



Angela Steidele

In Männer- kleidern

Das verwegene Leben
der Catharina Margaretha Linck alias
Anastasius Lagranticus Rosenstengel,
hingerichtet 1721

INSEL

“An old German story, more fascinating than any novel”

Die Zeit

Catharina Linck was the last woman in Europe to be executed for lesbian sexual activity. Raised in an orphanage in Halle, she began dressing in men's clothes at the age of fifteen, called herself Anastasius Rosenstengel and “caressed” numerous “beautiful female persons” with a “stuffed male member made of leather”. After a chequered life of travelling as the prophet of a Pietist sect, she fought as a musketeer in the War of the Spanish Succession, deserted and worked as a craftsman before marrying another woman in Halberstadt in 1717. Exposed and betrayed by her suspicious mother-in-law, Catharina Linck was subjected to an inquisitorial trial and Prussian King Frederick William I personally sentenced her to death.

Knowledgeably and empathetically, Angela Steidele tells the astonishing life story of a fearless woman from a background of poverty who, with wit and a thirst for adventure, broke through all the boundaries set for her by her gender and status. Supplemented by the – from a contemporary point of view – bizarre court records, *In Men's Clothing* changes our view of the early modern period and resembles a picaresque novel full of tragic comedy.

Angela Steidele

In Men's Clothing

Biography and documentation

(Original German Title: In Männerkleidern)

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On the Author

Angela Steidele, born in 1968, researches the history of lesbianism before 1869, when the term homosexuality was first characterised by Karl Maria Kertbeny. Scientific research combined with literary writing is Angela Steidele's signature feature. For her novel *Rosenstengel* (2015, Matthes und Seitz) she was awarded the Bavarian Book Prize, her biography *Anne Lister* (2017, Matthes und Seitz) was an international success.

A Selection of Critical Praise

»Steidele's biography is impeccably researched... It is a veritable page-turner. «

Susanne Kord, *The Modern Language Review*.

»The daring life of Catharina Margaretha Linck contains so much more suspense and, despite the tragic ending, so much more entertainment than many thrillers. [...] In regard to the content, the adventurousness and ingenuity of a woman who shrewdly and deftly evaded the narrow limitations of womanhood is astonishing. In terms of form, there is an astonishing variety and multitude of sources, which the author weaves into an easy-to-read story with unexpected narrative skill, without slipping into the realm of fiction. «

Monika Schmitt, *Quer/ells*

»This book is a real stroke of genius. Rarely does the life of a member of the lower class from the early modern period, with all its trials and tribulations, become so tangible as in the case of Catharina Margaretha Linck (1687-1721). Angela Steidele has now honoured this remarkable life with a moving biography. [...] It is with an equally knowledgeable and careful treatment that the author gives to this extraordinary woman. *In Men's Clothing* impresses with a remarkable concision in both content and style. This applies too to Steidele's statements theorising on the history of gender and sexuality. Complex contexts are brought to a comprehensible point without detracting from the given complexity. I hope that this powerful book is met with the readership it deserves. «

Helmut Puff, *Historische Anthropologie*

»Not only meticulously researched, but also brilliantly formulated with clear objectivity, Angela Steidele has produced an exemplary contribution to the early history of romantic love between women in Germany. We need more works of this quality. «

Lizzie Pricken, *Gigi. Zeitschrift für sexuelle Emanzipation*

»Angela Steidele has managed to turn a legal document into a fascinating text, a case study not only of 'women in men's clothing', but about the complex of transvestism, transgenderism, and lesbianism [...] What immediately engages the reader is the author's empathy for the fate of her heroine. All this is reconstructed with meticulousness and prudence. I look forward to reading more from Steidele, an author who is capable of both finding such topics and dealing with them. «

Wolfgang Behringer, *Süddeutsche Zeitung*

»Steidele might just be a German equivalent to Jeanette Winterson.«

Katy Derbyshire, *New Books in German*

"Angela Steidele has compiled her sources competently and lovingly and with it produced a historically verifiable and adventurous Moritat from a bygone era."

Ursula Pia Rauch, *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*

Sample Translation

Translated by Samuel Schulenburg

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Preface to the New Edition

Catharina Margaretha Linck was the last woman in not only Germany but all of Europe to be executed for so-called fornication with another woman in not only Germany but all of Europe. The start of November 2021 marks the three hundredth anniversary of her beheading. Insel Verlag is taking this sad event as an occasion to republish this book, which was published by Böhlau in Cologne in 2004 but has long been out of print. I have accordingly reviewed the text and supplemented it with newly discovered sources (see p. 00).

In the preface to the first edition, I stated that I had not been able to shake Catharina Linck's story since I first heard about her. The neurologist Franz Carl Müller published in 1891 a fragmentary extract from Linck's court file under the title "Ein weiterer Fall von conträrer Sexualempfindung" (Another case of contrary sexual perception) in Friedreich's *Blättern für gerichtliche Medicin und Sanitätspolizei* (Journal for Judicial Medicine and Medical Policing). Catharina Linck's male pseudonym alone fascinated me immensely; A name so beautiful it reads like something out of Thomas Mann: Anastasius Lagrantinus Rosenstengel. Unsure as to whether Müller had invented this remarkable figure, I searched for Linck's court file in the Secret State Archives of Prussian Cultural Heritage - and found it, after two world wars not only intact, but also much more extensive than the excerpt from 1891 would have suggested. I was able to confirm, supplement, clarify or correct much of the information in the court file through research in other archives. This is how this book came into being, the main part of which describes Catharina Linck's life. The biographical outline is followed by the sources, including the complete court records. Whilst from a historical distance they can seem whimsical and unintentionally funny, it is because of them that so much of the authenticity and scandal of Catharina Linck's story has endured.

In fact, her story has stayed with me far longer than I could have guessed at the time. In *Männerkleidern* began my passion for 18th-century sources and, at the same time, my fascination with the inspiring uncertainty of what they actually bear witness to. Is history only created through the act of reading and writing on the part of a historian? How much fiction is created one way or another in the writing of history? To what extent is all of life an invention? Who is more real - Catharina Linck or Anastasius Rosenstengel? During the research for *In Männerkleidern* I was very interested in who Franz Carl Müller was and what interest in knowledge led him to the Geheime Staatsarchiv (see pp. 00-00). When I realized that Müller had not only pulled Catharina Linck's file from the archive, but also the corpse of Ludwig II from Lake Starnberg, the idea for my novel *Rosenstengel: A Manuscript from the Environment of Ludwig II* (2015) was born. For

Müller connects two historical figures who literally invented their existence, their lives: one as a prophet, soldier and husband, the other as a swan knight and builder of castles directed by Richard Wagner. For Rosenstengel, I chose the form of the epistolary novel, because this genre has always offered an incarnation of “authenticity” that knowingly plays with its own fictitious status. The plot unfolds in fictitious letters of historical personalities, peppered with original quotations. Fact and fiction blend as inseparably as in the case of Ludwig II and Catharina Linck: life is also just art. What I first engaged with through the fictional Rosenstengel is now finally recognizable in this book about the historical Catharina Linck.

Chapter I: The Orphan in Glaucha (1687-1700)

Catharina Margaretha Linck was born on May 15, 1687, in Gehofen in present-day Thuringia as the illegitimate daughter to "Einer Soldatenfrau Von Erffurth", a prostitute from Erfurt who offered her services to the local soldiers. Her mother, Magdalena Linck (1656-1739), had not always been a prostitute, however. About 20 years earlier she had married a linen and wool weaver, Martin Linck, in Schönebeck an der Elbe. Thanks to her husband's status as a registered citizen, the couple enjoyed a higher quality of life in comparison to most of the townsfolk. This was, however, not to last as Martin died early, and Magdalena was unable to continue making and selling the goods that maintained their lifestyle. What brought her to Erfurt, whether she bore witness to the plague epidemic that struck the city in 1682-83, remains unknown. The baptismal entry of her daughter suggests that she accompanied a regiment of soldiers quartered in Gehofen, as the priest recorded in the church book.

The Thirty Years War (1618-1648) had seen the decimation of much of Central Germany, Catherine Linck's homeland, with many other towns and villages, like Gehofen, being completely burned to the ground. In some areas of the region, half the population had lost their lives to war, disease, and hunger, as it was not only the village buildings that were destroyed, but also the fields and gardens. Entire cattle herds were slaughtered. Gehofen was able to recover thanks to the fertile soil on the Goldenen Aue (Golden Meadow). In 1671, it even received the right to establish its own market. As soon as the village to the southeast of the Kyffhäuser mountains made some progress, the inhabitants were expected to provide for the soldiers who had been quartered there. Magdalena Linck probably worked as a sutler, selling goods, services and sexual favours to the soldiers. One of these soldiers, whose name is not found on any record, was the father of her daughter, whom she gave birth to on Pentecost Sunday and whom Pastor Bernhart Thalmann baptized on Pentecost Monday, May 16, 1687 in the Johannes Baptistae Church – a Protestant institution, which was as to be expected in the Lutheran heartlands. Her godparents were Hans Zacharias Triebel, Hans Georg Schuster, Elisabeth Angermannin and Catharina Hardman. The fact that she was born on Pentecost Sunday and baptized on Whit Monday was later understood by Catharina

Margaretha Linck as a sign. Already as a child she must have had a robust constitution, because in the years 1690 and 1691 priest Thalmann had to bury almost every child he had baptized in Gehofen: "In this year the smallpox and smallpox have been very rampant, therefore most of the children died of it, as was also the case during the following year", he entered as a side note in the church book.

Both mother and daughter must have lived in great poverty, because their traces only reappear ten years later in a state of profound poverty: in Glaucha, a completely neglected small city on the Saale directly in the south of the old city of Halle. Surrounded by city walls, it had been recognised as its own city in 1562 and had its own jurisdiction, a council and a mayor. Unfavourably located in the floodplain of the Saale, which splits into several arms here, the town was repeatedly destroyed by floods. The Thirty Years' War had raged cruelly here, as in Halle, and half of the inhabitants had perished. In 1682, the great plague epidemic also hit Glaucha, and once again more than half of the remaining population died. Since Glaucha had an archiepiscopal license to distil schnapps and to serve foreign beers since 1469, and the inhabitants could hardly practice agriculture due to a lack of appropriate farmland, the town developed into a single tavern: at the end of the 17th century, brandy was served in 37 of 200 houses, in what is today a village of about 1200 people. Even from the neighbouring city Halle people came to Glaucha to drink. Spending most of their time drunk, the people became destitute. The lack of moral discipline, to use a contemporaneous term, did not even stop at the Glaucha pastor: Johann Richter was arrested in the fall of 1691 after a church service and imprisoned in the castle Giebichenstein in the north of Halle, because he - if one interprets the contemporary moral paraphrases concretely - had become sexually aggressive in the confessional.

This vacant position in the parish of St. George was filled three months later, on January 7, 1692, by August Hermann Francke (1663-1727). The 29-year-old pastor had also already clashed with the authorities, but for completely different reasons. He had been expelled from Leipzig in Saxony and Erfurt in the Electorate of Mainz after holding Pietist meetings there. Now an opportunity opened up for him in Glaucha in the Duchy of Magdeburg, which had fallen to the Electorate of Brandenburg in the Peace of Westphalia; for at the same time he was appointed professor of Greek and Oriental languages at the recently formed University of Halle. In the midst of the poverty of Glaucha, the young Francke founded his great foundation work. The plague had made many children orphans in Glaucha; to keep them from begging and stealing, Francke opened a school for the poor in his rectory at Mittelwache, opposite the church, at Easter 1695. Classes were held in a room off his study. In the fall of that year, he placed some orphans with three families in exchange for money to cover their boarding. He also rented two rooms in Reichenbach's house next door for additional school classes. Francke bought this house the same year, and after it had been furnished for his purpose, twelve orphans moved in here on May 22, 1696. In addition to the school for the poor, Francke also operated a German school for middle-class boys and girls. In both houses in the Mittelwache, school lessons were held in constantly growing classes, and the orphans also lived and learned here.

Both the nine-and-a-half-year-old Catharina Linck and her mother were placed in these new institutions. Magdalena Linck was employed at the orphanage; at this point, her wandering years came to an end, for she remained in Glaucha until her death in 1739 and worked for decades at the orphanage as a housekeeper. Her daughter, Catharina Margaretha, was admitted to the Francke Orphanage "in Martini 1696" (November 11).

August Hermann Francke had dedicated himself to the mission of bringing the Christian faith to life in the practice of charity. Thanks to his charismatic personality, his courage and trust in God, his organizational skills as well as his great talent for raising funds, Francke established from 1695 onwards, virtually from nothing - the beginning is said to have been a small donation of four talers and sixteen pennies - an institution that developed into a "social enterprise" in just fifty years. The orphanage and the schools were followed by the foundation of a teachers' seminary, a pharmacy that soon exported medicines worldwide, and a publishing bookshop with a printing press, where millions of different editions of the so-called Cansteinsche Bibelanstalt were printed until 1938. Beginning in 1698, Francke built a large facility for his foundation a few hundred yards east of the Georgenkirche, immediately adjacent to Halle's Rannisches Tor, where he housed all the various institutions and which still stands today.

Francke's involvement was rooted in Pietism. This 'Reformation of the Reformation' was a renewal movement within Protestantism and its importance for social and cultural development in Germany can hardly be overestimated. Since Catharina Linck grew up in the great Pietist bastion of the time, moved around with a radical Pietist community for several years, and later became the subject of a Pietist pamphlet when she was imprisoned in the Halberstadt magistrate's prison, Pietism is a key reference to understanding her life and legacy.

An essential trait of the Pietist awakening, on the other hand, was the individualised experience of faith. To participate in the liturgical rite without actually feeling the love of God was considered an empty routine. Through this emphasis on one's own person, the self that was to personally experience Jesus Christ in faith and who had to justify himself before God, the individual, viewed in terms of spiritual history, was greatly enhanced in comparison to concepts of life in the Middle Ages, when class affiliation defined the individual. Moreover, because pietists tended to level class distinctions among themselves, pietism promoted the bourgeoisification of society in the 18th century. The widespread Pietist autobiography, in which the author, whether male and female, was supposed to individually justify their own path in life before God and also explore the most secret emotions of the soul in writing, pointed the way for modern psychology and prepared essential innovations in literature: the language of *Empfindsamkeit* and *Sturm und Drang* is as inconceivable without Pietist autobiography as the modern novel, which replaced the typified heroes and schematic plot devices of the Baroque with individual, psychologically motivated characters and more realistic plots. Pietism had an impact on literature as far reaching as German idealism. Lessing, Herder, Kant, Schleiermacher, Moritz, Goethe, Schiller, Hölderlin, and Hegel all either came from pietistic circles or were influenced by them

When Catharina Margaretha Linck was admitted to the orphanage in 1696, the Francke Foundations were still in their infancy; Francke had only offered care to ten boys and six girls before her. His work was anything but uncontroversial. "Pietist" was a dirty word used by representatives of Lutheran orthodoxy to describe the innovators; bitter and fierce battles broke out between the old and new forces, especially in Halle; Paul Raabe counts 625 disputes and vitriolic writings since 1692. But these disputes would not have had a major effect on Catharina Linck's everyday life. Along with the other orphan girls, she went to school in Francke's rectory in the Mittelwache and slept in the attic of the building next door. Schooling was a stroke of luck for Catharina Margaretha. Children like her were usually not taught, or hardly taught at all ; compulsory education was not introduced in Prussia until 1763. Francke, however, considered reading and writing to be indispensable for every good Protestant, who, in the spirit of Pietism, should eventually read the Bible on his own. Therefore, even poor people and orphans had to be instructed in it. Since in Spener's understanding of the general priesthood, women were in principle also granted the possibility of knowing God, Pietist education in Francke's manner also promoted the education of girls. As an illegitimate child and half-orphan from the simplest of backgrounds, Catharina Margaretha Linck was therefore virtually privileged by her admission to Francke's orphanage. Now she was materially provided for, had a roof over her head and a bed at night, received three meals a day, was given clothes and was allowed to go to school. Above all, however, her salvation was taken care of, through the practice of the Christian faith that dominated her day.

In the mornings, Catharina Margaretha now had to get up at 6 a.m., and later, in the summer, at 5 a.m. The day began with Christian devotions. Led by a "Christian studioso," all the children first sang a morning song together, from the hymnal, "so that they would not dare to sing wrongly"; the girls were not to "shout boldly and immodestly at the start of the day," but to sing "delicately, modestly" to God's glory. This was followed by a morning blessing, the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, a prayer from *Paradiesgärtlein* (1612) by Johann Arndt, one of the spiritual fathers of Pietism, and a "Glory to God". Each day, one child took turns reading the prayers aloud, followed by a chapter from the New Testament. Finally, there was a main passage from the Catechism, which was to be recited by another child "with questions and answers clearly, slowly, and without an affected tone". Only after this detailed instruction in Christianity, accompanied by some words of caution from the teacher to remain obedient and fulfil one's duty, Catharina Margaretha and the other girls were allowed to wash, supervised by the nurse, so that "everything would be done right and proper". Then, finally, there was "the morning bread".

[...]

In April 1697, five months after Catharina Linck's admission, there were already 36 children living in the orphanage, and the beggar class had grown so much that it was divided into one for boys and one for girls; Catharina had classes with fifty other girls, orphans and daughters of poor people. While the orphan boys went to school in the former inn "Zur goldenen Krone" from May 1697, Catharina Margaretha continued to live and study in the houses at the Mittelwache. A year later, in 1698, the orphanage

already housed 74 boys and 26 girls, and the houses at the Mittelwache could no longer meet the need for space, especially since August Hermann Francke had founded other schools, the German-speaking Paedagogium and the Latina. Therefore, on April 6, 1698, Francke bought the inn "Zum goldenen Adler," which was located on the eastern edge of Glaucha, in front of the Rannisches Tor on Halle's southern arterial road, the Steinweg. Whilst Glaucha as a whole was not a nice neighbourhood, this area was notorious. Not only the "Scharfrichterei", but also several taverns with bad reputations, such as "Das Raubschiff", were located here. In Steinweg, many factories also produced starch, the waste products of which were traditionally used for fattening pigs. Even some of the more accustomed contemporaries thought that it stank to high heaven in the area. Every year at Whitsun, particularly ugly drinking bouts with fights and stabbings took place on Steinweg. And starting on the Thursday after Whitsun, a cart, horse and livestock market took place for eight days, during which the home-brewed alcohol, which was abundant in Glaucha, flowed in abundance. At Whitsun in 1698, the orphans moved into the inn "Zum goldenen Adler", 71 boys and 30 girls. Catharina Margaretha was now sleeping with the other girls in the attic of the farm building belonging to the inn ; a back room in the inn served as their dining room. This move marked the beginning of the Francke Foundations on the site where they still stand today. Francke bought the undeveloped grassy hill next to the "Golden Eagle" in July of the same year and began to build a new orphanage perpendicular to the inn. Catharina Margaretha Linck witnessed the ceremonial laying of the foundation stone on July 13, 1698 and the construction work from the immediate vicinity. She also took part in the opening ceremony at Easter 1700. However, she never lived in this famous building; just one week later, on April 17, 1700, she was released from Francke's orphanage.

Children from the orphanage were sought after by families of craftsmen in Glaucha and Halle ;⁴⁴ their new apprentice or maid usually had far better skills than others. Therefore, when a wainwright in Halle wanted to take in Catharina Margaretha Linck, perhaps everyone involved was glad that her time at the orphanage was over. As a parting gift, she was ceremoniously given a catechism, a Psalter and a New Testament in class. Catharina left the orphanage relatively early, not quite thirteen years of age. Most other girls did not leave until they were fourteen or fifteen. The orphanage record sums up her stay with the words: "was preoccupied by her own self". Unlike her comrades Maria Nietschmann - who "behaved obediently" - or Margaretha Koch - who "had behaved well and been obedient and diligent" - Catharina Linck seems to have been a loner who distinguished herself neither by notable diligence nor by obedience. It seems that she was relieved to be leaving the orphanage.

However, despite all this, the fact that August Hermann Francke personally took her under his wing as a child was to prove to be a great stroke of luck for her on several occasions.

Chapter II: "MannsKleyder" (Men's clothing) (1700-1703)

At the wainwright's in Halle, Catherina Linck was no longer subject to the constant controlling influence of her teachers and the supervisor at the orphanage. Despite this she maintained her attendance at the public prayer gatherings. The journey to Glaucha was short, and she would have been able to keep in touch with her mother and school friends. Soon, however, difficulties arose with the wainwright and his family with whom she lived and worked, as was customary at the time. Perhaps because she had hoped to learn from her new master how to fashion wooden wheels or the carpentry necessary for carts and wagons. Instead, she was working as a maid, performing the same menial services she had been doing at the orphanage. Or maybe the wainwright had taken issue with her. In any case, Catharina Linck soon took her services elsewhere, to a button maker and calico printer, whom she helped with his craft. As a young girl, she would not have been allowed to perform the role of a regular apprentice, but given that she later worked in the profession, she must have received some form of instruction.

Originally, there had been no traditional textile trade in Halle since the briny waters of the Saale were poorly suited for the necessary milling. Salt exports had made the city rich in the Middle Ages, but after its destruction in the Thirty Years' War, Halle's old glory was faded. As part of the archdiocese of Magdeburg, the city was subject to the Electorate of Brandenburg, whose rulers believed in a tolerant economic policy: Around 1700, 726 Huguenots lived in Halle, specialising in the production and processing of wool and cloth. Most likely, Catharina Margaretha Linck learned from a French master. Since button making and calico printing were two different crafts, it is likely that she worked in a larger workshop with different branches of production. Button makers produced not only buttons, but also tassels, belts made of cords and the like. For this purpose, silk, camel hair or wool was twisted into fourfold threads, processed into cords with gold and silver wire and finally sewn in various patterns onto or around wooden button blanks. Calico printing was a very different kind of work. Cotton, imported from North America or the Caribbean, became increasingly popular during Linck's lifetime because, unlike wool, it was easy to wash. The so-called blue or whitewashers made dyes, washed, coloured, stained, and rinsed the fabrics, and created patterns using various negative and positive printing processes. Since Catharina Linck later successfully posed as a whitewash dyer and calico printer, she must have acquired some of these skills.

Nevertheless, she was not satisfied with this, the second craft she had taken up in Halle - or with herself, her life and her prospects. Probably in the spring of 1703, she packed up what little she had - she is unlikely to have owned much at the time - and set out on her first independent journey. Soon to be sixteen, she walked unaccompanied to Calbe, a small town on the Saale River a few kilometres from where it merges with the Elbe. It took her about two days to walk the 55 kilometres; if she had followed the Saale downstream, it is very possible that a fisherman might have given her a lift in his barge

in between. With almost no money, she would have been sleeping either in barns or with nothing but the stars above her.

Catharina Margaretha Linck was drawn to Calbe because she had friends there, as she later stated in her court case. Did a former classmate live there? Or friends and relatives of her mother from her Schönebeck days? Calbe is only twelve kilometres away from Schönebeck. It was here, in this new place, where she was, for the most part, unknown, that she found a new form of protection against the world. It was here that Catharina Linck made the decision that would change her life forever: She put on men's clothes.

In court she gave two reasons for her change of clothes: On the one hand, she had wanted to live a chaste life, on the other hand, she saw it as something that "»ja mehr WeibsLeuthe gethan«" (many other women had done). The first reason probably made the examining magistrate laugh: If she had wanted to live a chaste life, she would have been better off staying in the orphanage. Or was she being harassed by someone in the artisan's family? The second reason she gave, however was an entirely correct observation. In fact, from ancient times to the 20th century, there were many women who pretended to be men. Rudolf Dekker and Lotte van de Pol examined 120 historical cases, mainly from the Netherlands, and in their study *Women in Men's Clothing. Female Transvestites and Their History* (1990), they conclude "that men disguised as women in the early modern period were not curious isolated cases. " They sailed the seas, like Anne Mills or Maritgen Jans, served as soldiers like Geneviève Prémoy, Maria van Antwerpen, or Antoinette Berg, or became pirates like Anne Bonny or Mary Read. Most of the cases date from the 17th to 19th centuries, but there are examples from as early as 1188, when the young novice Joseph confessed on his deathbed in the monastery of Schönau near Heidelberg that he had been a woman, going by the name Hildegund von Schönau. In the 20th century, Valerie Arkell-Smith (1895-1960) made it to the rank of English officer as Victor Barker, and in World War I numerous women fought as soldiers in the Russian army.

It was only when something went wrong that the outside world discovered the concealed identity of these women in men's clothes, when they were exposed or involuntarily unmasked. Therefore, one may assume that the number of unreported cases is much higher. Perhaps Catharina Linck's friends in Calbe included just such a 'man'. Almost all the women known today who lived as men came, like Catharina Linck, from the working classes and tried to escape poverty through their donning of men's clothing, to take advantage of the hierarchy between the sexes. For in contrast to the transformation from man to woman, the transformation of woman to man always served as a form of social advancement. A woman from the working classes being perceived as a man was only ever to her benefit: in the early 18th century, career opportunities, sources of income, freedoms, and rights were suddenly open to her that she could only dream of before. Other reasons for changing clothes seem to have been not only a sense of curiosity about the world of manhood, but also escape from unbearable living conditions, relationships, and dependencies which defined their experiences of womanhood. The erotic reasons for swapping clothes ranged from the desire to accompany a beloved man into the field

as a soldier, to the attempt to escape an arranged marriage through male disguise, to the intention to seduce women or to marry and live with a woman.

Catharina Linck made a radical break with her former life by traveling to Calbe and changing her clothes. In doing so, she was seemingly fulfilling a long-cherished wish. Already in the orphanage, the great differences in the education of boys and girls must have been bitterly felt by her. Gifted orphan boys were allowed to go to Latin school, were allowed to do physical experiments and learn the basso continuo in music lessons – girls, no matter how gifted, were not. Catharina Margaretha proved her aspirations through her desire to learn a trade at the wainwright's and the button maker and calico printer's in Halle. She was not willing to slave away as a maid. So why would she not try her luck as a man? She was rebellious, as her escape from the orphanage had already shown, courageous too, and she had had enough of rules and regulations after the restrictive life in the orphanage. It was probably a mixture of all these things that made her decision to change clothes inevitable.

As her later life shows, she already had the physical prerequisites to pass as a man. Prussian General Friedrich Wilhelm von Grumbkow described her a few years later as "fort bien faite," meaning very well built. She was tall and strong, resilient, a performer with the body to match - everything else was taken care of by the clothes that determined her being, status and gender. Dress codes at the time not only dictated the fashions of professions and religions, but they also mandated strict gender signifiers. Catharina Linck's skirt would soon be swapped for a pair of breeches with an overcoat over top, that being the male outer garment from which today's suit jacket developed. After that, everyone who met her thought she was a young, still delicate man. For safety's sake, she would have bound her breasts with a strip of cloth. She only had to cut her braid to shoulder length and untie it, because men of that era wore their hair considerably longer than today - August Hermann Francke, for example, wore his hair in a style that pre-empted the hippies. A little cursing and foul language could cover up the somewhat softer voice and the lack of beard – that was if she could not grow one, given that a woman's ability to grow facial hair has always been more pronounced than the fashions would allow. According to Grumbkow, Catharina Margaretha Linck had "un beau visage", which would lead us to assume that she had not been afflicted by smallpox, which would have disfigured the features of many of her contemporaries. One may therefore also assume that she was good-looking and perhaps even particularly attractive as a man. In order to be completely convincing, she may already have placed a horn in her undergarments, in the tip of which was a drilled hole; later the Halberstadt city court was very surprised at her ability to pee standing up. Many women who lived as men had mastered this feat.

Catharina Margaretha Linck knew that as long as she was living as a man, she could no longer return to her old life. Even today, serious gender transition often forces people to leave their communities behind. Around 1700, such a change was unthinkable - with the exception of in high aristocratic circles, for whom other rules applied. Catharina Linck's decision to appear as a man was therefore preceded by the decision to break with her

old life, with the people in the orphanage and with the button maker and calico printer. She - he - needed a new livelihood, a new place, a new community, a new life.

Afterword

Today, there is almost nothing left for us to remember Catharina Margaretha Linck. It almost seems as if the original verdict of the Law Faculty of the University of Duisburg was carried out after all, and Linck's body was burned after the execution, her ashes scattered to the four winds to erase any memory of her and her deed. The old St. John Baptist Church in sleepy Gehofen, where Catharina Linck was baptized in 1687, was rebuilt in 1886. In the western part of Glaucha, where August Hermann Francke's great foundation work began, none of the original buildings still stand. The Georgenkirche burned down in 1740. The parsonage and the so-called Reichenbach's house have disappeared together with the whole Mittelwache, the area between Steg and Mauerstraße was more recently divided up into prefabricated buildings after the Second World War. The inn "Zum goldenen Adler" in front of the Rannisches Tor was fundamentally altered in the 18th century. Thus, none of the buildings from the early phases of the Glauchaschen Anstalten and in which Catharina Margaretha Linck lived have survived. At least she was familiar with the main building of the Francke Foundations, which was inaugurated in 1700, and the "Goldene Rose" inn, which Francke made his rectory in 1702 and which still stands today.

During World War II, the monasteries that Anastasius Rosenstengel visited in Hildesheim (St. Michael) and Münster (St. Petri) were destroyed. Only the churches were rebuilt. The college building, whose gate Anastasius Rosenstengel guarded in Münster for one year, is also a thing of the past.

Halberstadt was almost wiped out in an air raid on April 8, 1945. What the bombs left standing was torn down by the city administration under the GDR or worn away over time. In the Paulsviertel, where the Potts, the Mühlhahns and Anastasius Rosenstengel lived, one prefabricated building follows the next. The towers of the Paulskirche, decimated in the war, were blown up in 1969. The courthouse also did not survive the war, nor did the famous City Hall. The fish market, where Catharina Linck was executed, was redeveloped after the fall of the Wall. The old gallows hill had to give way to the Am Sülzegraben industrial park. The hill itself, which could still be seen clearly before 1990 on the way from Halberstadt to Harsleben on the left of the country road, was removed. The bones that were found were removed according to the law, those that were left undiscovered were concreted over as part of the foundations of a car market or a fast-food restaurant.

Nothing remains of Catharina Linck alias Anastasius Rosenstengel but the written sources. Nevertheless, they deserve their rightful place in German social, gender and sexual history. Their exceptionally well-documented case is unique for the largely unwritten history of female homosexuality and trans identity in the German-speaking

world, at a time that predates such terminology. Few other cases are known to date. In Speyer in 1477, Katherina Hetzeldorfer was drowned for sharing a table and bed with another woman for two years and having sexual relations with two more women. One of the co-defendants claimed "daz sie nit anders gewist dan daz sie eyynn man gewest" (that she did not know that she (Katherina) was not a man) and was thus able to save her own life - like Catharina Mühlhahn 250 years later. Also drowned in Basel in 1537 was an unnamed woman who had married another. Greta, "ain arme dienstmagdt" (a poor maid) in Messkirch, who worshipped "junge döchter" (young daughters) in the first half of the 16th century and gave them gifts with "mannlichen affect" (manly sentiment), seems to have escaped only with a physical examination.⁴ In 1702, Anna Ilsabe Bunck, the "Jungfer Heinrich" (Maiden Heinrich), was ridden to death in Hamburg along with her second wife Maria Cäcilia Jürgens, but her case differs from Catharina Linck's in that the two were also accused of murder and thus same-sex fornication was not the sole determining factor in their death sentence. Catharina Linck, on the other hand, had been guilty of many sins, as her judges found, but only of one crime that was punishable by death under the law. In Hamburg in 1728, a woman in men's clothing who had been engaged to another was whipped, branded, and imprisoned for life. In Vienna in 1748, Maximiliana von Leithorst, who had appeared as a man since the age of 14 and had been engaged to another woman for several years, died. Also in Vienna, the wife of the Habsburg heir to the throne, Isabella, sent her sister-in-law Marie Christine, a daughter of Maria Theresa, letters full of kisses in 1760-63 that were decidedly not meant to be merely spiritual. In 1773, Wilhelm Heinse (1746-1803) mentions in his translation of Petronius's *Satyricon* a

Countess of Tanis, the natural daughter of K** of C** with an Englishwoman, who, wrapped in male clothes and girded with a Gaudemischee [dildo], married a very beautiful Fräulein in Augsburg and received the priestly blessing.

The history of lesbians and / or transmen is as heavily underrepresented as women's history; this work is an effort to contribute to the overdue correction of the one-sided patriarchal historiography. In this respect, I still hope - as I did in 2004 with the first edition of this book - that history in the German-speaking world will also be increasingly surveyed for testimonies of women who loved, supported, betrayed, those who stood out and those who did not. How are the real Catharina Mühlhahns of this world to be judged? So far research has always cared about the conspicuous (i.e. the somehow 'masculine') part of a lesbian couple and thus reflected the astonishment of the contemporaries of that time. Were their wives not much more subversive? Anastasius Rosenstengel and "the like" confirm in their own way the patriarchal hierarchy. Their partners, on the other hand, subvert it. They lustfully leave behind traditional gender roles because, as women, they do what is not expected of women. Susan Lanser recognizes in the early modern perceived illogicality of sapphic dynamics the testing ground in which modernity explores its limits and reveals itself as decisively queer. Representations of lesbianism, therefore, help us think in entirely new ways about deciphering the past."