New Directions in Medieval Manuscript Studies and Reading Practices: Essays in Honor of Derek Pearsall. Kathryn Kerby-Fulton, John J. Thompson, and Sarah Baechle, eds.
Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2014. xxii + 552 pp. $66.

In this book, three functions converge: *New Directions* is a festschrift, a proceedings volume, and a thematic essay collection. In one sense, these multiple functions reinforce each other, with the conference's conceptual structure lending coherence to the topics of the volume. In another sense, the thematic festschrift is a challenging enterprise: it requires balancing coverage of the field's engagement with the theme(s) at hand against an appropriate reflection of a community's sentiments toward the honoree. This balancing act inevitably results in the omission of some voices. In particular, experimenting with approaches to medieval reading practices through inventive manuscript study is a task taken up by several junior scholars who operate outside the spaces limned here. I found myself wishing, in other words, that the "new directions" aspect of the book's remit had encouraged it toward an even broader representation of junior scholars than it contains. But the linked functions of the volume present an understandable challenge in this regard, and the volume contains valuable, forward-looking essays by both junior and senior scholars.

The number of essays precludes exhaustive coverage; I shall instead survey the whole informationally, lingering over some examples. The volume begins with a section reminding readers of Pearsall's commitment to "close reading" (1) practices alongside manuscript study, with essays focusing upon the formal operations that inflect narrative voice (A. C. Spearing; Oliver Pickering) and Pearsall's Shakespearean erudition (Martha Driver). A section acknowledging Elizabeth Salter and her collaborations with Pearsall gestures toward internationalism in an essay by Jocelyn Wogan-Browne. Her piece brings affect into conversation with "the somatics of medieval reading" (81) around a cosmopolitan tradition of nightingale poetry. This section also represents a methodological inquiry, in essays by Susan Powell, Sarah McNamer, and Katie Ann-Marie Bugyis, into the types of evidence that could reveal authorial or audience practices, location, and context: for example marginalia, "red ink annotat[ion]" that "redefines the bounds" around Margery Kempe (139).

The next section draws attention to Pearsall's 1981 York conference (and volume) on *Manuscripts and Readers in Fifteenth-Century England*, assembling some scholars present at that conference to revisit its contribution. The essays explore questions of circulation. These include a piece by A. S. G. Edwards on the modern-day valuation of Lydgate manuscripts, as well as essays by Julia Boffey, A. I. Doyle, and Carol Meale on the complicated and "protean" nature of manuscript context itself (167, 173), whether regarding the book trade or particular reading situations.

Doyle's essay picks up a methodological thread originating in the volume's opening and extending through the remaining sections, which is the study of marginalia. An in-

triguing variety of marginalia offer evidence by which to investigate readerly response, as in essays by Theresa O'Byrne, Nicole Eddy, Karrie Fuller, and Sarah Baechle (O'Byrne and Hilary E. Fox's essays also consider Irish and Anglo-Irish politics in relation to manuscript production). But while this type of trace offers one means to elucidate the dynamics of textual response, manuscripts possess other features as well that expose authorial and readerly consciousness. Hannah Zdansky's essay advocates this point. Referring to London, BL MS Cotton Nero A.x, Zdansky explores the potential of letter formation to signal an English literary consciousness of diversity in language and culture. Maura Giles-Watson's piece on early modern performance practice and improvisation looks beyond the religious and economic considerations (343) at work elsewhere in the collection to focus upon gendered literacies.

The volume ends with sections on "Chaucerian and Post-Chaucerian Reading Practices" (Elizabeth Scala, Sarah Baechle, Peter Brown, Stephen Partridge) and Langlandian "Editorial Philosophies" (Jill Mann, Melinda Nielson, Kathryn Kerby-Fulton). The former set, as Edward Wheatley notes in the section's foreword, problematizes in different ways the categories of fruit and chaff, text and gloss (361–62). In the latter set coalesces a network of ideas about the history and further possibilities of Langland editorship. Through an essay that proposes to locate the Z-text's redactor, Kerby-Fulton also, ultimately, makes an important point about the stakes underlying Pearsall's work. Negotiating the "scribe-poet binary" requires that we bear in mind the intelligence and erudition of those producing books in the late Middle Ages (494). To do so, Kerby-Fulton suggests, is to recognize the honor Pearsall does the scribe as laborer (490) and thus to recognize the political and ethical commitments he brings to his scholarship.

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Visionary Spenser and the Poetics of Early Modern Platonism. Kenneth Borris. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017. xv + 250 pp. $80.

Visionary Spenser contributes significantly to scholarship on Spenser and Renaissance uses of Plato and Longinus. Borris argues that Spenser, in *The Shepheardes Calender*, *The Faerie Queene*, and *The Fowre Hymnes*, centrally used Plato's Phaedran image of the soul as a charioteer managing contrary passional steeds to reach heavenly heights, inspired by the beauty of noble ladies. Driving that aspiration is Longinian furor in Spenser's poetics for realizing the sublime. To support his argument, which gives much coherence to Spenser's works, Borris cites dazzling nuggets from Plato, Neoplatonists, fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Italian critics, and Christian Platonists from Augustine to the Reformation. By finding the aspiring charioteer throughout Spenser's work, Borris disproves Ellrodt's view of Spenser's limited Platonism until 1596. On the eclogues Borris might extend the impli-