The second part of Erphat's monograph discusses the physical and architectural "emplacements of authority and holiness" (83–99). It describes the "special layout of Sufi lodges and shrines" and their role as enclaves of the saints' blessing and protective powers (83–86). Such buildings became magnets for visitors seeking the saints' help and protection. The author discusses various types of Sufi institutions, drawing a clear distinction between ruler-sponsored *khanqahs* and smaller structures (*zawiyas* and *ribats*) supported by the donations of ordinary believers hoping to secure continual blessings of the departed saints and their progeny buried nearby. Ephrat duly emphasizes the critical role of the saints' descendants and their students in sustaining and popularizing their cults. Not only did they maintain and renovate the tombs of their forefathers but they also composed hagiographies imprinting legendary images of the saints in the collective memory of the local communities.

Overall, the author has successfully achieved the goals stated at the beginning of her book. However, her reliance on Weber's model of institutionalization of charisma may occasionally appear overly utilitarian and deterministic. It risks making shaykhs and their spiritual and genealogical successors look manipulative or even cynical (10, 13, 28, 34, 37), while deemphasizing the innate human desire for protection against the vagaries of fate, such as foreign invasions (e.g., the Crusades) and epidemic diseases.

Alexander Knysh, *University of Michigan / Saint Petersburg State University, USA*
doi:10.1017/rqx.2024.65

The Spiritual Life and Other Writings. Camilla Battista da Varano. The Other Voice in Early Modern Europe: The Toronto Series. Ed and trans. William V. Hudon. New York: Iter Press, 2023. xv + 372 pp. $61.95.

This volume represents a veritable tour de force in several respects: not only does it include the translation of every text written by the noblewoman, nun, and saint Camilla Battista da Varano; it is also based on painstaking historical, philological, theological, and religious analysis of these writings; and it offers an incredibly rich view into one woman's life experience and belief system in early modernity. Even as he achieves this, William Hudon also calls into question some of the assumptions, naming conventions, and certainties that ultimately come from privileging some authors, approaches, or textual traditions over others.

Camilla (later, as a nun, Battista) was "the illegitimate daughter of the prominent Varano family of east-central Italy" (1), born in 1458 and educated at the Camerino court, where "a cultural and spiritual tradition" (11–12) had

prospered for several decades. Women there "received an intensive humanist education, equipping them for political involvement" (12); concurrently, they received "an exposure of similar intensity to Christian spirituality and devotion" (13). Hudon rightly emphasizes that these two facets of Varano's upbringing were not in contrast; in fact, they coexisted. Early on in his informative, exhaustive, and layered introduction, he reminds us of Gabriella Zarri's invitation that "a thorough reconsideration of the condition of early modern religious women and their position 'between Renaissance and Counter-Reformation' would result in a better understanding of each of those terms" (7). There is no doubt in my mind that readers of the present volume will be powerfully engaged in this direction, given the thematic scope and linguistic skills that Varano's writings display. This is possible because the editor and translator has painstakingly assembled here all extant writings by Varano, so we now enjoy the entirety of her works (in English translation) alongside illuminating footnotes that demonstrate the editor's (and the writer's) depth of scriptural and literary knowledge.

Varano engaged many topics: from the personal spiritual autobiography *The Spiritual Life* and *Instructions to a Disciple*, to a rewriting and explication of the Rule of the *Clarisse*, to a letter (one of only four extant) to Muzio Colonna, her brother-in-law and mercenary troop leader, asking him to spare the city of Montecchio from being occupied by his army. Some stylistic and rhetorical elements undeniably recur, such as the modesty topos that many other early modern writers utilized, foregrounded in the very title of "A treatise on the purity of heart necessary for religious perfection, composed by Sister Battista da Camerino, Clarist nun of the monastery of Saint Clare of Camerino, *at the request* of her spiritual father" (195; emphasis added) and expressed in its prologue through the following assertion: "You [Jesus] have deigned at times to utter your truths through the mouth of a woman" (195). Another element that emerges is the deep empathy that Varano inserts in her descriptions of the physical and emotional grief she felt (see, for example, a passage in her *Spiritual Life* included in the portion "Interior Debate over the Problem of Her Religious Vocation") (72–73); this is evident throughout her *Considerations on the Passion of Our Lord*, rife with descriptions of bodily and psychological harm and pain.

I want to single out the recurrence of paradoxes as an adequate tool to express the seeming contradictions of what can only be taken by faith, which is of course not unique to Varano's devotional and religious works. Paradoxes emerge most fully in her four poems, one in Latin and three in the vernacular (319–32). A literary consideration of Varano's writings could in fact start from these shorter texts, examining them through the textual and cultural lens of the paradoxes she employs.

https://doi.org/10.1017/rqx.2024.58 Published online by Cambridge University Press

In sum, this comprehensive volume brings back an additional "Other Voice" with the indispensable apparatus to understand and contextualize it. Hudon is to be congratulated for his insightful and learned introductory pages and the meticulous footnote references to biblical and other texts, which allow even a novice reader to grasp what Varano wrote in its cultural environment, and which offered this reader food for thought on sources incorporated in another woman writer's works.

Maria Galli Stampino, *University of Miami, USA*
doi:10.1017/rqx.2024.58

The Stolen Bones of St. John of Matha: Forgery, Theft, and Sainthood in the Seventeenth Century. A. Katie Harris.
Iberian Encounter and Exchange, 475–1755. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2023. xi + 229 pp. $119.95.

A good microhistory has a difficult mission: the author has to present a good (little) story that at the same time teaches us bigger, more complicated lessons than those immediately apparent in the story itself. Such connections are often a stretch. Katie Harris in her latest book offers us a lesson on how to do it right, when to focus small and when to expand big, how to take what could be a little slapstick story of lies and folly and make it an opportunity to think about truth, authenticity, and history. Her first book, *From Muslim to Christian Granada* (2007), dealt with a more famous case of religious-historical fraud, the discovery of the lead tablets (*plomos*) of Granada that allegedly established that city's ancient Christian past. In that earlier book as well as in this one, the author is both scholarly and entertaining, embracing complexity while never losing her grace.

The story is as follows. In 1655, two members of the Calced Trinitarians in Rome stole the relics of Saint John of Matha (actually not quite a saint), founder of the Trinitarian order and a member of the rival Discalced branch. The relics found their way to Spain and became the focal point of a decades-long effort to resolve the sainthood issue. More of interest to us, they provided an excuse for the writing of history, much of it invented.

The heart of the book is chapter 3, which describes one of the most interesting components of the story. Twenty years before the theft, an inventive Trinitarian friar named Juan Figueras Carpi had written an alleged history of the order, giving it a new past and an outstanding religious figure clearly worthy of sainthood. These document-based efforts to bolster the order failed, which probably was what inspired the 1655 theft. When Figueras's works proved