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Response to Constance B. Bouchard's review of Leonie V. Hicks, *Religious Life in Normandy, 1050-1300: Space, Gender and Social Pressure*. Woodbridge, Suffolk, and Rochester, N.Y.: The Boydell Press, 2007. x + 240 pp. Maps, notes, bibliography, and index. \$80 U.S. (cl). ISBN 1-84383-329-8.

Response by Leonie V. Hicks, University of Southampton.

I should like to thank the editors of H-France for giving me the opportunity to respond to Constance Bouchard's review of *Religious Life in Normandy, 1050-1300: Space, Gender and Social Pressure*. Although Prof. Bouchard endeavours to set my work within a wider context, she does little to give the reader of the review an overview of what I was aiming to achieve here.<sup>[1]</sup> After stating my purpose in writing the book, I shall address her main criticisms below.

My book is a theoretically informed, interdisciplinary and comparative study of the religious life in Normandy using both narrative and normative sources combined with a consideration of material culture, particularly architecture. Some of these sources, especially the architecture, have been underused in the study of the Norman religious life. My primary research question was how the construction and perceptions of sacred space governed interaction between religious and laity in a variety of contexts, including monasteries, hospitals and the parish. In so doing, it was my intention, clearly stated in the introduction and conclusion, to look at relations between people in terms of practices enacted in everyday spatial contexts (p. 15), as "all too often debates surrounding the use of space seem rather sterile" and "centred on institutions" (p. 161). In short, I am interested in relations between people and space.

It is against this background that Bouchard's criticisms should be read. She states that I do not analyse charters, considered, in her view, "to be the best source of information on medieval people", which is understandable given her use of charter collections and cartularies in her own work. Such documents may well provide a great deal of evidence in that regard, but they are not as informative as to how those relations are enacted in a spatial context. Where appropriate, charters were used to make specific points,<sup>[2]</sup> but a study on the lines that Bouchard suggests would have directed attention away from the main purpose of my book and also duplicated a lot of existing work and new and important research being undertaken by European scholars, particularly those based in Normandy.<sup>[3]</sup> I have recently been looking at charter collections in conjunction with a new project on the use and representation of "outdoor space", and my initial findings confirm that they are not the best sources for understanding space, though further research may disprove this theory. Bouchard speculates further that the reason behind the lack of charters is that I "found the Latin ... daunting." A cursory glance at the bibliography and footnotes reveals that the charter collections are to be found in printed Latin scholarly editions, as indeed are virtually all the other sources. References in the footnotes to all sources are given to the Latin text and where it exists, English translations. Direct quotations are, however, given in English, as is now the common practice in academic books designed to appeal to a wide audience, particularly undergraduate students unfamiliar with Latin.

Bouchard wonders on the one hand why I did not include the friars and on the other, why I did not focus on the hospitals and leper houses. This again comes down to a problem of availability of evidence. My stated aim was to use as wide a variety of evidence as possible. The mendicant orders, although present in Normandy, did not leave as rich and varied array of material and written sources as their

monastic counterparts and brothers and sisters within the hospitals. As such, the Franciscans and Dominicans, fell outside the methodological scope of this book which enabled me to compare different forms of religious life and lay/religious interaction from different perspectives. In terms of the many hospitals and leper houses, it is true that no regional study of these institutions for the province of Rouen akin to F.-O. Touati's work on Sens exists. However in terms of looking at the process of foundation, endowment, and the exercise of charity, work of the nature Bouchard was looking for, does exist for Normandy.[4] This is an area in which a lot of new and exciting work is being done and I look forward to seeing the results in due course. To reiterate, my emphasis was on comparison, rather than exhaustive studies of individual orders or congregations of houses.

Bouchard regards my reading of certain sources and the presentation of evidence as lacking analysis and nuance. She highlights the Benedictine rule in this respect. The rule was certainly adapted and modified throughout the period under consideration as is revealed through the inclusion of sources such as Lanfranc of Canterbury's *Monastic Constitutions* and the visitation records; however, it still underpinned monastic practice. As I elucidated throughout the book, monastic and wider religious practices were contested and meant different things to different people, whether they were monastic and ecclesiastical superiors, monks and nuns, or laypeople. Combined with the fact that this is most explicitly identified through a consideration of everyday spatial practice, this tension between ideas and reality is the overarching argument of my book. That space is active in creating relationships is something that Bouchard fails to acknowledge. As such she sees the three constituent parts of my subtitle as separate entities, whereas it is clear in my analysis and the summations of that at the end of each chapter, that space, gender and social pressure were interlinked. This is particularly evident in my discussion of the parish and the relations between priests and their wives or concubines.

The final aspect of the review I should like to address is the charge that I did not read enough American or German scholarship. Works by many of the authors she cites are included in the references and bibliography, if not the specific monographs listed in her review, as well as many other works by different authors.[5] All I can say is that of course one reads more widely and deeply than is evident from a bibliography. Books have time and word limits and it was not possible to include everything, so the bibliography and footnotes are confined to those works deemed most relevant to my research and most useful to the reader.

It is apparent through her comments that Bouchard was expecting a different book. I hope that I have stated my case here sufficiently so that the readers may judge for themselves the merits and purpose of my work.

## NOTES

[1] There are some factual errors in Bouchard's review, which need correcting.

This book grew out of my doctoral thesis; it is not my doctoral thesis and as such no blame should be attached to my "dissertation committee." Any errors are entirely my own. The number of leper houses and hospitals in Normandy is far in excess of the "nearly thirty" quoted by Prof. Bouchard. This is a figure she presumably takes from my appendices, which are by no means exhaustive and only include the houses mentioned in the text (p.17, n. 3; p.163, n. 1). The publication details for Barbara Rosenwein's book, *Negotiating Space: Power, Restraint and Privileges of Immunity in Early Medieval Europe* as cited in my bibliography are correct. The British publisher is Manchester University Press. As I am a British scholar, I naturally used the British edition.

[2] See particularly the discussion of family vocations in chapter four.

[3] Veronique Gazeau's work on the Norman Benedictine abbots is a case in point: *Normannia*

*monastica*, 2 vols (Caen: CRAHM, 2007). This book came out shortly after mine was published, but other works by Gazeau are listed in the bibliography. See also the work of Mathieu Arnoux, particularly *Des clercs au service de la réforme. Études et documents sur les chanoines réguliers de la province of Rouen* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2000) as well as the new work by younger scholars like Grégory Combalbert, “Les Évêques, les conflits et la paix aux portes de la Normandie: les exemples des diocèses de Chartres et d’Évreux (première moitié du XIIe siècle)”, *Tabularia* (2007) <http://www.unicaen.fr/mrsh/craham/revue/tabularia/print.php?dossier=dossier6&file=05combalbert.xml>, [accessed 16 June 2008] and Richard Allen, “Five charters concerning the early history of the chapter at Avranches”, *Tabularia* (2008) <http://www.unicaen.fr/mrsh/craham/revue/tabularia/print.php?dossier=sources&file=08allen.xml>, [accessed 16 June 2008].

[4] F.-O. Touati, *Maladie et société au Moyen Âge. La leper, les lépreux et les léproseries dans la province ecclésiastique de Sens jusqu’au milieu du XVI siècle* (Brussels: De Boeck Université, 1998). For Normandy see, for example, the work of D. Jeanne on the diocese of Bayeux, Bruno Tabuteau on Évreux and S. C. Mesmin on Saint-Gilles-de-Pont-Audemer, I also note that Elma Brenner has recently completed her doctoral thesis on charity in Rouen at the University of Cambridge.

[5] Penelope Johnson, *Equal Monastic Profession: Religious Women in Medieval France* (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1991); Rosenwein, *Negotiating Space*, Patrick J. Geary, *Living with the Dead in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1994); Megan McLaughlin, “Secular and Spiritual Fatherhood in the Eleventh-Century”, in J. Murray, ed., *Conflicted Identities and Multiple Masculinities: Men in the Medieval West* (New York: Garland, 1999), 25–43.

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