

against heresy was that it was innovative. The full scope of this traditionalism is revealed when it is perceived to have extended into the sphere of legal prescription. And in this context the notion of 'living tradition' loses its abstraction: we can see as we study the canons how immutability did not mean ossification, since their essential note was not repetition but a common grounding in the patristic inheritance, to which was attributed in practice the same authority as that of Scripture.

This book remains a study of the canonical collections precisely as collections. It does not treat the content of individual canons, save occasionally for purposes of illustration; it does not discuss the occasion and purposes of the issuing of new canons, notably at several of the ecumenical councils. Nor does it treat the actual application of the law in particular and individual cases.

While stressing that Byzantine church law was not conceived as a set of rules to be applied literally as in much modern administration of law, Wagschal concedes that such application was common in practice, whatever the broader ideological framework. A footnote refers the reader to my translation of the Acts of Chalcedon as 'an excellent platform for such a study' (p. 282). This surprises me. To take the trial of Dioscorus, the Acts stress that the correct canonical process was followed and that he was deposed for serious wrongdoing, but it was not thought necessary to convict him of breaking any particular canons. At Session x a list of eighteen charges against Ibas of Edessa was read out; at no point is a canon cited. There was no principle of *nullum crimen sine lege*, so self-evident principles of proper conduct were as good as codified canons. Even the basic procedural rules could be relaxed. Session XIV of Chalcedon treated the case of Athanasius of Perrhe, and ordered a retrial, even though two earlier condemnations had fulfilled all the canonical requirements and their annulment at Ephesus II had itself been rejected as invalid. It was this more than anything that made it unnecessary for the Byzantines to develop their church laws into a comprehensive system comparable to modern law codes.

The book ends with a final chapter that draws the threads together in a masterly fashion. I would advise readers to start with this chapter. But the whole book is to be read. It is highly coherent, well structured, with conclusions that are precisely instructive but possess a wider significance beyond legal studies. It is a book that deserves to inspire yet further research into this important body of material.

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RICHARD PRICE

New directions in medieval manuscript studies and reading practices. Essays in honor of Derek Pearsall. Edited by Kathryn Kerby-Fulton, John J. Thompson and Sarah Baechle. Pp. xxii + 551 incl. frontispiece and 39 black-and-white and colour ills. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2014. \$66. 978 0 268

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This rich volume reflects the remarkable range and depth of Derek Pearsall's influence on Middle English studies over the past half century. It originates in a

2011 conference organised to mark Pearsall's eightieth birthday; however, the true lineage of this book is more extensive. The volume contributes to a long-standing discussion about what the material contexts of medieval texts might have to say to literary critics. Conferences organised by Pearsall himself in 1981 and 1998 form notable landmarks in this conversation. The book is divided into seven sections, each featuring three or four papers and a foreword. The format is not unlike that of a conference, and, indeed, the forewords were developed from respondents' comments on individual conference sessions in 2011. The volume's structural similarity to a conference is complemented by the pleasantly conversational tone of many of the contributions. The subdivisions and forewords prove a helpful device both for keeping the myriad threads of discussion in clear focus and for articulating their relationship to each other in the course of a volume of more than five hundred pages.

The first section is devoted to what are termed 'Pearsallian reading practices'. In his foreword to this part of the book, Christopher Cannon stresses the importance of close reading in Pearsall's scholarship and traces his conscious shift from an initial focus on New Critical methods, to a more historicised perspective in later decades. The papers in this section exemplify and respond to these interpretative practices. The question raised in Oliver Pickering's title 'How good is the outspoken *South English legendary* poet?' is very much in Pearsallian mode. A. C. Spearing's exploration of narrative freedom in *Troilus and Criseyde* builds on Pearsall's insights into this text, but supplements them with ideas drawn from narrative theory. The volume's second and third sections pay tribute to Pearsall's work at the University of York between 1965 and 1985. The former section focuses on courtly verse and affectivity, themes on which Pearsall worked with Elizabeth Salter. William Marx's foreword frames this part of the book, as a tribute not only to Pearsall's work, but also to that of Salter, who died prematurely in 1980. Jocelyn Wogan-Browne reads two meditations on Christ's passion, one in Anglo-Norman and one in Middle English, against the background of medieval England's multilingualism and internationalism. Katie Ann-Marie Bugyis develops the idea of the annotator as literary critic in her contribution on reader interventions in the sole surviving manuscript of the *Book of Margery Kempe*. The third section of the volume is inspired by Pearsall's collection, *Manuscripts and readers*, the proceedings of his 1981 conference on the topic. It features four essays written by scholars who also contributed to that conference. Julia Boffey, Carole M. Meale and A. I. Doyle each use a single case study to ask larger questions about compilation, reader response and the medieval book trade. A. S. G. Edwards contributes an essay on the modern trade in medieval manuscripts, charting the fortunes of Lydgate manuscripts on the twentieth-century book market.

As its title signals (and unlike many volumes of its type), *New directions* avoids the temptation merely to look back. Senior scholarly voices are placed alongside less well-established ones and the collection is full of suggestions and pointers for further exploration. Sections IV and V of the volume are titled 'Newer Directions in Manuscript Studies I & II' and feature some stimulating work from up-and-coming scholars. Hannah Zdansky takes a fresh look at the curious manuscript in which *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* and *Pearl* survive. Other essays extend Pearsall's work in less well-trodden chronological and geographical directions.

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.

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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