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978-0-521-19080-0 - Image, Text, and Religious Reform in Fifteenth-Century England

Shannon Gayk

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IMAGE, TEXT, AND RELIGIOUS REFORM IN FIFTEENTH-CENTURY ENGLAND

Focusing on the period between the Wycliffite critique of images and Reformation iconoclasm, Shannon Gayk investigates the sometimes complementary and sometimes fraught relationship between vernacular devotional writing and the religious image. The study examines how a set of fifteenth-century writers, including Lollard authors, John Lydgate, Thomas Hoccleve, John Capgrave, and Reginald Pecock, translated complex clerical debates about the pedagogical and spiritual efficacy of images and texts into vernacular settings and literary forms. These authors found vernacular discourse to be a powerful medium for explaining and reforming contemporary understandings of visual experience. In its survey of the function of literary images and imagination, the epistemology of vision, the semiotics of idols, and the authority of written texts, this study reveals a fifteenth century that was as much an age of religious and literary exploration, experimentation, and reform as it was an age of regulation.

SHANNON GAYK is Assistant Professor of English at Indiana University.

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Contents

<i>Acknowledgements</i>	page vi
<i>List of abbreviations</i>	viii
Introduction: reformations of the image	i
1 Lollard iconographies	15
2 Thomas Hoccleve’s spectacles	45
3 John Lydgate’s refigurations of the image	84
4 John Capgrave’s material memorials	123
5 Reginald Pecock’s <i>libri laicorum</i>	155
Epilogue: words for images	189
<i>Notes</i>	192
<i>Bibliography</i>	229
<i>Index</i>	250

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)*Acknowledgements*

vii

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Abbreviations

Addit.	Additional
EETS	Early English Text Society
o.s.	original series
e.s.	extra series
<i>JMEMS</i>	<i>The Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies</i>
<i>MED</i>	<i>Middle English Dictionary</i>
MS, MSS	Manuscript(s)
<i>PMLA</i>	<i>Publications of the Modern Language Association</i>
<i>SAC</i>	<i>Studies in the Age of Chaucer</i>
<i>YLS</i>	<i>Yearbook of Langland Studies</i>