
Response by Caroline Ford, University of California, Los Angeles.

I appreciate H-France’s editor Michael Wolfe’s invitation to respond to Carol Harrison’s review of my recent book, *Divided Houses*. Harrison’s chief critique is that I did not include the unmediated “voices” of the religious women whom I discuss in my book. The fact of the matter is that this is not essentially what the book is about, and—in any event—the sources do not exist in this sense in the cases that I discuss, Harrison’s vague references to “devotional literature” and congregational archives notwithstanding. I am somewhat disappointed, as any author might be, that Harrison hence does not seem to grasp the main point of my book. In this sense, her review itself falls rather short. I was not trying to capture or explain female religiosity per se, though my chapter on Sainte Philomene does beg the question. The book is really about trying to understand how the feminization of religion contributed to the formation of a very distinct (largely male) secular political culture in France with respect to *laïcité*. This is not an insignificant question given what is going on in France and in the world today. Nevertheless, I do think that the voices of Emily Loveday, Jeanne Le Monnier, and Mme. De Guerry do at times come through quite powerfully, even though they had to rely on the pens of men. At any rate, what seems to interest Harrison more is female religiosity in and of itself, which is no doubt an important topic, too. I very much encourage scholars like her to explore this significant area of research. The books they produce will not be the one I was trying to write.

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