

**Bourgeois, Louise.**

*Midwife to the Queen of France: Diverse Observations.* Trans. Stephanie O'Hara. Ed. Alison Klairmont Lingo.

The Other Voice in Early Modern Europe: The Toronto Series 56 / Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies 520. Toronto: Iter Press / Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2017. Pp. xix, 451 + 14 ill. ISBN 978-0-86698-576-5 (paperback) US\$59.95.

Louise Bourgeois's contribution to the exclusively male domain of medical publications in the early seventeenth century continues to resonate with current research focused on women's writing traditions and the history of science and medicine. Stephanie O'Hara and Alison Klairmont Lingo add to an important series of editions that continues to recover and recontextualize women's writing in medieval and early modern periods. Both the translation and the editorial apparatus of Bourgeois's text from the edition published in 1626 are thorough and impeccably researched, and serve to offer modern readers and researchers a detailed and carefully annotated English version of a text that influenced the medical world and the professional debate around midwifery as a profession in the early modern period.

Bourgeois (1563–1636) was the midwife to the French queen Marie de Médicis, a position that she secured as a result of being a successful and experienced professional. The first woman to write a medical text on the art of midwifery, she published a text that literally and figuratively opened previously very firmly closed doors to the spaces, bodies, and processes involved in reproduction. In fact, Bourgeois let the text itself speak to the reader:

An honor caused me to be written  
 A malicious liar almost had me suffocated  
 A slanderer had me scolded,  
 Of the three, honor made me triumph. (103)

This final entry into the dedicatory material of Bourgeois's first volume spoke to more than the book itself; it addressed, as well, the heavily censored legacy of women's writing, the problematic place of midwifery as an art that was also a medical profession, and the complex politics and fluid dynamics of writing about reproduction and women's bodies in published and public spaces.