thin, save for the final chapter on the works of Friar Thomas of Hales. In this chapter, Farina most convincingly demonstrates that vernacular romance and the sacred were combined in both religious writing and preaching to a popular audience—to the extent that Christ becomes the metaphorical knight in shining armor for anyone wishing to be wooed from sin to sanctity through the increasingly private, yet still pleasurable, act of reading.

Joanna Shearer
University of Oklahoma

Madeleine Des Roches and Catherine Des Roches. *From Mother and Daughter: Poems, Dialogues, and Letters of Les Dames Des Roches*, edited and translated by Anne R. Larsen. (The Other Voice in Early Modern Europe.) University of Chicago Press, 2006. Pp. xxx + 319.

Mother and daughter Madeleine and Catherine des Roches, hostesses of a salon frequented by the elite of sixteenth-century Poitiers, were among the first women to publish their works in sixteenth-century France, *Les Oeuvres* (1578-79), *Les Secondes oeuvres* (1583), and *Les Missives* (1589). Although they figured among the most well-known and prolific French Renaissance women authors, their texts lacked a modern edition until Anne Larsen's critical editions of *Les Oeuvres* (1993), *Les Secondes oeuvres* (1997), and *Les Missives* (1998), now the standard sixteenth-century French edition. With *From Mother and Daughter*, Larsen provides non-specialists with access to a selection of poems, dialogues, and letters from the Dames des Roches' wide-ranging oeuvre.

Larsen's profound understanding of the texts in question is manifest. The format of the poetry, presented with a facing translation, allows Larsen to opt for clear, unforced renderings by eschewing rhyme. Here the non-French specialist can get the sense of the poem and see how it works in terms of verse in the original.

Larsen's introduction is brief but solid. Madeleine des Roches (ca.1520-87), née Neveu, the daughter of a Poitevin notary, married twice. Catherine (1542-87), her only surviving child among three, was the daughter of her first husband. At the death of her second husband, François

Eboissard in 1578, Madeline composed a sonnet and an epitaph; the latter recalling, in the husband's voice, their chaste bond and exalting Madeleine as an exemplary widow. These works are part of *Les oeuvres*, published only after Eboissard's death. The writers adopted the surname Des Roches, from a property inherited by Madeleine, for publication. This choice "highlighted their self representation as members of a noble elite of letters whose *modus vivendi* they had adopted with the creation of their coterie" (3). Although little is known of Madeleine's early life and education, in her first ode she expresses regrets that marriage limited her studies. The noted humanist Joseph Justus Scaliger (ca. 1540-1609) judged Madeleine to be "the most learned person in Europe, among those who knew only one language" (4). Madeleine assumed responsibility for Catherine's education. She broadly followed humanist precepts, but did not train her daughter to be a spouse. Rather, she "inspired in Catherine a thirst for learning coupled with an ambition for poetic fame" (5). Catherine received an extensive education steeped in humanist tradition, including instruction in Latin and Italian. Catherine never married and lived with her mother until their death from the plague in 1587.

Larsen distills three major themes in the works of the Des Roches: "*vertu* (virtue), *loi* (law), and *plume* (pen)," reflecting the values of a new elite which, in contrast to the hereditary nobility of the sword, emphasized "a separate ideal of nobility founded on civility and letters" (16). Grounded in the Platonic tradition, the Des Roches advocated learning as the path to virtue which, when associated with women, stressed chastity and sexual purity. Eloquence demonstrated in writing also revealed virtue. The Des Roches' knowledge of rhetoric facilitated their entry into the political forum and provided a framework to address all levels of officials, including the king, concerning the well-being of the nation. Ruled by law, equally applied to all, the nation will not be beset by chaos. Despite the fact that their political sentiments aligned them closely with the Politiques, the conservative Catholic party, the Des Roches remained pacifists. Although unlike Christine de Pizan in that they did not openly rely upon writing as a source of income, the Des Roches can be counted among "the first professional writers of the early modern period" (20). They encouraged other women to take

up "l'ancre et la plume" (ink and pen) to express their own opinions.

Larsen divides the selected works into five chapters, each preceded by a short introduction. Chapters 1 and 2 consist of poems from *Les Oeuvres*, Madeleine's in Chapter 1 and Catherine's in Chapter 2. This parallels the structure of *Les Oeuvres*, which separates Madeleine's works from Catherine's and was repeated in the subsequent volumes. Larsen posits that this arrangement reinscribes the mother-daughter relationship: Madeleine speaks first and addresses a letter to her daughter which then is mirrored by the daughter's letter to her mother that precedes her portion of the volume. Chapter 3 focuses on poems by Madeleine and Catherine that appeared in *Les Secondes oeuvres*. Chapter 4 brings together dialogues composed by Catherine that appeared in *Les Oeuvres* and *Les Secondes oeuvres*. Finally, Chapter 5 offers letters from *Les Missives*, again following the same bipartite structure. Larsen's choice to mimic the design chosen by the Des Roches provides further insights for those unfamiliar with their works into their relationship. Although connected, they are independent; in dialogue but not collaborative in the sense of creating a cohesive text. Experience, marriage, motherhood, widowhood, the reality of growing old, and concern for her country inform Madeleine's poetry and letters. Catherine writes as an unmarried, learned woman, a position she creates as she writes it. Larsen proposes that Catherine des Roches "valorizes the mother-daughter bond as political site of power and literary agency" (81).

The concept of a dialogic relationship, rather than collaboration, accommodates the hints of underlying tensions in Catherine's works. A single woman whose poems tell of her rejection of unworthy suitors and offer advice to friends, much of Catherine's work highlights strong relationships between women, to the exclusion of men. Catherine's *For a Masquerade of Amazons* and *Song of the Amazons*, probably written in 1577 during Henri III's visit to Poitiers, underscore female prowess combined with chastity and link women warriors to women writers. The retelling of the story of Agnodice, a woman who masquerades as a man to become a doctor, takes a homoerotic turn, when, to prove her sex, Agnodice exposes her breasts to her women patients who caress and kiss them. Catherine's dialogues put more than one voice into play. While the dialogue between Pasithée and Iris clearly

favors Pasithée's devotion to learning over Iris' flightiness, it stages the conflicting desires that a young woman may harbor. She also conceives of an idealized relationship between Sincero and Charité in which the latter serves as a teacher to her would-be suitor. Finally, Catherine's poem *La Puce,* reprinted in *Les Secondes oeuvres,* signals to the reader the happenstance of a flea landing of Catherine's breast, an event that inspired *La Puce.*[1] The erotic context of the male-authored poems in that collection problematizes Catherine's emphasis on chastity in her other works.

There can be few criticisms of this edition. It is clear that limitations of space and scope may leave the reader longing for more fully-developed analyses. Larsen provides ample notes and bibliography for those who want more. In bringing the works of the Dames des Roches to the English-speaking public, Anne Larsen has assured that their writings will reach a broader audience and stimulate more intellectual discussion, just as they did over four centuries ago.

Edith J. Benkov
San Diego State University

End Note

1. *La Puce* (1582) was the only volume published during their lifetimes that was not a mother-daughter collection.

Francisca de los Apóstoles. *The Inquisition of Francisca: A Sixteenth-Century Visionary on Trial*, edited and translated by Gillian T.W. Ahlgren. (The Other Voice in Early Modern Europe.) University of Chicago Press, 2005. Pp. xxviii + 195.

Among the studies and translations of texts in the series edited by Margaret L. King and Albert Rabil, Jr., "The Other Voice in Early Modern Europe," this volume is unique, although it is by no means unique among texts that bear witness to the spiritual lives of early modern women. The text was not written by Francisca de los Apóstoles, nor by a sympathetic amanuensis. It is the transcription of Francisca's responses to the Inquisition's charges against her in a trial that began in Toledo in 1575. Among the nuns, tertiaries, and laywomen whose visions were scrutinized by the Inquisition, Francisca's defiance resounds across the centuries,