Maddalena entered the convent. During the 1620s, artists under Medici patronage contributed to the flourishing of musical and theatrical productions at La Crocetta. This is evident from Harness’s discussion of the repertory of polyphonic music produced by Medici artists during these years, with particular emphasis on the music that was composed to mark the stages in the nuns’ life. To conclude her study, Harness returns to two biblical figures, Saint Catherine and Saint Thecla, who were in the convent singled out in two plays by Jacopo Cicognini as exemplar women martyrs who offered their virginity to god.

“The work of women recovering our own history has barely begun in our time,” Cusick reminds us (425). Musical Voices of Early Modern Women and Echoes of Women’s Voices set a high standard and an incentive for the studies to come.

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In her bilingual edition of selected poems by Madeleine de l’Aubespine, Anna Klosowska convincingly shows why l’Aubespine deserves greater critical attention: a highly visible member of the late sixteenth-century French aristocracy, l’Aubespine shows impressive generic range and daring thematic choices in her writing; she also collaborated with several important male poets of the time, including D’Aubigné, Desportes, and Ronsard. Building on Colette Winn’s reintroduction of l’Aubespine to readers in her edition of the Cabinet des saines affections (Paris: Champion, 2001), Klosowska’s edition in fact makes new critical work on l’Aubespine possible. Having carefully combed manuscript collections in France and Italy, Klosowska gathers in one volume—the first of its kind in French or English—all poems attributed to l’Aubespine to date, many of which were unavailable to readers outside their original manuscript format. The result is the resurrection of a writer
previously all but lost to sixteenth-century scholarship, one whose “dominant and defiant” writing, moreover, offers a counterpoint to a familiar narrative of sixteenth-century female authorship in which women writers appear to emphasize their modesty in the face of public scrutiny.

Following the excellent introduction to the “Other Voice” series by Margaret L. King and Albert Rabil, Jr., Klosowska’s introduction assesses the historical context of the work, the material circumstances of l’Aubespine’s publication in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and the diverse poetic genres (sonnets, dialogues, chansons, translations from Latin and Italian) that appear in the collection. She emphasizes three key ways in which l’Aubespine constitutes not simply an “other voice” but a new one: through the rediscovery of her previously lost texts (which were circulated in manuscript but not printed during her lifetime); through her composition of erotica, extremely rare for a woman of the period; and through the construction, in collaboration with Ronsard, of an authorial mythography that radically departs from concepts of authorship usually associated with early modern women. It is in the composition of erotica that L’Aubespine proves particularly exceptional. While Louise Labé authored some sensual verse at mid-century, l’Aubespine’s pornographic lyrics are “unprecedented in French poetry written by women” (17) both in their number and scope. Several overtly “describe homoeroticism, masturbation, multiple orgasms, and sexual agency” (17). More implicitly, Klosowska underscores, these erotic verses mark a determined move to place women on top, by reversing the gendering of poetic subject and object in conventional Petrarchan lyric, and making of the male and sometimes female beloved literally an “object” or instrument with which to fulfill female sexual pleasure and desire.

One of Klosowska’s most intriguing arguments is that l’Aubespine invents an authorial mythography that differs drastically from the rhetoric of humility frequently employed by early modern women to justify their writing and publishing. She constructs this mythography, moreover, in collaboration with Ronsard. Their poetic exchange is striking, for l’Aubespine is the only woman whom Ronsard praised as a poet in his vast corpus, and, as Klosowska points out, their collaboration “will undoubtedly change our assessment of l’Aubespine’s importance” (13). Through three poems exchanged between Ronsard and l’Aubespine (two sonnets, and a fragment
of a previously unknown sonnet by Ronsard that Klosowska also includes),
the two poets cast l’Aubespine as Phaetón, son of Apollo (here, a figure for
Ronsard), heir to his gift and his poetic successor. While the Phaetón of
Ovidian mythology fell to earth in a classic example of hubris, l’Aubespine
and Ronsard position the poet/Phaetón just before his flight, uncertain
and vulnerable, but filled with exceptional potential, graced with the gifts of
Ronsard/Apollo. The “national, heroic, [and] masculine” (2) resonances in
l’Aubespine’s adoption of Phaetón underpin one of Klosowska’s key argu-
ments about her corpus: beyond the clear difference from other women writ-
ers that both the boldness of l’Aubespine’s poetic voice and the regendering
of that voice represent, her poetry implicitly invites us to rethink the com-
plexity with which many early modern writers—men and women—may
have conceived of and constructed concepts of female authorship.

Klosowska’s elegant translations showcase l’Aubespine’s spirited voice
while conveying the syntactical and verbal nuances of the original French;
her few alterations in punctuation or syntax were clearly made to facilitate
reading the English versions. Given Klosowska’s close readings in the intro-
duction, and her acute attention to the details that are highly significant
to l’Aubespine’s unique authorial persona, it should be no surprise that her
translations attempt to preserve those details as faithfully as possible. The
translations deftly replicate the content of French poems line by line, often
word for word, with few enjambments in the English that were not already
present in the French. The layout of the volume is also skillfully designed.
Paired with her opening essay, Klosowska’s careful groupings of the poems
underscore the range of l’Aubespine’s writing, her poetic collaborations
and exchanges, and her prominent participation in salon settings of the
late sixteenth century. The volume closes with two appendices that present
l’Aubespine’s French renderings of Ovid’s Heroides and Ariosto’s Orlando
furioso, alongside their original Latin and Italian versions.

As a facing-page translation, the volume will appeal to instructors
treating early modern literature, and particularly women’s writing, not only
in France but across the European stage. And while the edition will be of spe-
cial interest to scholars of early modern French women’s writing, it will also
be useful to scholars of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century pan-European
women’s history, early modern erotica, gender studies, and the history of the
book. Klosowska’s edition represents the important work of Chicago’s “Other Voice” series. Not only does she recover a previously “lost” voice in Madeleine de l’Aubespine, but she also shows how l’Aubespine will undoubtedly change our ideas of the kinds of texts early modern women wrote and with whom, and how they publicly constructed their own authorial projects.

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With these lucid translations of Ana de San Bartolomé’s writings, Darcy Donahue provides English readers with a valuable resource in studying the spiritual texts of early modern nuns who claimed their own independence within European society under the auspices of the Catholic Church. This highly readable autobiography chronicles the events that transformed Ana’s life into one officially recognized as saintly by Pope Benedict XV in 1917: her youthful desire to serve God by running away to the desert and living an ascetic life, the battles with church patriarchy while setting up convents in France, her paradoxically conservative opposition to allowing the order’s nuns to choose their own confessors while simultaneously complaining about her dissatisfaction with her own confessor, and the counseling she received from her conversations with and visions of Saint Teresa of Ávila.

Ana’s siblings, who raised her after the death of their parents, vociferously opposed her desire to be a nun. They argued and dragged their feet over Ana’s calling, and, in one harrowing account, one brother became so infuriated with her decision that he attempted to murder her. Ana eventually joined the Discalced Carmelite convent of San José in Ávila. Ana soon became one of Teresa’s closest companions, even joining her in founding the order’s convent in Burgos. Ana nursed Teresa in her last days and claims to have held her in her arms as she died. Ana’s strong connection with Teresa continued posthumously, as Teresa appeared to Ana