In the early fifteenth century, English poets responded to a changed climate of patronage, instituted by Henry IV and successor monarchs, by inventing a new tradition of public and elite poetry. Following Chaucer and others, Hoccleve and Lydgate brought to English verse a new style and subject matter to write about their king, nation, and themselves, and their innovations influenced a continuous line of poets running through and beyond Wyatt. A crucial aspect of this new tradition is its development of ideas and practices associated with the role of poet laureate. Robert J. Meyer-Lee examines the nature and significance of this tradition as it develops from the fourteenth century to Tudor times, tracing its evolution from one author to the next. This study illuminates the relationships between poets and political power and makes plain the tremendous impact this verse has had on the shape of English literary culture.

Robert J. Meyer-Lee is Assistant Professor of English at Goshen College, Indiana.
This series of critical books seeks to cover the whole area of literature written in the major medieval languages — the main European vernaculars, and medieval Latin and Greek — during the period c.1100—1500. Its chief aim is to publish and stimulate fresh scholarship and criticism on medieval literature, special emphasis being placed on understanding major works of poetry, prose, and drama in relation to the contemporary culture and learning which fostered them.

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For my family:

Elaine, Gabriel, Jackson, and Lucas
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Portions of this book adapt previously published work of mine:


I thank the publishers for their permission to incorporate this material.

Citations of Lydgate’s poetry are from the following editions:

Citations of Hoccleve’s poetry are from the following editions:
- “My Compleinte” and *Other Poems*, ed. Roger Ellis, Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2001, for all poems besides the *Regiment, Complaint*, and *Dialogue*.

All verse, except where noted, is cited by line number and, where appropriate, book or fragment. Editorial diacritics, emendation
Notes on citations

brackets, and indications of expansion are not reproduced, and I have at times modified or added punctuation.

The following abbreviations are used:


EEBO for *Early English Books Online*, Ann Arbor: Bell & Howell Information and Learning, 1999–.

EETS o.s. for Early English Text Society, original series.

EETS e.s. for Early English Text Society, extra series.


Except where noted, translations are my own.