

---

H-France Review Vol. 6 (August 2006), No. 95

Response to Carol Harrison's review of **Caroline Ford**, *Divided Houses: Religion and Gender in Modern France*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2005. xi + 170 pp. Bibliography and index. \$35.00 U.S. (cl). ISBN 0-8014-4367-9.

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.

---

Caroline Ford  
University of California, Los Angeles  
cford@history.ucla.edu

Copyright © 2006 by the Society for French Historical Studies, all rights reserved. The Society for French Historical Studies permits the electronic distribution of individual reviews for nonprofit educational purposes, provided that full and accurate credit is given to the author, the date of publication, and the location of the review on the H-France website. The Society for French Historical Studies reserves the right to withdraw the license for redistribution/republication of individual reviews at any time and for any specific case. Neither bulk redistribution/republication in electronic form of more than five percent of the contents of H-France Review nor re-publication of any amount in print form will be permitted without permission. For any other proposed uses, contact the Editor-in-Chief of H-France. The views posted on H-France Review are not necessarily the views of the Society for French Historical Studies.

ISSN 1553-9172