Anglais. Lartigue va jusqu'à demander « si le bilinguisme ne devrait pas être une exigence pour recevoir la prêtrise » (p. 228). Gagnon aborde également les problèmes personnels de certains prêtres, dont les prestations furent cause de scandales et de plaintes. « Fallait-il tant insister sur les rarissimes infidélités au devoir d'assistance? Peut-être, ne fût-ce que pour montrer l'importance éminente de la confession, surtout lorsqu'il s'agissait de la toute dernière » (p. 240).

Au chapitre suivant, « Les péchés », Gagnon explore l'univers des péchés qui constituaient, en définitive, les objets formels pour lesquels pécheurs et confesseurs se rencontraient, les premiers pour passer aux aveux, les seconds, pour pardonner et déterminer les conditions de la rétribution. Péchés d'amour et péchés d'argent occupent beaucoup de place à ce tribunal, les seconds ayant plus d'importance que les premiers. Matières sérieuses, les péchés portaient à conséquences, tant pour la vie spirituelle des individus que pour la vie familiale, paroissiale et sociale. Si le lien social et l'état de grâce sont intrinsèquement affectés par les péchés de chacun, l'espérance de s'en sortir malgré tout, individuellement et collectivement, est nourrie par l'expérience du pardon et de la joie que provoque la libération du mal par l'absolution.

L'ultime chapitre, « Les confesseurs », ouvre sur ce qu'adviennent certains de ces prêtres, sous l'influence ou le fardeau de ce tribunal privé. On peut avoir le sentiment de connaître ce qu'a été la confession pour les pénitents, mais que sait-on de ce qu'elle a pu être pour les confesseurs? Il ne faut pas croire que les paroissiens étaient aveuglement soumis à leur confesseur. Gagnon a retrouvé des traces éloquentes de querelles qui ont éclaté et d'inquiétudes profondes qui ont traversé leur existence. En définitive, ce chapitre aide à comprendre ce qu'a pu être la fonction identitaire qu'entretenaient les curés et les vicaires avec la pratique du confessionnal : leur propre démarche de pécheur et leur accueil des pécheurs.

Un livre fort intéressant, très documenté, qui aide à approfondir d'où on vient tout en invitant à développer de la circonspection dans nos jugements sur le vécu religieux intime de ces Canadiens qui ont préparé le Québec d'aujourd'hui.

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Horrox, Rosemary, and W., Mark Ormrod (eds.) — *A Social History of England 1200–1500*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006. Pp. 514.

This new collection of essays surveying the field of social history in later medieval England is an immensely useful volume. The "social" is conceptualized here very broadly to include within its purview culture, law, politics, and religion, as well as the more traditional social history topics of economy and demography. The book occupies a niche between the single-authored textbook (most recently, for instance, Jeremy Goldberg's *Medieval England: A Social History 1250–1550*) and the weightier historiographical guide (such as Stephen Rigby's Blackwell

Companion to Britain in the Later Middle Ages). While inevitably a book featuring essays from so many different contributors will be more successful in some parts than in others, as a whole it is first-rate.

The book comprises 19 essays, each written by a leading specialist in the area. The editors chose to organize the book around six longer chapters (Stephen Rigby on the processes of socio-economic change in later medieval England; Peter Coss on the period as "an age of deference"; Richard Britnell on town life; Bruce Campbell on rural life; Eamon Duffy on religious belief; and Miri Rubin on identities). Between these broader chapters are interspersed shorter essays on more specific topics. Michael Prestwich writes on war; Simon Walker on law and order; Philippa Maddern on social mobility; Maryanne Kowaleski on consumption; Wendy Childs on "moving around"; Mavis Mate on work and leisure; Valerie Flint on magic; Jeremy Goldberg on life cycles; Robin Frame on England in the wider world; and Paul Strohm on reading and writing. Although the book in a broader sense does much of what other books of its kind do, the rubrics under which the contributors write are in some cases refreshingly different. The essays by Maddern, Kowaleski, Childs, Mate, Flint, and Frame each address subjects rarely included in general surveys of social or political history, and each convinced me that its subject is not only interesting but necessary for an understanding of late medieval English society. In other cases, seemingly more conventional chapter titles nonetheless deliver original and unconventional perspectives — Coss's and Campbell's essays, for instance, are each worth the price of the book, effortlessly and fluidly running through a stunning breadth of material topically, chronologically, and geographically. Although all the chapters are more than competent, some are more workmanlike than inspired (Walker's and Britnell's chapters, for instance). Rather than standing independently, as essays in collected volumes often do, the chapters speak to one another, the cross-references and occasional internal discussion improving the cohesiveness of the collection. Even when the essays do not explicitly address one another, nonetheless their juxtaposition provides much food for thought (asking students to read the chapters by Flint, Phythian-Adams, Rubin, and Goldberg against Duffy's essay would produce lively discussion, for instance). The editors are to be congratulated both for their conceptualization of the structure of the volume and their efforts in bringing the contributors into dialogue with one another.

The essays are not aimed at beginners, despite the blurb on the paperback edition advertising the book as an "introduction for students". The level of discussion is conceptually high, and the reader is assumed to have a basic grasp of chronological developments. The book would work well with advanced undergraduates or graduate students, for instance as a basis for a seminar on medieval English social history. Indeed, as I read the book, I found myself thinking often about how useful particular essays would be for advanced teaching (and I have already recommended particular chapters to several of my students).

Excellent though the volume is, I have one reservation about its usefulness for advanced teaching: the patchiness of its scholarly apparatus and the subterranean nature of some of the historiographical engagements. Each essay has a "further

reading" bibliography at the end of the book, some more inclusive then others. But within the essays, more precise references to scholarship on particular questions or signposts allowing readers to trace the provenance of specific examples are provided unevenly. Some of the authors point deftly and briefly, but as fully as necessary, to the literature on a subject in the footnotes. Others provide references only occasionally and sometimes seemingly randomly, lessening the utility of the book as a basic resource for the field. The essay by Eamon Duffy on "religious belief" was perhaps most frustrating on this question. Duffy has in his sights a number of historiographical targets, some of which are acknowledged as such in text and footnotes; for instance, he argues forcefully and explicitly against Colin Richmond's notion that gentry religion was increasingly privatized in the fifteenth century. Some of his targets remain under the surface of the text and the apparatus, however, despite equally forceful arguments being marshalled against those (unacknowledged) opponents. The section on Lollards, for instance, presents the sect in highly uncongenial terms — surely no one, he writes, could have been satisfied by a movement with doctrine and writings that were "chilling", "dispiriting", "monotonous", and "entirely lacking in the affective warmth and devotion to the suffering humanity of Christ which is the distinctive mark of late medieval mainstream Christianity" (p. 328). His partisan dismissal of the Lollards is clearly in reaction to the much more sympathetic views of mainline scholars of Lollardy such as Anne Hudson and Margaret Aston: yet an unsuspecting reader would not be able to detect this. Aston and Hudson are both featured in the "further reading" recommendations at the end of the book, but Aston's work does not appear in the footnotes at all, and Hudson features only in notes acknowledging quotations borrowed from her publications. For students struggling to understand the historiography of late medieval English religion, not to mention the functions of the scholarly apparatus, this is not entirely helpful.

These cavils aside, this is a splendid volume. *A Social History of England 1200–1500* does more than summarize the state of the field of English social and cultural history; it advances it. Marked by nuance, insight, and sophistication, the essays make a wonderful case that late medieval English social history is a vital and fascinating field.

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JORLAND, Gérard, Annick, OPINEL, and George, WEISZ (eds.) — *Body Counts: Medical Quantification in Historical & Sociological Perspectives/La Quantification médicale, perspectives historiques et sociologiques*. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2005. Pp. 417.

Body Counts: Medical Quantification in Historical & Sociological Perspectives is a much-needed in-depth analysis of the role of quantification in medical history. It fruitfully explores old debates with renewed vigour and successfully challenges accepted historiography on several issues, most notably the role of the patient in