le tourment de l’absence, la morsure de la jalousie, avec un réalisme psychologique déjà racinien. Elle y ajoute une véhémence singulière dans ses protestations contre la raison, contre les lois humaines opposées aux lois de la nature, une revendication de la liberté de la passion qui préfigure celle de George Sand” (123). Other dictionaries and anthologies preserve Mme de La Suze’s writings, albeit not in their entirety nor in their original context. However, as shown by the texts and paratexts collected in this edition, aptly titled Élégies, chansons et autres poésies, Henriette de Coligny, comtesse de La Suze enriched French poetic production together with her seventeenth-century male peers. Indeed, Henriette de Coligny, comtesse de La Suze has found in Mariette Cuénin-Lieber a most astute reader who has assured that the poet’s fuller legacy as a creative thinker will survive the vicissitudes of reception for posterity.


In 1609, Louise Bourgeois published the first volume of her *Observations diverses sur la stérilité.* She followed this publication with two more volumes in 1617 and 1626. Bourgeois, an experienced midwife who attended Queen Marie de Médicis of France and other royal family members, wrote the gynecological manuals to educate those who desired information on female anatomy and obstetrics and to prove the efficacy of midwives in assisting with pregnancy and childbirth. She was married to Martin Boursier, an army surgeon who had studied with Ambroise Paré, and many of their children would choose go into medical professions. Indeed, a section of the second volume of *Observations diverses* is entitled “Advice to My Daughter,” in which Bourgeois elaborates on her chosen career for her daughter, who followed her mother’s path and became a midwife. Bourgeois herself became a midwife in order to support her family when they lost their home and possessions during the religious civil wars of the late 1580s and 90s. In her work, she claims to have delivered over
2,000 babies in the course of her career. Bourgeois took great pride in her profession and advocated for recognition of its importance in women’s lives. As Bourgeois states in her first volume, she was “the first woman of my art to take pen in hand to describe the knowledge God gave to me” (90).

Stephanie O’Hara’s translation of Bourgeois’s manuals, entitled *Midwife to the Queen of France: Diverse Observations*, offers this pioneering work in English for the first time. The edition is a thorough, well-annotated translation of all three volumes with an introduction and supplemental material by Alison Klairmont Lingo.

Stephanie O’Hara’s translation introduces readers to a fascinating woman whose insights into women’s issues in early modern France offer the unique perspective of a professional woman. O’Hara exhibits a masterful command of the medical and scientific terms and language of the early modern France. Volume 1 begins with a series of poems celebrating Bourgeois’s patrons and defending her professional talents. After these paeans, Bourgeois mainly details various women’s reproductive issues, from “Why Women Cannot have Children” to “How to Choose a Good Wet Nurse and What Qualities are Required in One” to “Of a Very Plump Woman who Died from Eating Ice Cream.” Volume 2 is more autobiographical. Besides continuing her account of obstetrics, Bourgeois explains why she became a midwife and how she became midwife to the Queen of France and other royal women. One of the most riveting parts in Volume 2 is the section in which Bourgeois offers advice to her daughter. In this section, she reveals more about her life: “I was the head of the household with children to care for. I was overcome with the vicissitudes of war and the loss of our land and possessions,” (266); her pride in her profession: “Let me tell you, then, that what you have undertaken is something tremendously important” (268); and her struggles with the medical field: “My daughter, I will tell you that you must not be surprised to see the profession of midwifery held in contempt. Nor must this cool your ardor to practice thus profession as perfectly as you can. Its perfections are incomprehensible to those who look down in it” (276). Readers will inevitably be drawn into Bourgeois’s story, her struggles, and triumphs, as well as be fascinated by her appreciation of the female physiology. Volume 3 is much briefer and deals not only with
women’s issues, but also with wider health issues of the times, such as hernias and gout. Bourgeois published this final volume shortly before she lost her position as midwife to the court because of the death of the Duchess of Orleans after childbirth. Throughout her translation, O’Hara’s extensive footnotes offer further insights into the text and its author. The notes supplement Bourgeois’s material and give valuable information on relevant texts and current secondary sources.

Lingo’s critical introduction supports O’Hara’s translation and notes. Lingo divides her introduction into four sections: “The Writings,” “Life and Times,” “Reception and Afterlife,” and “Louise Bourgeois’s Approach to Health and Disease.” Lingo pays particular attention to what contemporaries wrote about Bourgeois, such as the verses found in the beginning of Volume 1. Lingo explores those writings within the context of the “Querelle des femmes,” the debate that questions “women’s morality, intellectual capacity, and physical abilities” (13). This debate underscores not only the first section of Lingo’s introduction, but also the next two sections, which explore Bourgeois’s life, the environment in which she worked and wrote, and the reception of her writings. The final section of the introduction serves as a guide to medical terms and concepts of the early modern period, explaining and clarifying language with which the present-day reader may not be conversant. This guide bookends the glossary of Materia Medica found at the end of the text. In the glossary, Lingo alphabetically lists and translates “all of the therapeutic methods and animal, mineral, and plant-derived ingredients” (313), described in the 1626 edition of Bourgeois’s text. Thus, the introduction in conjunction with the glossary helps the reader to navigate unfamiliar medical diagnoses and remedies.

In her translator’s introduction, O’Hara states that her purpose in publishing these gynecological manuals is to offer in one volume a “complete scholarly translation of one of the most significant texts in the history of medicine and in women’s history” (76). She achieves her mission with this comprehensive text. Through this dynamic translation, we become immersed in Bourgeois’s world. The volume will serve as an indispensable new source for those who are unable to read it in the original French. It will be a helpful work for those researching in many diverse disciplines. Its critical apparatus makes
it a valuable edition for scholars in fields including the evolution of medicine and midwifery’s role in medicine, as well as scholarship on woman’s body and form and on the early modern period in France.


In *Royal Favouritism and the Governing Elite of the Spanish Monarchy*, Alistair Malcolm analyzes Luis de Haro’s rise to power in the court of Philip IV following more than twenty years of the Count-Duke of Olivares’ unwavering influence on the Spanish monarchy. Historians have studied at length Philip III and Philip IV’s tendency to appoint powerful *validos*, or the king’s favorites, who in theory wielded the power of the monarch on his behalf. Yet such a position inevitably suggests usurpation, and *validos* and monarchs alike engaged in a careful balancing act which sought to legitimize the favorite’s power while at the same time not diminishing the king’s authority. Making the position even more complex was the fact that it depended solely on the monarch’s pleasure, and was therefore inherently unstable. Indeed, the *valido* could fall from the king’s favor at any moment. Most studies to date on early modern political favoritism focus exclusively on the first half of the seventeenth century. Antonio Feros analyzes the rise of the Duke of Lerma to power from 1598-1618 (*Kingship and Favoritism in Spain, 1598-1621*) and J. H. Elliott’s biography of Olivares (*The Count-Duke of Olivares*) looks at the Spanish court dominated by Olivares after Lerma’s demise in 1618 until 1640. J. H. Elliott and L. W. B. Brockliss’ edited volume *The World of the Favourite* studies similar political structures across Europe, including the Duke of Buckingham’s prominence in the English court of James I and Cardinal Richelieu’s iron grip on French politics during the reign of Louis XIII. Despite the attention given to early modern political favorites and their power in the seventeenth century, however, nearly all studies end with Richelieu and Olivares’ removal from the French and Spanish courts in 1642 and 1643, respectively.