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The Life and Times of Mother Andrea: La vida y costumbres de la Madre Andrea (Textos B)

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The anonymous novella Vida y costumbres de la Madre Andrea (ca 1650, The Life and Times of Mother Andrea) is a fascinating account of the life of the owner/administrator of a Madrid brothel. Probably written by a Sephardic resident of Amsterdam, and following the picaresque mode of first person narrative, it details the amusing experiences of Mother Andrea, the prostitutes under her charge, and the varied social types who make up the brothel's clients. Emphasizing the corrupt practices of prostitution and the controversy over the licensing of brothels in early modern Spain, the novella proposes a highly entertaining view of the very life experiences it purports to condemn. This bilingual edition, based on the novella's only extant text, an eighteenth-century copy discovered in a Utrecht bookstore in 1950 by the late Hispanist J. A. Van Praag, offers a thorough introduction that contextualizes the novella both historically and linguistically. Its modernized and annotated edition in the original Spanish with an admirably readable English translation on facing pages will have significant impact on the study of Spanish Peninsular and Sephardic literatures and cultures, and on early modern gender studies, linguistics, and comparative literature. ENRIQUETA ZAFRA is Assistant Professor of Spanish at Trent University. ANNE J. CRUZ is Professor of Spanish and Cooper Fellow at the University of Miami.

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