he possessed in earlier chapters. This section veers closer to being a history of the university, rather than that of student life. Perhaps the weakness of this section demonstrates that no historian can secure that necessary distance for perspective when treating the near-present. This criticism permits the reviewer to observe that he preferred those chapters which were Johnston's work because he possesses an enviable and felicitous magic with words.

One can, however, mount some small criticisms aimed at Johnston. The reviewer wonders, for example, if the students in the fall of 1914 were as oblivious to the war which had broken out before their return to classes, as he suggests. It seems very doubtful. In this same chapter, which encloses the war years, Johnston states that the Canadian Patriotic Fund was "set up to provide for the comfort of Canadian soldiers overseas." Such was not the case: the Fund was organized to supplement the incomes of the families of the men who were serving king and country.

As it happens, this reviewer was an undergraduate at McMaster from 1950 to 1954; consequently, the fifth chapter, dealing with the fifties, was read with special interest. It is natural, then, to protest that these years were not as marked by the student apathy which the subtitle of the chapter suggests. And, because the student newspaper, the *Silhouette*, is cited in making this argument, it should be noted that one editor of that era was only happy with a constant storm of controversy; anything less he characterized as apathetic. The reviewer, however, can move beyond questioning a source and, drawing on most of his remaining faculties, recall one episode of that era which belies the label of apathetic.

In the early fifties a very real storm broke over the campus around the question of sponsoring some Russian students to come for a year of studies — at what was still, then, a Baptist university. Whether these students would have ever come or been allowed to come remain academic questions because McMasterites voted down the proposition, but only after a heated and protracted debate. It still seems likely that the student body would have voted affirmatively had not two events occurred which placed some on the horns of a dilemma. First, someone hoisted the Russian flag over University Hall; and then a small group of young Hamilton communists arrived on the campus to urge a "yes" vote in the leaflets which they distributed. That tore it. But one could scarcely characterize the episode as an example of apathy, particularly if one remembers that McCarthyism was still flourishing in the United States.

Having gotten that off this chest, the conclusion must return to the beginning and emphasize the excellence of this book which is finely crafted and eminently readable.

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William Chester Jordan — *From Servitude to Freedom. Manumission in the Senonais in the Thirteenth Century*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1986. Pp. viii, 149.

Using a variety of unpublished sources, mostly from the Archives of the Yonne, the author has provided a stimulating discussion of the history of manumission in one relatively well-documented area of northern France. He discusses what was meant by manumission, particularly the limits of the benefits it conveyed, and then goes on to examine the reasons which led lords to grant manumission, and peasants to desire it; and the problems to which it gave rise. He bases his work on a case study of the manumissions of one landlord, the monastery of Saint-Pierre-le-Vif in Sens, but ranges widely within the Senonais in supplying supporting evidence from other sources.

Perhaps the most interesting chapter in the book is that in which Jordan discusses payment for the manumissions. The sums required were often enormous, and show that the peasants set a

high value on freedom. Penalties for late payment were immense. Peasants must, therefore, have borrowed extensively from middle men, particularly when landlords demanded a lump sum in return for manumissions. Jordan finds some evidence for these middle men among the wealthier *bourgeois* of the Senonais though much of their involvement must rest on assumption rather than evidence.

Previous work on manumissions has mostly concentrated on their legal rather than their social or even their economic consequences. Jordan may perhaps be forgiven for refusing to be drawn into legal technicalities. Nevertheless, he cannot avoid some legal definition of manumission. The one at which he arrives — the freeing of a dependent from one or more of six named jural disabilities — is very wide and deliberately begs the question of whether the recipients were *hommes de corps* of their lords or merely owed certain services traditionally associated with unfreedom. The former were, however, an identifiable and clearly less privileged group and it would have been worth discussing how many of the Senonais manumissions were in fact directed to *hommes de corps*. The work of Patault on Champenois (*Hommes et femmes de corps en Champagne méridionale à la fin du moyen-âge*. Saint Nicolas-de-Port, 1978) makes it clear that *hommes de corps* were sometimes specifically excluded from enfranchisement there and suggests that to blur the distinction between enfranchisement and manumission, between *hommes de corps* and other unfree dependents, may lead to inaccuracy. The problem of the *taille* was also dismissed rather briefly: against the views of Fourquin and Valous, to which the author refers, could be set that of Pacault backed to some extent by Morard [« Servage et manumissions dans le canton de Fribourg à la fin du moyen-âge », *Mémoires de la Société pour l'histoire du droit et des institutions des anciens pays bourguignons, comtois et romands* (1967)] (who does not appear in the bibliography) that it was considerable burden and a major reason to seek manumission.

The author seeks no more than to provide a case study of one group of manumissions in one area where manumission, as he defines it was particularly widespread and precocious. He discusses reasons for this and, while he does not reject economic explanations — obviously a major reason for the extraordinarily large number of manumissions in the Senonais was the need of the landlords for ready money — he discusses other reasons for the manumissions and particularly for the willingness of the recipients to pay large sums of money for the privilege of being free, even when such privilege by no means freed them from all obligations to their landlords. In many cases they were buying recognition of freedoms which they had already usurped under a previous, less competent abbot and which they had used to move to towns and to enter into business transactions of a type not normally possible to serfs. Others wanted the mobility, the freedom of action or the power to transmit their estates to their heirs without the obligation to pay *mainmorte* which such freedom would give them. Jordan emphasizes, however, that there must have been a psychological element in the quest for freedom which overrode practical considerations since in many cases the purchase of manumission could not have made economic sense.

The story of the manumissions of Saint-Pierre is instructive. It does, however, differ significantly from that of manumissions in other places for which studies exist (Fribourg, Champagne etc.). Some reference to the contrast would have been useful. In spite of these quibbles, however, this is a valuable book, both as a study of manumission in its own right and as a contribution to the current debate on the nature of relations between landlord and peasant in the middle ages. Jordan wisely avoids much direct reference to that debate — though he does give an outline of it in his first chapter — and leaves the reader to draw his own conclusions. But he does make it clear that even the manumissions of the Senonais, which were apparently pleasing to both parties, were achieved in and were to some extent the product of an atmosphere of profound social tension. We need more such studies if we are to achieve a reliable picture of medieval social relations and Jordan is to be congratulated on this one.

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