Karrie Fuller probes early modern manuscript responses to Langland and contributions by Hilary E. Fox and Theresa O'Byrne analyse literary output in the English-speaking areas of fifteenth-century Ireland. The final two sections deal with two of Pearsall's consistent preoccupations: the medieval reception of Chaucerian and Langlandian texts. Elizabeth Scala explores Chaucer's practice of self-quotation in the *The Nun's Priest's Tale*. Through a detailed analysis of the manuscript glosses to the *Wife of Bath's prologue*, Sarah Baechle makes a compelling case for the glosses in early manuscripts of *The Canterbury tales* having been 'received by medieval readers as an integral part of the text' (p. 400). In the final section on Langlandian writing, Jill Mann questions the well-established theory that the C-reviser of *Piers Plowman* was using a 'corrupt' copy of the B-text. Melinda Nielsen and Katherine Kerby-Fulton consider textual instability in a manuscript culture, focusing on the act of revision and on the blurry boundary that often exists between authors and scribes.

The emphasis in *New directions* on the relationship between manuscripts and reading practices produces a volume that has a lot say about literary experience, but also about the shifting nature of aesthetic expectations in different times and places. In her preface to the volume as a whole, Kerby-Fulton voices the hope that the essays will not only speak to manuscript specialists, but will also enrich students' literary understanding of medieval texts (p. xix). The volume's fresh insights into canonical texts, its clear 'mission statement', its account of previous work in the field and, above all, its clear and lively style, should ensure a broad audience. Fittingly for a volume about books, it is an attractive publication with a generous helping of colour images. Scholars and students of medieval English writing will find much to enjoy here. *New directions* is an engaging collection of essays that covers a remarkable range of texts and contexts and opens up as many questions as it seeks to answer. The energy and intellectual largesse that characterises this volume is a fitting reflection of Derek Pearsall's impact on Middle English studies.

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD AISLING BYRNE

The clergy in the medieval world. Secular clerics, their families and careers in north-western Europe, c. *800*–c.*1200*. By Julia Barrow. Pp. xxi + 447 incl. 3 maps. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015. £65. 978 1 107 08638 8

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Julia Barrow's volume on the secular clerics of north-western Europe over some four centuries raises fundamental questions about a significant section of society to which comparatively little attention has been paid. Who were the 'secular' clergy – first so termed in the twelfth century to distinguish them from monks? Who decided that the clerical life was the path that they would take? How did their careers develop? How and under what 'rules' did they live? What sort of relationship did these men enjoy with their worldly families? What form of education did they receive? What do we know of their roles in households, major cathedral and collegiate churches, and in the parish? These questions are essential to our understanding of the clerical office, yet they have rarely been as well articulated or tackled in such detail as the author does in this study. Barrow casts her

geographical net principally across France, Germany and England – arguing that there are compelling reasons for treating these areas separately from southern Europe (p. 7) – and chronologically from the Carolingian period to the years before the Fourth Lateran Council, a period during which source material becomes increasingly rich and diverse. Much scholarship has been devoted to the monastic orders in the same period, but tackling the large and diverse group that comes under the umbrella of the term 'secular clergy' adds an important dimension to scholarship on the medieval Church. Chapter ii begins with a study of the clerical office and its defining features: ordination in its various grades (and the distinguishing mark of the tonsure) and the age at which men were ordained, and clerical careers. It is brought to life by case studies such as of Wilfrid, Æberht of York, Alcuin, Aldric of Le Mans and Hincmar of Laon. Barrow also tackles the difficult question of the proportion of clergy in the various grades at any given time, and considers progression into higher orders. Chapter iii, 'Rules for life', examines the way in which monks – unlike clergy – spent 'a great deal of time debating their own raison d'être [and] also devoted attention to the task of advising clerics how to live' (p. 7), and monastic and episcopal influence on clerical lifestyles. Of particular significance here is the emergence of the Rule of St Augustine in the eleventh century. Chapter iv turns to the question of clergy as family men, examining the nature of their relationship at this level, in particular the questions of clerical marriage and inheritance. From this subject the discussion moves easily to commendation and *nutritio*, and the fostering of boys in the early years after their first tonsure, which might form a bridge between the family home and entry into an ecclesiastical career. Two chapters are devoted to education, always a central part of the training of the clergy but one that increased in importance from the end of the twelfth century (p. 234). Patronage was essential to clergy careers, and chapter viii investigates how clerics benefited from the support that saw them placed as household chaplains in royal or magnate courts, or in the service of bishops. Those clergy about whom we know most – due to the more abundant source materials – are those who served in cathedral churches and the major collegiate churches, and these form the subject of chapter ix. The final chapter turns to the complex question of what sort of clergy served in local churches, arguing that those whose careers were at parish level would have expected to stay in that role and would not have sought further preferment.

This book marks the cumulation of many years' research, and Julia Barrow is to be congratulated on the appearance of this, the first study of this depth, in English, of the secular clergy in the medieval world. She has brought together diverse materials, previously studied piecemeal, and fashioned a coherent and compelling narrative.

University of Wales,
Trinity Saint David

Janet Burton