and power. Members of Spain’s royal circles competed against each other and against nobles in other countries, comparing the quality and quantity of their art collections. Spanish noblemen were voracious collectors, and the Duke of Alcalá, was no different. At his familial residence in Seville, La Casa de Pilatos, he continued his family’s tradition of collecting antiquities and manuscripts by doubling his inherited library of 4,000 books and expanding his collection of art to include works by contemporary artists from near and far. In consultation with Francisco Pacheco, the Duke added works by members of the Seville School: Diego Velázquez, Pablo de Cépedes, Juan de Roelas, Alonso Vasquez and others, to his extant collection of family portraits.

In addition to his reputation as a man of great erudition, the Duke of Alcalá was also widely known as an dubious politician, simultaneously earning and sabotaging all of his political accomplishments. In 1629, Philip IV appointed The Duke of Alcalá to the position of Viceroy of the Kingdom of Two Sicilies, then Spain’s most eastern colonial province. Stationed in Naples—then the largest city in Europe—the territory under Alcalá’s control encompassed the southern half of the Italian peninsula and the island of Sicily. The Duke of Alcalá’s tenure in Naples was short-lived: a year after his arrival, he insulted King Philip IV’s sister, the Queen of Hungary, Mary of Austria by suggesting that she shorten the length of her visit, already three months in, because of the expense. This faux pas would cost him the viceroyalty. He returned to

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Seville in May of 1631 with seventy-six paintings by Italian and Northern Renaissance masters and contemporary Neapolitan artists that he had acquired during his three-year term.

The Duke followed the examples of Hapsburg royalties in Spain and Austria by commissioning portraits of monstrous human and animal anomalies. Alcalá’s collection of monstrous portraits was modest. He owned five portraits in total, including Ventura’s. Prior to his arrival in Naples, Alcalá had acquired a painting of a two-headed bull, two portraits of dwarves—Gabriel and Hetias—and a portrait of “a buffoon who eats everything that is [placed] on his plate.”\(^5\) The latter painting was attributed to Alcalá’s court painter, Diego de Rómulo, and the two dwarf paintings to Pacheco.\(^6\) There is no evidence to suggest the Duke of Alcalá adopted people for his court’s amusement. It is unknown how the Duke learned of Ventura’s existence, but in February 1631, four months before he left his position as Viceroy of Naples, the Duke of Alcalá commissioned Ribera to paint a portrait of Ventura, this most unusual resident living under his governance.

Gabriele Finaldi believed that the Duke of Alcalá and not Jusepe de Ribera wrote the inscription on Magdalena Ventura’s portrait because the overly florid language used to describe the artist “as a Spaniard, marked by the cross of Christ, a second Appelle of his own time. Ribera only identifies himself through the papal cross he received from Portugal in 1626 in only one painting made the year he received the honor. He never refers to himself as “a second Appelles”

\(^5\) Jonathan Brown and Richard Kagan. “The Duke of Alcalá: His Collection and Its Evolution.” The entry about Ribera’s portrait of Magdalena Ventura on the Fundacion Mendinaceli website also lists a painting of a giant and a bull with three horns in the Duke’s collection.\(^6\) All of these works have been lost, but all were catalogued in the 1752 inventory of the collection at the Casa de Pilatos. The two portraits of dwarfs are described on the inventory as “dos lienzos de vara de alto de dos enanos de mano de Pacheco” (“two canvases of the highest measure of two dwarves by Pacheco’s hand.”)
before or after. The artist, a Spaniard, had come to Naples in 1616 from a small town near Valencia in southern Spain by way of Parma, Bologna and Rome, used *Il Spagnoletto*, or “the little Spaniard” to describe himself often. This nickname was given to him when he studied briefly at the academy in Rome and served him well throughout his life in Naples, as it identified him as Spanish in a Spanish-occupied city and quickly aligning him with the governing body there. The Duke of Alcalá appointed Jusepe de Ribera (b. 1591, Játiva, d. 1652, Naples) as his court painter immediately upon his arrival in Naples. Ribera would be court painter to an seven of eleven viceroys before and after the Duke of Alcalá.

During his short tenure as viceroy, the Duke commissioned at least five paintings by Ribera: Magdalena Ventura’s portrait and four portraits of beggar-philosophers, a style of portrait for which Ribera become famous. These untitled portraits of men presented the unknown figures frontally or in three-quarters profile, wearing tattered clothes and often with unkempt hair and scruffy beards. Appearing to be beggars from the streets of Naples, these figures were exalted by attributes included in the pictures, such as books, globes and statuary that identify them as the great thinkers of ancient times. As Delphine Fitz Darby has argued, these symbols would help an erudite audience to identify the otherwise anonymous figure in an exercise of wit and demonstration of humanist education. Thus, for example, the “sardonic face by which all students of the Classic would recognize” and a quotation from Horace (“how Democritus would laugh …”), identify one of the laughing beggar-philosophers in the duke’s

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8 Diego de Rómulo, Alcalá’s court painter since 1616 died in 1625. Ribera and Alcalá had met previously when the Duke’s visited Naples in 1626 before taking office. At this time, the patron had been gifted a painting by Ribera, *Christ Being Prepared for the Cross*. Ibid.
10 Ibid.
collection as Democritus (1630).\textsuperscript{11} (Fig. 52) In addition to matching a figure’s expression to a philosopher’s ideological position, Ribera consulted Greek and Roman portrait busts to aid him in composing the figure’s facial features.\textsuperscript{12} Ribera would become known across Europe for this subject matter, as evidenced by numerous commissions. The portraits demonstrate an investment of great meaning in the most efficient and reduced manner; references to texts and images across centuries are staged as clues to unravel a pictorial puzzle. These same symbolic investments are found in Magdalena Ventura’s portrait. The artist’s current reputation as a painter of the gruesome and grotesque relies mainly on a few martyrdom scenes and the portrait of Magdalena Ventura, that he made at the Duke’s request. With these few exceptions, his \textit{oeuvre} is better characterized by the humble portraits of beggar-philosophers, apostles and penitent saints that emphasize his masterful representations of human anatomy and his dramatic \textit{tenebrismo} from which figures emerge from a velvety darkness into halos of light.

Magdalena Ventura would not have been the first hairy woman to cross Ribera’s or the Duke’s path. As a frequent visitor to the courts of Philip III and IV in Madrid from the late 1590s onward, Alcalá would have been familiar with Juan Sánchez Cotán’s portrait of Brígida del Río, \textit{La Barbuda de Peñaranda}, 1590, if he had not had the opportunity to del Río in person\textsuperscript{13} (Fig. 53). Given the specificity with which the Duke commissioned the beggar-philosophers, he would have most likely described Sánchez Cotán’s painting of the bearded Brígida to Ribera, if the

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Ibid., 284.
\item Del Río toured Spain, traveling from her home in the western part of the country to the royal court in Madrid to Valencia in the south and charged money to those who wished to view her excess facial hair. There is no evidence to suggest that Ventura exhibited herself for money.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
artist had not had the opportunity to see the painting himself. Brígida del Río’s image would proliferate, reaching its widest circulation when used in in Sebastián de Covarrubias’ *Emblemas morales* (1610)—a series of brief moral warnings—to accompany entry 64 (Fig. 54) with the following text:

*I am hic, et hec, et hoc.*  
*I declare, I am male, I am woman, I am a third,*  
*neither one nor the other, nor is it clear*  
*which these things I am. I am a third*  
*one of those horrendous and rare.*  
*I have sinister and bad omen.*  
*Take heed all who have seen men,*  
*for you are like me, if you are female-male.*

—Emblem 64, Moral Emblems, Sebastián de Covarrubias, 1610

Ventura and her picture would have been greeted with same questions posed by Covarrubias about Brígida del Río: effeminate man, masculine woman, or an unnamed third gender category in between male and female? It is also highly probable that Ribera had seen Lavinia Fontana’s portrait of Antonietta Gonzalez (c. 1595), or perhaps even met Gonzalez or one of her hairy siblings during his stay in Parma. The same Duke Ranuncio Farnese of Parma who commissioned Ribera to paint an altarpiece for Parma’s Church of San Prospero in 1611 had also gifted Gonzalez to the Marquesa de Soragna in the 1590s. With his ties to the Farnese family, Ribera may have also seen Annibale Carracci’s painting of Enrico Gonzalez in Cardinal Odoardo Farnese’s collection or met Antonietta’s hairy brother when he passed through Rome in 1615 or 1616. He certainly was known to the Carracci family. Annibale’s cousin Ludovico praised Ribera as “that Spanish painter who follows the school of Caravaggio and was with Signor

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Mario Farnese” in a letter dated December of 1618.\textsuperscript{15} Although there is no certainty that Ribera had seen these paintings or met their subjects, all of these hairy people occupied a certain level of fame in their day, as did their painters and patrons.

Ribera is exact in rendering details such as the dark circles under Ventura’s eyes, the wrinkles that furrow her brow, a receding hairline, a mottled complexion and coarsened skin with the glimmer of sweat upon it. Her beard continues past her chin onto her chest, becoming sparser at the beginning of the curve of her single, exposed breast. The hair is thick and dense, more fur or animal-like than it is like human hair. Such specificity belies an assumed truthfulness and authenticity, making the portrait seem more a document than a representation.\textsuperscript{16} There are no other portraits of Ventura to which Ribera’s can be compared nor is there information about Ventura beyond Ribera’s portrait, except for a letter from the Venetian ambassador, Marcantonio Padovanino, who confirms her “masculine face,” “beautiful black beard more than a palm’s length” and “very hairy chest.”\textsuperscript{17} Dated February 12, 1631, a month before the date on the painting, the letter reveals the level of spectacle around the painter and his subject. It documents that visitors were allowed to watch Ribera in the process of painting and also to examine Ventura herself. The ambassador writes:

In the rooms of the viceroy, there was an extremely famous painter who was making a portrait of an Abruzzi woman, married and the mother of many children, who has a completely masculine face, with a beautiful black beard more than a palm’s length and a very hairy chest. His Excellency wanted me to see her, thinking it was a marvelous thing, and it truly is.\textsuperscript{18}

\textsuperscript{17} Marcantonio Padovanino’s letter in Catalogue Entry for \textit{The Bearded Woman: Magdalena Ventura and Her Husband}, in Pérez Sánchez, Spinosa and Bayer, \textit{Jusepe De Ribera, 1591-1652}, 93.
\textsuperscript{18} Ibid.
Whereas Covarrubias described Del Río as a “bad omen,” a “terror,” “horrendous and rare”—terms dating back to Greek and Roman antiquity that were used to describe the physically different as warnings from God—the text on Ventura’s painting describes her instead as a “miracle” and “great wonder of nature.” The natural scientist Giambattista della Porto, who treated hirsute women in Naples in his text Dalla fisionomia dell’uomo (On human physiology, 1610), also attached prodigious associations to the hairy female body when he wrote that “the bearded women should be feared as an omen of great evil to come.” The inscription states that Ribera’s portrait was “painted marvelously from life,” which is a triple entendre of the word “marvelously.” Referring to Ventura’s status as a “marvel” (noun), the word indicates that she is a wonder. She is also “to be marveled at” (verb), and looked on with wonder, curiosity and awe for her difference. Lastly, “marvelously” (adjective) describes the exceptional manner in which the portrait was painted by Ribera, whose talent was as spectacular as his subject. The phrase also indicates that Ventura was a live model for the painting. Dating the finished work to the day it was completed—March 17, 1631—notarizes the painting as a document of Magdalena Ventura’s existence, in addition to “confirming [the artist’s] presence with the subject and emphasizing the artist’s role in recording changing appearances at a particular moment.”

Notably, the letter does not mention Ventura’s husband or child, both of whom represented in the painting. As the inscription indicates, Ventura was fifty-two years old at the time of the portrait and it is unlikely that she would have recently birthed the infant. Rather, the

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19 James Clifton citeing Della Porta unfortunately confuses Giambattista (also Giovan Battista) for Giacobo della Porta in “’Ad vivum mire depinxit:’ Towards a Reconstruction of Ribera’s Art Theory,” 112.
20 Ibid., 115. Clifton argues the phrase “marvelously painted from life” echoes the goals of sixteenth and seventeenth-century painting to not copy but elevate nature to the level of the beautiful as a means of perfecting nature in accordance with the designs of God.
21 Michael Tunbridge writing about the painting from a medical perspective, notes: “The median age of menopause nowadays in 51 and it remains possible to conceive spontaneously at that age in someone who is still menstruating.
child functions symbolically as a sign of Ventura’s birthing capacity and femaleness more than as a subject of the picture. The child gives Ribera the opportunity to juxtapose breast with beard, for he would not show a bared breast without a child in the wake of the strict decrees of the Council of Trent. Without this biological detail, Ribera would have no evidence for Ventura’s womanhood—represented pictorially through her role as a mother—because given her features as the artist has painted her, she appears to be male and thus a father. Other details in the portrait further complicate the assumed objectivity of the painting’s apparent documenting style.

The inscription suggests that Ventura’s “full growth of beard appeared such that it seems rather that of a bearded gentleman.” If we read Magdalena Ventura’s beard as a sign of her masculinity and maleness, as Sherry Velasco does in Male Delivery: Reproduction, Effeminacy and Pregnant Men in Early Modern Spain, then we can read the portrait in terms of the “invasion [of men] into the realm of female sphere of reproductive medicine and the threat of feminization of Spanish men, which was manifested in the body through unstable physiology, transgressive gender behavior and criminalized sexual activity.” While Velasco makes this claim to support her interpretation of the popular seventeenth-century Spanish theatrical production about a pregnant man, El parte de Juan Rana (c.1636), its social context apply to Magdalena Ventura’s portrait. Furthermore, beards more so than genitalia, as Will Fisher argues in “The Renaissance Beard: Masculinity in Early Modern England,” were the primary means by which masculinity was materialized in the early modern period. As Thomas Hall, the seventeenth-century physician, noted: “The beard is the sign of a man … by which he appears a man.”

The oldest woman to conceive naturally in the pre-in vitro fertilization era was 57 in the US and 55 in the UK. It is unlikely that Magdalena would have conceived had she had sustained very high testosterone levels which would suppress the pituitary-gonadotrophin axis and prevent ovulation.” W. Michael G. Tunbridge, “La Mujer Barbuda by Ribera, 1631: A Gender Bender.” Q J Med: Oxford University Press on behalf of the Association of Physicians, 104.8 (2011): 733-736.

elaborates: “It thus seems clear that … for Ribera, the beard is not simply a secondary characteristic, but rather a constitutive element of gender identity.” Marking the physical difference between men and women, as well as men and boys, beards signified not only masculinity, but also a man’s reproductive capacity and the social role of father, since it was believed that both facial hair and sperm were thought to derive from heat and dryness in a masculine man’s body.

The reconceptualization of St. Joseph’s iconography corresponds to the reconceptualization of fatherhood and the increased presence of the father in child rearing, supporting the interpretation of Magdalena Ventura as the father, rather than the mother of the child she holds. Christina Villaseñor Black argues that the change in the iconography of St. Joseph in Spain and its colonies resulted from the use of Christ’s earthly father as a model for an ideal father. In 1555, shortly after the arrival of the Spanish in the Americas, St. Joseph was made the patron saint of the Viceroyalty of New Spain (present day Mexico, colonized in 1521) and the Viceroyalty of Peru (present day Panama, Colombia, Venezuela, Ecuador, Bolivia, Peru, Argentina, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay, established in 1542). St. Joseph was the first Christian convert and thus the patron saint of conversion, a primary goal, along with harvesting natural resources and establishing international trade routes, of Spanish colonization. The foster father of Jesus Christ, St. Joseph was also the heavenly-assigned guardian of the central figure in the Christian faith. As such, the saint became emblematic of Spain’s relationship to its occupied territories, identified as the spiritual caretaker of the American indigenous people as the Spanish claimed responsibility for their Christian upbringing. St. Joseph’s image was employed as a

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24 Ibid., 155, 174, Fisher quoting Thomas Hall’s The Loathsomeness of Long Hair, c. 1654.
model of a good father for the men of Spain’s colonies in an effort to combat the frequent abandonment of bi-racial children across these territories. In 1679, King Charles II would name St. Joseph the patron saint of the Spanish kingdom as well as the Spanish colonies. The saint would take on an even greater prominence in the ideological, visual and cultural landscape of New and old Spain and their arts as his image became a popular subject painted by all the major artists in Spanish and Colonial Latin American art.

Prior to his rise as a prominent figure in the illustrated Catholic colonial narrative, St. Joseph was generally portrayed in images of the Nativity, the Flight into Egypt and biblical genre scenes that included the extended Holy Family at play, rest or engaged in daily activity—if indeed he was portrayed at all. With his new importance to the colonial project, however, St. Joseph’s image was adapted according to the terms outlined by Francisco Pacheco, who advised that St. Joseph should be portrayed at the peak of masculine maturity as a handsome, young man shown with carpentry tools so viewers could identify him by his trade. In an example from Cuzco, the Christ-child carries a bag of carpentry tools in his right hand as an indication of his lessons in his earthly father’s trade, a metaphorical inheritance of Christianity from Father-Spain (Fig. 55). Contrary to Pacheco’s iconographic dictates, the Christ-child wears Incan style sandals, whereas St. Joseph wears a European-style boot. These details further reinforce the idea that patron saint Joseph, representing Spain, is the moral, intellectual and physical guardian of the Christ-child who acts as a stand-in for the Americas, indigenized through his dress. The decision to depict the Christ-child in indigenous shoes would have been a strategic choice made by the artists of the Cuzco School, who were all of indigenous descent. Such details

communicate the painting’s origin Peruvian origin, as paintings such as this one were often exported to other locations.

Villaseñor Black’s argument speaks to patrimony, nationhood, and spiritual inheritance as extensions of fatherhood and Spain’s colonial project abroad. In Spain’s homeland, the shift from the Mary-centric visual culture of the medieval and Renaissance eras to the Joseph-centric imagery of the colonial Golden Age parallels the replacement of female midwives by male physicians in early modern Spain. As Velasco asserts, women were “visually and ideologically separated from [the realm of] childbirth and pregnancy” in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. St. Joseph replaced Mary in images just as medical texts written by men supplanted the oral tradition of midwives and as foreigners wet nurses replace peasant women. When three manuals on childbirth were published in Spain—Damien Calbon’s *Libro del arte de las comadres y madrinas* (*Book of the Art of Midwives*, 1571), Francisco Nuñez’s *El libro del parto humano* (*Book of Human Delivery*, 1580) and Juan Alonso de los Ruyzses, *Diez privigios de prenadas* (*Ten Privileges of Pregnant Women*)—two were published in Latin, so that only the educated, i.e. men, could read them.26 These textbooks were all adaptations of the well-known sourcebook for reproductive manuals, Eucharius Rösslin’s *Rose Garden for Pregnant Women and Midwives* (1516), which was translated into Czech, Danish, Dutch, English, French, Italian, Latin, and Spanish in the seventeenth century.27 Midwives, operating according to oral tradition, were at a legislative disadvantage because new laws required formalized training to obtain a license to practice. This legislative requirement succeeded in making midwifery a marginalized and unsanctioned practice. Midwives were also required to practice under the

supervision of a physician in case of potential problems, evoking fear and further implying that they were untrained or uneducated in their crafts. Birth defects considered monstrous and reproductive mishaps, such as miscarriages, were attributed to the mother and the midwife, who was frequently accused of witchcraft or suspected of intentional wrongdoing. Wet nurses working in Italy, many of whom had emigrated from eastern territories, including Turkey, Russia, Greece, the Levant (present day Syria, Lebanon and Jordan), North Africa and Ethiopia, were often thought of as “domestic enemies.” In painting, the appearance of Joseph follows on the absence of Mary, often represented as a midwife stewarding pregnant women through birth and a wet nurse in medieval and Renaissance paintings such as Tintoretto’s The Birth of St. John the Baptist. Women also disappear from medical illustrations, which soon begin to focus on representing the fetus in a disembodied womb.

The painted inscription states that “in her thirty-seven, she began to go through puberty and thus a full growth of beard appeared such that it seems more that of a bearded gentleman than a woman,” suggesting that Ventura was a woman who became more masculine, if not male. The previous chapter on Catalina de Erauso detailed the belief that women could spontaneously transmute into men, and vice versa, with an understanding that monstrous aberrations could take place inside and outside the womb. Usually, in texts concerning female to male transmutations, the growth of a penis is accompanied by the appearance of facial hair, as described in the case of Magdalena Muñoz. Montaigne documents the case of Marie-Germaine, “a girl up to the age of twenty-two,’ who, while making ‘an effort at jumping’ one day, experienced the sudden descent

28 Velasco, Male Delivery, 58.
29 Ibid., 62.
31 Sherry Velasco, Male Delivery, 67.
32 Velasco, Male Delivery, 105.
of ‘virile instruments’ \([\text{o}ufils \text{virils}]\) and was re-baptized as the male Germaine.”\(^{33}\) He also notes she was “remarkable for having a little more hair about her chin than the other girls; they called her bearded Marie’” and that “she went on to develop ‘a big, very thick beard.’”\(^{34}\) As explained by Juan Harte de San Juan in \textit{Examen de ingenios para las ciencias}:

> Having a lot of body hair and a bit of a beard is a clear indication of low levels of coldness and moisture, since all physicians agree that the source of hair and beard is heat and dryness; and if the hair is dark than even higher levels of heat and dryness are present. The opposite temperature creates a woman who is smooth, without beard or body hair. The woman of average levels of coldness and moisture has a little bit of hair on her body but it is light and blond. Of course, the woman who has much body and facial hair (being of a more hot and dry nature) is also intelligent but disagreeable and argumentative, muscular, ugly, has a deep voice and frequent infertility problems.\(^{35}\)

Harte de San Juan’s text explained that coldness and moisture are also necessary conditions for menstruation and breastfeeding. Juxtaposition of beard and breast in Ventura’s portrait indicate the presence of coldness and moisture as well as dryness and heat. As the English John Bulwer writes in \textit{Anthropometamorphosis} (1654): “Woman is by Nature smoothe and delicate; and if she have many haires she is a monster.”\(^{36}\)

The portrait, in its ambiguity, also presents the possibility that Magdalena Ventura was a man who gave birth, and corresponds to numerous cases of pregnant men in early modern Spain. A \textit{relacion} published in Barcelona 1606 reported that a man named Hernando de la Haba birthed a monster after being given a potion. Such stories inspired playwrights like Lope de Vega and other \textit{ingenios} who would elaborate on the trope of the pregnant man, a parallel to the \textit{mujer}

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\(^{35}\) Juan Harte de San Juan in Velasco, \textit{Male Delivery}, 98.

As only the true sodomite would choose to forsake his masculinity and manhood, it was believed that men only transmuted into women by self-inflicted castration. Pierre Boaistuau, in *Histoires Prodigieuses*, an antecedent to Paré’s *On Monsters and Marvels*, distinguished between the natural spontaneous transmutation of women into men and unnatural voluntary trans-mutilation of men into women when he wrote that “some women have become men and some men have castrated themselves to become women … In the first case, Nature was the author without any human intervention, and accordingly to the opinion of many ancient philosophers, this could happen naturally … But that of a man who becomes a woman is not only a prodigious event but so is the telling and the memory of it.”

According to Harte de San Juan, when “this transmutation occurs in the mother’s womb, it is clearly recognizable later by certain movements he has that are indecent for men: woman-like behavior, effeminate, soft and mild voice; and such men are inclined to behave like women and the frequently fall prey to the sin of sodomy.”

Sherry Velasco states that Magdalena Ventura’s portrait demonstrates homoerotic parenting through the inclusion of Ventura’s husband. As written in the painting inscription, the husband’s name “Felici di Amici,” is a highly unlikely one as it translates to “Happy Friends,” a euphemism for homosexuality then and now. Effeminacy with or without engagement in sodomy defined a conception of homosexuality in the early modern period. Both were increasingly public.

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37 Velasco, *Male Delivery*, 86-7
38 Ibid., 165-6.
41 Ibid. Velasco does not elaborate on this statement with an analysis of the painting, *Male Delivery*, 94.
aspects of life, as sodomites were publicly burned in great numbers in the first quarter of the seventeenth century in cities across Spain.\(^{42}\)

While the masculine man was hot and dry in nature, effeminate men were possessed by the feminizing effects of moisture in combination with an increase of womanly cold thus making them more woman-like.\(^{43}\) “Happy, carefree and given to leisure; they are simple-natured and agreeable, easily embarrassed and not much interested in women,” according to Harte de San Juan.\(^{44}\) Furthermore, “excessive relaxation and too much leisure time, sleeping too much and in a soft bed, overindulging in food and drink, wearing too many and very elegant clothing, always traveling by horse, frequent indulgences, and playing recreational games and other things that give pleasure” also defined these effeminate men.\(^{45}\) These same terms are used to describe both the feminized courtly courtier—as fashioned by Balthazar Castiglione in \textit{The Courtesan}, and \textit{moriscos}, Muslims living in Southern Spain since the eighth century. Both the courtier and the Muslim are linked to sodomy in the cultural imaginary of early modern Spain.\(^{46}\)

Citing Rachel Adams, Velasco also argues that the inclusion of a “normal” person in the portrait increases the perception of difference between Ventura and her husband.\(^{47}\) But in addition to their difference (Felici’s lack of breast), the juxtaposition highlights their similarities; from the neck up both appear to be men because of their beards. Through semantic parsing, Will Fisher writes with the understanding that hair on a woman’s face is a common phenomenon, often dealt

\(^{42}\) In \textit{Gender and Disorder in Early Modern Seville}. (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1990), Mary Elizabeth Perry, writes of the 71 men burned for sodomy in Seville between 1567 and 1616. Other cities in Spain, had equally high numbers.

\(^{43}\) Juan Harte de San Juan in Velasco, \textit{Male Delivery}, 112.

\(^{44}\) Ibid.

\(^{45}\) Ibid., 99.

\(^{46}\) Ibid., 118-9.

\(^{47}\) Ibid., 183.
with through shaving or other depilatory action. Focusing on the operative words “more,” he writes:

If we take this statement to its logical conclusion, it suggests that woman could have a beard, but this particular beard is more like that of a man [Fisher’s emphasis]. Envisioned in these terms, it is not the presence or absence of facial hair that distinguishes man from woman, but the relative amount. Furthermore, given this formulation, it is striking that Magdalena’s husband (himself a ‘bearded gentleman’) is not nearly as hirsute as his wife. If Magdalena’s beard is like that of “any bearded gentleman,” we might ask if Felici’s beard is like the beard of “any bearded woman”?

The inscription also reconfirms Ventura’s biological status with the statement that she was “a woman who had previously lost three sons whom she had borne to her husband.” Other elements in the painting, however, argue the case for Ventura’s womanhood. Firstly, the giant lactating breast and the child who feeds from it, reinforced Ventura’s role as mother. The two objects that sit atop the painted plinth in the picture—spindle and bobbin—are traditional symbols of female domesticity associated with the Virgin Mary. Leonardo da Vinci’s Madonna with the Spindle (1500) was such a popular composition that over thirty copies of the painting were made and distributed across Europe. The subject matter was especially popular in Spain and Italy, as evidenced by four copies of the painting by Luis de Morales, a follower of Leonardo, made in the 1560s in Madrid. The “Madonna Lactans,” the breastfeeding Virgin Mary of the medieval and Renaissance periods, provides an iconographic reference point for breastfeeding, while the Penitent Mary Magdalene offers a source for female hairiness. Notably, the iconography of the Madonna Lactans and the Penitent Magdalene was revised in the years following the Council of Trent following prohibitions against female nudity.

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In contrast to St. Joseph’s new accessibility in his role as virile, young father,” the Virgin of the Immaculate Conception replaces the Madonna Lactans. According to Francisco Pacheco’s iconographic tenets, the Virgin of the Immaculate Conception was to be represented “without the Christ child in her arms and without having been pregnant.”50 Representations of the Madonna Lactans, or *La Virgen de la Leche*, are as old as Christianity. Many scholars have suggested the image of the breastfeeding Mary was appropriated from ancient Egyptian statues of the goddess Isis breastfeeding her son Horus51 or the Caritas Romana, the Roman personification of the allegory of Charity, who, as reported by Pliny, saved her wrongly imprisoned father from starvation by breastfeeding him through bars. Both were prominent representations in Roman territories during the Empire’s transition to Christianity.52 Images of the breastfeeding Virgin Mary peaked in popularity in conjunction with the spread of the bubonic plague and a series of famines in fourteenth-century Europe. As Margaret Miles writes in “The Virgin’s One Bare Breast,” “Because of the social conditions prevailing when it became a popular image, the nourishing breast was simultaneously a symbol of threat and of comfort, focusing a pervasive, chronic anxiety over nourishment.”53

Like the Madonna Lactans, Magdalena Ventura displays a single, engorged breast from beneath her tunic. Like the Madonna Lactans, Ventura’s breast is oddly placed, high and in the

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52 Lasareff, “Virgin Iconography,” 27. The earliest known representation of the Madonna Lactans, from the Catacombs of Priscilla in Rome, dates from the overlap between the Late Roman Empire and Early Christian period in 4th century.
center of her chest, skewing anatomical correctness. And like the Madonna Lactans, Magdalena Ventura appears not to have a second breast beneath her robes. Instead, her robes lie flat where they should be modeled to illustrate the curve of a breast. Miles argues that the “denaturalized” breasts of the Madonna Lactans are intentionally abstracted to suppress erotic titillation in the viewer. As she writes, “nudity must be depicted naturalistically enough to evoke the viewer’s erotic interest; on the other hand, it must not be dominant enough to render this erotic attraction primary. The religious message must dominate, with the erotic component in the subordinate and supportive role.”

In Ghirlandaio’s Madonna with Glory and Saints (1495) and Jean Fourquet’s Madonna Surrounded by Seraphim and Cherubim (1452) from the fifteenth century, the Virgin’s pale skin is offset by her red cloak and a circle of red-winged cherubs. Other versions of the Madonna Lactans such as Lucas Cranach’s Virgo Madonna (c. 1500) and Leonardo da Vinci’s Madonna Litta (1490) also have skin as pale as breast milk and wear red dresses beneath the Virgin’s traditional blue mantle to represent menstrual blood (Fig. 56). In “Bitter Milk: The Vasa Menstrualis and the Cannibal(ized) Virgin,” Merrall Llewelyn Price writes about theories of lactation in circulation at the height of the Madonna Lactans’ popularity in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. “Like the embryo in the fetus thought to be nourished in the womb by the blood of its mother, otherwise shed through menstruation, breastfeeding babes were thought to feed upon their nurses’ blood, which was channeled from the womb to the breast by means of a lacteal duct known as the vasa menstrualis.”

54 Miles, “The Virgin’s One Bared Breast,” 32.
55 While Price doesn’t go on to connect the color of the Madonna Lactans red robes and pale skin to blood and breast milk, her essay prompted me to make the connection. Merrall Llewelyn Price, Bitter Milk: The ‘Vasa Menstrualis’ and the Cannibal(ized) Virgin” in College Literature, Vol. 28, No. 1, Oral Fixations: Cannibalizing Theories, Consuming Cultures (Winter 2001): 146.
blood would be purified and whitened. No breast milk was as pure or white as the Virgin Mary’s, which was also believed to be very sweet.56

But Magdalena Ventura’s skin is dark and swarthy. Could she instead be a “domestic enemy,” a wet nurse imported from the Levant? Instead of relying on foreign wet nurses mothers across Europe were advised to follow the Virgin Mary’s example and breastfeed their own children. Juan Luis Vives writes in his Instrucciones de la mujer christiana (Instructions for a Christian Woman, 1524) “What animal, I ask you is so unnatural as not to sustain what it brings forth, or to turn over to another the rearing of its own children.” He continues with his point that “Nature only gives a woman breasts “so that after giving birth the mother would be able to nourish her child, just like all other animals do.” To give a child to a wet nurse is “a terrible misfortune” as a stranger’s milk “corrupts” a child, especially if the wet nurse is a slave, or if she has the mind of one, or if she’s a commoner or a peasant, or a foreigner or from a barbarous nation, or evil, dishonest, ugly or drunk … ”57 Conceptualized as “natural,” imitating the Virgin Mary by breastfeeding one’s own child elevated the act and the “animal” into the realm of the divine.

After the Council of Trent, all nudity, abstracted or not, was banned in religious pictures, thus, the Madonna Lactans all but disappeared after 1565. Pacheco writes, “if we avoid nudity in the Christ Child so too in the Virgin, his Mother, with even more reason, for being a woman.” With the Counter-Reformation, aesthetic and ecclesiastical theorists agreed that nudity was undignified and inappropriate for the mother of Christ. Textual descriptions of Mary’s breasts shifted from being “blessed for having suckled the Son of God” to “chaste breasts that nursed the

57 Ibid., 179-181.
creator of the world exposed to everyone’s view.” None of the major figures in seventeenth Spanish painting depicted images of the Madonna breastfeeding. Charlene Villaseñor Black argues that Spanish artists working after the Council of Trent came up with inventive solutions to the prohibition against the Virgin’s nudity. Breastfeeding is implied in paintings where Mary hands the Christ-child a cup to drink from or when he tugs at the neck of her dress to communicate hunger, as seen in Murillo’s *Virgin and Child* (1672)\(^58\) (Fig. 57). Breastfeeding is deferred back to the Caritas Romana by Caravaggio, Reni, Poussin, Rubens (who painted four versions of the theme) and others who contribute versions of the story in the early seventeenth century, transforming the breast from a religious symbol into a secular one\(^59\) (Fig. 58).

Apocryphal lore and medieval hagiography offers another source for conceptualizing Ventura’s gender as female through her hairiness.\(^60\) According to the Golden Legend, after Christ’s death Mary Magdalene retreated to a cave in France, where in grief and penitence she grew hair all over her body. She ascended into heaven hourly during her devotions for her remaining thirty years.\(^61\) In addition to Magdalena Ventura and the Penitent Mary Magdalene, two other hairy Magdalenes can be located in seventeenth-century Europe: Maddalena Gonzalez, as discussed in chapter one, was the sister to hirsute Antonietta in Parma and hairy Enrico in Rome. Her name is the French version of Magdalene. Magdalena Muñoz, the transmuted nun and hidden hermaphrodite who grew a beard and a penis was discussed in the second chapter. The confluence of the name Magdalene around hairy women seems more than coincidental.

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\(^58\) Ibid.

\(^59\) Miles expands her essay on the Madonna Lactans into a book-length consideration, *A Complex Delight: The Secularization of the Breast 1350-1750* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008) to write the history of how the breast was transformed into a religious symbol into a secular one via the Caritas Romana.

\(^60\) I will not be discussing Wild Woman, as many before me have: see especially Joana Antunes’ comparison of the Magdalene to the Wild Woman in “The Late Medieval Mary Magdalene Sacredness, Otherness and Wildness” in *Mary Magdalene in Medieval Culture: Conflicted Roles*, Robin Waugh, ed., (New York: Routledge, 2014).

More than a name, I suggest that “Magdalene” is a euphemism or label used to describe women who, in Maddalena Gonzalez’s case, were born with an excessive amount of body hair. In Magdalena Ventura’s case, we know from the painting’s inscription that she came into her hairiness through “a second puberty at age thirty-seven.” The onset of polycystic ovarian syndrome, a condition that causes both a receding hairline and the growth of thick, dark hair on a woman’s face and chest as a result of hormonal change, is a more likely cause. Aside from the letter from the Venetian consul, there are no documents verifying Ventura’s name. Given the improbability of the name “Felici d’Amici” assigned to her husband to express his homosexuality, it is a strong possibility that the name “Magdalene” could be assigned to Ventura herself as an indicator of her hairiness.

The image of a Penitent Mary Magdalene as a hairy hermit derived from the conflation of the saint with Mary of Egypt, a medieval prostitute-cum-hermit from fourth-century Europe whose long hair covered her nudity in self-imposed exile (Fig. 59). As a model of a repentant sinner, the Magdalene would become a highly visible symbol of reform during the Counter Reformation. In Spain, a series of spaces called Magdalen houses were dedicated to institutionalizing and reforming prostitutes, unwed mothers and other wayward women. The Magdalene’s body would be another field across which Counter-Reformation aesthetic reforms would play out in the decades immediately preceding the painting of Magdalena Ventura’s portrait.

62 W. Michael G. Tunbridge diagnoses Ventura with an androblastoma, or a benign tumor, of the ovary and considers polycystic ovarian syndrome as another potential cause of her hairiness as both conditions cause increases in testosterone levels in women to the levels found in men. The flood of testosterone in Ventura’s body in both cases would cause infertility or, more infrequently, a child with ambiguous genitalia. W. Michael G. Tunbridge, “La Mujer Barbuda by Ribera, 1631: A Gender Bender.”
The iconography of the Penitent Magdalene ranges from long head hair covering, and in some cases highlighting, her nudity, to the more emphatic full-body fur covering in representations from Renaissance Northern Europe. The Magdalene’s long head hair envelops her like a cape in a sculptural altarpiece for the Basilica of St. John the Baptist and St. John the Evangelist in Torún (in present day Poland). In Tillman Reinschneider’s sculptural altarpiece for the Bavarian church in Münnerstadt, 1490-92, which depicts Magdalene ascended into heaven by six angles, she appears to be wearing a fur suit—curls of sculpted wood approximating curls of hair—ending at the neck and wrists64 (Fig. 60). Munich painter Jan Polack depicts the Magdalene, like Reinschneider’s Magdalene and Ribera’s Magdalene Ventura, as hairy except for her exposed hairless breasts, which she hides with hands coming together in prayer. Italian Renaissance master Donatello of Florence fashions the Magdalene’s hair into a ragged dress. Where the Madonna Lactans’s exposed breast is symbolic of motherly nurturing, the Magdalene’s breasts are symbolic of an erotic and ecstatic spirituality engaged through physical sensation.65

Two versions of the Penitent Magdalene by Titian illustrate the political and religious tension around the Magdalene’s image during the Counter-Reformation. His 1533 version of the Penitent Magdalene, which was painted for the Duke of Urbino, (Fig. 61) depicts in the Magdalene’s long red hair swirling around her figure. Tears well in her eyes, which are cast toward the heavens in an ecstatic appeal for forgiveness. She holds her hair close to her body in a gesture that expresses shame or modesty yet her breasts are exposed, even emphasized by the

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64 The angels’ feathers similarly extend over their entire body like fish scales, save their hands, necks and faces. M.D. Anderson speculates the peculiar arrangement of feathers and hair reflects the costumes worn in medieval passion plays more than they attempt to represent a hairy or feathered body. M. D. Anderson, Drama and Imagery in English Medieval Churches. Cambridge: University Press, 1963.
swirls of hair. After the Council of Trent, such representations of the Penitent Magdalene was deemed overly sensuous, and Titian’s 1533 Penitent Magdalene and other erotic examples would be removed from religious settings, if not destroyed. Writing in the Spanish-occupied Netherlands (present day Belgium) in 1570, Molanus elaborates on the Council’s decision with an admonishment: “The worst is when painters shamelessly introduce lasciviousness in the work where they represent images of saints, for example, the most holy Virgin Theotokos, the penitent Magdalene in tears and other holy female saints or virgins.” Pacheco would similarly denounce overly sensual images of the Magdalene, as would Gabriel Paleotti in Bologna; all would devote long treatises to the proper iconography of the saints. Two years after the Council of Trent ended, Titian re-presented the theme of The Penitent Magdalene, 1565 (Fig. 62). In this later version, loose drapery hides the Magdalene’s breasts while still giving the viewer visual access to her shoulder, a great deal of cleavage and the suggestion of a nipple from beneath her thin white gown. While not chaste, she is also not nude, and complies with new policies towards the representation of saints.

For his part, Jusepe de Ribera contributed at least seven depiction of the Penitent Magdalene over the course of his career in Naples, although none are recorded before his portrait of Magdalena Ventura. In his 1636 version of The Ascension of the Magdalene, Ribera paints her wearing what looks to be an off-the-shoulder hair shirt instead of portraying her as hirsute (Fig. 63). In The Penitent Magdalene, 1637, she holds a hairy pelt to her chest. In all but one of Ribera’s Magdalene paintings, he drapes her in a red cloth as a sign of her lasciviousness in a manner similar to El Greco, Guido Reini, Orazio Gentileschi, Bartolomé Esteban Murillo and other Spanish and Italian artists active in the sixteenth and seventeenth century. In Ribera’s two

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66 Molanus, De Picturis et Imaginibus Sacris, pro vero earum usu contra abusus, 1570
other paintings, he substitutes the Magdalene’s red hair, a different kind of “drapery,” for the red cloth. Both red hair and red cloth are signs of the Magdalene’s lasciviousness, as scarlet red signified wantonness well in advance of *The Scarlet Letter*. In Ribera’s picture of Magdalena Ventura, the child in her arms is swaddled in a red cloth, calling the paternity of the child into question by association with the prostitute-saint Mary Magdalene.

There is one more source for a hairy breastfeeding woman in the history of art who is connected to Magdalena Ventura through place. The painted inscription details that Ventura was “from the town of Accumulus in Samnium, commonly called Abruzzo.” Known as Sabina et Samnium in ancient Rome, and called Abruzzo in vernacular Italian in the seventeenth century and today, the ancient city from which Ventura hailed is the historic home of the Sabine peoples. According to Livy, Plutarch and Dionysius of Halicarnassus’s narratives of the history of Rome, the abduction of the Sabine women was ordered by Romulus because the newly founded city, home only to soldiers, needed women for repopulation. Interpreted as a story of marriage, motherhood and wifely devotion, the abduction of the Sabine women was a theme often represented on *cassone*, or marriage chests, in the Renaissance through the seventeenth century and in public frescos across Rome. But as much as it is a story about a wife’s devotion, the story is also about building an Empire and the peaceful resolution of a conflict that had been created by taking a neighboring population by force. In this way, the story of the Sabine Women finds a parallel in Spanish-occupied Abruzzo. Thus, as Fisher reasoned in his interpretation of

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68 Luca Cambiaso’s fresco for the ceiling of the Villa Imperiale in Genoa, Giambologna’s sculptural version of 1583 for Florence’s Piazza della Signora (1565) and Piero da Cortona’s 1629 painting for the Piazza Sacchetti in Rome were all highly public representations of the story of the Sabine women made in advance of Ribera’s portrait. Later in the seventeenth century, Rubens, Poussin and Giordano, all based in Italy, would create their own painted versions of the story; Rubens would paint it twice, a demonstration of the popularity and importance of the story to Roman patrons.
the painting’s inscription, Ventura’s ability to bear three sons, “not only emphasizes her capacity to reproduce, but also her role in the production of heirs, and hence social reproduction.”

Within the context of the Roman creation myth, the choice to depict the hairy Abruzzo resident with chest hair that resembles an animal’s more than a human’s in the act of breastfeeding a non-hairy child could be part of the artist’s decision to connect her image to the She-Wolf who nursed Romulus and his brother Remus. In versions of the story by Livy and Dionysius of Halicarnassus, “She-Wolf” was the nickname for a prostitute named Laurentia who preyed upon the shepherds like a wolf upon sheep. There is no known portrait of Laurentia herself, the metaphorical wolf who preyed upon the shepherds of pre-Roman society. However, Ribera would have known this She-Wolf as the Lupa Capitolina (5th C BC with 11th CE additions) in Rome. He may have also known Ludovico Carracci’s ceiling decoration from the Palazzo Magnani in Bologna since he met the Carracci family in Bologna in 1616. Of the fifteen frescoes that Carracci painted for the series of The Founding of Rome, 1588-89, eleven are devoted to Romulus, including one scene in which a feral wolf allows the hero-twins to suckle (Fig. 64). In this depiction, the She-Wolf is a feral animal who exhibits motherly love and tameness towards the two orphans. The female-animal and the prostitute connect Magdalena Ventura to textual and visual representations of the Penitent Magdalene and Laurentia, the She-Wolf. Lactation connects the hairy Magdalene Ventura to the Madonna Lactans, Caritas Romana, and Laurentia. All of these connections speak to the limited means for representing women in the early modern period, vacillating between clichés of mother and whore, but also demonstrate the range of possible sources and references that Ribera could draw from when developing his iconography of hairy women and breastfeeding.

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The pictorial evidence for Ventura’s womanhood is as compelling as the social circumstances that support her maleness. Possessing both male and female physical features, Magdalena Ventura, like the bearded Brígida del Río before her, could have also been considered a hermaphrodite: “I declare, I am male, I am woman, I am a third, neither one nor the other, nor is it clear which these things I am.” Ribera intentionally keeps gender fluid and ambiguous as he floats iconographic and social signifiers for man and woman across the painting. All of these gender categories—effeminate man, homosexual father, bearded woman, bestial woman, prostitute and hermaphrodite—were encompassed in the early modern period in one ethno-religious category, that of the Jew. At its most basic level, the painting may illustrate anti-Semitic beliefs carried forward from the medieval period that maintained that Jewish men were hermaphrodites inclined towards effeminacy, homosexuality and pedophilia. Based on the assumption that circumcision was equivalent to castration, Jewish men were often believed to be capable of menstruating and giving birth, making their gender interchangeable with that of women. Popular tradition also maintained that Jewish women to be possessed an anima-like sexual desire. More than animal-like, Jews were considered animals, an entirely different species than had more in common with hyenas than Christians. Jewish women, in particular, were believed in possession of a bestial animal desire. Such stereotypes were a part of the common belief system in Europe from the middle ages through the Inquisition, revealed in pictures and texts. Gender instability is the fulcrum at which Jewishness is both hidden and revealed in Inquisitorial Spain.

70 Sebastian Covarrubias, Emblemas morales de Don Sebastian de Covarrubias Orozco. 1610. https://archive.org/details/emblemasmoralesd00covar
In the very few and very brief written accounts of Ribera’s portrait of Magdalena Ventura, one aspect of the painting is never discussed: her robes and the skullcap, which resembles a yamaka. Ventura’s apron is decorated with tassels at its bottom edge. Called "gedilim" and "ızīt," similar tassels were worn by Jews as a reminder to practice the Commandments in accordance with a law from Deuteronomy (22.12): “You shall make yourself tassels on the four corners of your garment with which you cover yourself.”73 Significantly, three stripes are embroidered on each sleeve of Magdalena Ventura’s robes; striped clothing often identifies non-believers or Jews in pictorial scenes of the Christian narrative.74 Magdalena Ventura’s beard can also be read as an attribute of Jewishness for its lack of style. Following Leviticus (19:27), Jewish men did not cut their beards: “You shall not round the corners of your heads, neither shalt thou mar the corners of thy beard.” Will Fisher identifies upwards of sixteen named styles of beards in his survey of portraits of men made in England in years between 1530 and 1630. Unlike the stiletto (pointed like the knife), swallowtail (split like the bird’s tail into two round lobes) and the sugarloaf (long and tapered), Ventura’s beard blends from cheek and chin to neck and chest as if it had never been shaped or cut.75

The Jewish practice of circumcision was considered equivalent to castration. As such, Jewish men, like the male-to-female transmutant, were no longer truly men because of the damage inflicted upon their penises. More so, rumors of Jewish men seducing young children, especially boys for pedophilic motivations, in search of blood for use in rituals circulated throughout Europe in the medieval and early modern periods. The myth of the blood libel is but one association of Jewish men with blood, for it was believed that Jewish men menstruated

73 http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/6516-garments  
74 Ruth Mellinkoff, Outcasts, 123.  
monthly from their anuses and also had the capacity to bear children through the excremental orifice, making them woman-like and hermaphroditic.76 In the context of the pedophilic Jewish drinker of children’s blood, could the child in Magdalena Ventura’s arms have been abducted from a Christian household?

Henry Abramson’s review of medieval caricatures of Jewish women shows that they performed three primary functions within Christian imagery and the cultural imaginary. First, Jewish women were depicted as Christ’s mutilator, dramatizing scenes of Christ’s circumcision with threats of harm (Fig. 65). Secondly, the image of a Jewish woman was used to personify the Synagogue, as defeated and fallen in juxtaposition to personifications of the Christian Church in medieval cathedral statuary and stained glass. Finally, and directly related to this inquiry, a Jewish woman was represented as bestial. In one example, she births piglet-children that cannot conceal their animality as well as she does. In another image from Der Juden Erbarkeit, 1571, bodies composed of various animal parts and flaunting both penises and breasts are identifiable as Jewish by the badges they wear on their cloaks. (Fig. 66)

A comparison to another animal, the hyena, aims at representing beliefs about the deeper, changeable and “unclean” nature of the Jew. According to medieval tradition, the hyena appears to be hermaphroditic because its enlarged clitoris resembles a penis and its engorged vulva, testicles. In addition to appearing sexually ambiguous, hyenas were also considered mutable in another way: they were believed to be able to change their voice and mimic human speech in efforts to lure prey. Hyenas were marked with a “deceptive line” according to Aristotle, a

reference to the animal’s stripes.\textsuperscript{77} The bestiary, \textit{The Medieval Book of Monsters}, aligns the hyena with prostitution, creating another connection between Mary Magdalene, excessive animal lust and the bestial Jewish woman. \textit{The Aberdeen Bestiary} goes one step further and connects hyenas and Jews directly: (Fig. 67)

The sons of Israel resemble the hyena. At the beginning they served the living God. Later, addicted to wealth and luxury, they worshipped idols. For this reason, the prophet compared the synagogue to an unclean animal: ‘My heritage is to me as the den of a hyena.’ (see Jeremiah, 12:8) Therefore those among us who are slaves to luxury and greed, are like this brute, since they are neither men nor women, that is, neither faithful nor faithless, but are without doubt those of whom Solomon says: ‘A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways’; (James, 1:8) men declare that the hyena has magical properties. In a part of Ethiopia the hyena mates with the lioness; their union produces a monster, named crocote.\textsuperscript{78}

Stalking sheep and evading shepherds—Biblical metaphors for Christ’s flock of followers—the Jew preys upon Christians by pretending to be a Christian, a hyena in sheep’s clothing. As discussed above, the wolf-prostitute also preyed upon the shepherd’s flock in the Roman creation myth. Shifting between human and animal forms, the werewolf and were-hyena became metaphors in the early modern period for the suspicious nature of women and Jews. According to restrictions of \textit{liempiza de sangre}, Spanish blood laws, anyone with one Jewish ancestor was a Jew.\textsuperscript{79} Thus copulation between a “hyena,” as metaphor for Jew, and a lion—representing a child of Jesus, the lion of the tribe of Judah—would produces a monster whose blood could never be purified according to the terms of Spanish race relations. As hermaphroditic, shifting between genders and anatomic features, Jewish bodies were presented as excessively corporeal, having an excess of anatomy, and with this extra anatomy, an excessive desire for sex and material goods.

\textsuperscript{77} Mary Prendergast, “‘Thou Shalt Not Eat the Hyena’": A Note on ‘Barnabas’ Epistle 10.7,” \textit{Vigiliae Christianae}. 46.1 (1992): 75-79.

\textsuperscript{78} “On the Hyena,” \textit{The Aberdeen Bestiary}, http://www.abdn.ac.uk/bestiary/comment/11vhyena.hti

Another translation of the passage from Jeremiah elaborates on the covetous nature of the hyena in the Old Testament when he wrote, “Does the hyena look greedily on my possession for me? Are birds of prey around her? Go gather, all you beasts of the field, come to devour her.” (Jeremiah 12:9) Furthermore, as DeVun argues, a preference for disgusting food, like rotting corpses, distinguishes the hyena from the lion, the Jew from the Christian.

Sexual ambiguity and instability, as well as delight in disgusting food and sex acts, made Jews akin to hyenas, more animal than human. As DeVun argues in “Animal Appetites,” “a binary and stable sex, a singular means of reproduction and a restricted set of possible sexual acts were central to what made humans human.” Anal sex and bestiality were certainly not included in the menu of sexual possibilities for Christians, who in part determined their identities as Christians and humans through missionary-style sex. Thus, the image of the hermaphroditic hyena-Jew from The Aberdeen Bestiary is depicted with a dorsally positioned vagina that resembles an anus above a circumcised penis, making the hyena-Jew accessible for deviant, sodomitical sex. A penchant for anal sex also explains how Jewish men as anal menstruants would be able to bear children.

An image from the illuminated manuscript The Ancient History of Cesar, 1470–1480, illustrates a different medieval stereotype of the Jewish hyena. Depicted as a circumcised hermaphroditic devil, the Jew-hyena stalks rooftops and spreads disease while in search of

80 Holladay’s translation as cited in Benjamin Foreman’s Animal Metaphors and the People of Israel in the Book of Jeremiah (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011) 224.
83 Ethiopian Jews are called the “Hyena people” to this day by their non-Christian neighbors; see The Hyena People: Ethiopian Jews in Christian Ethiopia (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999). For 19th century iterations of the Jewish Hermaphrodite, see David Brenner’s essay, “Re-dressing the ‘German-Jewish’: A Jewish Hermaphrodite and Cross-Dresser in Wilhelmine Germany.” in Elazar Barkan and Marie-Denise Shelton, eds, Borders, Exiles, Diasporas (Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 1998).
children’s blood (Fig. 68). Blamed for the Black Plague, hundreds of thousands of Jews were killed in fourteenth and fifteenth-century Europe. Of those who lived, some converted to Christianity by force or choice to avoid religious persecution. Others sought refuge in nations with more tolerant laws. Because baptism in the name of Christ was not enough of a guarantee to keep the “deceptive” Jew from practicing their religion, one of the primary motivations of the Spanish in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, in addition to Christianizing the Americas, was to remedy the failed conversion process in their homeland by revealing the crypto-Jews from behind their Christian disguise.

As a Spanish territory, Naples played its own reluctant part in the ongoing investigations of the Spanish Inquisition (1478–1834). In the Inquisition’s early years, Naples, under French occupation, provided a refuge for the Jews evacuating Spain, especially those wealthy enough to relocate comfortably. Upon conquering Naples in 1501, Ferdinand of Spain’s first order was to vanquish all Jews from his newly acquired land. In 1628, the year before the Duke of Alcalá took possession of the viceroyalty, a debate between the Spanish Crown, the anti-inquisitorial municipality of Naples, and the papacy in Rome focused on questions of jurisdiction. The matter was resolved on March, 18, 1631, a day after Jusepe de Ribera dated Magdalena Ventura’s portrait, via a letter from Philip IV reinforcing Spain’s executorial position.¹⁸⁴

Against this political backdrop, is it possible to suggest that Magdalena Ventura had been brought from Abruzzo to the court of the Duke of Alcalá for prosecution as a crypto-Jew? No other document except the painting and the Venetian ambassador’s letter offer evidence of Ventura’s life after the portrait is painted, so such a claim is speculative and based the evidence presented here. Like his portraits of beggar-philosophers, Ribera gives the viewer clues to

deciphering the encrypted Jew in Magdalena Ventura’s portrait. If viewed as a man and a father, Ventura is a sodomite and a homosexual capable of conceiving, bearing, and breastfeeding a child. If considered as a woman and a mother, she is a hairy omen who, like the fallen and disgraced Mary Magdalene and the She-Wolf prostitute Laurentia, preys on men to satisfy her lust. Magdalena Ventura could also be a foreign wet nurse from the Levant. Alternatively, the child she holds in her arms could be stolen for blood libel. By reading the painting as a portrait of a Jew, however, Magdalena Ventura encompasses all of these aspects, embodying deviant sex, excessive sexuality, and mutable gender in one identity. She could be Christian imposter wearing a human disguise to conceal an underlying animality, for the Jews’ deception in Inquisitorial Spain was sited in how they could easily they pass between categories of male and female, human and animal, Christian and Jew.
Chapter IV
King Kristina’s Hermaphroditic Image, 1648-1653

Unlike the other three women whose portraits I have discussed up to this point, Kristina Augusta Vasa was in a position to construct aspects of her representation and public image. Kristina became Queen Kristina of Sweden upon the death of her father King Gustav II Adolphus in 1632. She abdicated the throne in 1654 and became Christina Maria Alexandra after converting to Catholicism in 1656. She constructed her image against contemporary expectation for queenly and feminine appearance in the court portraits she commissioned from Sébastien Bourdon and David Beck.

Called the Girl-King, Kristina inherited the throne at age six, was raised as a prince and educated like one. Assuming the full authority of the throne at age eighteen in 1644, Kristina began her reign as Queen of the Swedes, Goths and Vandals; Great Princess of Finland; Duchess of Estonia and Karelia and Lady of Ingria by ignoring the advice of her regents, whose investments in war defended Sweden’s Protestant beliefs. Instead, she negotiated a series of treaties that brought peace to Sweden, but not before pillaging the collection of painting, sculpture, objets d’art, curiosities and books of Holy Roman Emperor Rudolph II’s Hradčany Castle. Rudolph was one of the Hapsburg relatives of Catherine de Medici who commissioned portraits of Antonietta Gonzalez and the Gonzales family. Known collectively as the Peace of Westphalia, the 1648 treaties of Münster and Osnabrück ended the Thirty Years’ War between Sweden, France and the Hapsburgs’ Holy Roman Empire (present day Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Poland, Croatia, Czech Republic and Northern Italy) and the Eighty Years’ War

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1 Kristina becomes Cristina upon her conversion to Catholicism in 1654. Because the idea of conversion, mutability and changing or shifting identities is important to this essay, I keep “Kristina” where others use Christina.
between Spain and the Netherlands.\footnote{During these negotiations she also pillaged the collection of painting, sculpture, \textit{objets d’art}, curiosities and books of Holy Roman Emperor Rudolph II’s Hradčany Castle. Rudolph was one of the Hapsburg relatives of Catherine de Medici who commissioned portraits of Antonietta Gonzalez and the Gonzales family.} Her reign as Queen was short, lasting only ten years. At age twenty-eight, she abdicated the throne allowing Sweden to remain Protestant under her cousin Karl Gustav’s rule. Crossing the border into Denmark en route to Rome, Kristina’s first steps towards becoming the Catholic Kristina were cutting her hair and changing into men’s clothing.

Shortly after negotiating this peace treaty, Kristina began planning to abdicate the throne in perhaps one of the most audacious and scandalous events of the seventeenth century. To do so, she sought the support of King Philip IV of Spain, Sweden’s recent enemy. During their discussions, Philip IV requested an equestrian portrait of Kristina to hang in his collection of royal relatives on horseback. Kristina sent a portrait painted by her court painter, Sébastien Bourdon. It was the last in a series that depicted Kristina in a dress styled after men’s fashions in the year leading up to her abdication (Fig. 69). Amongst Philip’s collection, Kristina atop her rearing horse resembles that of a line of Spanish kings more than Spain’s queens. In response to this betrayal of her alliance with France, the French court circulated rumors of her lesbianism, hermaphroditism and atheism in a series of political pamphlets, understood as “portraits littéraire” aimed at revealing aspects of Kristina’s nature.

Shock was a frequent response to Kristina’s behavior and appearance as she challenged seventeenth century notions of womanhood with her masculine dress, loud swearing, and bold opinions. Because of her position, Kristina was a ready target for rumor and innuendo launched from other royal courts, first in ten years rule as Queen from 1645-1654 and then even more so after her abdication. The most frequent rumors questioned Kristina’s sexuality, status as a woman and religious affiliation and labeled her a hermaphrodite. After her move to Rome in
1655, her masculine dress, behavior, and appearance continued to raise suspicion of her intersexuality. Despite the statement that she made at the end of her life that she was “neither Male nor Hermaphrodite, as some People in the World have pass'd me for," the suspicion of Kristina’s hermaphroditism persisted for 275 years after her death, which led to her body being exhumed from its grave at the Vatican and autopsied. Kristina’s “cranium and skeleton show[ed] typical feminine features.”

In this chapter, I argue that Kristina’s inability to consolidate an image of power as a female ruler contributed to the public perception of her hermaphroditism. More so, her image, as she constructed it in her court portraits and as it was reflected back in negative propaganda after her conversion, would have been interpreted as hermaphroditic according to seventeenth-century definitions of the term. The portraits she commissioned from Sébastien Bourdon, David Beck, and others present a range of archetypes: God and goddess, lady and gentleman of the court. Each actualized an image Kristina that attempted to embody. Kristina’s portraits articulate regal authority in a social order that did not have a model for a queen unattached to a king. In the early modern period, “hermaphrodite” meant mutable, changeable, and in transgression of established social categories, including sex, gender, sexuality, religion, and social status. Regardless of whether one possessed an intersexed anatomy, the expression of behaviors, dress, and appearance of the opposite sex, as well as engagement in sexual activities with someone possessing the same genitalia, made gender non-conforming performativity and homosexuality synonymous with hermaphroditism. Contextualized within contemporary interests in

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3 Carl-Herman Hjortsjö, Queen Christina of Sweden: a medical/anthropological investigation of her remains in Rome, 1966, 155.
4 I mean “archetype” in the Jungian sense.
hermaphrodites in medical, alchemical, literary and political realms, Kristina’s image as it was constructed in portraits and as it was interpreted by European society, as well as her conversion from Lutheran to Catholic, Queen to commoner, Kristina to Christina, were evidence of her hermaphroditism.

In many ways Kristina encouraged, even propagated, rumors about her sexual and biological aberration. As she wrote it in an unfinished autobiography, a prophecy divined by astrology predicted she would be born male. A caul interfered with the proper determination of the newborn Kristina’s sex at birth. This, in combination with a body “entirely covered with hair and a deep, loud voice,” gave her midwives cause to announce the prophecy true. Closer inspection of the infant Kristina revealed female genitalia. King Gustav was not disappointed by the reattribution of the child’s sex. After a miscarriage, stillbirth, and early death of three other children, the king was grateful for a direct successor. As Kristina quotes him, the King’s response was: “I hope that this girl will be worth as much as a boy to me…She should be clever, since she has deceived us all.” As seen in previous chapters on Jusepe de Ribera’s portrait of Magdalena Ventura and Juan Van der Hamen’s portrait of Catalina de Erauso, the hermaphroditic body was associated was deception and instablity for its ability to shift between sexes. Kristina associated these qualities with cleverness and ruse.

Such anecdotes become foundational to the narration of Kristina’s life as she conceptualized it. Also important to the construction of her identity is an idea of intelligence to which she associated with masculinity as a way to distance herself from her sex in both text and

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6 Buckley, 19
7 Zirpolo, 38, Quoted from Stolpe, Christina of Sweden, 37. and Oskar Garstein, “Rome and Counter Reformation in Scandinavia. (London: EJ Brill, 1992), 37. The extra hair is speculated by some to be lanugo, a fine down produced and shed by the fetus in utero. Its presence at birth is an indicator of a premature delivery.
image. A voracious learner, it is Kristina herself who perpetuated the rumor that she only slept four hours and spent the rest of the night reading. She also wrote in her autobiography that she “surpassed the capacity of [her] age and sex…I used my books and exercises as pretexts to escape the queen, my mother, who could not bear to see me because I was a girl and she said that I was ugly.”

Though her intelligence and education is unquestionable, her teachers told a different story about her capacities as a student: She was clever and curious with a quick wit and long memory, but lacked focus and discipline to follow through on her studies. Instead, she tended towards breadth rather than depth, perusing a range of interests. The French philosopher René Descartes, sensing her restlessness, was reluctant to come to Stockholm when called by the twenty-two year old queen. The philosopher’s intuition would prove true; when he arrived in the winter of 1649, Kristina spent very little time with him, quickly forgetting the academy of international intellectuals she had been eager to create in Stockholm. Instead, the philosopher caught influenza, then pneumonia and, would die in Sweden within the year. But before his illness, he wrote of her: “I still have no idea whether she has ever concerned herself with philosophy at all. Therefore, I can say nothing about her interests in matters philosophical nor can I tell whether she will have time for any…She is passionately interested in literature and learning Greek and collecting scores of ancient books.”

Mostly, Kristina was precocious and had the power of a nation to endorse her whims. Fickleness and mercuriality, traits that would follow her into adulthood, aided in establishing a public perception of her hermaphroditism.

Kristina’s image followed a prototype established by her mother, Maria Eleonora of Brandenburg, which was modeled after Queen Elizabeth I of England’s image. As both a

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9 Buckley, Queen Christina, 53.
Protestant and a woman, the English Queen who had “the heart and stomach of a King” was also a demonstrated military leader and was positioned as a model to which the young Kristina, leader of war-torn Sweden aspired. An unattributed portrait from 1632 (Fig. 70) depicts the young princess at age five as a miniature version of her mother as painted in 1619, the year before her marriage (Fig. 71). Both are positioned slightly turned from center in between parted red curtains wearing elaborate brocaded dresses with high lace collars. The hair of both mother and daughter are both coiffed into a sphere of tight curls in their individual portraits; Kristina wears a tiny crown that designates her status as heir apparent. Jakob Elbfas, Maria Eleonora’s court painter connected the young Kristina to the then-deceased Elizabeth through styling in two portraits. In the first, from 1634, Kristina’s powdered hair is split into two lobes on top of her head (Fig. 72) like that of the red-haired queen (Fig. 73). Behind both queens, windows open onto ship-dotted lakes that reference the armies under their command and give Elizabeth’s Armada Portrait its name. The iconographic for Elizabeth’s portraits was established before she was queen as seen in a portrait at age thirteen that shows Elizabeth with red hair parted in two lobes on the side of her head presented at three-quarter profile (Fig. 74). Though her clothing and jewels would become more elaborate with her increase in status, and fashion would be updated over her forty-four years as queen, Elizabeth’s portrait style would remain relatively unchanged over the course of her long reign.

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12 Buckley, 55.  
13 Nathan Alan Popp connects early portraits of Kristina to these prototypes in “Beneath the Surface.” He also connects Elbfas’ 1634 portrait to Teerline’s miniature portrait of the young Elizabeth, but I cannot say for certain that the image would have been dispersed widely and seen by Elbfas as a model because it was a miniature and meant for more intimate viewing.
Whereas Elizabeth fashioned a singular image of sovereignty, Kristina’s multiple images make her appear inconsistent to the public viewing her image, as will be demonstrated. The young Queen’s conceptions of power were incompatible with her ideas of women and femininity. Kristina could not conceptualize power as embodied by her gender as she assumed that the female sex was incapable of anything but weakness, writing:

I have escaped, even in matters spiritual, the weakness of my gender; my soul as well as my body having been rendered virile by [God’s] grace. Thou hast made use of my sex to preserve me from the vices and dissipation of the country of my birth; and, having condemned me to belong to the weaker sex, [God] hast exempted me from the frailties natural to it...Allow me to admire the goodness that has so favored me as to build upon my greatest defect my merits and my fortunes.

As women occupying positions of power, both Queens’ bodies, which were increasingly available to public viewing, were subject to another level of critique. Following the rise of a Elizabeth I in England and Mary in Scotland, Protestant reformer John Knox wrote The First Blast of the Trumpet Against the Monstrous Regiment of Women, 1558, established a vocabulary for describing women holding power as “monstrous,” unnatural rulers. Like the hermaphroditic body, female bodies were also thought of as highly unstable in the seventeenth century.

Upon assuming the throne at age eighteen, Kristina gained greater control in constructing her own image. She would import two artists from abroad to update Elbfas’s static Renaissance style. The French painter Sébastien Bourdon, whose career had stalled in the shadows of Charles

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14 Rose Marie San Juan presents a version of this argument when she writes: “For Elizabeth I the queen’s body succeeded in signifying the union of subjects in the same collective body (and erased economic and social differences); for Queen Christina, the queen’s body became equally conspicuous but was constructed from competing representations and functioned in diverse and contradictory ways. San Juan discusses accusations of hermaphroditism but does not connect hermaphrodites to the multiple gender identities Kristina portrays. Rose Marie San Juan, “The Queen’s Body and Its Slipping Mask: Contesting Portraits of Queen Christina of Sweden” in ReImaging Women: Representations of Women in Culture, ed. Shirley Neuman and Glennis Stephenson (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993) 21-22.

15 Queen Christina, Histoire : dédieé à Dieu (Stockholm, Riksarkiv Axxolinosamlingen : kaps 37 :4 chapter IV), as cited in Garstein, Rome, 547. Cited in Nathan Allan Pope

Le Brun and others at the French Academy, sought the possibility of greater fame in Sweden. David Beck, who had traveled from his native Netherlands to London in 1640 to study with Anthony van Dyke and teach Charles I’s children, joined Kristina’s court in Stockholm in 1647 after the outbreak of civil war in England and the death of his master. After the outbreak of civil war in England and the death of his master, Beck joined Kristina’s court in Stockholm. Neither was a particularly original artist, but both excelled at copying the manner of the great masters of the Renaissance and Baroque, particularly Peter Paul Rubens and Anthony van Dyke. The court portraits that Kristina commissioned from these two artists between 1648 and 1653—the years after the treaties of Westphalia had been signed during which she secretly planned her abdication in 1654—show two distinct iconographic programs realized in masculine and feminine genders. Whether depicting Kristina as a mythological god or courtesan, Beck’s portraits of Kristina emphasize her feminine qualities; Bourdon’s, the masculine ones.

As Descartes noted, Kristina was enamored with the ancient philosophers and classical images, and like other queens before her, she attached herself to the images of a goddess. Dubbing herself the “Minerva of the North,” Kristina aligned herself with the mythological goddess of war and wisdom to forge a portrait of intelligence and military strength embodied in female form. Kristina depicted herself, not as Minerva, as Rubens portrayed Marie de Medici in 1622 (Fig. 75), but as a portrait bust of Minerva in an engraving by Jeremias Falck, Kristina’s royal engraver (Fig. 76). Designed after a composition by David Beck, Falck’s engraving was circulated to celebrate the end of the Thirty Years War. In the image, Kristina’s eyes turn outwards toward the viewer to enliven what otherwise appears to be a still life, heightening the commemorative aspects of the image by suggesting the longevity of sculpture in the ephemeral

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17 Bourdon, 290.
work on paper. The face of Medusa that decorates Kristina’s scalloped armor is placed between two full breasts, which emphasize their swell. An owl—an attribute of the goddesses and an indicator of her wisdom—sits atop a stack of books, another symbol of learning. An olive branch is propped against the picture’s edge, indicating that Kristina-cum-Minerva’s military strategies tend towards peace. A coin minted in the same year similarly featured a full-bodied Kristina plucking a branch from an olive tree. (Fig. 77) Long curls fall to her shoulder from beneath a laurel-wreathed helmet and pearls adorn her neck beneath a double chin. A scallop shell decoration clasps leather straps to her armor. A sign of the goddess Aphrodite, the pearls and the shell reference the goddess’s divine birth from sea foam. The pearls are more understandable in this portrait as a marker of her wealth and position, but the scallop shell is incongruous with the image of Minerva and Kristina’s disdain of all things feminine. Instead, the image succeeds at emphasizing the young Queen’s intelligence and peace-making skills by disembodying her from the lower half of her body, and thus genitalia. The scallop shell is also a symbol of baptism and of the pilgrims who traveled to Santiago de Compostela, and may read as an early indicator of the plans Kristina was making to convert to Catholicism.

Beck painted another portrait of Kristina at three-quarter profile, looking over her shoulder, following the style established by his teacher, Anthony van Dyke (Fig. 78). Unlike any other portrait of Swedish royalty, before or after Kristina’s reign, David Beck’s portrait from 1648 is Italianate in style, reflecting his master’s training in Italy and the influence of Veronese and Titian. Kristina herself preferred Italian art to the master of the Northern Renaissance, based on the comments she made about Rudolf II’s collection, which she plundered at the end of the Thirty Years War: “There are really a lot of paintings, but only thirty or forty of the Italian ones are originals. I don’t count the others. There are some by Albrecht Dürer and other German masters whose names I don’t know. Everyone likes them very much—everyone except for me, that is. I swear I’d give them all for a few Raphaels, and even then it would be doing them too much honor.” Buckley 94.
is also a compositional strategy that Beck used to hide Kristina’s slumping shoulder. Her autopsy revealed that the bones of Kristina’s right shoulder were fused, which gave her the look of a hunchback in life. She claimed that her nursemaids dropped her at the request of her mother, who was unable to overcome the disappointment of her sex; however, it is more likely that the deformity was congenital. The downward slope of her shoulder made one breast more pronounced than the other. While the pose corrects her skeletal curvature, she chose to keep her double chin. Her forehead is high, chin and her elongated nose with its wide bridge tapering halfway down its length before flaring into a rounded tip overhangs a small mouth and recessed chin. Her hair is styled in the same manner as in Beck’s miniature, with a deep part that separates curls that hang from hair pulled back on the side of her head. She wears a voluminous gown that shimmers in a pale pearl color. A gossamer shawl trails behind her shoulder as if carried by the wind. In front of her, the balcony upon which she stands opens up to a view from Gripsholm Castle, which some have romantically suggested looks south to Rome.¹⁹ In her hand, she holds a letter.

Beck seems to look specifically to Van Dyke’s portraits of Lady Frances Cranfield, c. 1636 (Fig. 79), and Catherine Howard, the Duchess of d'Aubign, 1638 (Fig. 80), in his portrayals of Kristina, especially in her pose and the fashion of her hair and dress. She shares the same hairstyle as the two women: A deep part on the side of both Howard and Cranfield’s heads separate the loose fall of curls from hair pulled back at the top. Both Howard and Cranfeld, where square-necked bodies that cling tightly to their torsos and voluminous sleeves that balloon. Behind each woman the sheer veil of a shawl seems to float upon an unseen wind. In Van Dyke’s portrait of Lady Anne Carey, 1635-6, the Viscountess holds the sheer fabric in front of

¹⁹The curators of the Royal Collection suggested this in an in-person conversation on February 26, 2015.
her with both hands as if to keep it from trailing off from the unseen breeze that lifts its edges
(Fig. 81).

In her book *Anthony Van Dyke and Representations of Dress in Seventeenth-Century London*, Emilie E.S. Gordenker, traces the ways in which Van Dyke “changed the rules of representation of dress” from conventions of portraits up to the time the Dutch artist arrived at the court of King Charles in the 1630s. He did so by:

removing fashionable items, such as lace collars or cuffs, which were *de rigueur* in portraiture of the time; ... adding fanciful touches like billowing sleeves or ostentatious jewels; ... [and] by appropriating details from other paintings. At times, Van Dyke recycled his costumes from one portrait to the next. He combined details to create a seemingly endless variety of costumes. While some of the costumes would seem to be pure invention, he usually kept an element of truth in the clothing, adhering to the fashionable line of silhouette and altering rather than radically changing the garments.\(^{20}\)

Such “alterations” to the fashions allowed Van Dyke to create clothing not possible in life and indulge in the fancy and fantasy of the high-society courtiers whom he painted. Fabric became a means of illustrating the invisible effects of atmosphere, such as the unseen breeze that lifts the lighter pieces of cloth, while heavy satins, silks and brocades crease and wrinkle under their own weight. This attention to fabric would become the hallmark of Van Dyke’s practice, and the types of fabric were signs of the sumptuousness and wealth of his clients. While the richness of the cloth revealed the wealth of the client, Van Dyke’s reused the same costume type, allowing him an efficiency that he used to create many portraits in a short period of time, most likely aided by students like Beck in his workshop.

And yet Kristina was a queen, not a lady, duchess or viscountess as Cranfield, Howard and Carey were. So why would the Queen be interested in commissioning a portrait of herself dressed as an English courtier in fashions from ten years before? Gordenker, traces the influence

of Van Dyke’s imaginings of costumes in English, Dutch, and French portraits throughout the
duration of the seventeenth century. Given Beck’s presence at Kristina’s court in Sweden, one
could infer Van Dyke’s influence there as well. This portrait type, of which a number of copies
would be made and distributed across Sweden’s territory, would not be utilized by royals of any
class after Kristina’s abdication. It departure from the conventions of royal Swedish portraiture
up to this point would be associated with Kristina’s unusual character and short reign. The
original portrait from 1648 would be sent to France to Louis XIV at the request of the young
King’s regent, Cardinal Mazarin. There, Kristina’s portrait would be ahead of the fashion curve
as Van Dyke’s alteration to costumes in portraiture would be the standard in Paris ten years later
at the beginning of the 1660s.

The letter that Kristina holds in her hand in Beck’s portrait may correspond to the letter
that accompanied the portrait to the court of the young King Louis XIV and indicates that
Kristina meant the portrait to be read as a message. Written by the French ambassador to
Sweden, Pierre Chanut described what Beck's painting “could not contain, the distinctive aspects
of the queen.” Chanut continued:

[The painting] could give no indication of the fine qualities of her character, more
particularly because of the mobility of her expression changed her face from one moment
to another … one did not perceive so many marvels in the beauty of this twenty-two year
old princess as when on considers them at leisure...the Queen’s face in repose was
pensive, though agreeable and serene. On the rare occasion when she was roused to anger
her expression could strike terror in the beholder.

21 A number of copies of this portrait painted by Beck and others appear in other collections across Scandinavia,
including Ratsube and Heimatmuseum, both in Stralsund, Germany, the Dorn-Museum, Riga, Latvia, and another
in Copenhagen at the Statens Museum for Kunst. The portrait at the Swedish National Portrait Gallery at Gripsholm
is also a copy from 1650. The original portrait from 1648 has been lost.
22 Ibid., 75.
23 Masson, 87, cited in San Juan 22.
24 Massion, 113
In other words, Chenat wrote the letter because Beck’s portrait was too fixed an image to describe Kristina accurately. The “portrait littéraire” or literary portrait developed out the biographical notes that accompanied drawn portraits in portrait books into into a psychological character studies, becoming its own genre in France in the early half of seventeenth century. Elaborating on the mutability of her nature, vacillating between serenity and terror, Chenaut describes her in terms that emphasize the mercurialness and easy changeability of her personality. Other parts of Chenaut’s letter emphasize Kristina’s “extraordinary physical endurance.”

He writes of her exhaustive studies, hunting and riding abilities and tendencies to wear men’s clothings with little interest in preening. He writes:

Except on state occasions, her coiffure consisted only of rapidly combing her hair and tying it up with a ribbon, and she never wore a hood or mask, as the custom then was, to protect her complexion but when riding women a plumed hat...if any stranger saw her out hunting, wearing a masculine type of coat with a small man’s collar, he would never have imagined that she was the Queen.

Chenat’s observations flushed out Beck’s hyper-feminized portrait of Kristina by supplementing it textual descriptions of her masculine qualities. The combination of text and image would fuel rumors in France after Kristina broke her alliance to France by partnering with Spain. Rose Mary San Juan has argued that Beck’s portrait reputed Chenaut’s charges of her masculinity by portraying her in feminine majesty.

Sébastian Boudon based his portraits of Kristina on a prototype established by Beck, emphasizing the masculine qualities that Chenaut describes in his letter. A miniature portrait by Beck from about 1650, would influence Bourdon’s representations of the Queen. (Fig. 82) In Beck’s version, she looks over her shoulder with a hand at her neck. Her hair is curled in neat ringlets and she wears a black, ermine-lined cape with a white smocked lady’s garment.

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25 Massion, 155 cited in San Juan 24.
26 Ibid.
underneath. Sébastien Bourdon masculinized this prototype in a series of three portraits made in 1653 and a celebratory image engraved in the same year.

In Jeremias Falck’s engraving, 1653, of an image designed by Bourdon to celebrate the end of the Thirty Year’s War, Kristina is pictured receiving the club of Hercules from her father King Gustav II Adolf, who is pictured as Zeus, Hercules’s father, descending from the heavens aloft an eagle (Fig. 83). The lion’s pelt that is traditionally accompanies representations of Hercules is draped over a stone plinth on which the personified allegory of Fame “records Swedish Victory.” Kristina drew upon her knowledge of the mythology to construct this image. In the myth, Hercules’ real strength is conceptualized by his ability to temper his physical strength, an attribute Kristina herself exercised when she withdrew from war. In the image, Kristina reinforces her royal lineage and fashions herself as the Girl-King by occupying a male character. Here, the military garb she wears as Minerva in Falck’s engraving of Beck’s commemorative image, lies discarded at the base of the plinth, no longer necessary. Instead, Kristina wears a dark frock that hangs low on her shoulders; a white undershirt balloons out at her wrists and is tied by a black ribbon at her neck. Her hair falls in limp sections around her face and hangs in loose waves down her neck.

Kristina’s styling choices relate to the ways in which she conceptualized women and femininity. Of her mother’s exclusion from the rule of the country, she writes, “she would have no doubt ruined everything, like all the other women who have tried it.” Of herself, she writes:

As a young girl, I had an overwhelming aversion to everything that women do and say. I couldn’t bear their tight-fitting, fussy clothes. I took no care of my complexion or my figure or the rest of my appearance. I never wore a hat or a mask and scarcely ever wore gloves. I despised everything belonging to my sex, hardly excluding modesty and propriety. I couldn’t stand long dresses and I only
wanted to wear short skirts. What’s more I was so hopeless at all the womanly
crafts that no one could ever teach me anything about them.”

In the context of her disdain of her mother and desire to distance herself from all things feminine,
her choice to cast herself in the role of Minerva suggests that the myth of the goddess’s birth, in
which the motherless deity sprang from her father Zeus’s head, resonated with Kristina.

Kristina’s statements translate visually into the first of three portraits painted by Sébastien
Bourdon in 1652. Colloquially titled “portrait with sparse hair,” Kristina’s hair is pulled back
into a bun on the back of her head with loose strands framing her face, making her look
disheveled (Fig. 84). Instead of partaking in “womanly crafts, Kristina played with toy soldiers
and later, partook in masculine pursuits like fencing, hunting and horseracing—though she did
the latter two activities on a sidesaddle. Kristina’s hair was often windswept, on and off the
saddle. With little interest in taming it, she walked around her Stockholm castle with a heavy,
mannish gait and a wild halo of entangled light brown strands. Often her tunics were stained with
ink from her letter writing. The disarray depicted in Bourdon’s portrait is consistent with her own
writing and others who described her time at the Swedish court in text. That Kristina would
choose to represent herself in this disheveled manner reads as a purposeful statement against the
“womanly crafts,” in this case, grooming.

Bourdon made two versions of this portrait within a year of the first. In one depicting her
at three-quarters length, seated, she holds her hand to the ribbon at her neck, as if adjusting it
(Fig. 85). The last portrait shows her more closely cropped, increasing the size of her figure
within the frame (Fig. 86). Bourdon depicts Kristina in the same pose and dress in these two later
version, but this time, hair framing her face is tightened into curls. In all three portraits, Kristina

27 Buckley, 55
28 Bourdon Cat. 292
wears the same black dress and white undershirt tied at the neck with a black ribbon that she wears in Falck’s engraving after Bourdan’s original. This particular style of shirt, sans overdress, is the same shirt depicted in Bourdon’s portraits of Swedish nobleman. The 1657 portrait of an unnamed man features the voluminous white sleeves ballooning from a jet black cape (Fig. 87). He holds his right hand at his chest, near his heart in the same manner that Kristina’s hand attends to the ribbon at her neck in her own portrait. Another portrait by Bourdan from the same period, *Portrait of a Man Holding a Bust of Caracalla*, (Fig. 88) features a man in repose. In this painting, cape, vest and jacket have been removed so that the full voluminosity of the white shirt is visible. The black ribbon at his neck is the same as Kristina’s. Why would Bourdon update Beck’s prototype to emphasize masculinity? Perhaps her relationship with Ebba Sparre, whom Bourdan painted in the same year he recast Kristina in men’s dress, could be the reason.

Kristina was known to make leading remarks about her ladies in waiting, saying publicly of her companion Ebba Sparre, whom she nicknamed Belle, that “her insides are as beautiful as her outside.” This, among a number of other bawdy jokes directed to Belle, caused much speculation about what happened between the two privately. Additionally, the young Queen’s refused to marry and public expressed disgust at having sex with men (“I could not bear to be used by a man the way a peasant uses his fields.” Biographer Veronica Buckley writes, “Her mannish way of walking, her love of hunting, her gruff voice, her flat shoes—to a roomful of countries eager for scandal and impatient for an heir, all betokened clear sexual aberration.” In Bourdan’s portrait of her from the same year he depicted Kristina in male shirt, Ebba is decidedly feminine. (Fig. 89) She wears the same voluminous sleeves, beneath her deep blue gown, but her neck, shoulders and decollete are bare. Her hair curls into a soft halo around her
head. The overall effect of the portraits is softness as all edges are blurred, whereas in Kristina’s, all edges are hard and crisp, and all colors are subdued, whereas those in Kristina’s portrait are stark.

Bourdan would next portray Kristina in this masculinized version of dress in a portrait from 1653. While in discussions with Kristina about her plans to convert to Catholicism, King Philip IV requested an equestrian portrait of the Queen to place among the collection of equestrian portraits of his forefathers, including a portrait of Charles V by Titian from 1548 and two of himself by Peter Paul Rubens from 1628 (Fig. 90) and Diego Velázquez from 1635, that were kept in the Salón de Reinos at the Palacio del Buen Retiro in Madrid. Next to the Pope, Phillip IV was the major defender of the Catholic faith during the Catholic-Protestant wars of religion. Such a requests indicates that Philip considered Kristina to be a part of his spiritual family.

In Velázquez’s equestrian portrait of Isabel of France, Philip’s wife, the Spanish Queen’s long dress and riding blanket keep her horse from moving at a pace more than a gait. (Fig. 91) In Kristina’s portrait, however, her horse rears both of its front feet up off the ground, in a manner closer to Philip’s portrait by Velázquez. (Fig. 92) Such a pose suggests that Kristina was an accomplished rider, even when riding side-saddle as Bourdon has painted her. The presence of hunting dogs and the hooded falcon that sits on the rump of the horse indicate her hunting skills. Arne Danielsson interprets the falcon first as a symbol of hope, then as an allegory for Kristina herself, a bird kept from blindfolded and from flying, who upon conversion will be allowed to see and soar the skies. Given that Sweden’s envoy to Spain, Mathis Palbitzki, is represented as the falconer, a less romantic interpretation would suggest the hood-wearing falcon was a symbol of the secrecy of the plans being made between Kristina and Philip. Spain’s envoy to Sweden,
Don Antonio Pimentel, is not present in the picture, but as Arnesson has suggested, Pimentel’s
dog is among Kristina’s hunting hounds. Its collar is inscribed with the letters “L+CRS + DA,”
an short hand for *Legatus / Christina Regina Sueciae / Dominus Antonius.* Danielsson also
suggests that the artist has depicted Kristina riding away from the gray clouds into the light as a
metaphor for her decision to convert.

By presenting herself atop a rearing horse, Boudan’s equestrian portrait suggests that
Kristina identified more with Philip IV, as the ruler and authority of her own nation, rather than
his wife. As San Juan and Danielsson concur, Kristina identified the power of her rule as a
masculine virtue. Marion Lemaignan, writing of the literary portraits that would come after
Kristina’s abdication, considers sovereignty a third gender. Lemaignan notes that satirical and
political pamphlets like Antoine Brunel’s *Le Voyage d’Espagne* from 1655 and Alcide
Bonnecase of St. Maurice’s Maurice’s *The Genius and Queen Christine,* from 1655, (also
published under the title “*Briève relationship Christine's life in Sweden, up to the resignation of
her crown and her arrival in Brussels,*”) all use the same textual descriptions to portray the
Queen’s mannerism and appearance as ambiguous. Throughout these texts, Kristina is
described as being a woman with “dark, thin, dry hair.” Lemaignan connects these physical
features to masculinity and maleness through prevailing medical theories of the humors as seen
in previous chapters. Such texts match her visual portraits and describe her physical body in
terms of an ambiguity reserved for royalty. Thus, when Kristina abdicates the Swedish throne,
the ambiguity of her body as described in text and image no longer had a foothold of power on
which to stand, thus rendering her hermaphroditic.

30 Arnesson, 104
31 Ibid., 105.
32 http://acrh.revues.org/5256#ftn5
In part Kristina’s critics attached their interpretations of hermaphroditism to her choice of clothing in part, but intersexuality, defined by ambiguous genitalia that lies beneath clothing, is generally unviewable in public space. Kristina and the French court of King Louis XIV would have been well-acquainted with the various histories—fictional and factual—surrounding hermaphrodites. In particular, Kristina held an in-depth knowledge of classical and alchemical texts, in which the hermaphrodite plays a key role. As one of the key figures in teratology, the hermaphrodite occupied a particularly prominent place in seventeenth-century France. Fifty years prior to the rumors launched by the French court regarding Kristina’s hermaphroditism, King Henri III of France had also been accused of hermaphroditism as a means of discrediting his authority because of questionable bedroom activities with effeminate consorts. Henri III inspired a number of texts that used the figure of the hermaphrodite as a metaphor for the unstable political landscape in the wake of multiple religious wars across Europe, in which the hermaphroditic body was positioned as the cause and solution.

In Ovid’s story of Hermaphroditus and Salmacis (1st C AD), the biologically male son of Hermes, the Greek messenger of the gods, and Aphrodite, the goddess of love, was anatomically merged with his admirer, the female nymph Salmacis, into a hybrid of both sexes in one body through an intervention from the gods. Hermaphroditus and Salmacis “were not two, but a two-fold form, so that they could not be called male or female, and seemed neither or either.”33 Other Ancient Greek thinkers, namely Aristophanes and Aristotle, also posited theories of hermaphroditism.34

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34 Polyclitis also contributes a story of an infant hermaphrodite—the newly born child of a ghost—whose appearance fortells disaster upon Aetolia. Polyclitis’s story was put to paper by Phelgon of Tralles’s Book of Marvels in 2nd century AD Rome. Retold by Luc Brisson’s Sexual Ambivalence: Androgyny and Hermaphroditism in Greco-Roman Antiquity, Brisson cites the story of the first in which a monstrous birth is interpreted as a sign of coming disaster.
Plato’s *Symposium* (385-370 BCE) records a dinner party conversation between ancient Greek thinkers as they debate the nature and purpose of love. Aristophanes’ contribution to the conversation is a myth of human creation. The original humans as created by the gods were doubled, formed with four legs, four arms, two heads and two sets of genitalia—some creatures had two sets of male genitals, others, two sets of female genitals, and a hermaphrodite version had one of each. In a fit of jealousy and fear of the potential of these creatures’ power, Zeus split one being into two, so that the resulting humans in the forms we inhabit today would spend our lives trying to reconnect to our other halves rather than question the gods’ authority.\(^{35}\) Abrahamic religions also have a genesis story that includes a hermaphroditic character: Adam, the first man in Christian, Jewish and Muslim faiths, was originally made in the image of God, a genderless being who was split to produce Eve, thus forming the two sexes.

Equally a creation myth—albeit with intentions of understanding human reproduction rather than genesis—Aristotle’s “Of Hermaphrodites” comes at the end of his *Book of Problems with Other Astronomers, Astrologers and Physicians, Concerning the State of Man’s Body* (c. 3rd century BCE). \(^{36}\) The text is a survey of the form and function of each part—eye, hair, nose, etc., of the human body. At the end of the book, he turns his attention to conception and reproduction asking “How are hermaphrodites begotten?” \(^{37}\) His answer: “When nature cannot perfect the male, she brings forth the female too.” \(^{38}\) With its thesis of uniting and merging the two sexes into


\(^{37}\) Ibid.

one body, Aristotle’s hermaphrodite has more in common with Ovid’s Hermaphroditus. In contrast, Aristophanes’s tale and Biblical creation myths posit human origins as dual-sexed and gendered only after being split in two by divine will. The hermaphrodite as a metaphor for discord and the unity that reconciles it, will continue throughout the Baroque as a metaphor for the political strife, religious war and the possibilities of reconciliation. Ideas of the alchemical and medical hermaphrodite would supplement classic notions.

Ovid’s Hermaphroditus would receive renewed interest in 1608, when during the excavating of a site near the Baths of Diocletian—an overgrown and unpopulated area of Rome just west of the Quirinal—in preparation to build a chapel to dedicated to St. Paul, builders unearthed a Roman marble copy of a Greek Hellenistic bronze sculpture representing the Greek mythological god Hermaphroditus.39 Cardinal Scipione Borghese immediately claimed the sculpture for his family’s extensive collection of Roman and Greek antiquities. In exchange, the Cardinal would fund the new church’s façade. On receipt of the statue in 1619, Borghese commissioned Gian Lorenzo Bernini to restore the ancient sculpture and design a pedestal for its display.40 Consistent with the artist’s interest in clever visual play—the Baroque concetto—Bernini created a tufted mattress and pillow out of marble upon which the sculpted sleeper could rest (Fig. 93). Borghese dedicated the northeast corner of a room of the newly completed Palazzo Borghese to the display of the Sleeping Hermaphroditus. The presentation of the sculpture in the eponymously named Stanza dell’Ermpfrodito was designed to heighten Bernini’s and the

39 The chapel would be rededicated to the Virgin Mary of Victory (Santa Maria della Vittoria) after Catholic forces succeeded in claiming Bohemia from the Protestants in 1620.
40 Bernini completed four restorations during his early career: a faun and a Imperial Roman bust for the Barbarini family, a figure of Ares for the Ludovisi and the Borghese’s Hermaphroditus. Later, his reputation and workload would allow him to turn down this kind of work. Hermaphroditus is one of seven works the Borghese would commission from Bernini between 1615 and 1632. Pino Guidolotti, and Rudolf Wittkower. Bernini: The Sculptor of the Roman Baroque. (London: Phaidon Press, 1997) 235.
sculpture’s concetti.\textsuperscript{41} Entering the room, one would approach \textit{The Sleeping Hermaphroditus} from behind, lying on Bernini’s sculpted mattress with its back to the viewer. This initial view would give the viewer the impression that they were looking at woman lying asleep on a bed. The figure’s head is turned sideways to face the viewer; its left cheek rests on folded arms beneath its head. Its hips twist in a contraposto that emphasizes the feminine indentation of a waist before it flares out into the curve of rounded buttocks. Moving around the sculpture, the turn of the hip lengthens into a leg that creates a shallow fold on its way from hip to knee. From beneath this curve in the sculpture’s body lies a flaccid phallus juxtaposed on the figure’s torso with the curve of a breast that signals the synthesis of male and female anatomy into one figure.

Though alchemic practice and discourse dates to the Greco-Roman era, Robert of Chester’s translation of the \textit{Book on the Composition of Alchemy} from Arabic into Latin in 1144 invigorated and fortified the obscure discipline.\textsuperscript{42} Chester was an Englishman living in Muslim-occupied Spain, and thus was exposed to a number of Arabic texts. He and others would translate these works and disseminate their ideas throughout Western Europe, where they would eventually reach Sweden. Kristina actively pursued the study of alchemy. In the medieval world of alchemy, the hermaphrodite takes on a metaphorical function. As sex and gender historian Leah DeVun writes in “The Jesus Hermaphrodite: Science and Sex Difference in Premodern Europe,”

Alchemists seized upon the image of the hermaphrodite to describe the “philosophers’ stone,” the chemical agent they thought transmuted base metals into silver and gold. According to alchemists, their work combined male and female elemental qualities into a compound substance of both sexes—a hermaphrodite—that was capable of transmutation. This body (since chemicals and metals were often called “bodies” in

\textsuperscript{41} According to the authors of \textit{i Borghese e l’Antico}, \textit{The Sleeping Hermaphroditus} was displayed with two Roman marble copies of Hellenistic Venuses—one modest, one “vulgar.” Anna Coliva, \textit{I Borghese E L’antico}. (Milano: Skira, 2011), 184. Venus was Hermaphroditus’ mother.

\textsuperscript{42} Not proud of this footnote: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alchemy
alchemy) was both, but also neither, because the alchemical process held contrarieties in stasis, creating a new substance that was outside the norms of binary division.43

A number of images of fantastical hermaphrodites were produced for alchemical treatises. In one such pamphlet, the 1616 Chymical Wedding of Christian Rosenkruetz, chemical bonding is described as a “marriage,” a term that signals the notion of union between male and female “bodies.” Alchemy was also thought of as a spiritual practice, metaphorically describing transcendent union with God. Hermetic alchemy, the term that describes this spiritual aspect, derives etymologically from “Hermes,” one half of Hermaphroditus’s parents. With its emphasis on compatibility between chemical elements, the alchemical hermaphrodite reconceptualized Ovid (two bodies merged into one) and Aristophanes’s (one body split into two) conceptions of hermaphroditism. One such image from the Aurora consurgens depicts the alchemical hermaphrodite as two distinct bodies merging into one. (Fig. 94) As Leah DeVun writes, “The image draws upon the understanding of the [philosopher’s] stone as a combination of sulphur (represented by its male half) and mercury (represented by its female half.) As in the works of Albert the Great and Petrus Bonus, the hermaphrodite is a balance of male (hot and dry) and female (cold and moist) qualities.”44 Alchemical union is pictured here as the fusing of two distinct bodies that resemble conjoined twins, Aristophane’s split couple joined into one, merging back into union. Extra limbs, torsos and heads disappear as this pictorial metaphor for a chemical equation comes into equilibrium. In the eighteenth century, the search for the philosopher’s stone would be replaced with the Enlightenment era’s quest for knowledge and alchemical pursuits would be dismissed as irrational. The practice of alchemy would transition into the discipline of chemistry.

44 Ibid., 205.
For clarity, it is important to make a distinction here between the hermaphrodite as a metaphor for hybridity and the physical bodies of intersexed peoples, who would be the subject of consideration for physicians, anatomists and naturalists in Europe in the sixteenth and early seventeenth century. In addition to Amboise Paré, who wrote from a proto-gynecological perspective, Jacques Duval, Casper Bauhin, Jean Riolan also contributed theories of hermaphroditism in sixteenth-century France. In 1614, the physician Jean Riolan produced the treatise *Discourses on Hermaphrodites*, and wrote about the “composition of the hermaphrodite” “to inform the learned and the curious of the secrets of nature.” Riolan’s image is a modification of Paré’s from *Des Monstres et Prodigies* (Fig. 95), adding greater shading and modeling to the bluntness of Paré’s woodcut. Like Paré, Riolan pairs images of the conjoined twins, which match Aristophanes’s description of the synthesis of two bodies in one with images of a hermaphrodite, who visually articulates Ovid’s text—the synthesis of two sexes in one body (Fig. 96). Whereas Paré’s image was concerned with external physical features, Riolan’s showed the body of the conjoined twin sliced open to reveal dual sets of organs. (Fig. 97). The twins are presented as if standing on a landscape before a cloudy sky as if alive, highly improbably given the dissecting cuts made their body. Opposite this image, Riolan produced another from Paré, in which the two twins conjoined at the stomach share an embrace.

Capitalizing on its dual metaphorical function for both unity and discord, the hermaphrodite became a symbol for the fracturing of society after the Protestant reformation and also a symbol for peaceful reuniting. At least four political satires written between 1605 and 1614 use the hermaphrodite as a metaphor for the tensions felt in society in the wake of religious

discord. In Thomas Artus’s 1605 *Description de l’Isle des Hermaphrodites*, the hermaphrodite is a being of ambiguous, indeterminate gender with a variety of vices and social ills, including murder and thievery etc. *L’Antihermaphrodite* of 1606 proposes a solution for what the author Petit de Bretigny calls the hermaphroditic French state, threatened by a great sickness because of its “excess and lack.”⁴⁶ Here, the hermaphrodite is associated with excess, seen as having too much genitalia—as well as too much desire as a product of this surplus anatomy. As Catherine Randall Coats writes in “A Surplus of Significance: Hermaphrodites in Early Modern France,” the excesses of the French crown, swollen with wealth and goods from foreign trade, was matched by an aesthetic of gilded ornamentation, “the response to the glut and gorging of the early modern economy.”⁴⁷ An image of King Henri III would be used as the cover of *Description de l’Isle des Hermaphrodites* (Fig. 98). While *L’Isle des Hermaphrodites* and *L’Antihermaphrodite* described above were published in Catholic France, Joseph Hall wrote *Mundus alter et idem* in England in 1605 from a Protestant perspective. The novel is also a satirical fiction: taking place on a ship as it sails to New Worlds, characters encounter an island of sexually deviant hermaphrodites. In addition to being described as a hermaphrodite, Kristina was often related to the Amazons, the fictional tribes of warrior women believed to inhabit areas of the Americas. One comment from an unknown person described the rumors that accompanied her presence: “We hear strange stories of the Swedish queen with her Amazonian behavior, it being believed, that nature was mistaken in her, and that she was intended for a man, for in her discourse, they say, she talks loud and sweareth notably.”⁴⁸ Such descriptions triangulated the

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⁴⁸ Libertine 297, FN4
Queen’s body, and tribes of monsters and mythologies of the New World, lands of surplus riches to be mined for European tastes.

Kristina would arrive in Rome on December 20, 1655, riding through Rome’s gates on horseback, as documented in an engraving by Giuseppe Testana (Fig. 99). She would take residence in the Palazzo Farnese, once occupied by the Cardinal Odoardo Farnese and his companion the hairy Enrico Gonzalez, where she would establish the academy of scholars that had failed to coalesce in Stockholm. She would befriend Bernini and become one of his greatest patrons. Rumors of her hermaphroditism would continue to be disseminated across Europe in political pamphlets published until her death in 1689.
Conclusion
The Monster Years, 1475-1680

Eugenia Martínez Vallejo’s monstrosity was based on her obesity; she weighed over 150 pounds at six years old. (Fig. 101-102). Her size conveyed her inability to control her appetite and herself around food. Thus, she belonged to a category of animal for her inability to stay within a standard of normal scale.¹ In 1680, Juan Cabezas, wrote about Martínez Vallejo’s visit to the court of King Charles II, son of Philip IV, and described her as:

Eugenia was white and not very unpleasant of face, though she has a lot of grandeur. Her head, face and neck … are the size of the heads of two men; her belly is so huge it is like that of the oldest woman in the world about to give birth. Her thighs are such fat and thick meat to be confusing and make her shameful nature [genitalia] invisible to the eye. The legs are slightly less than the thigh of a man, so full of threads, and her thighs fall over each other, with amazing monstrosity and while the feet are proportioned to support the edifice of meat that they support, they are almost like a man’s, yet she moves and walks to work, so disproportionate to the greatness of her body.”²

According to Cabezas, Charles II commissioned Juan Carreño de Miranda to paint a double portrait of Martínez Vallejo, called “La Monstrua,” in “two different portraits of her: one nude, the other clothed” “in a sumptuous dress with red and white brocade and silver buttons.”³

Like Bronzino, who painted Morgante in a double-sided portrait to display the dwarf’s body from the front and the back, 1552 (Fig. 100), Juan Carreño de Miranda painted Eugenia Martínez

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² My translation of “Eugenia era blanca y no muy desapacible de rostro, aunque lo tiene de mucha grandeza. La cabeza, rostro y cuello y demás facciones suyas son del tamaño de dos cabezas de hombre, su vientre es tan descomunal como el de la mayor mujer del mundo a punto de parir. Los muslos son en tan gran manera gruesos y poblados de carnes que se confunden y hacen imperceptible a la vista su naturaleza vergonzosa. Las piernas son poco menos que el muslo de un hombre, tan llenas de roscas ellas y los muslos caen unos sobre otros, con pasmosa monstruosidad y aunque los pies son a proporción del edificio de carne que sustentan, pues son casi como los de un hombre, sin embargo se mueve y anda con trabajo, por lo desmesurado de la grandeza de su cuerpo.”
http://www.toptrendingblog.com/2015/11/la-historia-de-eugenia-martinez-vallejo.html
³ “The king, our lord has ordered she be attired decorously, in the style of the palace, in a sumptuous dress with red and white brocade and silver buttons, and he has commanded the second Apelles of our Spain, his painter, the distinguished Juan Carreño, to produce two different portraits of her: one nude, the other clothed.” “Eugenia Martínez Vallejo, clothed,” Prado Museum of Art, https://www.museodelprado.es/en/the-collection/art-work/eugenia-martinez-vallejo-clothed/f8092cbd-8dd4-4e63-af63-1402940150f0
Vallejo 1680, in a double portrait extends the opportunity to look at her body with greater access. Like Eve before the fall, her nudity conveys the unawareness of animals. The fig leaf that covers her genitals, crown and the bunch of grapes that sits on the plinth against which she leans also connects her to mythological god of indulgence, Dionysus. In the portrait of her clothed, she holds an apple in each hand. The pearl buttons of her dress chosen by Charles II are only fastened at the top of her frock as her round belly prevents the others from closure. Whereas Pedro Gonzalez’s furry body was pictured in scholar’s robes to convey his monstrosity at the intersection of wildness and acculturation, Miranda’s portrait of Martínez Vellejo nude and clothed similarly represents the synthesis of animal and human the defines one type of monster.

Martínez Vallejo’s portrait is one of the last in a series of “monster” paintings that appear in Medici and Hapsburg collections across Europe between 1475 and 1680. These years are roughly concurrent with the beginning of Spain’s colonial exploits and the subsequent fall of the Spanish empire. The popularity of court portraits of monsters declined after the birth of Philip IV’s son Charles II (1661–1700). Known as el Hechizado or “the Bewitched,” Charles II was born with numerous physical, emotional and intellectual disabilities cultivated through generations of Hapsburg inbreeding. He also inherited the Hapsburg jaw, a deformity that made eating and speaking difficult. Juan Carreño de Miranda’s portrait of Charles II from 1685 emphasizes the king’s lower jaw as it jutted out in a pronounced under bite beyond his upper jaw (Fig. 103). Charles was also unable to produce an heir to the throne. Thus, the Hapsburg Empire’s practice of intermarrying to avoid challenges to their authority to rule would be the cause of their demise. Monstrosity, as defined by Hapsburg collecting and inbreeding practices

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4 This assessment is based on a review of “monsters” in Spanish collections as catalogued by Fernando Bouza and José Luís Betrán, Enanos, bufones, monstruos, brujos y hechiceros en la España moderna, Manuela B. Mena Marqués, Monstruos, enanos y bufones en la corte de los Austrias, , and José Moreno Villa, Locos, enanos, negros y niños palaciegos; gente de placer que tuvieron los Austrias en la corte española desde 1563 a 1700.
converge in Charles II. The Spanish Hapsburg line would die with him and Spain’s rule would pass to the Austrian Hapsburgs.\(^5\) It is interesting that a royal line that was so obsessed with questions of pedigree, lineage and ancestry, would collect images of the monstrous, who represented the pathological shadow of genealogy. Whereas royal portraits lining the walls of Hapsburg palaces show the successful result of the royal breeding project, portraits of the gente de placer, the monster paintings in Hapsburg Wunderkammers and illustrations in Paré’s Wunderwerck document the comparative failures of breeding and chart a genealogy of deviant forms.

Moreso, by the time Charles II takes the throne, an intellectual sea change had occurred across Europe. In 1669, Hennig Brand, a German alchemist, in the quest of all alchemists to find the philosopher’s stone, instead discovered the pure chemical element phosphorus when he extracted water and other chemical components by boiling urine.\(^6\) (Joseph Wright of Derby illustrates this moment in his 1771 painting The Alchemist Discovers Phosphorus.) Isaac Newton, a man now associated with the Age of Reason, theorized the principles of physics, astronomy and mathematics through his search for the philosopher’s stone, an elixir of immortality that was also believed to be capable of turning lead into gold. Alchemy and astrology in the 17\(^{th}\) century were precursors to the more codified scientific project of the Enlightenment era. Whereas in 1626, Kristina of Sweden’s birth was divined by astrology, by 1673, John Flamsteed, the first Royal Astronomer of England, writes of “the falsity of Astrology

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\(^5\) Charles II died in 1700. The Austrian Hapsburgs would take over rule of Spain in 1715, after The War of Spanish Succession, in which the French crown disputed Austrian rights of inheritance and vied for rule of Spain.

and the ignorance of those who pretend to it.” The stars were no longer being studied for the purposes of divining the future and deriving metaphysical meaning and were instead beginning to be considered for what they could reveal about the physical mechanics of the universe. By the 1670s, astrology was no longer considered a subject of serious inquiry. Deborah Houlding writes, “Astrologers were stripped of their right to make political statements affecting the Church or State and the public seemed to be losing interest. The educated and influential classes started to look upon astrology as, at worst, superstitious nonsense and dangerous propaganda, and at best, a study in dire need of research and refinement.” The prevailing ways of looking at the world through the lens of religion was in decline and coincided with a growing understanding of the world through the lens of science.

Whereas Paré believed the Furry Girl and Black Child were produced by the imagination of their parents, Juan Harte de San Juan wrote, “It was told that a woman gave birth to a son who was darker than he should have been because she had stared at a black face on a tapestry. I consider his a great joke and if it is true that she did give birth to a black child I would say that the man who fathered it was the same color as the figure on the tapestry.” Harte de San Juan’s Examen de ingenios para las ciencias was published in 1575, only two years after Ambroise Paré’s Des Monstres et Prodiges, and yet their arguments derive from two different sets of logic. Des Monstres et Prodiges is a hybrid of ideologies, part mystical, part medical, that in retrospect can be understood as much of a monstrous form as the monstrous forms it seeks to understand and document. The image of the Furry Girl and Black Child was published in Wunderwercks,
gynecological, midwifery and sex manuals through the early twentieth century, reaching its widest distribution when included as the frontispiece to Aristotle’s Masterpiece in the nineteenth century\textsuperscript{10} (Fig. 104). Often the image appeared with the same text. Within the realm of reproductive literature, printed images and text were reproduced in their same form relatively unchanged since ancient times. After the development of the printing press, image and text could be reproduced and disseminated at an accelerated rate.

In their essay, “Hybridity and its Discontents: Considering Visual Culture in Colonial Latin America,” Carolyn Dean and Dana Leibsohn question the terms used to describe the artworks produced at the intersection of European and indigenous cultures. They write:

The descriptive term “hybrid” therefore performs a double move: it homogenizes things European and sets them in opposition to similarly homogenized non-European conventions. In short, hybridity is not so much the natural by-product of an “us” meeting a “them,” but rather the recognition—or creation—of an “us” and a “them.”

Whereas “hybridity” is used to describe the intermixing of people and cultural forms in colonial Latin America, “monstrosity” is its European counterpart. Monstrosity speaks to the ways in which those unusual hybrids are placed on display to be visually scrutinized by European audiences, confirming Dean and Leibsohn’s point that hybridity highlights difference rather than integrates two opposites into wholeness.

Through the course of researching this thesis, I began formulating a theory that monsters are more “visible” during major sea changes of thought, such as the shift from the Renaissance on the cusp of the Enlightenment. Allen S. Weiss, concurred when he wrote in “Ten Theses on Monsters and Monstrosity,” that “Monsters are indicators of epistemic shifts.”\textsuperscript{11} The \textit{épistème} is


a term Michel Foucault defines in *The Order of Things* as that which “defines the conditions of possibility of all knowledge, whether expressed in a theory or silently invested in a practice.”

In other words, the *épistème* is a period bounded by the lifespan of a set of ideas, ideologies and discourses rather than a length of time. Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, the author of the essay, “Seven Theses on Monster Culture,” writes, “The monster is born only at this metaphoric crossroads, as an embodiment of a certain cultural moment—of a time, a feeling, and a place.” Continuing, Cohen writes: “Because of its ontological liminality the monster notoriously appears at times of crisis as a kind of third term that problematizes the clash of extremes—as ‘that which questions binary thinking and introduces a crisis.’”

Thus, the monster becomes a visual metaphor and a physical manifestation of cross-cultural exchange in a time of ideological shift. Like the monster itself, the time in which it is most pictured in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was at a crux of conflicting and overlapping ideologies represented by the Ambroise Paré and Juan Harte de San Juan’s approaches to the same subject. Both and neither Catholic or Protestant, European or indigenous, rational or religious simultaneously, the overlap between two conflicting ideologies corresponds to a definition of monstrous time. Could the Baroque be defined by the appearance of the monster and discussions of monstrosity, a metaphor to describe melding cultures, conflicting religious beliefs and shifting ideological methods accelerated by the developments in printing technology. I propose the period of time bracketed by the appearance of the attendant dwarf in

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14 Ibid., citing Marjorie Garber’s *Vested Interest: Cross-Dressing and Cultural Anxiety* (New York: Routledge, 1992) 11.
Sandro Bottecelli’s *Adoration of the Magi* in 1475 to the Juan Carreño de Miranda’s portrait of La Monstrua in 1680 as Monster Years.

Just as the early modern monster has parents, it also has offspring: Disability studies, critical animal studies/post-Humanist theory, critical race studies, queer and transgender theory, contemporary monster theory, tabloid journalism, natural history, art and medical museums, freak shows, human zoos and reproductive technology, including in-vitro fertilization and any eugenics projects, are some of the legacies of this conversation. Moreso, this study speaks to how bodies have been collected as objects by the state. Thus, zoos, prisons, asylums, hospitals are all institutions that house state collections of bodies-as-objects and parallel the development of museums originating from Hapsburg collections of curiosities.
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152


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Appendix 1

Simonetta Da Collevecchio

Lorenzo II de Medici

Ottoavio Farnese, Duke Of Parma
Margaret Of Parma
Alessando de Medici
Catherine de Medici, Queen Of France
King Henry II Of France
Appendix 2
Appendix 3

- Geolama Orsini
- Pierluigi Farnese, Duke Of Parma
- Alessandro de Medici
- Margaret Of Parma
- Ottoavio Farnese, Duke Of Parma
- Ranuccio Farnese, Duke Of Parma
- Cardinal Odorado Farnese

Printed from Family Echo - http://www.familyecho.com/
Figure 1
“Two figures, one of a furry girl and the other of a child that was black because of the imagination of their parents”
Figure 2
Lavinia Fontana (1552-1614)
*Holy Family with St. Catherine of Alexander*, 1581
Oil on canvas, 51 x 44 x 4 in.
Los Angeles Country Museum of Art, Gift of The Ahmanson Foundation
Figure 3
Venus de Medici, 1st century BC
Roman marble copy of a Greek bronze original
Uffizi Gallery, Florence
Figure 4
Masaccio (Tommaso di Ser Giovanni di Simone) (1401-1428)
detail from *Expulsion of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden*, 1425
Fresco
Brancacci Chapel, Santa Maria del Carmine, Florence
Figure 5
Petrus Comestor
“The Expulsion of Adam and Even from the Garden of Eden,” 1173
*Historica Scholastica*, illuminated manuscript
Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. Lat. 5697, fol. 20v.
Figure 6
Barbara Urselin, broadsheet advertisement, 1656
Etching by R. Gaywood (R. Gaywood fecit aqua forti Londini)
Figure 7 (top) Taxidermied body of the two-headed calf known as the Monk-Calf, born in Saxony Germany in 1522

Figure 8 (left) Lucas Cranach, illustration for the pamphlet *Interpretation of Two Horrible Figures the Papal Ass in Rome and the Monk Calf found in Freiberg in Meissen*, 1523.

Figure 9 (right) “Monk-calf,” illustration from Ambroise Paré, *Des Monstres et Prodiges (On Monsters and Marvels)*, Paris, 1573; reprint Chicago: The University of Chicago, 1982.
Figure 10
“Infans Aetheops and Virgo Villosa”
Woodcut illustration from Ulisse Aldrovandi’s *Monstrorum historia cum Paralipomenis historiae omnium animalium* (*The history of monsters chronicled with the history of animals*), published in Bologna in 1642
Figure 11
Figure 12
Woodcut illustration from Pierre Boaistua’s *Histoires Prodigieuses* (*Prodigious Stories*) originally published in Paris, 1566
Figure 13
Christoph Weiditz (1498-1559)
Illustration of Mexicans performing for the court of Hapsburg ruler and Spanish King Charles V from *Trachtenbuch*, 1530
Figure 14
Valerio Cioli (1529-1599),
La Fontana del Bacchino, 1560
Marble
Palazzo Pitti, Florence
Figure 15
Georgio Vasari (1511-1574)
Pope Clement VII Marrying Catherine de Medicii and King Henry II of Orleans, 28 October 1533, 1556-62
Fresco
Sala di Clemente VII, Palazzo Vecchio, Florence
Figure 16
Unknown artist
The Giant Bartima Bon with the Dwarf Thomele, c. 1550
Oil on panel
Ambras Castle, Innsbruck
Figure 17
Unknown Artist
*Portrait of a disabled man*, c. 1650
Ambras Castle, Innsbruck, Vienna

Figure 18
Unknown Artist
*Vlad the Impaler*, c. 1650,
Ambras Castle, Innsbruck

Figure 19
Unknown Artist
Gregor Baci, c. 1650
Ambras Castle, Innsbruck
Figure 20
Rodrigo de Villandrando (1588-1622)
Portrait of King Philip of Spain with Dwarf, 1620
Oil on canvas
Museo del Prado, Madrid
Figure 21
Sleeping Chamber of Queen Catherine de Medici with portrait of Antoinetta Gonzalez in far back corner
Château Royal de Blois, France
“Don Pietro, a wild man discovered in the Canary Islands, was conveyed to his most serene highness Henry the king of France, and from there came to his Excellency the Duke of Parma. From whom [came] I, Antonietta, and now I can be found nearby at the court of the Lady Isabella Pallavicina, the honorable Marchesa of Soragna.”
Figure 23
Jean Bourdichon
Top: *Wild Folk*, from *The Four Conditions of Society*, c. 1505-10
Bottom (left to right): *Nobility, Poverty, Labor*
Illuminated manuscript
Ecole des Beaux-Arts, Paris
Figure 24
Unknown artist
*Portrait of Petrus Gonzalez*, c. 1580s
Oil on canvas
Kunsthistorische museum, Ambras Castle, Innsbruck
Figure 25
Unknown artist
*Portrait of Catherine Gonzalez*, c. 1580s
Oil on canvas
Kunsthistorische Museum, Ambras Castle, Innsbruck
Figure 26
Unknown artist
*Portrait of Enrico Gonzales*, c. 1580s
Oil on canvas
Kunsthistorische Museum, Ambras Castle, Innsbruck
Figure 27
Unknown artist
*Portrait of Maddelena Gonzalez*, 1580s
Oil on canvas
Kunsthistorische Museum, Ambras Castle, Innsbruck
Figure 28
Joris Hoefnagel
Illustrations of the Gonzalez family from \textit{Elementa depicta}, 1580s
Gift of Mrs. Lessing J. Rosenwald, National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C.
Figure 29
Unknown artist
Engraving of “Woman of the Cinnaminian race,” 1642
From Ulisse Aldrovandi’s *Monstrum historia*
Memorial Library, University of Wisconsin-Madison
Figure 30
Unknown Artist
Antonietta Gonzalez
Tempera on paper
Biblioteca Universitaria di Bologna, from Ulisse Aldrovandi’s personal collection.

Caption: “A hairy woman of twenty years whose head resembles a monkey, but who is not hairy on the rest of her body.”
Figure 31
Unknown artist, possibly Coliolani
Woodcut of one of the Gonzalez sisters (Antonietta),
illustration in Ulisse Aldrovandi’s *Monstrorum historia*, p. 18
Memorial Library, University of Wisconsin-Madison
Caption: “A hairy eight year old girl, the other sister.”
Figure 32
Unknown artist, possibly Coliolani
Woodcut of a González sisters (Maddelena or Francesca),
illustration in Ulisse Aldrovandi’s *Monstrorum historia*, 1642, p. 17
Memorial Library, University of Wisconsin-Madison
Caption: “A hairy girl of twelve years old.”
Figure 33
“Hairy female daughter age eight”, 1622
Copperplate from Gaspar Schott's *Physica Curiosa*, 1622
Figure 34
Unknown artist
Woodcut of Petrus and Enrico Gonzalez, illustration in Ulisse Aldrovandi’s Monstrorum historia, 1642, p. 16
Memorial Library, University of Wisconsin-Madison

Caption: “The father of fifty years and the son of twenty years whose whole bodies were covered with hair.”
Figure 35
Lavinia Fontana
*Portrait of Antonietta Gonzalez or Portrait of a Gonzalez Sister*, 1594-95
Red and black pencil, brown ink on paper, 94 x 76 mm
The Pierpont Morgan Library and Museum, New York, IV, 158h
Figure 36
Stefano della Bella (1610-1994)
Orazio Gonzales, c. 1630
Engraving
Yale University Art Gallery
University Purchase, Edward B. Greene Fund, 1964-9.62

Translation of text:
“Gonzalus gleams here, well-known in the Roman court
Animal hair bristles from his human face
And to you, Ferrarius, who once was joined in love [with him]
He lived, and lives breathing still, in fidelity”
Figure 37
Annibale Carracci
*Hairy Harry, Mad Peter and Tiny Amon*, 1595
Oil on canvas; 101 x 133 cm
National Museum of Capodimonte, Naples
Figure 38
Annibale Carracci
_Hercules Resting_, 1595-7
Ceiling fresco
Camerino, Palazzo Farnese
Figure 39
Lavinia Fontana
*Portrait of a Girl*, 1580-3
Oil on metal
Private collection
Figure 40
Albrecht Dürer

Madonna with the Siskin, 1506
Oil on poplar panel, 91 x 76 cm
Lindenau-Museum, Altenburg, Germany
Figure 41
Lavinia Fontana
*Portrait of a noblewoman*, c. 1584
Oil on canvas; 133 x 88 cm
National museum of Women in the Arts, Washington, D.C.
Figure 42
Lavinia Fontana
*The Gozzadini Family*, 1584
Oil on canvas; 253 x 191 cm
Pinacoteca Nazionale, Bologna
Figure 43
Juan Van der Hamen y León
*Portait of Catalina de Erauso*, c. 1626
Oil on canvas, 56 x 43 cm
Patrimonio Ártistico Kuxta, Caja Gipzúkoa, San Sebastian
Figure 44
Juan van der Hamen y León (workshop)
Still Life with Fruit, Sweetmeats and Monkeys, 1626
Oil on canvas, 54.5 x 121.5 cm
Private collection
Figure 45
Juan Van der Hamen y León

Lorenzo Van der Hamen y León, c 1620
Oil on canvas, 55 x 43 cm
Instituto Valencia de Don Juan
Figure 46
Juan van der Hamen y León
*Portrait of a Dwarf*, 1625-30
Oil on canvas, 122 x 87 cm
Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid
Figure 47
Diego Velasquez
The Conde-Duque de Olivares, c 1625
Oil on canvas, 216 x 129.5 cm
The Hispanic Society of America, New York
Figure 48
Juan van der Hamen y León
Jean de Cröy. II Comte de Solre, 1626
Oil on canvas, 206 x 120 cm
Private collection, courtesy of Euremio Diez-Monsalve, Anticuario
Figure 49
Ambroise Pare
“Portrait d’un hermaphrodite homme & femme” (“portrait of a hermaphrodite, man and woman”)
woodcut illustration from Ambroise Paré’s *Des Monstres et Prodiges (On Monsters and Marvels)*, Paris, 1573
Figure 50
Diego Velázquez,
*Madre Jeronima de la Fuerte*, 1620
Oil on linen, 160 x 110 cm
Museo del Prado, Madrid
Figure 51
Jesupe de Ribera
*Magdelena Ventura and with Her Husband and Son*, 1631
Oil on canvas, 77 1/8 x 50 inches
Palacio Lerma, Fundacion Casa Ducal de Medinaceli, Toledo
Figure 52
Jusepe de Ribera
*Democritus* (traditionally called *Archimedes*), 1630
Oil on canvas, 49 ¼ x 31 7/8 inches
Museo del Prado; inv. no. 1121
Figure 53
Juan Sánchez Cotán
Brígida del Río, *La Barbuda de Peñaranda*, c. 1590
Oil on canvas, 10 1/8 x 24 1/2 inches
Museo del Prado, Madrid

Figure 54
Woodcut illustration for “Emblema 64,” from Sebastián de Covarrubias, *Emblemas morales*, 1610
Figure 55
Unknown artist, Cuzco School, Peru
Saint Joseph and the Christ Child, late 17th C
Brooklyn Museum
Figure 56
Leonardo da Vinci
*Madonna Litta*, 1490
Tempera on canvas
The Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg
Figure 57
Bartoleme Esteban Murillo
*Virgin and Child*, 1670-72
The Metropolitan Museum of Art
Figure 58
Caravaggio
_The Seven Works of Mercy_, 1607
Pio Monte della Misericordia, Naples
Figure 59
*Mary of Egypt*, Missal and Book of Hours, c. 1385, Lombardy

Figure 60
Tilman Riemenschneider
*The Assumption of Mary Magdalene*, 1490
Limewood, Munich
Figure 61
Titian
*Penitent Magdalene*, 1533,
Commissioned by the Duke of Urbino

Figure 62
Titian
*Penitent Magdalene*, 1563
Figure 63
Jusepe de Ribera
*The Assumption of the Magdalene*, 1636
Figure 64
Ludovico Carracci
*Romulus and Remus Suckled by the She-Wolf*, 1588-91
Fresco
Palazzo Magnani, Bologna
Figure 65  
Master of Tucher, Circumcision, 1450  
Alterpiece, Aachen
Figure 67
“On the Hyena,” Aberdeen Bestiary, 1542
illustrated manuscript, with detail and copy
Figure 68
*The Ancient History of Cesar* (1470-1480)
Illuminated manuscript
Figure 69
Sébastien Bourdon
*Christina on Horseback*, 1653
Oil on canvas
Prado Museum, Madrid
Figure 70
Unknown artist
*The Princess Christina*, 1632
Oil on canvas
Nationalmuseum, Stockholm
Figure 71
Unknown artist
Queen Maria Eleonora of Brandenburg, 1619
Oil on canvas
Nationalmuseum, Stockholm
Figure 72
Jakob Elbfas
Queen Christina, 1634
Oil on canvas
Swedish National Portrait Gallery,
Gripsholm Castle, Stockholm
Figure 73
Unknown Artist
*The Armada Portrait*, c. 1588
Oil on panel,
National Portrait Gallery,
London

Figure 74
William Scrots
*Lady Elizabeth*, 1546
Oil on oak panel
Royal Collection, Windsor Castle
Figure 75
Peter Paul Rubens
*Marie de Medici as Minerva*, 1622
Louvre, Paris
Top: Figure 76
Jeremias Falck after David Beck,
*Kristina of Sweden as Minerva*, 1649
Engraving
Graphische Sammlung, Düsseldorf Kunstmuseum

Right: Figure 77
Sebastian Dattler
*Christina of Sweden as Minerva Pacifera*, c. 1649
Copper coin
Stadmuseum Munster, Germany
Figure 78
David Beck
*Portrait of Queen Christina of Sweden*, c. 1650
Oil on canvas, copy of lost original from 1648
National Museum of Sweden, Gripsholm Castle
Figure 79
Anthony Van Dyke

*Lady Frances Cranfield, Lady Buckhurst, later Countess of Dorset*, circa 1637

Oil on canvas, 75 5/8 x 52 1/8 in

Knole Museum, Kent
Figure 80
Anthony Van Dyke
Catherine Howard, The Duchesse d'Aubign, 1638
Oil on canvas
National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C.
Figure 81
Anthony Van Dyke
Portrait of Lady Anne Carey, Viscountess Clandeboy and later Countess of Clanbrassil, 1635-6
Oil on canvas
The Frick Collection, New York
Figure 82
David Beck
*Kristina, Queen of Sweden*, c. 1650
Oil on copper, 9 x 7 inches
The Royal Armory, Stockholm
Figure 83
Jeremias Falck after Sebastien Bourdon
*Christina receives the Herculean Arms from Gustav II Adolf, as Fame Records Swedish Victory in Germany, 1653*
engraving, 17.8 x 28 cm.
Figure 84
Sébastien Bourdon
Queen Christina (with sparse hair), 1652
Oil on canvas
Nationalmuseum, Stockholm.
Figure 85
Sébastien Bourdon
*Queen Christina*, 1652
Oil on canvas
Figure 86
Sébastien Bourdon
*Queen Christina with Curly Hair*, 1653
Oil on canvas, .72 x .58 m
Figure 87
Sébastien Bourdon
*Portrait of a Man*, 1657-8
Art Institute of Chicago
Figure 88
Sébastien Bourdon
Portrait of a Man Holding a Bust of Caracalla, no date
Oil on canvas
Louvre, Paris.
Figure 89
Sebastien Bourdan
*Ebba Sparre*, c. 1653
Oil on canvas
Figure 90
Peter Paul Rubens
*Philip IV of Spain on Horseback*, 1628
Oil on canvas, 337 x 262 cm
Uffizi Gallery, Florence
Figure 91
Diego Velázquez
Equestrian Portrait of Elizabeth of France, c. 1635
Oil on canvas, 119 x 124 in.
Museo del Prado, Madrid
Figure 92
Diego Velásquez
_Equestrian Portrait of Philip IV_, 1635-6
Oil on canvas, 119 x 124 in
Museo del Prado, Madrid
Figure 93
Unknown artist with additions by Gian Lorenzo Bernini
_Sleeping Hermaphroditus_, restored 1620
Roman marble sculpture with Baroque marble pillow and mattress
Louvre, Paris
Figure 94
Alchemical hermaphrodite, *Aurora consurgens*,
Zurich, Zen-tralbibliothek, MS Rhenoviensis 172 (early fifteenth century), inside frontispiece.
Figure 95
Ambroise Pare, *Des Monstres et Prodigies*, 1573
Figure 96
Jean Riolan, *Discours sur les hermaphrodites, ou il est demonstre contre l’opinion commune, qu’il n’y a point de vray hermaphoditis*, Paris 1614
Figure 97
Artus Thomas, *Description de L’Isle des Hermaphrodites*, 1605, Paris
Figure 99
Giuseppe Testana
*Christina of Sweden enters Rome*
Engraving
Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, France / Archives Charmet / The Bridgeman Art Library
Figure 100
Agnolo Bronzino
_Nano Morgante, 1551_
Oil on double sided panel
Uffizi Gallery, Florence
Figure 101
Juan Carreño de Miranda
*La Monstrua* (nude), 1680
Oil on canvas
Prado Museum of Art
Figure 102
Juan Carreño de Miranda
*La Monstrua* (clothed), 1680
Oil on canvas
Prado Museum of Art
Figure 103
Juan Carreño de Miranda
Portrait of Charles II, 1685
Oil on canvas, 145 x 105"
Kunsthistorisches Museum
Figure 104
Furry Girl and the Black Child
Fronticepiece to Aristotle’s Masterpiece or The Secrets of Generation Displayed in all the parts thereof.