of Nelli’s intriguing artistic corpus. Overall, this publication is warmly recommended to those desiring to delve further into the artistic and social contexts of religious women in the early modern period.

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_The Marvelous Hairy Girls: The Gonzales Sisters and Their Worlds._
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This book describes the folk and intellectual cultures surrounding people, animals, and objects that were considered strange to most Europeans. The especially hairy Gonzales family (ca. 1573–1656) provides an extended case study for Merry Wiesner-Hanks’s inquiry into early modern European attitudes toward physical difference and strangeness.

Given the limited historical archive on the Gonzales family, Wiesner-Hanks deftly takes what might otherwise be a footnote about an “odd” family and uses it as a point of departure to assess the place of the strange and exotic in early modern Europe. The family patriarch, Petrus Gonzales, appeared to suffer from a genetic condition of excessive body hair known today as Ambras Syndrome, or _hypertrichosis universalis_, which caused his entire body and face to be covered in hair. Born on Tenerife, part of the Canary Islands, Petrus traveled as a small boy to the royal court of France’s Henry II. Source materials from the period express uncertainty about Petrus’s national and ethnic origins; some refer to him as a Guanche and others as a Spaniard. Historians have confirmed that Petrus married a non-hairy woman named Catherine from Paris around 1573, and the couple had a number of children, most of whom were hairy. The family relocated to the Farnese court around 1590.

Early in the work, the author states her decision to focus as much as possible on the Gonzales sisters Maddalena, Francesca, and Antoinetta. This decision enables Wiesner-Hanks to draw connections to the ever-expanding scholarship on gender and feminist studies in the early modern
period. Building on her previous work on early modern women, particularly the “monstrous feminine,” the author focuses this study on how “monstrous” births were believed to be conceived and delivered, considering at length how female sexuality and anatomy may play a role. However, despite repeated claims that the study will focus on Maddalena and Antoinetta Gonzales, the book offers, instead, a comprehensive historical overview of the “strange” and postulates what French and Italian courtiers might have thought about the Gonzales family more generally.

The six chapters are arranged topically rather than chronologically. Chapter 1 addresses the pre-existing tradition of wild folk within Europe, ranging from the trope of the “wild man” to wild versions of religious figures and saints, such as the hairy Mary Magdalene. In many cases Wiesner-Hanks notes that hairiness is central to early modern European conceptions of civility and of the division between humans and animals. Chapter 2 discusses how the exploration of the Americas and travel to far-off lands changed and expanded the idea of the “wild” or animalistic human in Europe. Chapters 3 and 4 provide the most useful contribution to feminist early modern scholarship. Chapter 3 explores the place of all women as “monstrous” to many European intellectuals who followed Aristotelian thought and also discusses the challenge female monarchs posed to medical understandings of women’s “inferiority.” Chapter 4 focuses on marriage traditions, paying particular attention to the role of women in the conception and birth of children—how “deformities” ranging from excessive hair to conjoined twins would have been explained by early modern understandings of female anatomy. Chapter 5 attends to religious conflict and explores how tropes of monstrosity were used by both Catholics and Protestants alike to vilify their opponents. Finally, chapter 6 considers the world of the curiosity cabinet and the collecting habits of the elite. It is in this chapter that the most extensive and detailed discussion of the Gonzales family occurs.

The book is accessible and clearly written. Perhaps most importantly, Wiesner-Hanks maintains a sympathetic yet analytic tone when probing topics that could easily veer toward the prurient. Indeed, the book suggests that the display of the Gonzales family at courts as oddities was a form of exploitation complicated by the family’s engagement in common
court activities. These included Petrus’s humanistic education with the other children at the court of Henry. However, Wiesner-Hanks suggests that nothing is ever as simple and straightforward as it may seem. The line between the exotic and the mundane remains blurred. The case of Maddalena Gonzalez’s marriage provides the perfect case in point: a young woman recorded in court documents as “Maddalena the hairy” had a marriage and dowry arranged by the Farnese court. Such an action on the surface, Wiesner-Hanks argues, may lead one to think that the Farnese court considered Maddalena to be more than just a living part of their collection of oddities until one notes that she was married to the man in charge of the court kennels, so that the union of the hairy woman to the animal keeper sounds more like a brutal early modern witticism.

The major drawback to the monograph is that it provides a general history of the place of “others” in early modern Europe rather than offering an in-depth history of the Gonzales family. Wiesner-Hanks admits this drawback herself, yet there still remain a few too many suppositions about what people may or may not have thought. However, the book is a significant contribution to scholars interested in how Europeans understood and interacted with people whom they perceived as different, be it cultural and national differences encountered abroad or physical differences they saw at home.

The volume extends the discussion of earlier scholarly inquiries into how early modern Europe defined what it meant to be human, such as Erica Fudge, Ruth Gilbert, and Susan Wiseman’s work in *At the Borders of the Human*. Since Weisner-Hanks works to explain how Europeans understood difference at home, she also compels early modern scholars studying the interactions of Europeans with non-European cultures to reassess the definition of what constituted physical and cultural difference. The Gonzales family could be seen as human but also animal, foreign but also European. Wiesner-Hanks’s study helps to clarify these apparent contradictions in ways that will benefit scholars of early modern culture working within many disciplines.

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